

Comparative **MEDIA** Studies

# *In Medias Res*

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## The Changing Face of CMS

Introducing Nick Montfort and Erin Reilly

CMS, Media Lab Launch Center for Future Civic Media

C3 Hosts Futures of Entertainment 2 Conference

Project New Media Literacies Tackles *Moby-Dick*

The Education Arcade and NBC Announce iCue

GAMBIT Unveils Six New Game Prototypes

William Uricchio on the Future of Digital Heritage

New Staff, New Faculty, New Visiting Scholars,  
and the Class of 2009



Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology



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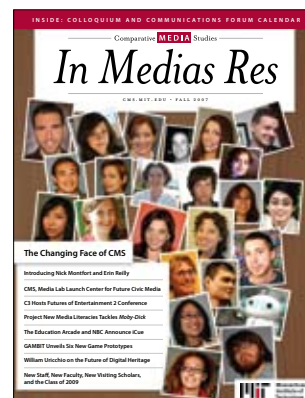
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*Photos by Talieh Rohani, Beth Coleman and others; collage by Geoffrey Long*

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**audiOdyssey, one of six game prototypes by GAMBIT: p17**



# Space: The Final Frontier

By Henry Jenkins and William Uricchio, CMS directors

The new GAMBIT lab facility over at 5 Cambridge Center (two stories above Legal Sea Foods) opened mid-summer and has transformed how CMS operates. If you haven't been over to GAMBIT yet, you should do so. The Lab space was created with support from the Singapore Media Development Authority and National Research Foundation and from MIT to help sustain a new center designed to do the kind of research and development that is not taking place within the games industry but which will stretch the medium in important new directions.

As you walk through the door, you will see an image of the screen of *Spacewar!* etched in glass. Here's the back story: *Spacewar!* is believed to be the first interactive computer game, built in the early 1960s by the Tech Model Railroad Club, which was at the time housed in MIT's legendary Building 20. The game deployed the Artificial Intelligence Lab's PDP-1 computer. Soon, the game was widely deployed as a test whenever PDP-1 computers were installed. More importantly, it set the stage for subsequent experiments with computer and video games. Oddly enough, there is no plaque honoring the Tech Model Railroad Club for its place in video games history amongst the various memorials to Building 20 in the new Stata Center, so we've chosen to recognize it within CMS, one of a number of recent efforts to help our students recognize the fit between their current projects and a much larger history of media theory and production at MIT.

If you walked past the *Spacewar!* memorial this summer and into the heart of GAMBIT, you would have seen something truly remarkable: a team of 40 students from 9 different Singaporean institutions working hand in hand with undergraduate and graduate students from CMS and Computer Science to develop cutting-edge games. The projects they built were creatively interesting and technically challenging; they had compelling graphics and engaging soundtracks; and they were all developed through an eight-week rapid prototyping and development process which would put most professional game companies to shame. To visit the lab at that point, you would have found walls plastered with artist sketches,



flowcharts, and development schedules, signs of a creative process at work. What these students did this summer has already attracted media attention in both the United States and Singapore; participants are scoring top level jobs in game companies around the world; and the projects themselves are being closely reviewed by game companies in the hopes that some of them will get picked up for commercial distribution.

With the start of the academic year, CMS has taken over much of the lab space to serve our own expanding pedagogical and research needs. (If you don't think CMS is expanding, just look at all of the announcements of new staff and students in this issue!) Each of the CMS research initiatives now have designated spaces, which means that we have room for teams of students to work together on projects. The result has been a dramatic shift towards greater collaboration throughout the research process and a fuller integration of learning and research activities. It is also resulting in greater collaboration across the teams because people run into each other in the hallways at GAMBIT and start to talk about the work they are doing. Increasingly, we are using the GAMBIT space for teaching with several of our required graduate subjects being hosted there this term.

The space played important roles during our orientation for new students; it is the location for Friday afternoon game playing sessions designed to bring the community together and familiarize them with new developments in this area, as well as the location chosen to host a half-day series of faculty meetings to help redesign the requirements for our undergraduate major.

These sessions brought together 25 members of our (sometimes loosely) affiliated faculty, who cut across almost every part of the HASS school and beyond. Those participating were: **Alan Brody, Tommy DeFrantz, Jay Scheib, Ian Condry, Stefan Helmreich, Marty Marks, Philip Tan, William Uricchio, Sarah Brouillette, Noel Jackson, Wyn Kelley, Nick Montfort, Ute Meta Bauer, Glorianna Davenport, Kurt Fendt, Leila Kinney, and Jing Wang.** Many of those who came ended up hanging out with students and research staff longer than expected and came away with a much better picture of what CMS is becoming. The Lab space will also host a growing number of post-docs and visiting scholars who are being better integrated into the research process and will bring valuable new perspectives to our ongoing discussions.

Other CMS activities remain scattered across multiple locations on campus (including, of course, our headquarters space in building 14) as we await completion of the new MIT Media complex where our core operations will unfold alongside those of the Media Lab, the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, and other media-related groups.

During the summer, the GAMBIT Lab is emblematic of the ways CMS translates humanistic insights into pragmatic projects and the ways our research is starting to have a global impact. During the academic year, GAMBIT is allowing CMS to reinvent itself, to better achieve our goals both inside the classroom and inside the research laboratory, to bring faculty, staff, and students together in new ways, and to create a context for collaborative work in the future.

# Project NML's Erin Reilly and the Cyphibian Theory

by Huma Yusuf

Erin Reilly, the new Research Manager for Project NML, has arrived at the Comparative Media Studies program with a highly evolved philosophy about digital learning. At her previous job, she coined the Cyphibian Theory. "I believe that kids today have one foot in the cyber world and one in the real world," says Reilly. "Digital learning requires a cross-pollination of those two worlds. There has to be a balance between them and educators have to consider when is the best time for kids to use technology and when they should step away." She also argues that "community is the glue to learning" and is intrigued by the way in which young people use social networking as a means to establish collaborative learning environments. Working with these principles, Reilly has been empowering youngsters using digital learning throughout her career.

Although Reilly is recognized for designing engaging educational content using new media applications, she describes herself as a social entrepreneur. Prior to arriving at CMS, she served as the CEO of the Platform Shoes Forum, a non-profit organization that develops e-learning tools for youth. In that post, she co-created *Zoey's Room*, an online community that aims to expand young



girls' knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math. "We wanted to help girls become the leaders of tomorrow and cultivate their interest in sci-tech," explains Reilly. The interactive website features girls-only chat rooms, informative message boards, and e-learning challenges known as Tec-Treks that build knowledge through both on- and off-line activities. The success of *Zoey's Room* earned Reilly *Cable in the Classroom's* Leaders in Learning Award in 2007 and she has recently been flagged by the National School Board Association on '20 to Watch,' a list identifying educators who use technology in innovative ways.

Reilly's confidence in developing tools for tweens and teenagers probably stems from her own experience as an educator. After completing an MFA, she was an adjunct

faculty member for the International Film and Television Workshops and subsequently taught at the Art Institute of Dallas. She also coordinates the *National Geographic* Photo Camp at annual Pop!Tech conferences.

At Project NML, Reilly is excited to convert theories about new media literacy into practice. "I've been away from academia for a while and am still in an entrepreneurial spirit," she admits. "I want to move fast, plan, and think about the budget. Ultimately, I want to see our tools in kids' hands to determine whether these theories can actually work." Reilly is also hoping to reframe the content and curriculum generated by Project NML last year so as to address questions about how kids connect, communicate, collaborate, and create in a participatory culture. Most of these ideas will be manifest in the project's revamped website, due to be launched next year. "The website will have a new look and feel as it will move from a passive to an active approach. The site will be interactive and fun for its teenage audience, and I hope that users will eventually add content to the site and build community around it." With this vision in place, Reilly is rearing to go on her new job.

## About *In Medias Res*

*In Medias Res* is published twice a year by:

### Comparative Media Studies (CMS)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
14N-207  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617.253.3599 / cms@mit.edu / cms.mit.edu

## CMS Faculty

**Henry Jenkins** (henry3@mit.edu), Director  
**William Uricchio** (uricchio@mit.edu), Director  
**Beth Coleman** (bcoleman@mit.edu)  
**Nick Montfort** (nickm@nickm.com)

## Research Managers

**Kurt Fendt** (fendt@mit.edu), HyperStudio  
**Joshua Green** (jgreen@mit.edu), C3  
**Scot Osterweil** (scot\_o@mit.edu), Education Arcade  
**Erin Reilly** (ebreilly@mit.edu), New Media Literacies  
**Philip Tan** (philip@mit.edu), GAMBIT

## Staff

**Sarah Wolozin** (swolozin@mit.edu), Program Administrator  
**Leila Kinney** (lwkinney@mit.edu), Administrator, Academic Programs  
**Becky Shepardson** (bshep@mit.edu), Undergraduate Administrator  
**Amanda Ford** (aford@mit.edu), Administrative Assistant  
**Generoso Fierro** (generoso@mit.edu), Events Coordinator  
**Geoffrey Long** (glong@mit.edu), Communications Director  
**Ximena Forero-Irizarry** (xforero@mit.edu), Financial Assistant  
**Rik Eberhardt** (reberhar@mit.edu), Systems Administrator  
**Mike Rapa** (mrpa@mit.edu), Computer Support Assistant  
**Douglas Purdy** (dgpurdy@mit.edu), Film Office  
**Brad Seawell** (seawell@mit.edu), Communications Forum

## Our Evolving Look

*In Medias Res* was redesigned in 2005 and is constantly evolving. The body font is Minion Pro, the headline font is Myriad Pro, and certain other splash text is set in Mrs. Eaves. Most headshot photographs are by **Dan Bersak**, **Geoffrey Long** or **Talieh Rohani**. This issue marks the first time *In Medias Res* is printed in full color.

Please send comments to **Geoffrey Long** at glong@mit.edu.

# Location Scouting in Second Life

By Amanda Finkelberg

When I show up for our interview as my avatar, a middle-aged bald man, CMS Professor **Beth Coleman** does not greet me immediately. I've been standing next to her for a few minutes when she finally recognizes me. Coleman and I see each other often in the halls of Building 14, but today we're meeting on location in Second Life (<http://www.secondlife.com>), the online virtual world where she and her machinima working group are shooting a film.

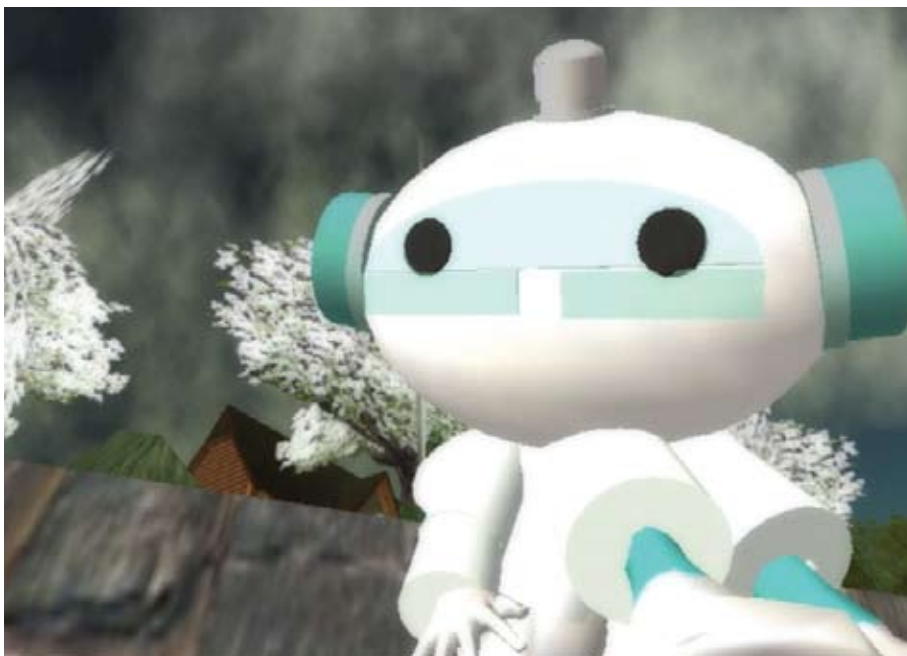
"Wait," Coleman asks me in a chat window, "you're the old guy?!"

I caught up with Coleman and her machinima work group on a location scouting mission. She offers me a "teleport" and I am immediately whisked away from a halting Spanish conversation I'm having with a wolf man into a wood-paneled room with a ping-pong table in the center. The sound of running water comes through my computer speakers, but I can't see its source.

Coleman's avatar is a small, white robot with a large gold head and what appears to be one red eye. Her head animation designer, Jenny Yi-Chen Mu (or "Hana" in SL) joins us in the room to help show me some of what the group has been working on. Her avatar is also a robot, the character that they have built to be the star of the group's first short.

The group is working to produce high-quality machinima, an emerging filmmaking process that utilizes the construct of an established game world to create films (<http://www.machinima.com>). Coleman has assembled a diverse group of students and professionals to contribute a variety of skills to the project. Unlike popular examples of machinima like *Red vs. Blue* (which was made using the engine of the video game *Halo*), Coleman's group is working on cinema that is emotionally charged and, they hope, visually stunning. The aim is not to showcase the technology – how "cool" it is to make a movie within a virtual world – but to make a quality film that happens to use Second Life as its location.

The bulk of the group's research so far has been learning how machinima is made, picking an engine to work with, and getting familiar with the territory. Coleman chose



Second Life as the first platform the group would investigate because of the relative ease of shooting as well as the variety of landscapes and locations, such as the room we have met in for the interview. Why the ping-pong table? They were trying to see if they were coordinated enough to play. I keep walking through walls, so I can imagine how difficult it will be to learn to make a movie in here.

Back in first life at the group's weekly meeting in Cambridge, project member and designer Mu tells me that she has joined a group called "The Academy of Second Learning," a group within Second Life that helps people learn to use machinima. MIT undergraduate researcher Kat Kuan, who is studying computer science, took the research position because she thought it looked like an interesting way to enhance her programming skills. She has been working on customizing the tools available for movie making including cameras, characters and special effects.

She shows me one of these tricks in Second Life. I "touch" the Cute Robot actor and it displays wings the color of a rainbow.

Not even Pacino can do that.

For more information on the project, visit <http://cms.mit.edu/people/bcoleman>.

## Project Update

by Beth Coleman

Since its inception, the machinima research group has brought in various undergraduate researchers (UROPS), graduate student researchers, and young professionals working in game design, 3D imaging, and networked media to experiment with interactive filmmaking. Some of the topics we examine include:

- Transmedia storytelling
- Customization
- Networked collaboration
- 3D imaging techniques
- Virtual world and game engine as design tools
- Generative design
- Multimedia distribution

This semester's project is to build a Cute Robot army and stage a real-time battle on a virtual world platform. Volunteers wanted – no 3D animation experience needed. Contact Professor Coleman for more information at [bcoleman@mit.edu](mailto:bcoleman@mit.edu).





## FEATURE STORY

# Preserving Our Digital Heritage

*By William Uricchio, CMS Co-Director*

When I was invited by UNESCO to address their delegates on the future of digital heritage, I knew that a tipping point had been reached. UNESCO, long concerned with world heritage sites such as the Taj Mahal, extended its remit to include something far more ephemeral.

This tale turns on changing technologies, paradigm shifts in the notion of the archive, and the very pressing needs of our newly emerging and fast fading audiovisual heritage. It's led me to speak to various archival associations in the Hague, London, Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Tokyo. It's a story that is located between our memory institutions and our study of media. And, of course, it is a tale with stakes: the survival of our collective memory and the traces of our past, and the crucial issue of our access to it.

Let's step back and consider one of the nodal points in film studies – the 1978 International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) meetings held in Brighton, England. Celebrated as one of the first major collaborations between the archive and the academy, the Brighton meetings triggered a period of intellectual ferment in film studies and an era of significant investment in film archival preservation and restoration. But in hindsight, it also seems that this classic 'win-win' scenario was a bit overdetermined. Television's deregulation (the early 1970s in the US and a bit later in most European countries) coupled with the rapid penetration of the VCR not

only transformed the notion of audiovisual heritage and the field of film studies, but they sparked an awareness of the commercial value of that heritage for content providers. Although this would translate into important archival initiatives (and a burgeoning field of study), the nitrate and acetate past continued to decay faster than it could be preserved.

The digital turn had a similar effect. It offered new pots of money to archives, new forms of access to academics and consumers, new paradigms for media study (CMS!), and new opportunities for the commercial sector. But there was a crucial difference. Digitalization also introduced new preservation and restoration technologies and new distribution possibilities. While the need for preservation has long been urgent (only 2% of Europe's 100 million hours of film and television has been preserved), once reframed as a digital initiative, the money has been flowing and flowing fast. The Dutch alone, one of Europe's smallest producers, have just funded a digitalization initiative that will accommodate 137,200 hours of video, 22,500 hours of film, 123,900 hours of audio and 2.9 million photos.

Predictably, there have been battles about the aesthetic status of the grain vs the pixel, about formatting standards, media refresh rates, the latest image recognition technologies, and metadata protocols. But strangely absent from most discussions has been the nature of the archive itself: by default, most plans simply port new technologies into old archives. Even without recourse to Foucault's insights on the archive, it doesn't take much to realize that this institutional behavior mimics the obtuseness of the mainstream music industry.

In my talks with the Association of Moving Image Archivists and major European television archives (BBC, INA, ZDF, etc.), I've been stressing digital affordances not simply as a matter of new tool sets, but as ways of organizing data and user communities. Napster showed how a distributed logic and anonymous, bottom-up participation could digitize and store vast amounts of content in an efficient and low cost manner. Grid computing projects demonstrate how thousands of interlinked computers offer powerful and cost-efficient strategies for massive calculations. And precedents like LOCKSS ('Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe') prove that distributed and highly redundant holdings offer an effective and safe way to store – and make available – library materials. These and other examples offer lessons that we can draw on as we design the archives of the future. Steady increases in computer storage capacities and transmission speeds (Alcatel-Lucent's



**While audiovisual archives are facing enormous pressures from the backlog of endangered films and tape, we must also learn from our failure to intervene at a much earlier date. Today's digital culture – email, blogs, webpages, wikis, MMORPGs, and so on – lacks a fixed place on the archival agenda.**

recent demonstration of 25.6 terabits per second), the advantages of dynamic social tagging systems over static metadata, together with the ever-growing mountain of materials to be archived and organized, combine to make this new conception of the archive not only desirable but essential.

I've also been arguing a second point. While audiovisual archives are facing enormous pressures from the backlog of endangered films and tape, we must also learn from our failure to intervene at a much earlier date. Today's digital culture – email, blogs, webpages, wikis, MMORPGs, and so on – lacks a fixed place on the archival agenda, although Brewster Kahle's Internet Archive, with over 50 billion archived pages since 1996, offers an inspiring and extraordinary

exception. While most film archivists know precisely what they would do if they could return to 1915 (and it involves hoarding films, records, ephemera), our newest media are transparent, and more interesting for what comes next than what recedes into the past. They also bring some serious complications with them: how might we best capture dynamic and ever-changing sites? How should we deal with links? Patterns of use and networking? These and other questions require that we think creatively while we still have the opportunity to gather data. Fortunately, UNESCO's Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage calls in part for precisely this sort of attention.

There are certainly challenges ahead. Rethinking the archive adds one more compelling reason to rethink the current intellectual property regime; and the archiving of use patterns requires that we think carefully about privacy implications. But our memory institutions have the potential to play an even more vital role in helping us negotiate our way into the future, while maintaining contact with the experiences of the past. Access is a precondition to fluency, and at least in Europe, it seems as though the message has gotten through!

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*For more, see W. Uricchio, "Moving Beyond the Artifact: Lessons from Participatory Culture" in Preserving Digital Heritage: Principles and Policies (UNESCO, 2007).*

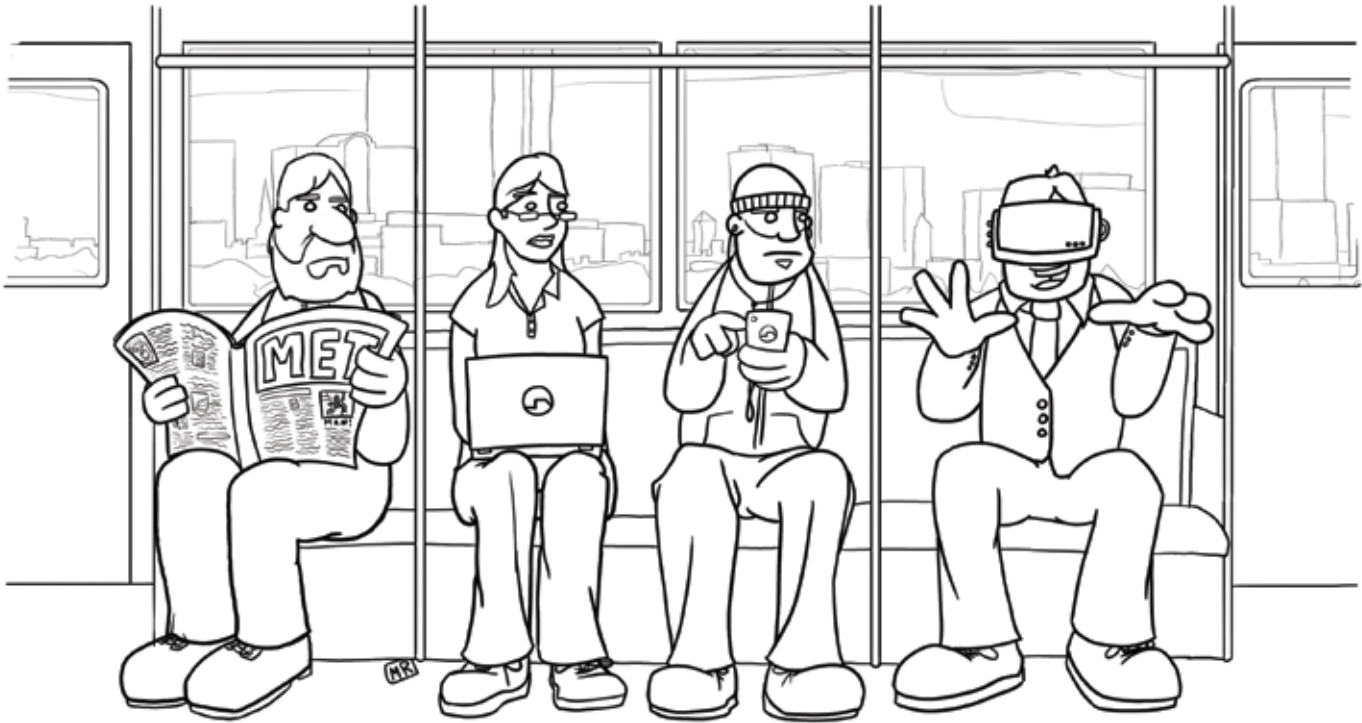


Illustration by Mike Rapa

## Connecting the Future: The MIT Center for Future Civic Media

By Huma Yusuf

It began as a jumble of jargon. Students and faculty from the Comparative Media Studies program (CMS) and the Media Lab – many of them meeting for the first time – huddled around a table and tossed out seemingly interchangeable phrases: civic media, citizen journalism, civic participation, networked communities, hyper-local reporting. More meetings, broad research, and a slew of proposal drafts later, and a path of clarity had been paved in the sea of catchphrases. That clarity led to the announcement, in May 2007, that MIT had emerged as the top winner in the first Knight News Challenge, with CMS and the Media Lab together receiving US\$5 million to fund a Center for Future Civic Media.

The Knight News Challenge aims to support projects that use digital news and information in innovative ways so as to create a sense of community and bind individuals and groups located in a specific geographic area. As recipients of the Knight Foundation's most generous grant, CMS and the Media Lab have their work cut out for them in the coming years. As Gary Kebbel, the Knight Foundation's Journalism Initiatives Program Officer, puts it, "we only want you to reinvent community communication."

According to Kebbel, MIT was inevitably a front-runner in the Knight News Challenge because "the combination of CMS and the Media Lab was hard to beat." Indeed, much of the initial excitement

surrounding the Center for Future Civic Media stems from its facilitating collaboration between the two programs. "For some time, there has been a strong interest in developing a research theme that overlapped between the Media Lab and CMS," explains Professor **Henry Jenkins**, co-director of CMS. For his part, Mitchel Resnick, the head of the Lifelong Kindergarten research group at the Media Lab, believes that the center allows the two programs to come together through their common interest in the idea of participation and the question of how new media engages people in new ways and encourages deeper levels of participation in communities. "Our goal has been to help people become active participants in their communities, to provide them with new means to experiment, explore and express themselves," he adds.

Interestingly, the long-awaited union between CMS and the Media Lab is expected to have a broader impact on the MIT community. David Gordon, the Associate Director of the Office of Foundation Relations, hopes that the center will further the cause of interdisciplinary research across the institute. "The center will impact collaboration across departments at MIT," he says. "Within the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, the grant is seen as clear evidence of the ways in which humanistic inquiry can be applied to understanding the ever-changing role of technology in society."



As if the mandate to reinvigorate local communications and champion research across disciplines weren't enough, the Center for Future Civic Media is also expected to bolster the separate program goals of CMS and the Media Lab. Professor Jenkins, for example, sees the center as a way to diversify the range of projects and opportunities available to CMS students. "Our students are able to study and master the big picture of media change. At the same time, they are able to put what they learn into action by working on projects that have a real world impact and which help them to expand the skills they will use as they enter their professional lives," he says. In particular, the center hopes to attract students with backgrounds in journalism and public policy to CMS. Meanwhile, the Media Lab sees the center fitting into its new focus on 'Inventing a Better Future' as it will involve developing technologies that can make a meaningful difference in people's lives and communities.

In the coming academic year, students and faculty members involved with the center will have to cut through the rhetoric about community and participation and identify how best to have an impact. "Initially, we expect those involved in the center to learn the community communication landscape so as to be more effective during the four-year grant period," says Kebbel. To that end, participants in the center will be brainstorming new ideas, conducting fieldwork, and building on projects already underway at CMS and the Media Lab. That said, there is a desire on both the part of the Knight Foundation and MIT to leave things a bit open-ended. "We want to see what emerges when we put CMS and Media Lab students, faculty, and staff in the same room, drill deep into existing work in this area, and begin to brainstorm new directions we might take in this space," explains Professor Jenkins, who will be the faculty member overseeing the center for its first year (the role will rotate between CMS and the Media Lab on a yearly basis).

One can snatch a glimpse of the kind of projects the center will be working on by considering Nadav Aharony's work. A second-year graduate student in the Media Lab's Viral Communications research group, Nadav hopes his proposed project, currently titled Snap-N-Share, will come to fruition under the umbrella of the Center for Future Civic Media. Combining his research work with ideas about civic journalism has helped Nadav envision a wireless communication system in which there is better connectivity among group members rather than to a core network. "I have proposed to create a system that allows the publication and dissemination of content among its users, giving them a service that is free, unsupervised, uncensored, and as private or as public as they would like," he explains. With students such as Nadav from the MIT Media Lab coming together with three career journalists-turned-CMS graduate students, the center is bound to come up with a host of projects that will allow community members to snap, share, speak out, and more.

For more information, please visit the Center for Future Civic Media's website at <http://civic.mit.edu>.

## What Is Civic Media?

By Henry Jenkins

Civic media, as I use the term, refers to any use of any medium which fosters or enhances civic engagement. I intend this definition to be as broad and inclusive as possible. Civic media includes but extends well beyond the concept of citizen journalism which is so much in fashion at the moment.

Lisa Gitelman has suggested that a medium should be understood both as a technological platform (a channel of communication) and the social and cultural protocols which grow up around it. As we think about future civic media, we are not simply designing tools or devices which might be deployed to support and sustain citizenship; we are also talking about the practices that grow up around those devices, practices that shape how they get used and how they are understood by the people who use them.

What constitutes a civic use of media? Well, certainly, we have classically considered newspapers to constitute a form of civic media, given the centrality of the concept of the informed citizen to the ideals of a democratic society. Yet, I would argue that even in classic accounts, the concept goes further than this.

So, let's consider, for example, Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, where the image of the 1950s and 1960s bowling league embodies the Harvard professor's ideals of civic engagement. In what sense might bowling become a civic act? Putnam suggests it represents a commitment which citizens

made to their neighbors, that they would come together socially at regular moments to play and that around the sport a range of other significant conversations would occur which help sustain their investments within their community. Some of those conversations would contain news of civic importance, many of them would be personal gossip, but the key point was that the conversations occurred on multiple levels and thus helped to knit strong social ties.

Putnam contrasts the public sociability of bowling with our retreat into private space in response to the emergence of television. Here, Putnam confuses two arguments – the domestic consumption of television as a medium and concerns about the centrality of entertainment, rather than news, as its primary content of this medium. For me, his argument breaks down partially on both levels.

First, television is not inherently an isolating medium. We need look no further than the accounts of its introduction which suggest that installing the television set was an intensely social occasion in the 1950s with friends and family gathering to watch those first fuzzy and flickering images. Or we might account for the ways that television is consumed collectively in much of the developing world where people gather at the center of the village and hold important exchanges around broadcasts. So, in other words, television was consumed more socially at a moment of time when there was already a much greater investment in civic engagement or in cultures which

**What medium can foster  
civic engagement?  
All media can do so,  
depending on their use  
and the investments  
we make in other users.**

have a more communal lifestyle (though even then, it was the newness of the technology which lead to the unusual experience of bringing the whole neighborhood into one's private domestic space). The shift towards more private consumption doesn't have to do with the intrinsic properties of the medium but rather has to do with the ways the medium gets used in a specific historical and cultural context.

But, second, it seems odd for Putnam to suggest that television can only be used for civic purposes when it is conveying news and information, given the fact that he uses bowling as his exemplar of civic participation. In this case, it is not the informational content of bowling but the emotional context in which it is consumed that enhances civic engagement. The conversations held around the gameplay helped to forge people into a community. And thus, there's no intrinsic reason why a predominantly entertainment or recreational medium might not enhance civic engagement almost as much as one focused on news and information. Whatever people are doing when they form guilds within a multiplayer game, it isn't bowling alone.

We might for a moment move beyond Putnam and consider another classic writer on this theme, Benedict Anderson. Anderson writes in his book, *Imagined Communities*, about the role which *The London Times* played in creating a shared sense of identity and fraternity across at least segments of the British empire. He argues that nations are imagined in the sense that we are invited to feel solidarity with people who we may never meet face to face – indeed, we will meet relatively few members of a nation even in the course of our entire lifetime and in the case of the British empire, he's describing how a concept of national culture was extended across the planet (although clearly unequally – understood differently by those who ruled and those who submitted to their rule). Some of this had to do with the exchange of news and information, some of it had to do with the sense of a shared agenda, some of it had to do with the rituals which re-enforced that sense of social connection. Marshall McLuhan compared reading the newspaper to our morning baths – suggesting that its ritual functions were as important as its informational ones.

This sense of the civic, then, is at once real and virtual, created through media and experienced through face to face contact, sparked by shared activities and by exchanged information. This sense of civic engagement manifests itself through democratic participations (voting, for example) but it also gets displayed through the micro-processes of everyday life – through countless social rituals and seemingly meaningless everyday interactions with some subset of the larger group of people with whom we feel some sense of social connection.

As we think about civic media, then, we need to think about all of the mechanisms that generate that “structure of feeling” of belonging

to a community and working together to insure its long term viability. Read side by side, Putnam and Anderson tell us that civic engagement involves the interweaving of weak and strong social ties.

So, what medium can foster civic engagement? All media can do so, depending on their use and the investments we make in other users. Jean Burgess has studied, for example, the local camera culture which grew up in Australia around the use of Flickr. Photography, she argued, is at least partially a local medium – we take pictures of real places while we are standing in front of them, even if the images circulate within digital networks. Flickr functions as a social network, helping photographers in the same area find each other. They hold meetups to take pictures together, and this shared activity leads to other conversations and other kinds of social contact. Taking pictures focuses their attention on their immediate geographic surroundings,

though they look at them through a range of conceptual lenses. They begin to feel a greater emotional bond with other photographers taking pictures of that same area and, in some cases, their photography increases their awareness of – and then becomes a vehicle for increasing other people's awareness of – local problems and concerns.

We can read this scenario in two ways: the first emphasizes the affordances of the Flickr technology that enables us to determine the location of the photographs and to identify the contact coordinates of the photographers; the second emphasizes the social processes – the ways that people organize themselves around the shared rather than individual production and circulation of images, the emergence of the meetup in the context of a networked culture.

My vision for this center, then, is one which combines understandings of technologies and of the social contexts within which they are used. If some writers, like

Putnam, blame media for the breakdown of civic engagement, others, like Anderson, suggest that the rituals of shared media consumption can foster social connections and thus spark citizenly participations. Working together, we will produce both technologies and social practices, test them in the field, and publicize best practices. As we do so, we need to think about what might constitute today's equivalent of reading the *London Times* and today's equivalent of the Bowling League.



**Whatever people are doing  
when they form guilds  
within a multiplayer game,  
it isn't bowling alone.**

---

*Variations of this essay appear in both the CMS Colloquia event “What is Civic Media?” and on Dr. Jenkins’ blog, Confessions of an Aca-Fan. To download the mp3 podcast of the event, visit [http://cms.mit.edu/news/2007/09/forum\\_what\\_is\\_civic\\_media.php](http://cms.mit.edu/news/2007/09/forum_what_is_civic_media.php); for more of Dr. Jenkins’ thoughts on Civic Media, read his blog entry at [http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/10/what\\_is\\_civic\\_media\\_1.html](http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/10/what_is_civic_media_1.html).*

# st0ryte11er: Introducing Nick Montfort

by Geoffrey Long

You are standing in the darkened lab of Nick Montfort, Assistant Professor of Digital Media in the Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies and the newest addition to the faculty of CMS. Inside the lab are a small TV and an Atari 2600, some dubious-looking chairs and three doors. Two of these doors are shut tight, but the third sits slightly ajar. From inside comes both a dim light and the sound of someone typing on a keyboard.

## > Look Open Door

You inch your way over to the open door. Through it you can see Montfort's own lair. Several framed documents hang on the far wall, beneath which are shelves laden with old video games, dogeared copies of *Wired* and a number of books. Seated in the chair is Montfort himself, typing intently on a laptop computer, and he doesn't seem to have noticed you yet.

## > Look Documents

The framed documents on the office wall show that this isn't the first time Montfort's academic career has brought him to MIT.

Montfort earned his BA in liberal arts from the University of Texas at Austin, where he graduated as a Dean's distinguished graduate with high honors and special honors, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1995. His thesis there provides an early clue to his eventual trajectory: "Interfacing with Computer Narratives: Literary Possibilities for Interactive Fiction." A second clue can be found in the next line of his resume: a BS in computer science completed in August of the same year, also from the University of Texas at Austin and also with high honors.

For his next degree, Montfort headed to Cambridge and the MIT Media Lab. Under the tutelage of Justine Castell, Montfort completed his SM in June of 1998 with the thesis "A Conversational Computer Character to Help Children Write Stories."

Montfort then moved to New York City and worked as a writer for several years, writing his first substantial piece of interactive fiction, *Winchester's Nightmare*, during this time. He returned to Boston to study poetry in Boston University's graduate creative writing program with Robert Pinsky. He finished his studies there in 2001, and was a winner of the school's Academy of American Poets Prize.

In 2002, Montfort headed to the University of Pennsylvania to further his studies of interactive fiction, literature, and computing by learning about artificial intelligence and natural language processing. He finished his Ph.D. in computer and information science there in August of 2007. As he worked on his thesis, "Generating Narrative Variation in Interactive Fiction," he also put on events at the Kelly Writers House and wrote *Book and Volume*, an interactive fiction piece which has been selected for several festivals and exhibits internationally.

## > Look Bookshelves

Montfort's interest in combining text and technology is clearly reflected in his publishing history, which is just as clearly reflected on his bookshelves. In addition to numerous articles on technology for *Wired*, *MIT Technology Review*, *Suck.com* and others, Montfort has also written dozens of book chapters, journal articles, conference papers and reviews dealing primarily with variations on this topic.

It's the books by Montfort himself that catch your eye, however. Montfort's first book was a textual experiment named after its year of publication: *2002: A Palindrome Story* was co-authored by Montfort and William Gillespie and illustrated by Shelley Jackson. In 2003 Montfort and Noah Wardrip-Fruin co-edited *The New Media Reader* for MIT Press, which also published Montfort's history of interactive

text adventures, *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction*, in the same year. Montfort next co-edited *The Electronic Literature Collection, Volume 1* with N. Katherine Hayles, Stephanie Strickland and Scott Rettberg for the Electronic Literature Organization in 2006.

On the shelf beside Montfort's books are a pile of photographs.

## > Look Photographs

They seem to be snapshots of Montfort and others taken at various lectures, readings, and even museum exhibitions. Short labels are scribbled on the back of each one: "Opening of *Grand Text Auto* exhibition, UCI Beall Center for Art+Technology, Irvine, California – Oct. 4, 2007", "*Mystery House Taken Over* reading, Boston Cyberarts Festival – April 25, 2005", "Speakeasy open mic reading, Kelly Writers House, Philadelphia – Sept. 1, 2003". There's a thick pile of them, too many to count.

## > Look Computer

Montfort appears to be working on an entry for *Grand Text Auto*, the popular group blog about computer narrative, poetry, games, and art that he's been co-authoring with Mary Flanagan, Michael Mateas, Scott Rettberg, Andrew Stern, and Noah Wardrip-Fruin since 2003. The URL at the top of the screen reads <http://grandtextauto.org>.

## > Look Montfort

Montfort notices you at last. As he looks up from his laptop, his eyes open wide and he begins to cry something out in alarm. You wonder what he's trying to say, but it's too late.

You've just been eaten by a grue.

For more information on Nick Montfort, visit his personal site at <http://nickm.com>.



# CMS Colloquium Series: Autumn 2007

9.13.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-105

## **The Harry Potter Alliance: How the Myth of Harry Potter is Changing the World**

*Andrew Slack*

The Harry Potter Alliance, an educational and activist organization, is employing allegories from the Harry Potter series to mobilize tens of thousands of young Harry Potter fans toward fighting the “Dark Arts” in the real world, like racism, homophobia, global warming, and the genocide in Darfur.

9.20.07 | 5-7 PM | Bartos Theater

## **Center for Future Civic Media / Communications Forum: What is Civic Media?**

*Chris Csikszentmihalyi, Henry Jenkins, Beth Noveck, Ethan Zuckerman*

Many have noted the expansion of participatory cultures and virtual communities on the web, the growth of blogs, podcasts, and other forms of citizen journalism, and the rise of new kinds of social affiliations within virtual worlds. What lessons can we learn from these online worlds that will impact the communities where we work, sleep, and vote? What new technologies and practices offer us the best chance of revitalizing civic engagement? This forum marks the launch of the new MIT Center for Future Civic Media and is the first in a series designed to focus attention on the relationship between emerging media and civic engagement.

9.17.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-270

## **Technology and Media in the Experience Economy**

*B. Joseph Pine II*

The emerging Experience Economy opens up entire new vistas for engaging customers. While people will always be open to innovative real-life experiences, B. Joseph Pine II explores how perhaps the greatest opportunities lie in thinking about how to use digital technology and all experience media to stage compelling experiences, whether they enhance what's going in the real world, effectively replace that within a virtual world, or create permeable boundaries between the two and, indeed, between all experience media.

9.27.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-105

## **Lee Hunt's New Best Practices 2007**

*Lee Hunt*

Promax/BDA, the association of television promotion and marketing professionals, holds an annual international conference bringing together media marketers from around the world. One of the keynote

attractions is Lee Hunt's “New Best Practices,” an annual overview of ground-breaking strategies, innovative tactics, and breakthrough creative. In this excerpt from his 2007 presentation, Lee explores the challenges and opportunities faced by his television marketing peers, and analyzes solutions that have reshaped the industry.

10.04.07 | 5-7 PM | Bartos Theater

## **Communications Forum: Collective Intelligence**

*Thomas Malone*

Thomas Malone, founding director of the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence, will lead a conversation about the theory and practice of collective intelligence, with emphasis on Wikipedia, other instances of aggregated intellectual work and on recent innovative applications in product development for both large and small businesses.

10.25.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-105

## **Being Me: A Game School Project**

*Katie Salen*

Katie Salen is the Executive Director of the Gamelab Institute of Play, as well as an Associate Professor in Design and Technology, Parsons the New School for Design. Her Game School project is a platform for considering how game design theory and the practice of gaming can be used as foundational strategies for the design of learning environments that support the ongoing formation of learner identities. This colloquium will explore the design issues Salen's team has faced while designing the school, as well as the range of constraints guiding the project. Salen is the co-author of two books, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* and *The Game Design Reader*, and worked as an animator on Richard Linklater's *Waking Life*.

10.16.07 | 6-7 PM | 14E-310

## **CMS Town Meeting**

*CMS Faculty and Staff*

**Restricted to CMS faculty and students.** What is the state of the CMS program as a whole? Who are we? What are we doing? Where are we headed? CMS co-director Henry Jenkins will lead the department's semiannual Town Meeting.

11.01.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-105

## **Video Art History?**

*Caroline A. Jones*

Caroline A. Jones studies modern and contemporary art, with a particular focus on its technological modes of production, distribution, and reception. Professor of art history and head of the History, Theory, and Criticism Program in the Department of Architecture at MIT, she

has also worked as an essayist and curatorial consultant, contributing most recently a "Video Trajectories" component to the Sounding the Subject exhibition at MIT's List Visual Art Center. With digital convergence, the historical specificity of early video art is disappearing. How is that history being written? And what are its stakes?

*Co-sponsored by the List Visual Arts Center*

11.08.07 | 5-7 PM | Bartos Theater

### **Center for Future Civic Media / Communications Forum: Games and Civic Engagement**

*Mario Armstrong, Ian Bogost*

Scholars, critics and political leaders have denounced videogames as at best a distraction and at worst a negative influence on society. Yet for a growing minority of activists and researchers, games may also represent a resource for engaging young people with the political process and heightening their awareness of social issues. How do young people use the online societies constructed in multiplayer games to rehearse and refine skills of citizenship? Can we imagine games that encourage public awareness and citizenship? And what might it mean to empower young people to create their own games to reflect their perceptions of the world around them? This is the second in a continuing series from the new MIT Center for Future Civic Media.

11.15.07 | 5-7 PM | Bartos Theater

### **Communications Forum: NBC's *Heroes*: "Appointment TV" to "Engagement TV"?**

*Heroes Creators and Producers*

Some media and advertising spokesmen are arguing that smaller, more engaged audiences are more valuable than the passive viewers of the Broadcast Era. They focus on the number of viewers who engage with the program and its extensions – websites, podcasts, digital comics, games, and so forth. What steps are networks taking to prolong and enlarge the viewer's experience of a weekly series? How are networks and production companies adapting to and deploying digital technologies and the Internet? And what challenges are involved in creating a series in which individual episodes are only part of an imagined world that can be accessed on a range of devices and that appeals to gamers, fans of comics, lovers of message boards or threaded discussions, and digital surfers of all sorts? In this Forum, producers from the NBC series *Heroes* will discuss their hit show as well as the

nature of network programming, the ways in which audiences are measured, the extension of television content across multiple media channels, and the value producers place on the most active segments of their audiences.

11.29.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-105

### **Maps, Mental Models and Applications**

*Leon Trilling, Michael Stiefel, Wesley L. Harris*

Communication, whether in human conversation, a scientific experiment or a work of art, is an intermediary between the originator and the recipient's mental model. People make mental models not just because they are useful; they make them because that is the way people think. These models are often implicit, and are always incomplete. This seminar will be devoted to discussing the evidence that humans think this way, how artifacts extend the range of mental models, and the implications in diverse areas such as engineering, cultural understanding and the arts.

*Co-sponsored by the Program in Science, Technology and Society*

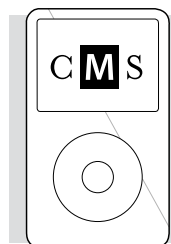
12.06.07 | 5-7 PM | 2-105

### **P=R=O=G=R=A=M=M=A=T=O=L=O=G=Y**

*John Cayley*

An illustrated talk/dialogue in which poet John Cayley will attempt to explain and justify the title his presentation has been given; to explain, that is, what he thought he was doing when he strung it together as a 'literal collage' and what he thinks he's doing now. Today there is a recognized practice of writing in networked and programmable media. A number of literary artists are 'writing digital media', and their work is being studied and taught. Cayley's presentation, using - chiefly - descriptions and illustrations of his own work, attempts to highlight certain 'properties and methods' of this emergent, fast-developing writing practice and its relation to aspects of critical theory that haunt or drive the work. Cayley's latest printed book of poems, adaptations and translations was *Ink Bamboo* (London: Agenda & Belew, 1996). Links to his writing in networked and programmable media are at <http://www.shadoof.net/in/>.

*For details on speakers and events, please visit the CMS Events page at <http://cms.mit.edu/events>. Most colloquia are made available as podcasts a few days after the event at <http://cms.mit.edu>.*

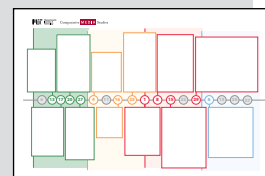


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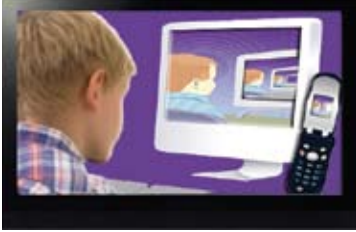
#### **Download the Colloquia Poster**

Never miss a CMS Colloquia event again! Go to <http://cms.mit.edu/events> to download a free color 11x17 poster of the CMS Colloquium Series to hang on your wall!



## Oct. 27: CMS Co-Hosts 2007 Media Literacy Conference

### 2007 Conference Media Literacy



#### Creating and Learning in a Media Saturated Culture

On October 27 CMS and HOME, Inc. will co-present the one-day conference "Media Literacy: Creating and Learning in a Media-Saturated Culture." The event, a follow-up to the 2005 conference "Media Literacy: Building Critical Thinking Skills In Our Media Age", will take place between 8 AM and 4 PM at Building E51 on the MIT campus.

The conference will showcase the innovative work of classroom teachers, highlighting new pedagogical practices that support school reform and after-school enrichment. We will explore after-school learning through new platforms and technologies such as Second Life, and examine the research shaping the field. The event will feature leaders in media literacy including CMS co-director **Henry Jenkins** and Temple University's Renee Hobbs among a host of others prominent in the field.

The conference will consist of two tracks covering topics relating to "in-school" and "after-school" media literacy programming. There will also be a special presentation of the first Dola Award for Media Literacy in Education. This award is meant to acknowledge and encourage outstanding media literacy education that encourages collaboration, communication, and innovation in the use of media to challenge students in high school to learn and succeed. A keynote address will be given by Henry Jenkins.

## November 16-17: C3 presents Futures of Entertainment 2

The logics of convergence culture are quickly becoming ubiquitous within the media world. Audiences are being encouraged to participate in a wider range of sites. Transmedia principles are being adopted by content producers in a broad range of fields. 'Engagement' is being discussed as crucial to measurements of success.

Co-hosted by the Convergence Culture Consortium and Comparative Media Studies, the Futures of Entertainment 2 (FoE2) conference brings together key industry players who are shaping these new directions in our culture with academics exploring their implications. This year's conference will consider developments in advertising, cult media, audience measurement, cultural labor, fan relations, and mobile platform development.

Speakers currently scheduled to appear include:

### Opening Remarks

**Henry Jenkins**, MIT  
**Joshua Green**, MIT  
**Jonathan Gray**, Fordham University  
**Lee Harrington**, Miami University  
**Jason Mittell**, Middlebury College

### Metrics and Measurement

**Bruce Leichtman**, Leichtman Research Group  
**Stacey Lynn Schulman**, HI: Human Insight  
**Maury Giles**, GSD&M Idea City

### Fan Labor

**Mark Deuze**, Indiana University  
**Catherine Tosenberger**, University of Florida  
**Jordan Greenhall**, DivX  
**Elizabeth Osder**, Buzznet  
**Raph Koster**, Areae Inc.



### Mobile Media

**Marc Davis**, Yahoo!  
**Bob Schukai**, Turner Broadcasting  
**Francesco Cara**, Nokia

### Advertising & Convergence Culture

**Mike Rubenstein**, Barbarian Group  
**Baba Shetty**, Hill/Holliday  
**Tina Wells**, Buzz Marketing Group  
**Faris Jakob**, Naked Communications  
**Bill Fox**, Fidelity Investments

### Cult Media

**Danny Bilson**, transmedia creator  
**Jeff Gomez**, Starlight Runner  
**Jesse Alexander**, Heroes  
**Gordon Tichell**, Walden Media

The conference works around a talk-show style model with panelists participating in a moderated discussion. With fewer than 200 seats open for the conference, FoE2 emphasizes discussion amongst panelists and interaction with the audience.

Futures of Entertainment 2 takes place Friday, Nov. 16, and Saturday, Nov. 17, at the Bartos Theater in the Wiesner Building at MIT. For more information and registration details please contact C3 Project Manager Sam Ford at samford@mit.edu or visit the FoE2 website at <http://www.convergenceculture.org/futuresofentertainment>.





## C3: Massively Multiplayer Fandemonium!

By Joshua Green, C3 research manager and Sam Ford, C3 project manager

The Spring semester was another busy one for the Convergence Culture Consortium. The C3 team continued to roll out extensive work exploring fandom, new audience behaviors, business practices in a convergence culture, and new patterns of social relations.

C3 graduate student researcher **Alec Austin** authored the first of two major reports released this spring. Austin's paper, *Playing In Other Worlds: Modeling Player Motivations*, used established frameworks for understanding player behavior in Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) to shed light on participation in virtual worlds such as Second Life. Drawing on an extensive range of models for understanding MMOG player motivations, Austin's report argued that the media industries as a whole would be wise to take heed of the distinctions the games industry makes between MMOGs and virtual worlds; though they may appear similar in form and style, the spaces are characterized by several markedly different modes of interaction.

C3 graduate student researcher **Sam Ford** authored the second major report for C3 this spring, called *Fandemonium: A Tag Team Approach to Enabling and Mobilizing Fans*. Looking at the successful efforts of World Wrestling Entertainment to incorporate archival material into their business practice, Ford positioned fans as necessary and valuable participants in this process. Fans were the first archivists, recording and trading content before wrestling was essentially centralized around the WWE. These activities made possible the national and global network on which the WWE capitalizes, building audiences for wrestling's history long before the activity went mainstream.

The team has continued to work throughout the summer on a study examining social networking through the framework of fandom that will be completed in time for the commencement of the new school year.

In addition to our official research output, spring also saw C3 Research Manager **Joshua Green** present some of the C3 team's ideas in several different venues. Joshua gave a keynote presentation at the fifth annual Youth Marketing Mega-Event at Huntington Beach in March and spoke to advertising agency Wieden and Kennedy in Portland. In addition, he was a featured speaker at PBS' annual brand manager's meeting in Dallas and spoke at the annual retreat of Alloy Marketing and Promotions. In addition, Joshua and the team spent time visiting with each of the C3 research partners, including a variety of on-site visits and hosting representatives of C3 partners at MIT.

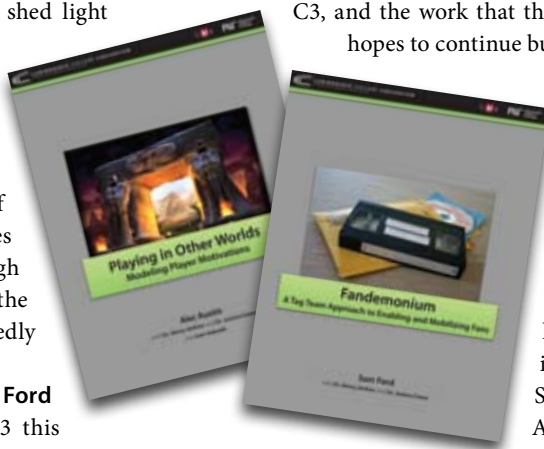
Aside from our research projects and travels, we continued to work with C3 consulting researchers from around the world, who

presented a rich variety of interesting studies through our weekly internal Consortium newsletter, the *C3 Weekly Update*. We have also continued to engage many of the issues we research on a daily basis through the C3 Weblog.

The summer and fall has been a time in which the consortium has made several significant shifts in its team. **Ivan Askwith**, Alec Austin, Sam Ford, and **Geoffrey Long** were instrumental in guiding the direction of the consortium in its first two years. Their tenure at C3, and the work that they produced, will provide a foundation C3 hopes to continue building on in the coming year.

Joining us in that endeavor will be three new graduate students from the Program in Comparative Media Studies. The C3 team looks forward to how the contributions of **Ana Domb Krauskopf**, **Xiaochang Li**, and **Lauren Silberman** will help guide our work in the years to come.

Sam Ford will remain with C3, helping to guide C3 activities and research in the coming year, while 2008 Sloan School of Management Master's of Business Administration candidate **Eleanor Baird** will continue to work with C3 as well.



### Collaboration 2.0

In April 2007, C3 hosted Collaboration 2.0, its second annual Consortium Retreat. Representatives from each of the corporate partners came to MIT to listen to and discuss research from members of the C3 team and affiliated researchers. The event once again featured an international mix of speakers. Jean Burgess and John Banks traveled from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. Burgess discussed Flickr, vernacular creativity, and participatory culture, while Banks talked about balancing models of co-creation within the video game industries. Robert Kozinets, long affiliated with the project, came from the Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto, Canada, to speak to the team about the value fans have in sustaining franchises such as *Star Trek*. C3 Consulting Researcher Kevin Sandler of the University of Arizona spoke about the mishandling of the *Scooby-Doo* franchise. The event also gave the partners and the team a chance to sit down together and discuss research activities for the 2007-2008 school year.

For more information on the Convergence Culture Consortium, visit their website at <http://www.convergenceculture.org>.

## the education arcade

# The Education Arcade, NBC Announce iCue

*By Scot Osterweil, Education Arcade project manager*

The Education Arcade is working in partnership with NBC News to help them evaluate and grow their forthcoming online educational offering iCue, announced in July, and recently previewed in *The New York Times*. Slated for a fall 2007 release, iCue will provide teachers and students with access to “history’s first draft” through the archives of NBC News and other publishing partners. The site will also leverage student interest in social networking and games to anchor their learning in a vibrant online community.

Today’s youth, especially high school students, navigate a rich, diverse, and increasingly complicated mediascape. They often do so with ease, developing skills that extend literacy, synthesis and other traditional school skills. There are challenges however – despite an unprecedented 24-hour flow of news and information, teens typically have little awareness of or regard for news and current events; students have difficulty determining the quality of online sources; frequent use of shorthand writing styles for text or instant messaging causes some students problems when later asked to write well-developed essays.

To address some of these challenges, TEA and NBC News have joined forces in developing iCue to support teaching and learning in AP U.S. History, AP Government and Politics - U.S., and English Language and Composition. iCue offers students and teachers access to NBC News’ coverage of important events and topics (along with the coverage of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and other news outlets), and reinforces students’ classroom learning by linking the media to the curricula for those classes. These stories are also used in games and social networking activities that allow teachers and students to explore these topics in unconventional ways. Education Arcade director **Alex Chisholm** was instrumental in the conception and design of iCue while working as a consultant to NBC, where he previously developed games for their 2006 Winter Olympic website.

Led by **Jason Haas**, TEA’s research for this project extends our work studying the ways that games can enhance a student’s understanding and experience of learning, and incorporates principles developed by CMS’s New Media Literacies project. Once iCue is open to the public, our work will focus on evaluating the impact iCue has on its users, as well as the impact that the users have on iCue, with a goal of providing NBC News with the data they need to improve and enhance their initial offering.

## Elsewhere in TEA

Work has begun in a new partnership between TEA and Fablevision to create a game that engages young players both in the challenges of medical research and in character education. Graduate students **Evan Wendell** and **Lan Le** will work on the game designs. Boston-based Fablevision is also our collaborator on the ongoing



*iCue will support AP U.S. History, AP Government and Politics - US, and English Language and Composition.*

development of *Labyrinth*. Still in its prototype phase, *Labyrinth* has been receiving very favorable responses from teachers and students in a first round of evaluations.

In the past six months TEA has also been working with the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to identify new opportunities in learning games that advance Hewlett’s goal of widespread dissemination of open (i.e. free and/or open-source) content. In addition, we have been consulting with Hewlett on the development of OLLI, a language learning game that teaches English to non-native speakers. The first version of OLLI will be directed to students in China, and it will be rolled out in the spring of 2008. As part of our work, we will be hosting a one-day conference in Shanghai in January ’08 to familiarize Chinese educators and game developers with some of the principles of game design and pedagogy that animate our work. CMS grad **Ravi Purushotma** spearheads this effort.

On the augmented reality front, our colleagues in the Teacher Education Program are developing a handheld game for the Columbus Zoo. A team led by **Marleigh Norton** is using GPS enabled PDAs to create a game that gives visitors an understanding of wildlife through a rich interactive experience in which they access far more detailed information than can be provided by exhibit placards.

*For more information on The Education Arcade, visit their website at <http://www.educationarcade.org>.*

## PROJECT NML

## Project NML Sends a Shout-Out to Mixed Magic Theatre

*By Anna van Someren, Project NML creative manager and Kelly Leahy, Project NML research associate*



With its white paper “Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century”, Project New Media Literacies (NML) presents a theoretical framework laying the foundation for the innovative learning tools it is now creating. One of the ideas put forth in the paper - and now being explored through the production and testing - is that in order for students to become full participants in the 21st century, it is necessary to design opportunities for learning that integrate current practices shaping the production and flow of cultural material. One of the most influential and ubiquitous of these practices is appropriation, or, as NML defines it, “the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content”.

Working to demonstrate the educational value of sampling and remixing as skills, NML is currently involved in a dynamic collaboration that crosses many disciplines. NML Principal Investigator **Henry Jenkins**, Creative Manager **Anna van Someren**, and Research Assistants **Deb Lui** and **Andres Lombana** are working with Melville scholar and CMS affiliate professor **Wyn Kelley** and theatre director Ricardo Pitts-Wiley to create a new kind of teachers guide. The multi-media, web-based guide will offer educators concrete tools to teach traditional literature by exploring interpretations of Herman Melville’s classic novel *Moby-Dick*.

Central to this teachers guide is the work of Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, Director of Mixed Magic Theatre in Pawtucket RI. Pitts-Wiley works with local youth to first read and then remix the work of Herman Melville. Immersing themselves in the novel and making connections between Ahab’s journey and their own, Pitts-Wiley and his students recently created a multi-layered play called *Moby Dick: Then and Now*. A remix of narrative themes, the new play is also a remix of language, as it mixes passages from the original Melville with samples of urban slang provided by the youth.

The production team of Project NML has been documenting the processes of Pitts-Wiley and his young cast since early 2007 by videotaping readings, rehearsals, and interviews. With so much time spent together, the relationship has become a rich one; the NML camera crew stayed late after rehearsals, hashed out plot points and rewrites with Pitts-Wiley, and conducted more personal interviews with teen cast members in their homes.

Professor Kelley first brought Pitts-Wiley and his theatre to Jenkins’ attention, having met him through the Melville Society she co-founded. Kelley sees Pitts-Wiley as a remixer in the very spirit of Melville, pointing to the many voices and styles employed in *Moby-Dick*. In interviews conducted by Kelley, teen cast member Rudy Cabrera describes his perspective on the remix as it functions in the world of hip-hop, and defines a good remix as “when other artists understand the original track and they debate on it adding their own flavor, their own lyrics, like a response.” Like Kelly, Cabrera sees Pitts-Wiley as an artist remixing Melville, but he compares it to the way his favorite rappers set their own lyrics over beats from an original track – new versions with implicit and explicit references, or “shout-outs,” to the original. These are the kinds of cross-generational, interdisciplinary perspectives that encourage new pathways for participation and understanding in the 21st century.

Project New Media Literacies’ *Moby-Dick* teachers’ guide is currently in development and will be available online at the Project NML website in 2009.

*For more information on the New Media Literacies Project, visit their website at <http://www.projectnml.org>.*



## HyperStudio

DIGITAL HUMANITIES AT MIT

# From the Local to the Global: New Digital Humanities Projects in HyperStudio

*By Kurt Fendt, director of HyperStudio, Metamedia project manager*

Since last spring, the HyperStudio team has embarked on a number of exciting new projects, four of which — involving collaborations with faculty across SHASS and outside partners — will be presented here. For a full list of ongoing projects please check our new website: <http://web.mit.edu/hyperstudio>.

### Tories, Timid or True Blue

Initiated by the Old North Foundation, Boston, the Tories, Timid, or True Blue project creates an online educational environment focusing on the history of Paul Revere and the American Revolution. Through first time public access to Boston's Old North Church's archival collection, the project seeks to stimulate critical historical thinking by addressing such questions as: What is history? How is it constructed? Who gets to have a say and why? At the same time, the project will provide a unique scholarly resource for the history of the Old North Church. Based on the *Berliner sehen* project, HyperStudio will build the digital repository framework and develop educational modules. This project has received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

### Comédie Française Performance Archive

The Comédie Française Performance Archive allows researchers to extensively investigate 17th and 18th century French theatre practices. The archive will complement the CESAR (Calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'Ancien Régime et sous la Révolution) website, one of the most comprehensive web-based resources for scholars and theater professionals interested in seventeenth and eighteenth-century French theater. HyperStudio is developing advanced tools for researching and visualizing the complete records of the registers of the Comédie Française Theatre Group (1680-1800). This project has been initiated by Professor **Jeffrey Ravel** in History and is being developed close collaboration with the University of Paris-X (Nanterre).

### US-Iran Relations: Missed Opportunities

This project, undertaken in close collaboration with the Center for International Studies at MIT, the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, and the National Security Archive at George Washington University, explores the relations between the USA and Iran during the period from 1997-2005 and asks why improvements in bilateral relations did not occur. "We are undertaking research that can lead to a deeper and more productive understanding between the two countries," says John Tirman, executive director of

the Center for International Studies. "Innovative engagement with Iran, rather than posing it as an object of hostility or attack, is not only normatively preferable but vastly more interesting as an intellectual endeavor." HyperStudio is building an innovative research platform that allows US and Iranian scholars to collaboratively investigate and interpret a rich repository of English and Farsi documents from a variety of sources.

### Asian Shakespeare in Performance

This project extends MIT's existing Shakespeare Electronic Archive, which includes an unequalled collection of early editions in electronic text and digital facsimile, and, for Hamlet, more than 1000 works of art, illustrations, and several films. HyperStudio is developing a unique research and study platform for the project while also adding an extensive collection of materials focusing on Asia, where the last fifteen years have been characterized by unprecedented growth and varied experimentation with forms of intercultural Shakespeare performance. The core of the new collection will be complete video records of key theatrical productions from China, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, and elsewhere. The Shakespeare Electronic Archive is directed by **Peter S. Donaldson**, Professor of Literature; the Shakespeare Performance in Asia project is being developed in close collaboration with Penn State, the National University of Singapore, and other partners.

### Platform Development

In addition to the m:media platform, originally developed as part of the d'Arbeloff-funded Metamedia project, HyperStudio has been working on two new platforms:

**Zimbra** allows users to upload media documents to a network drive that immediately displays them on the web in flexible formats.

**Repertoire** is based on principles of the Semantic Web (adding meaningful descriptors that can be processed automatically), social tagging (adding user specific descriptors that can be shared among groups, e.g. Flickr), and so-called mash-ups (a Web 2.0 concept, combining different data resources to create a new meaningful resource), Repertoire is the basis of most new projects in HyperStudio.

*For more information on the HyperStudio, please visit their new website at <http://web.mit.edu/hyperstudio>.*



# GAMBIT Summer 2007: All Work and Lots of Play

By Clara Fernández-Vara, GAMBIT research associate



The vision of the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab is now a reality, thanks to the effort of the CMS staff and to the participation of students and scholars both from MIT and Singapore.

This summer has been full of firsts at GAMBIT. It was the first time the new lab space over at Five Cambridge Center was used, the first group of Singaporean students to attend, and the first slate of games produced. It was a great summer for the thirty-one Singaporean students and fifteen MIT students who attended from June 11th to August 10th.

The purpose of the summer program is to create several polished game prototypes using a rapid development process, giving students first-hand game production experience and guidance from lectures and guest speakers. For eight weeks, GAMBIT runs like a game studio with multiple games in its pipeline. Six groups were in charge of each game, supported by Guo Yuan and “Fezz” Hoo Shuyi, extremely talented Singapore students who produced the sound effects and music for all the projects.

The GAMBIT students used a wide range of technologies such as the Nintendo Wii controller, mobile phones, commercial game engines, and Web 2.0 services. Their prototypes will serve both academic research purposes and potential commercial applications. All of the games focus on innovation (the “I” in GAMBIT), exploring risky game design and development ventures that are of great interest to the game industry.

One such issue is game accessibility for the sight-impaired. This question was the focus of *audiOdyssey*, headed by GAMBIT graduate student **Eitan Glinert**. Most games that attempt to be accessible to the visually impaired are difficult or impossible for the sighted to play, but *audiOdyssey* is specifically designed for both blind and sighted players. The game turns the player into a DJ, who uses Wiimote gestures to create song tracks that engage a club audience. The game has already received considerable attention from the public, including an interview on CNN and several conference invitations.

Under the guidance of the Singapore Executive Director for GAMBIT, Teo Chor Guan, and Singapore researcher Alex Mitchell,

*Wiip* also uses the Wii game controller to provide more intuitive and expressive game controls. *Wiip* is the response to another research question: how can we make gameplay more expressive through the use of gestures? In this case, the player becomes a circus ringmaster who has to tame waves of zany animals with his whip. Crack the Wii controller at the right time, and the animals will respond with a spectacular series of fireworks.

GAMBIT also had room to produce prototypes for The Education Arcade. **Marleigh Norton** and **Eric Klopfer** had their team produce *Backflow*, a multiplayer mobile phone game where players have to manage recyclable waste and trade it with other players in an effort to manage pollution across multiple cities. *The Illogical Journey of Orez* is a puzzle game designed to introduce kids (from ages 9 to 99) to positive and negative numbers. Working with **Scot Osterweil**, puzzles prototyped in this game will be incorporated into *Labyrinth*, the latest game being produced by The Education Arcade.

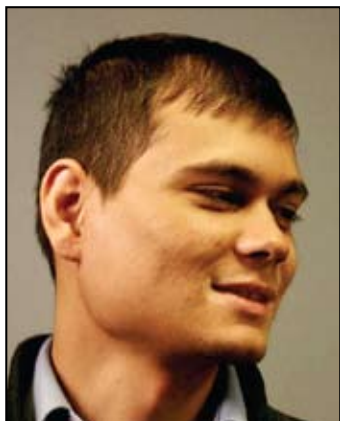
The other two games produced asked different questions about online multiplayer gaming. *TenXion* is a third-person shooter, where players take turns at being a hero or the various monsters that do their very best to get in the hero’s way. This game will serve as a tool for Jeff Orkin at the Media Lab to study the decisions made by players in multiplayer environments. The data gathered will help gain insight into further advances in artificial intelligence in videogames. **Ravi Purushotma** from The Education Arcade took a different approach: *TakeOut!* integrates Web 2.0 applications to produce a game map based on real cities and real stores, where the player operates a service to deliver dinner to their Facebook friends.

The games developed during the Summer Program will be available for download at <http://gambit.mit.edu/loadgame> this Fall.

For more information on the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab, visit their website at <http://gambit.mit.edu>.

**For eight weeks, GAMBIT runs like a game studio with multiple games in its pipeline. Six groups were in charge of each game, supported by two extremely talented students who produced the sound effects and music for all the projects.**

# CMS Welcomes Class of 2009



*Abhimanyu Das*



*Joshua Diaz*



*Kevin Driscoll*



*Colleen Kaman*

Born and raised in Kolkata, India, **Abhimanyu Das** graduated in 2005 with a B.A. in English from Franklin and Marshall College. Gradually, his interests in new kinds of media texts (such as computer games, graphic novels, and serialized fiction) began to push against the outer limits of proscribed curriculum of his English department. His struggles with core questions about transmedia storytelling, the audiovisual elements of texts, and the social context of genre narratives led him to develop a secondary concentration in Film Studies, during which he did archival research at the British Film Institute and also read a lot of comics. His relevant professional experience includes writing about film and literature as well as a brief stint in publishing.

At MIT, he hopes to pursue a thesis project that studies “the confluence of post-colonial influences and the effect of globalization on two rapidly expanding media movements, the Indian independent film and the Indian comic book.” He is currently working at the MIT Center for Future Civic Media as an research assistant. His long-term goal is to be able to make a living as a cultural journalist with the clout to make a few people do more than just smile indulgently while he talks about movies and comics.

**Joshua Diaz** went from a B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John’s College (2004) to working within the computer games industry. His game industry experiences include working in QA at Electronic Arts’ Los Angeles Studio, serving as systems designer for the PlayStation 2 title *The Sopranos: Road to Respect*, and working as a game designer for DS platform games at Seven Studios. Diaz reports that “the rigorous and interdisciplinary approach [he was taught in the St. John’s “Great Books” program] would later be of great benefit, as I found game design almost always involves negotiating between aesthetic and

technological requirements and translating principles from one field into others.” His academic interests focus on exploring the relationship between video games and cognition, studying the relations between amateur and professional practitioners, and developing new ways to talk, think, and teach learning.

**Kevin Driscoll** earned his B.A. in Visual Art from Assumption College in 2002. He joins CMS after three years of teaching Computer Science at Prospect Hill Academy Charter School in Cambridge, MA. There he explored issues of identity management, media production, literacy, hacking, and hip-hop with the consistently brilliant students in grades 6-12. Inspired by a challenging first year in the classroom, Kevin co-founded a non-profit organization called TeachForward (later re-named Developing Curriculum, Inc.) to encourage the sharing and development of high-quality, free learning materials on the web. In addition to his work in education, Kevin is a frequent collaborator with Internet-based artist Claire Chanel and a hip-hop DJ responsible for Gold Chain and Todo Mundo events. His website can be found at <http://kevindriscoll.info>.

**Colleen Kaman** comes to MIT with a strong interest in ethnography and the intersection of media, politics, and democracy. Colleen is an Emmy-nominated journalist and documentary filmmaker whose work has aired on Chicago Public Radio, National Geographic Explorer, Showtime, HBO, NBC, ABC, and CNN. Her professional work has included stories about publicly funded private education, alleged mercy killings in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Europe. She has directed two short films and taught nonfiction filmmaking in India. Colleen has also produced and directed commercial radio, television, and web production for state and federal political



campaigns. She holds a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Bates College.

While at CMS, Colleen is working as a researcher with the MIT Center for Future Civic Media. She is also exploring the creation of narrative and identity across media, communication regulation and the role of new technologies in community, and information design.

Before coming to MIT, **Ana Domb Krauskopf** worked as a journalist, producer, and arts manager in her native Costa Rica. Ana's work has always revolved around the creative industries. In 2003, she collaborated with film historian María Lourdes Cortes to create Cinergia, the first film production fund designed to stimulate media activity in Central America and Cuba, and coordinated the project until June 2007. She has also worked with the Papaya Music label in research, marketing, corporate sales, fundraising, public relations, and concert and CD production. In early 2006, she co-produced the Papaya Fest, the first Central American music festival, with Luciano Capelli. This large-scale event involved more than 70 musicians and diverse styles ranging from Belizean rap to Costa Rican acid jazz and Panamanian pop. Ana's research interests include alternative distribution and consumption of creative goods and how they relate to the production process.

**Lan Xuan Le**, who has B.A.'s in both Biology and Asian Studies from Swarthmore College (2004) and a Masters in Public Health from Boston University (2007), has been part of the "games for health movement," conducting a qualitative study and co-authoring a white paper for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on the use of games to combat childhood obesity. She also has a strong interest in the globalization of media and the construction of alternative understandings of what it means to be Asian and Asian-American through popular culture, an interest which led her to design, research, and execute a library

exhibition of anime and manga for Swarthmore's McCabe Library. She wrote an undergraduate thesis on problematic gender and sexual representations in Japanese popular culture with a particular focus on *Card Captor Sakura*, a paper which won the Swarthmore College Asian Studies Program's top writing prize.

**Xiaochang Li** completed a B.A. at New York University in 2006, where she wrote an undergraduate thesis on narrative structure in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* while also exploring various aspects of media production through internships in film production, publishing, and web design and advertising. She then spent the interim year in Germany on fellowship through the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, where she spent her time working with independent film production firms in Berlin and Saarbrücken and going 220 km per hour on the *Autobahn*.

Her current research interests include the emergence of narrative forms in the digital landscape that shift our understanding of, and interaction with, the structure of texts and the relationships of gender and sexual performativity between Eastern and Western media through the lens of fan-generated content. In the future, she hopes to see Roland Barthes resurrected from the dead to author a book about YouTube that consists entirely of a series of semi-related Cat Macros.

**Jason Rockwood** studied communication theory and video games as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research there explored the social and psychological demographics of gay video game players. Currently, he is interested in understanding the functioning of real estate markets in virtual economies. Jason has been quoted in magazines such as *Details*, *Salon.com*, *Kotaku*, *Joystiq*, and *The Advocate*. He lives in Cambridge with his dog, Nibbles.



Ana Domb Krauskopf



Lan Xuan Le



Xiaochang Li



Jason Rockwood



Talieh Rohani



Lauren Silberman



Deja Elana Swartz



Whitney Anne Trettien

**Talieh Rohani** studied filmmaking at Soureh University in Tehran, Iran, before going on to do a B.F.A. in Image Arts/Film Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto and to pursue an M.F.A. in Cinema Studies at San Francisco State University. She has directed four short films and worked, variously, as a director, art director and production designer, cinematographer, and editor. She is interested in the emergence of post-revolutionary popular culture in the lives of young Iranian women and in the larger impact of technology on the development of a new global imagination. She sees CMS as a place to broaden and strengthen the ideas and skills that she hopes to bring back to her filmmaking practice.

**Lauren Silberman** graduated with a B.A. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she also spent four years as a research assistant in the Games, Learning, and Society program. Using commercial sport video games as a model, her core research investigates how sport video games mediate athletes' physical play. She has observed and interviewed numerous professional and college level athletes about their virtual game-play. Other research interests include developing effective business models and strategies for companies in an ever changing media landscape and understanding the effect Web 2.0 is having on our social interactions and public identities. Her research has been published in *The Journal of Physical Education*, and she has presented her research in various forums throughout the United States and abroad. She has worked for NBC and other leading media companies as a researcher and project assistant.

**Deja Elana Swartz** grew up on a houseboat in Miami, Florida. She graduated with a B.A. with Highest Honors in English from the University of Florida in 2002. After graduation,

she taught high school English in Houston, Texas as part of Teach For America. She's also worked in nonprofit development and in autism education and research.

Here at CMS, she is a researcher specializing in learning and user insights at Project New Media Literacies and serves as the liaison to the Harvard GoodPlay Project. She is fascinated by taste-making. Her own tastes currently include nail-art, knock-off fashion, fast food breakfast sandwiches, soap opera comic strips, and Tolstoy.

**Whitney Anne Trettien**, who holds a B.A. in both English and Philosophy from Hood College (2007), spent her time as an undergraduate studying early English literature, continental and post-modern philosophy, as well as Latin, Old English, and Ancient Greek. Outside the classroom, she wrote extensively for online indie rock publications, edited webzines, and designed clothing for her internet company Moonslush. Unexpected commonalities between her academic research and the online communities she was involved with sparked her ongoing interest in the relationship between early oral narratives and the so-called "secondary orality" produced in digital culture.

Trettien is also a Truman Scholar and a political activist, having worked with the Green Party, Amnesty International, Women in Black, ACORN, and the Pro-Literacy Council, among other groups. She recently edited an anthology of stories, poems, photography, and artwork from the American peace movement entitled *Cost of Freedom*, which was published by Howling Dog Press in 2007.

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For more information on the classes of 2008 and 2009, please visit <http://cms.mit.edu/people/gradstudents.php>.

# From Around the World to Cambridge: CMS Welcomes Four New Visiting Scholars



*Pilar Lacasa*

*Jaroslav Svelch*



*Yu-Ling Lu*

*Rongting Zhou*



**Pilar Lacasa** is Professor of Developmental Psychology and Education at the University of Alcalá (Spain). During the past ten years she has been collaborating with teachers and families to facilitate the acquisition of new forms of literacy that enable children and adults to develop as global citizens in their community, as producers as well as active receivers of media content. She leads the Culture, Technology and New Literacies Research Group, which designs new forms of educational activity settings adapted to cultural situations. The Group has developed innovative methodological approaches in a number of areas, and has led the debate about the development of teacher training programs and educational policy in Spain. At this moment they are working on a collaborative project with Electronic Arts (<http://www.aprendeyjuegaconea.net/uah/php>) to introduce specific video games to Spanish classrooms so that they can be used as educational tools by teachers and families. Pilar has been a visiting scholar at the Universities of Utah, British Columbia, and University of California (in both Santa Cruz and San Diego). Her most relevant publications have appeared in *Linguistics & Education*, *Social Psychology*, and *Culture & Psychology*.

**Jaroslav Svelch** is a Czech Fulbright visiting researcher for the academic year 2007–2008. He is a Ph.D. student at the Charles University in Prague, with degrees in Journalism and Media Studies. His double major studies of Linguistics/Phonetics and Translation/Interpretation Studies are also nearing completion. As a journalist, he has written on popular music, film and marketing. As a student and scholar in training, he has written theses on comics, time structures in narratives and video games. In his Ph.D. thesis he wants to focus on the subcultural meaning of video games and the relationship of content and activity.

**Yu-Ling Lu** completed her B.S. in Physics and M.S. in Chemistry at National Taiwan Normal University, and her Ph.D. in Science Education at the University of Iowa. She is a professor at the National Taipei University of Education, one of the institutes with the longest tradition of preparing successful teachers in Taiwan. Professor Lu's research interests are in the areas of Science/Technology/Society Education, Scientific Creativity, Critical Thinking and E-learning. She is currently conducting research on game learning. Her research group has developed a role-playing game system that incorporates elements of science and culture context, within which learners can explore and navigate in a virtual environment.

**Rongting Zhou**, who arrived at MIT as a visiting scholar in April 2007, conducts his primary research on digital content and the creative industries. Zhou participates in the "Creative Commons in China" program at CMS, and studies media and cultural policies, digital media technology, and the methodological architecture of comparative media studies. Zhou is an associate professor at the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC), where he obtained his Ph.D. in Media Management. Zhou has taken charge of a network publishing project sponsored by the national foundation of China, as well as a project related to creative products and innovative design. Zhou's book, *Network Publishing*, was published in 2004. As a co-founder of the Institute of Knowledge Management at USTC, he has developed lots of online applications in the field of digital content industry.

For more information on the CMS visiting scholar program, please visit <http://cms.mit.edu/academics/visiting scholars.php>.



# CMS Welcomes New Staff Additions

## CMS Headquarters

Prior to working for CMS, Undergraduate Administrator **Becky Shepardson** was an administrative assistant for the Computer Science and AI Lab at MIT. She continues to work part-time as an editorial assistant for the theoretical computer science journal *Information and Computation*, edited by Albert Meyer. Interesting coincidence: Albert Meyer was the Chair of the CoC (Committee on Curricula) when the CMS Undergraduate Major was approved on an experimental basis in 2003. Becky is finishing up a master's degree in Applied Linguistics at Boston University.



**Geoffrey Long** is the Communications Director for both CMS and the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab. He is also a recent graduate of the CMS master's program, a writer, designer, musician, artist, filmmaker, and shameless media addict. He is the editor-in-chief of the literary, culture and technology zine *Inkblots*, a co-founder of both the software collective Untyped and the award-winning film troupe Tohubohu Productions, and the founder of the creative consulting company Dreamsbay. His writing has appeared in *Polaris*, *Gothik*, *Hika* and *{fray}*. His personal website and portfolio can be found at <http://www.geoffreylong.com>.



As Computer Support Assistant, **Michael Rapa** is the first point of contact for CMS tech support and the technology liaison for project NML. A graduate of The Art Institute of Boston, Rapa received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2007 with focus on Graphic Design and Digital Illustration. He is an avid member of the global video gaming community, regularly sacrificing several hours of his day to owning n00bs. His previous professional experience was as a Desktop, Lab Systems, and A/V Technician for Lesley University in Cambridge, MA.



## MIT Center for Future Civic Media

Prior to joining the Center, Research Associate **Geeta Dayal** worked as a journalist in New York for several years, writing on culture, technology, activism, and popular music. Her work has appeared in

many major publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Bookforum*, *Wired*, *I.D.*, and *The International Herald-Tribune*. She has also contributed work to documentary projects for PBS and NPR and taught several undergraduate courses as an adjunct lecturer at the State University of New York and at Fordham University. In 2005, she was awarded an Arthur F. Burns Fellowship through the International Center for Journalists to live and work as an arts reporter in Berlin. She has a master's degree in journalism from Columbia Journalism School and two bachelor's degrees from MIT, in Brain and Cognitive Science and in Comparative Media Studies. She is currently finishing a book on Brian Eno, which is scheduled to be published by Continuum in late 2008.



## Project New Media Literacies

Research Manager **Erin Reilly** is co-creator of Platform Shoes Forum's model program *Zoey's Room*, a national online community for 10-14 year-old girls, encouraging their creativity through science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). *Zoey's Room* has proven results in advancing STEM and Media Literacy skills. In 2007, Erin received a national educational Leaders in Learning Award from *Cable in the Classroom* for her innovative approach to learning through *Zoey's Room*. A recognized expert in the design and development of thought-provoking and engaging educational content powered by virtual learning and new media applications, Erin has been a featured speaker, panelist and keynoter at several industry events. Erin serves on the Working Committee of Pop!Tech (<http://www.poptech.org>), an internationally acclaimed technology event that can be seen on PBS and the Technology Committee of the Maine Arts Commission. Erin is moving here from Rockland, Maine with her husband Shane and her 3-year-old son, Ocean.



**Kelly Leahy**, NML Research Associate, has worked on the development and production of children's media for the past ten years for such companies as Nickelodeon, PBS, and Discovery Kids. Professionally, she has collaborated on a wide range of projects, from animation to documentaries to live theatrical productions. Currently, Kelly is a full-time doctoral student at Harvard University, where her studies focus on how media and technology



shape human development and cognition. Kelly holds a Master's degree in specialized studies in education from Harvard, and earned her Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University School of Communication. Her previous research work was with Project Zero on the Understandings of Consequence Project. She lives in Cambridge with her fiancé, Evan, and is planning a wedding when not working at NML or on her studies.

**Jenna McWilliams** is the new Education Outreach Coordinator for Project NML. She taught English composition, literature, and creative writing at Suffolk University, Bridgewater State College, and Newbury College and at Colorado State University, where she earned her M.F.A. in Creative Writing and pursued interests in Surrealist art and literature and in zombie movies. She has also worked as a newspaper reporter, a groundskeeper, and a billing assistant at an emergency veterinary hospital; prior to these experiences, she helped to run a nonprofit consumer advocacy group out of the top floor of an abandoned warehouse in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



**Katherine Clinton** is a Content Analyst for Project NML. She has a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she wrote her dissertation on learning and literacy in videogames. Her research centers on how the method of experimental phenomenology can be used to study the dynamics of meaning-making in digital worlds. Her research focus is on describing the new "moves" and "moods" that videogames enable, and envisioning how these new kinds of discursive acts can be recruited for building technology-based learning environments.



**Clement Chau** is a research intern at Project NML. He is currently a doctoral student at the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University working in the Developmental Technologies Research Group with Prof. Marina Bers. Clement's research interests include understanding how virtual environments and virtual communities can support the socio-emotional development of young people, and the extent to which youth can leverage the various resources on the Internet to engage in civic and social activities. Clement received his Master's in Applied Child Development from Tufts University and a B.A. in Music and Psychology from Washington University in St. Louis.



## The Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab

**Claudia Forero-Sloan** comes to GAMBIT from the MIT Sloan School of Management, where she worked as a Financial Assistant for the past two years and supported three Faculty in the Sloan Management Science department as an Administrative Assistant for five years before that. She will continue working with finance and administration for GAMBIT. In her free time, Claudia enjoys reading and playing with her 5-year-old daughter Annabella.



**Matthew Weise** is equal parts gamer and cinephile, having attended film school before segueing into game studies and then game development. Matt is a producer for GAMBIT and a full-time gamer, which means he not only plays games on a variety of systems but he also completes (most of) them. Matthew did his undergrad at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, where he studied film production before going rogue to design his own degree. He graduated in 2001 with a degree in Digital Arts, which included videogames (this was before Game Studies was a field). He continued his research at MIT's Comparative Media Studies program, where he worked on *Revolution with The Education Arcade*. After leaving MIT in 2004 Matt worked in mobile game development for a few years, occasionally doing some consultancy work, before returning to work at GAMBIT.



**Clara Fernández-Vara** is a Research Associate at the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab. Her research concentrates on the development of videogame theory, focusing on adventure games and the design of players' experience with the aid of storytelling. She is particularly interested in cross-media artifacts from the standpoint of textual analysis and performance. Clara holds a B.A. in English Studies from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (2000), and was awarded a fellowship from the La Caixa Foundation to pursue a Masters in Comparative Media Studies from MIT (2004). She is a Ph.D. candidate in Digital Media from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and is writing her thesis while she is not doing work for GAMBIT, or playing games, or watching movies, or reading books.





**Marleigh Norton** is a project manager for the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab and a research manager for the Teacher Education Program's Outdoor Augmented Reality project at the Columbus Zoo. A recent addition to TEP, Marleigh brings years of design experience from both the commercial and academic sectors. Her recent work as an interaction designer for the Waterford Research Institute aimed to teach reading, math, and science to young children through the use of educational games. She holds a master's degree in human-computer interaction from Georgia Tech, where she created an augmented reality 3-D puzzle game. New interaction paradigms are a major interest of hers, and past projects have included collaborative touch-screens for the NASA Ames Research Center and voice user interfaces for major telephone companies.



## HyperStudio

**Karen Verschooren**, a recent graduate from the CMS master's program, is performing the role of project manager for MIT's HyperStudio. Her interest in new media art continues to motivate participation in and organization of artist and curator's collectives CONTAGS and Zanchyn as well as her work as a board member for the Flemish committee on audiovisual arts. Verschooren's essays, articles and translations can be found in, among others, *Campuskrant*, *Muziek en Woord*, *Vlaams Marxistisch Tijdschrift*, *De lichte Kamer*, and *The Weight of Photography*.



## The Education Arcade

**Jason Haas** is Research Associate for the Education Arcade, working on the iCue project, helping NBC News address issues around providing new media offerings like social networking and gaming to students and teachers. He is a 2000 graduate of the Film Studies department at Wesleyan University and received his M.Ed. in Technology, Innovation, and Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Jason maintains a weekly subscription folder at Million Year Picnic in Harvard Square, knocked over a drink within minutes of owning a Wii, has 16+ GB of music in his iTunes folder, and would love to tell you why *The Apartment* is the greatest movie of all time. In his off hours, he directs and performs improvisational and sketch comedy at ImprovBoston, including the guerilla video improv group Neutrino Boston and the forthcoming *Wasteland Comedy Hour with T.S. Eliot*.



## The Convergence Culture Consortium (C3)

**Sam Ford** is the project manager for the MIT Convergence Culture Consortium. Sam worked with C3 for the past two years while a graduate student, conducting research and writing white papers. In addition to working with the C3 team on research projects, he heads up the *C3 Weekly Update*, the Consortium's internal newsletter, as well as the C3 Weblog. Ford frequently writes about wrestling, television culture, fan communities, narrative archives, and the media industries, and has taught classes on professional journalism and pro wrestling at WKU and MIT. His Master's thesis project was on American soap operas.



## CMS Babies: Julian Daniel Riccò

CMS is thrilled to announce the arrival of Julian Daniel Riccò, son of Luca Riccò and **Sarah Wolozin**, Program Manager. Julian arrived punctually on his due date, August 7, 2007, at 7:01 AM. He weighed in at 7 pounds, 14 ounces, and was 19 inches long. Born with a big head of dark hair and a hearty appetite, Julian has spent his time during the last six weeks mastering the difference between night and day. His current research focuses on the expressions of smiling, laughing, and crying. He is not looking forward to sending his mother back to CMS in November.





## Faculty

This summer in West Kerry, Ireland, **Ed Barrett** (Writing and Humanistic Studies) completed the third volume of his trilogy of Boston-based prose poem novels. The third book is titled *Bosston*, and like its companion volumes it is populated by a variety of characters including murderer and FBI informant Whitey Bulger, Cardinal Law, New England transcendentalists, the IRA, the new ICA center at Fan Pier, Louise Day Hicks, Dianne Wilkerson, a murdered bank robber named Bucky Barrett, Dice-K Matsuzaka and the spirit of visionary Boston poet John Wieners. *Bosston* will be published this fall and follows the publication this past spring of its companion volume *Kevin White* and the earlier volume *Rub Out*.

**Sarah Brouillette** (Literature) had a busy summer. As a Rockefeller Humanities fellow at the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, she went to Belfast and Washington to study the role transnational

capital played in the construction of the Northern Ireland program at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. She spoke on this topic in Vancouver in August, and related work on new Irish writing appeared in the Irish Studies Review and in Contemporary Literature. Meanwhile her first book, *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*, was published in the US in July. She is thrilled to be teaching CMS.871 Media in Cultural Context this term.

**James Buzard** (Literature) traveled to Istanbul, Genoa, and Santa Cruz, where he gave keynote and panel lectures and directed a weeklong graduate seminar at the "Dickens Universe" (University of California at Santa Cruz). He also wrote an essay on Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* for a forthcoming collection on "Victorian Vulgarity."

This summer **Beth Coleman** (CMS, Writing) worked on *A Virtual World Primer*, her forthcoming book on virtual world design and use. Additionally, she wrote on animation

and machinima (game-engine filmmaking) and a contribution for *Camera Obscura* on the subject of race and technology. This fall she continues to work with CMS graduate students and international affiliates on Media Democracies (code name Project Good Luck), a global comparative media research project (projectgoodluck.com). She presented a paper on unique media identity and Chinese nationalism this summer at the Ubiquitous Media: Asian Transformations conference, Tokyo Japan. She will present on her current research at the Virtual Worlds conference this fall in San Jose, California. She teaches 21L.015 Intro to Media Studies this fall in the CMS program.

**Ian Condry** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) is continuing work on his book project *Global Anime: The Making of Japan's Transnational Popular Culture*. Over the summer, he made a brief trip to Tokyo to continue fieldwork in animation studios, and to present a paper at the University of Tokyo on anime and time travel. In the fall of 2007,

## POEM

### From Kevin White

Laws drown under the wide-planked sky's plump hull, or the No. 86 to Cleveland Circle slashes its action-figure kanji over Wheelwright's idea of bridges from the Netherlands, each a windmill blade dreaming on the hills of heaven, to bear in mind a thin-gauged copper thought that will go astray because it is not a revelation or a prophecy. And because they long to reach beyond bounds, the bus, the bridge, the thought are tested on earth with symmetry and example. Things ripen. Fire rhymes with silver, and what will you do, likening ornamental scrolls to waves churning across the loss of eternity, mice that scratch as greedily at the poison you put out as at your crumbs? Water is a TV. Violets would watch TV if they could, like children, and turn to heaven with a question unfulfilled. Some things are infusions, some radiation. The water table chews across generations to slip houses in the South End. Hilly Somerville funnels rainwater under basement floorboards, a majestic train of starry mold in its wake. Balance is unattainable except by those for whom loyalty is impossible.

*By Ed Barrett, excerpted from Kevin White (Pressed Wafer, 2007).*

he is working with Prof. **Thomas DeFrantz** and the MIT Dance Theater Ensemble to create "Live Action Anime 2007: Madness at Mokuba." This dance theater performance will feature giant robots, a magical schoolgirl, a lovesick otaku, a masterless samurai, a vengeful death god, and an undocumented Korean gamer, who must team up to combat the excesses of Homeland Security. Directed by Thomas DeFrantz (Music and Theater Arts), script by Ian Condry, "Live Action Anime" will be performed at the Kresge Little Theater, Nov. 29, 30, and Dec. 1 (Thu.-Sat.).

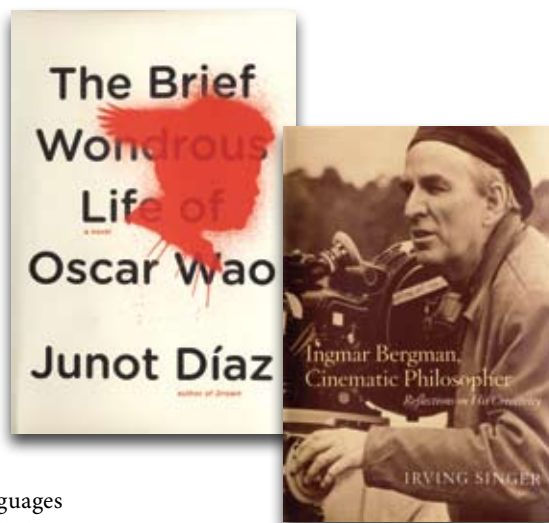
September 2007 saw the publication of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by **Junot Díaz** (Writing), which the *New York Times*' Michiko Kakutani described as "a wondrous, not-so-brief first novel that is so original it can only be described as Mario Vargas Llosa meets *Star Trek* meets David Foster Wallace meets Kanye West." As of October 28, it was sitting at #34 on the paper's bestsellers list.

After having organized the third European Short Film Festival at MIT in April, **Kurt Fendt** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) participated in a workshop on US-Iran relations in Italy as part of a new collaboration between the HyperStudio and the Center for International Studies at MIT. In June, he was External Examiner for a humanities computing course at Cambridge University, England.

In the Spring **Joshua Green** (CMS) undertook a number of speaking appointments, including presentations by invitation to the Weiden and Kennedy advertising agency in Portland, Oregon and Alloy Media & Marketing in Albany, New York, plus a keynote to the PBS Brand Masters seminar in Dallas, TX. He presented a paper on the impact of online consumption on our understanding of television at MiT5, a version of which is now under review for *Media International Australia*. He also completed an entry about user-generated content for a forthcoming collection on media battlegrounds, and wrote a book chapter about participatory audiences (with **Henry Jenkins**) for a forthcoming collection about Media Industry Studies. In addition, Green commenced work on a

collaborative research project titled *The Uses of YouTube* with Jean Burgess at the Queensland University of Technology.

**Henry Jenkins** (CMS) was profiled in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, which alternately called him "the Mud-wrestling Media Maven from MIT" and compared him to Marshall McLuhan. *Convergence Culture* was recently published in Italian as *Cultura Convergente*; *The Wow Climax* was recently translated and published into Chinese. His three recent books, collectively, are scheduled



*New books by CMS affiliate faculty include* Ingmar Bergman, *Cinematic Philosopher: Reflections on His Creativity* by **Irving Singer** and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by **Junot Díaz**.

to be published in Spanish, Polish, Russian, Korean, Japanese, and Hebrew. His session with danah boyd at the prestigious South By Southwest conference was ranked the most popular session of last year's event and so he has been invited to open the conference in Spring 2008. His travels over the past nine months have taken him from Singapore to Salt Lake City, from Helsinki to Houston. His weblog, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* (<http://www.henryjenkins.org>) received more than a thousand links in its first year of operation. This summer and fall, the blog has featured more than 30 scholars in a conversation about Gender and Fan Culture. Participants from CMS included **Sam Ford**, **Geoffrey Long** and **Joshua Green**.

This summer **Wyn Kelley** (Literature) traveled to Szczecin, Poland to give a paper, titled "'Wreck Ho, a Wreck!': Melodrama and the Language of Muteness in Melville and Conrad" at a conference called Hearts of Darkness: Melville and Conrad in the Space of World Culture. Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, of Mixed Magic Theatre (Pawtucket, RI), a partner in New Media Literacies, presented as well on his work with the play *Moby-Dick: Then and Now*. It was a big hit!

**Jeff Ravel** (History) has begun to collaborate with **Kurt Fendt** and his HyperStudio team on a project to digitize over one hundred years (1680-1800) of daily registers from the Comédie-Française, France's royal theater troupe before the Revolution. The registers record the plays performed each day by the troupe, attendance figures, box office receipts, and shares paid to the playwrights and performers. Once completed, the data will be available on the HyperStudio site. It will also be integrated into CESAR (<http://www.cesar.org.uk>), a comprehensive site serving researchers interested in all aspects of seventeenth and eighteenth-century French spectacle. Ravel is a co-founder of CESAR, which has been live since 2002.

The latest book by **Irving Singer** (Philosophy) *Ingmar Bergman, Cinematic Philosopher: Reflections on His Creativity* was published this fall by The MIT Press. It will also publish his other two new books in Spring 2008, *Cinematic Mythmaking: Philosophy in Film and Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing-Up*. In addition, The MIT Press has created what it calls The Irving Singer Library, the first volumes of which will be a reprinting of Irving's trilogy *The Nature of Love* together with three new prefaces written for this edition during the summer. That will appear in January 2008. Irving continues to work on his unfinished book on the nature of creativity.

**Alice Robison** (CMS) has continued her research with videogame developers and will be publishing four articles this fall in a number of interdisciplinary areas, including written communication, media studies, and education. Alongside **Katie Clinton** (Project New Media Literacies), Alice is writing a book proposal for an edited collection on videogames and literacy learning for Peter

Lang. Over the spring and summer she presented her own work and the work of Project NML at a variety of conferences, which included the American Educational Research Association in Chicago, and the Games, Learning and Society conference in Madison, Wisconsin. This fall, she commenced work as the writing and literacy coordinator for The Game School in New York, which has been conceived as a dynamic learning system that takes its cues from the way games are designed, shared, and played.

**Edward Baron Turk** (French and Film Studies) once again spent this past July at the Avignon (France) International Theater Festival, in connection with his current research on contemporary French theater. His yearly chronicle, "The French Stage: 2006-2007," will appear in the October 2007 issue of *The French Review*. His appreciation, "Isabelle Huppert; or, The Gallic Vaklyrie Who Bewitched Brooklyn," appears this fall in *Camera Obscura's* special issue devoted to screen divas, issue 65 (vol. 22, no. 2). This academic year he continues to co-coordinate, with **Ian Condry**, the International Cultural Capital initiative, an MIT study group for faculty and graduate students that is sponsored by Foreign Languages and Literatures.

**William Uricchio** (CMS) is spending the final semester of his sabbatical in the Netherlands finishing a book on television. Among other activities, he will be speaking in Bergen to the National Research Council of Norway on television in a digital environment; in London on the future of the film archive; and in Bonn on technologies of vision from the panorama through television. Meanwhile, he'll be spending his spare time pursuing the traces of digital audiovisual technologies from the 15th century onwards in museums and church towers across the Netherlands.

## Graduate Students

**Mike Danziger '08** spent the summer studying information visualization and playing video games. Not necessarily in that order. For the Fall semester, he intends to spend most of his time on his thesis research while simultaneously hazing the new kids in the department.

## Dr. Aswin Punathambekar a CMS First

by Sam Ford '07 and Geoffrey Long '07

For CMS, **Dr. Aswin Punathambekar** is a first.

The 2003 graduate of the CMS Master's program decided to pursue his doctorate after leaving MIT. Four years later, he has successfully defended his dissertation and, this fall, started as a tenure-track assistant professor. He is now the first CMS graduate to complete his doctoral dissertation and land a full-time faculty position.

Punathambekar, who was part of the third graduating class of CMS, completed his Master's thesis on the place of Indian films in the lives of the diaspora. That thesis, entitled "We Are Like This Only: Hindi Films and Desis in the Diaspora," was a precursor to Punathambekar's doctoral work, which focuses on how new media is changing the modes of production, circulation, and consumption of Bollywood films.

Punathambekar did his doctoral work in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, successfully defending his dissertation this summer.

"Within the communication arts department, I was in the media and cultural studies program," he said. "That wasn't a huge transition, as the program is similar to CMS, so that was a very good fit."

Punathambekar said he spent two years in coursework, a year of field work, and the final year writing his dissertation and searching for a job. Punathambekar is now in the process of seeking publication of his dissertation, *Bollystan: Bollywood, New Media, and Transnationalism in Contemporary India*, in book form.

The term "bollystan," which Punathambekar came upon, is a combination of the Bollywood film industry and the Farsi word "stan," which means land.

"Bollystan" seemed to be a really nice term to use, which helps us immediately grasp the idea that transnational media flows also create spaces of belonging that allow people to transcend the limits of territory while, at the same time, allowing us to talk about the ways state institutions



and market logics do circumscribe the ways in which that belonging gets defined," he said.

He has now taken the tenure-track assistant professor position at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, teaching international and comparative media for their Department of Communication Studies.

"This position fit really well with my globalization interests and with my background with CMS," Punathambekar said. He added that the "communication studies department brings together faculty who follow different approaches - mass communication, cultural studies, historical approaches, and political economy - to a range of issues pertaining to media and communications."

He will be teaching a class on global media and culture, as well as a course on new media and cyberculture, in his first year, and he will eventually teach a course on the culture industries as well.

Punathambekar is the co-editor of a forthcoming collection on Bollywood from New York University Press, entitled *Mapping Bollywood: Media, Culture, and Identity in a Global World*. In addition to seeking publication for his dissertation, he will also have an essay entitled "It's all About Loving Your Family: Bollywood, Globalization, and the Reconstruction of the Indian 'National Family'" in Michael Curtin and Hemant Shah's forthcoming book *Re-orienting Global Communication*.

In addition, Punathambekar writes regularly in a blog detailing his thoughts about the media industries in South Asia, called BollySpace 2.0.

For more on Punathambekar, visit his website at <http://bollyspace.wordpress.com>.



**Liwen Jin** '08 writes, "I spent June and August in the HyperStudio, working on three projects – Asian Shakespeare, US-Iran Relations, and Film Experience. In July, I traveled to California, including LA, San Diego, and San Francisco. Actually I was completely overwhelmed by the different and beautiful sceneries of California especially San Francisco. I visited my friends at Stanford too. At the end of July, I went to Connecticut to join a Taiwan class about traditional Chinese culture, life and love. It was a wonderful experience, through which I made a lot of friends with Taiwan students in the States."

**Andres Lombana** '08 spent half of the summer in Europe and the other half in Boston. He explored and photographed London and Dublin, and spent eleven days in Berlin making music and recording *Eis-Automat*, the latest album from elektrodomestika (<http://www.elektrodomestika.net>). Back in Boston, Andres worked part time in the Project New Media Literacies, did research for his thesis on slapstick, created the video art piece "Medusas of Mercury" and spent many hours sailing in the Charles River.

This summer **Deb Lui** '08 had the dual task of continuing her work with Project New Media Literacies and interning at WGBH. For Project NML, Deb edited a web documentary about *Moby-Dick: Then and Now*, a theater project that involved teens in remixing the story for the stage. For the PBS Kids show *Design Squad*, she worked on outreach and production research. Deb also began work this summer on her thesis, which looks at the creation of the imaginary Chinatown through media such as film, iconography and aesthetics. In the Fall, Deb will continue working for Project NML, as well as with Professors **Diana Henderson** and **Janet Sonenberg** as a research assistant on their "Freshman Experience" class.

This past summer, **Steve Schultze** '08 joined Google's Public Policy team in Washington, DC. He focused on telecommunications issues like spectrum auctions and network neutrality feed, which feed into his thesis research on the "public interest standard" in media regulation. He has also joined the board of Cambridge Community Television, and is interested in how the ideals and experience

of the public access world intersect with the emerging online participatory culture. He is excited to continue to work this year with Project New Media Literacies.

After scrapping his initial thesis project on historical video games and popular memory, **Evan Wendel** '08 spent a long and lonely summer listening to emo music, crying, and, due to financial hardship, drinking very cheap beer. Fear not though, he is ready to continue work on his new thesis which will explore "independent" music making practices and the transformations these practices are undergoing in the context of online social networks, especially MySpace Music.

**Huma Yusuf** '08 discovered that her path to hell is definitely paved with good intentions. This summer, she returned home to Karachi, Pakistan, to conduct ethnographic research for her master's thesis, an analysis of how media representations shape urban identity and experience in violent, developing cities. She also hoped to continue her inquiries into the social impact of cellular phones in the rural areas of Pakistan. Despite a valiant effort to be the responsible academic, Huma was sidelined by the shenanigans unfolding across the Pakistani political landscape, and spent most of her summer working as a journalist, reporting on riots, showdowns, floods, and the nation's 60th Independence Day this August.

## Alumni

**R.J. Bain**, SM '04, is currently producing a new yet-to-be-titled documentary series for the Discovery Home Channel that will focus on the process of "greening" houses. Each episode will follow homeowners as they attempt to modify/renovate their home in an effort to reduce its environmental impact and make it a healthier environment to live in. In early 2008, the Discovery Home Channel will be re-branded as "Planet Green", the first ever 24-hour channel devoted to a green lifestyle. For more on Planet Green, visit <http://planetgreen.discovery.com>.

These days you'll find **Vanessa Bertozzi**, SM '06, testifying about the pleasures and socio-economic benefits of buying handmade

from indie artists and designers. She works for Etsy.com, an online marketplace for all things handmade, where you buy directly from the items' makers. Bertozzi runs *The Storque*, Etsy's multi-media blog, and spends her days in a crazy fun-house office called the Etsy Labs. Please come visit her in Brooklyn or become one of the intensely passionate DIYers/fan community on Etsy.com. You are forewarned — it's addictive.

**Jim Bizzocchi**, SM '01, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT) at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. He continues to do research in three areas: the future of the televisual, interactive narrative and game design. He is teaching SIAT's graduate course in New Media, and undergraduate courses in New Media Narrative and Interactive Video. His teaching work was recognized by the University Award for Excellence in Teaching. In the last year his first three grad students received their Masters degrees. Jim's creative work in video production continues. He was awarded an artistic residency at the Banff New Media Institute, where he finished the principal shooting for his fourth work in the "Ambient Video" series. His scholarly paper on ambient video art has been selected for a plenary session at the upcoming DAC 2007 Conference in Perth. His site can be found at <http://www.dadaprocessing.com>.

After graduation, **Chris Casiano** '07 grabbed his computer and some clothes and broke for warmer weather. Currently working as a game designer at Midway in Austin, Texas, he still hasn't had his job break his gaming habit — only expand his horizons. He's still an avid gamer, but now instead of mostly playing videogames, he's turned his sights to designing and developing, and has returned to old games with a vengeance, looking for what works, what doesn't, and what little bits of genius can be gleaned from them.

**Kristina Drzaic**, SM '07, spent her summer designing *The Illogical Journey of Orez* with the wonderful and amazing Team Awesome for the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab. (Play it now!) A short time later she married a game designer named Dean Tate and moved to Australia for a grand new adventure game designing adventure. Kristina is currently co-authoring a book chapter with fellow

CMS grad **Peter Rauch** as well as exploring the land, finding the secrets and waiting for her immigration to process (good fun)!

**Joellen Easton**, SM '05, is a Public Insight Analyst at American Public Media in Los Angeles. She recently finished production and launched a new serious game about the environment and human impact. It's called *Consumer Consequences*, and it lets users test the environmental impact of their lifestyles, redesign their consumption habits to try to live within the Earth's resources, and share their experiences with APM's Sustainability Desk. Analysts and reporters can explore what game players share about themselves to look for trends, themes, and story ideas. Users can also sign up in the game for the Public Insight Network, APM's network of citizen-sources. Find the game at <http://www.consumerconsequences.org>.

**Amanda Finkelberg**, SM '07, got married this summer and spent July traveling around Southeast Asia. After a brief hiatus and moving into her new home in Berkeley, CA,

she returns to visual effects working for several months on an upcoming Joel Schumacher film. While she finds the commute to LA is rough she says, "it's nice to be off the grad student budget". She is currently looking for teaching positions in new media and cinema.

**Sam Ford**, SM '07, graduated with his Masters from the Program in Comparative Media Studies and is now working as a project manager for the Convergence Culture Consortium. In addition to settling into his new role and helping organize the Consortium for the coming academic year, he completed final revisions on a chapter for publication in *Bodies of Discourse: Sports Stars, Media and the Global Public*, and completed an interview with Henry Jenkins on comic books for MIT Press' *Third Person*. His thesis, "As the World Turns in a Convergence Culture," is currently under review for publication, and he is working on an anthology of the current state of American daytime soap operas with Dr. Abigail Derecho at Columbia College in Chicago. He is writing a piece on *The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show* for

an upcoming anthology called *The Essential Cult Television Reader* and has a piece under review on understanding the ways in which pro wrestling fans engage with the text of a show at live events.

**Rena He Huang**, SM '07, returned to China with her husband Leo right after commencement (they're now both "sea turtles", Google it) – where tons of work was awaiting her in Beijing. She now leads the China Business Development team and Content Development team for wigix.com, the next generation consumer-inspired community funded by Silicon Valley capitalists. She is thankful to MIT for making working under stress a way of life and less daunting. She is also thankful to CMS for equipping her with knowledge that helps her handle her current job, but she wishes she had worked harder as a graduate student. Rena literally lives in the office, a soho unit within her favorite shopping complex in Central Beijing. She urges everyone to consider seriously visiting Beijing, anytime, even during the 2008 Olympics.



*The newly-minted class of 2007: (back row, left to right) Sam Ford, Geoffrey Long, Ivan Askwith, Dan Roy, Alec Austin, Neal Grigsby; (front row, left to right) Peter Rauch, Kristina Drzaic, Karen Verschooren, Rena He Huang and Amanda Finkelberg.*

**Daniel Huecker**, SM '02, moved to Guatemala after graduation, where he taught photography and communication courses at the Universidad Rafael Landivar. He also ran workshops and organized an exhibition for Fotokids, a non-profit children's media center in Guatemala City. Daniel eventually returned to the U.S. and designed the print, radio and television outreach campaign for the City of Santa Barbara water quality program. He currently lives in the Central Valley of California with his wife Logan and son Samuel. Daniel is an elementary school teacher at the Eleanor Roosevelt Charter Home School, where he is using media technology to implement new collaborative communities of learning. In other words, he is getting paid to have fun with kids, cameras and computers.

Since graduation, **Nick Hunter** '06 has been working as a Feature Producer on EA's new product *MySims*™. Between working long hours making the game and travelling the world for market research, he's been enjoying San Francisco and experimenting in the kitchen (ask him about his Cappellini di'Caprese sometime). However, despite how much he's enjoyed this lifestyle, he's decided to pick up roots and move to Japan before year's end. Let's hope that this next adventure proves as fruitful as the first!

**Brian Jacobson**, SM '05, is entering the third year of his Ph.D. in Critical Studies at the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts. Thanks to a generous grant from the Social Science Research Council's Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship in Visual Culture, Brian spent the summer in New York and Paris conducting preliminary archival research for his dissertation, tentatively titled "Making Modern Space: Architecture, Technology, and Early Cinema." This semester Brian will complete his coursework, begin studying

for qualifying exams, and teach discussion sections for USC's "Introduction to Cinema" course.

In 2007 **Sarah Kamal**, SM '05, was awarded the Trudeau Doctoral Scholarship in support of her studies on Afghanistan's media development at the London School of Economics. She worked for four months for Rights and Democracy, a Canadian institution promoting human rights internationally, to set up a four-year, 5 million dollar project working to support gender-sensitive legal reform in Afghanistan. She is currently based in Montreal, Canada.

from Davis Square to sunny Belmont, Mass. (right around the corner from **Sam Ford**) and attended the 2007 Austin Game Developer's Conference with **Matthew Weise**. This fall he will be lecturing on transmedia storytelling at FuturePlay in Toronto, guiding a team of GAMBIT developers in making a web-based game or two, TA'ing for **Ed Barrett's** Interactive Narrative class and traveling home to Ohio for his best friend's wedding.

**Heather Miller**, SM '03, is the Executive Editor at Argosy Publishing where she oversees the development of educational print and media programs for major publishers.

As a consultant, she contributed to the development of the Pokémon Learning League, which has won four industry awards since its debut in early 2007. In her spare time she contributes to **Robin Hauck's** *Misstropolis* webzine and runs the MIT Book Club of New York. Her son, Jasper, is now 14 and starts at boarding school in Deerfield, Mass this Fall.

**Rekha Murthy**, SM '05, just started as a Product Manager for uLocate, a Boston-based company. She's focusing her efforts on WHERE, an application that offers a library of widgets to



Recent CMS alumni projects include (from top left) *Discovery Communications' Planet Green* (**R.J. Bain** SM '04), *Etsy.com* (**Vanessa Bertozzi** SM '06), *uLocate* (**Rekha Murthy** SM '05), *Our Daily Red* (**Karen Verschooren** SM '07), *Electronic Arts' MySims* (**Nick Hunter** '06) and *Nickelodeon's parentsconnect.com* (**Karen Schrier** SM '05).

**Zhan Li**, SM '03, has left his i-banking job in New York City and has moved to Los Angeles to start the Communications Ph.D. program at USC Annenberg. He is already complaining about the weather. And he still can't drive.

In addition to completing his CMS Master's degree, in the past few months **Geoffrey Long**, SM '07, has presented papers at the SCMS Conference in Chicago and MIT5; lectured on experience design to the GAMBIT summer program; introduced young Singaporean minds to the beauty of Costco; relocated

people with GPS-enabled phones, and lets any developer quickly publish their own location-based content. Rekha is drawing from her CMS explorations in mobile media to come up with fun and useful widgets.

**Peter Rauch**, SM '07, spent most of the summer putting his belongings into boxes and then taking them out again. That done, he's been writing, continuing his research into the intersections between videogames, stories, philosophy and religion. He hopes to expand his thesis into a book in the coming



year. An excerpt from his thesis appeared in Henry Jenkins' weblog *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, and was then picked up by both the *Wired Blog Network* and *Educational Games Research*.

**Dan Roy**, SM '07, moved to San Francisco after graduating this spring. He misses The Education Arcade, but is enjoying designing games for learning at a super-secret startup. His medium term goal is to be a serial entrepreneur in learning games (especially language), and his long-term goal is to financially support and guide other entrepreneurs in this field. His mission of making learning more fun and effective continues, disrupted periodically with plans for world domination. His thesis this spring discussed mastery in a social context as a motivating factor in playing games. He recently made the thesis available as a website, and added interviews with prominent multiplayer game designers: <http://crossgamer.com/thesis>. Updates about his comings and goings: <http://dan.roy.name>.

**Karen Schrier**, SM '05, writes: "Hello! Since leaving MIT, I've presented my thesis research (on educational mobile games) at a variety of conferences, including GDC (Game Developers Conference), Siggraph, and AoIR (Association of Internet Researchers). I've also published chapters in a few books, including *Ubiquitous and Pervasive Knowledge and Learning Management* and *Games and Simulations in Online Learning: Research and Development Frameworks*. I am currently living in Manhattan with my boyfriend, Nick, and working at Nickelodeon as the producer of a brand new website (<http://www.parentsconnect.com>), which is launching soon! I also just started a doctoral program at Columbia University this past May, where I am continuing to research games and learning. Somehow in the past year I also squeezed in trips to Australia, Amsterdam, and Paris, but right now I'm just enjoying NYC!"

**Philip Tan**, SM '03, is back in Boston as the US Executive Director of the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab. He manages the staff and facilities in 5 Cambridge Center, which houses several CMS research groups, multiple UROP game development teams, and many caffeinated beverages. As the main contact

with the Singapore-based management of GAMBIT, the perpetual evening phone conferences have prepared him well for the 2007 MLB Postseason. He is looking forward to winter so he can switch the lab's air-conditioning from "thundering cool" to "rumbling warm."

After a rewarding set of trips through Colombia, Italy, and Belgium, **Karen Verschooren**, SM '07, said goodbye to the student life to which she had grown accustomed in order to explore life as a project manager for MIT's HyperStudio. Activities within the realm of media art include participation in and organization for artist and curator's collectives CONTAGS and Zanchyn, project proposal evaluations for the Flemish commission on audiovisual arts, a number of lectures and presentations here and there and some blogging for <http://ourdailyred.bigredandshiny.com>.

**Margaret Weigel**, SM '02, recently left her position as Research Manager with CMS' New Media Literacies project to accept a position as a senior researcher and manager with Harvard's educational thinktank Project Zero, where she is working closely with Howard Gardner and the GoodPlay project. This summer, Margaret also contributed a chapter based on her CMS thesis research to the new anthology *Mediated Deviance and Social Otherness*, earned her motorcycle license, organized a local farmer's market, and saw her first Broadway show (*Legally Blonde – The Musical*).

**Matthew Weise**, SM '04, has been pretty busy since he arrived at the GAMBIT Game Lab in June. He only just got back from the other side of the world a few weeks ago, having spent most of September visiting Singapore and Japan. He is back to work at GAMBIT for the Fall semester, helping with [insert actual name of seminar here] and building the GAMBIT game industry advisory board. He is also heading up a team of talented UROP's on a game development project called *gunPLAY*. *gunPLAY* is a First Person Shooter parody in which all characters are unarmed and all violence is pantomimed... but otherwise is identical gameplay-wise to a normal FPS.

**Michelle Woodward**, SM '02, is living in Beirut, Lebanon this year and keeping a blog about her experiences (<http://www.photobeirut.typepad.com>). Along with her photography of the city's graffiti and urban landscape, she posts about representations of the Middle East, Lebanese art and video, and the politics of photojournalism. This year her interviews and photographs of Lebanese history teachers appeared in *Vice* magazine (Italy), her photos of Beirut's graffiti appeared in a new Lebanese magazine of photography, *Sowar*, and her essay "Photographic Style and the Depiction of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict since 1948" is forthcoming in the journal *Jerusalem Quarterly*. She also continues to work as photo editor at *Middle East Report* and conduct freelance photography research for authors and publishers, such as Palgrave Macmillan. Recently she began teaching an online photography course through The Compelling Image. Otherwise, she is enjoying living life along the Mediterranean Sea.

**Yannis Zavoleas**, SM '04, has been teaching architectural design and digital technologies as Assistant Professor at Technical University of Crete (TUC), Department of Architecture since 2004. Last spring he presented the papers "Fountain Mediated: Marcel Duchamp's Artwork and its Adapting Content" at the Media in Transition 5 conference at MIT, "Real Space, Digital Perception: Formation of Spatial Experience beyond Materiality" at the Architecture and Phenomenology conference at Technion University, Haifa, Israel (published in English and in Greek), and "Zoom In/Zoom Out" at The Concept of Scale in the Configuration of Space conference at The Center of Mediterranean Architecture, Chania, Crete, sponsored by TUC, Department of Architecture and Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, School of Urban Planning. He also published the paper "Behind the Glass: Transforming the Ordinary to an 'Object of Desire'." Last summer, Yannis organized the workshop Spatial ID-entity, about architecture and film, at TUC, sponsored by BEST European student organization.

Please direct all alumni updates to CMS Communications Director **Geoffrey Long** at [glong@mit.edu](mailto:glong@mit.edu).

## CMS at the Movies

(continued from back cover)

won two awards (best editing and honorable mention) at the 2007 Hollywood Documentary and Fiction Film Festival, which I unfortunately was unable to attend due to prior commitments. Shortly after receiving the news that our film had won two awards I was thrilled to find out that our documentary was an official selection of the Boston-based New England Film and Video Festival, based in Boston with screenings at the Coolidge Corner Theatre in Brookline, the oldest running independent film festival in the United States. At this point my documentary had not had an official public screening so I was excited to see the reaction to our work, and after years of attending film festivals as a fan this would be the first time I would have a work in competition.

On Saturday October 6th I began my day at 11AM at The Coolidge Corner in Brookline, where I was met by festival organizers and registered as a “filmmaker”. The organizers immediately provided me with a graphic-laden badge that had the word “filmmaker” across the front, which added a certain feeling of arrival and a kind of superhero vibe that I have always wanted. My early arrival was to mainly promote my film to people attending festival screenings that day, but I also wanted to take part in the many interesting panels that the festival coordinators, Patricia Moreno and Robert Patton-Spruill had put together this year – specifically one panel which featured festival organizers from all over New England, some with multiple programming categories (Rhode Island and New Hampshire), some genre-specific (Boston Underground and Boston Fantastic) and many others. A panel of established documentary filmmakers such as Ben Oliver and Ziad Hamzeh provided much insight into the recent growth and distribution in documentary filmmaking. After beginning a conversation with these filmmakers towards the end of their panel’s session I invited them all to the reception for my film being thrown by the festival organizers at the nearby Marriott hotel courtyard. There the filmmakers gathered and casually spoke with the filmgoers and possible investors who started to file into the reception for my documentary.

Shortly after the reception a large group of us walked the two blocks over to the Coolidge Corner. This was the theatre that I had assisted in the renovation of back in 1997, I had attended for many years as a patron, and was now going to show my documentary in its upstairs screening room. After chatting with Coolidge Staff Manager Jillian Maryonovich, whom I’ve known for many years as she works the fantastic midnight cult film screenings, the announcement came that “they were seating for *Lynn Taitt: Rocksteady*” which honestly gave me a chill. Several things ran through my mind at that time: the possibility of my film’s DVD (which I had pre-tested several times) fouling up during screening or, my favorite fear of the hour, that the audience wouldn’t connect with my film. Adding to the pressure was that a few of the documentary filmmakers whom I had met as well as some of the outside festival organizers were in attendance. Throw in two ex-girlfriends and some of the musicians from the documentary who had never seen the film before and you have a great idea where my head was orbiting.



*The Coolidge Corner was the theatre that I had assisted in the renovation of back in 1997, I had attended for many years as a patron, and was now going to show my documentary in its upstairs screening room.*

I chose to sit in the last row of the screening room, which I thought would accomplish two things: first, it would provide a good vantage point to survey how people reacted to my film, and, second, since we did most of the sound editing using only tiny speakers and headphones, I wanted a good place to accurately judge the tonal quality of the film through a the dynamic sound system. Honestly, a music documentary with bad or even mediocre sound is about as useful as a pro hockey player with unsharpened skates; kind of imposing visually but not so scary after the first few times they fail to check you into the boards. Luckily the film played through without issue with the audience responding to scenes the way I had hoped for, but I did feel that the sound, though good, still needed some minor tweaking during interview segments. Overall the sound during music numbers was top-notch, as we spent weeks just working on the those pieces. After the film rolled credits I was met with a solid round of applause and then a series of questions mostly from musicians curious about the length of rehearsal time and instrumentation, with fewer questions regarding editing or background.

The following night I was asked by the organizers to DJ and spin some of the Jamaican records heard in my film at the festival’s music showcase at Great Scott’s in Allston, which provided me a more familiar (read: comfortable) atmosphere and another opportunity to talk with fellow filmmakers and people who had seen my documentary the night before. All in all this was an experience I won’t soon forget.

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*For more information about Lynn Taitt: Rocksteady, please visit the film’s official site at <http://audience.withoutabox.com/films/lynntaitt>.*

# CMS Makes Headlines by Wrestling and Dancing

## Henry Jenkins, the “Mud-Wrestling Media Maven from MIT”



Comparative Media Studies co-director **Henry Jenkins** was the focus of an in-depth profile in the Sept. 14, 2007, edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The piece, titled “The

Mud-Wrestling Media Maven from MIT”, showcased Jenkins’ work on fandom, as well as his own experiences as a fan; his recent projects, including GAMBIT, the Education Arcade and Project NML; his speaking engagements with both industry and academia; and, yes, the annual mud-wrestling match versus his wife Cynthia at Steer Roast.

## GAMBIT featured by Wired, CNN

In early September, both *Wired* magazine and CNN took notice of *AudiOdyssey*, one of the six game prototypes developed by the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab this summer. The game, a brainchild of graduate student **Eitan Glinert**, explores gameplay equally accessible to both the sighted and the blind. The CNN piece also features visually-impaired CMS alum **Alicia “Kestrell” Verlager**, SM ’06, who helped play-test the game. “Play is one of the ways in which people build relationships,” Verlager said. “It’s fun to take on the challenge of a game and take turns encouraging and laughing at each other’s sillier mistakes. That’s the experience I am really craving in a game – the social aspects.” The *Wired* article is at <http://blog.wired.com/games/2007/09/rhythm-game-dev.html> and the CNN article is at <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/BUSINESS/09/02/video.blind/index.html>.

## Terrascope Radio Project Material on Pacifica Radio Network’s Sprouts

Late this summer, the *Sprouts* program on the Pacifica Radio Network ran material produced by the Terrascope Radio project (previously featured in the Fall 2006 issue of *In Medias Res*) in 2005 and 2006. Pacifica is a national network with approximately 90 affiliated stations in around 30 states; *Sprouts* is the network’s third most popular show. The material included a piece on Chile produced

in 2006 and a piece on Galapagos from 2005. An MP3 of the show can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/terrascope-radio/Sprouts-08-22-07.mp3>.

## Uricchio Panel Video on MITWorld

A MIT5 panel on “Copyright, Fair Use and the Cultural Commons”, moderated by CMS co-director **William Uricchio**, is now available for download on MITWorld. According to the site, “In 1790, when news traveled by horse and carriage, copyright protection was good for 14 years. Today, when a digital, networked society enables instant transmission of data, protection lasts 70-plus years. Uricchio notes, ‘Bizarrely, the faster information circulates, the longer we’re extending copyright protection. It seems totally at odds with where our constitution framers and case law emerged from.’” The video can be found at <http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/469/>.

## Crank That, Techie Boy!

New CMS graduate student **Kevin Driscoll** SM ’09 made headlines by convincing MIT people to get up and dance. Driscoll, **Xiaochang Li** SM ’09, **Joshua Diaz** SM ’09, **Lauren Silberman** SM ’09, **Deja Elana Swartz** SM ’09 and **Jason Rockwood** SM ’09 were studying how new dances spread virally across the Internet using video sites like YouTube. Rather than simply observe, the students decided to participate by videotaping MIT people – including **Henry Jenkins** and **Alice Robison** – performing the “Superman” dance created by 16-year-old DeAndre Way, aka Soulja Boy. Video of the event can be found accompanying the *Boston Phoenix* article at [http://thephoenix.com/article\\_ektid49121.aspx](http://thephoenix.com/article_ektid49121.aspx) and on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7C6r6fG4k40>.



## The Internet’s New Dr. Spock?

On August 17, CNET’s News.com featured CMS co-director **Henry Jenkins** and his work with Project NML with the headline, “The Internet’s New Dr. Spock?” The interview includes Jenkins’ opinions on,

among other things, the Wii fitness trend, the YouTube presidential debates and the “participation gap”. The article can be found at [http://www.news.com/The-Internets-New-Dr.-Spock/2008-1025\\_3-6203058.html](http://www.news.com/The-Internets-New-Dr.-Spock/2008-1025_3-6203058.html).

## Alumni Film Screens at Rhode Island International Film Festival

CMS Events Co-ordinator **Generoso Fierro** isn’t the only CMS person currently on the film circuit: **Vanessa Bertozzi** SM ’06 screened her film, *Secondhand (Pepe)*, at the Rhode Island International Film Festival in August.



According to the official website, the film is “a 24min tri-lingual documentary about the role of used clothing in diaspora cultures. Filmmakers [Hanna Rose] Shell & Bertozzi weave two narratives into a visual and sonic journey. The historical memoir of a Jewish immigrant rag picker intertwines with the present-day story of “pepe” – secondhand clothing that flows from the United States to Haiti. *Secondhand (Pepe)* animates the materiality of recycled clothes: their secret afterlives and the unspoken connections among people in an era of globalization.” For more information visit <http://www.secondhandfilm.com>.

## CMS Theses Featured on Boing Boing

On August 23rd, author and blogger Cory Doctorow posted the following to popular tech/culture blog *Boing Boing*: “The graduate theses of MIT’s Comparative Media Studies program are now online. CMS is taught by super academic-fan **Henry Jenkins**, guru of all things fan-theoretical. I once spent a mind-blowing day at his program, meeting super-smart people seriously unpicking things like pro-wrestling fandom and understanding what makes it tick. Now there’s *dozens* of these online – I could read this stuff for weeks.” Doctorow’s post can be found at <http://www.boingboing.net/2007/08/23/theses-from-mits-com.html>; the theses can be found at <http://cms.mit.edu/research/theses.php>.





## CMS at the Movies

By Generoso Fierro, CMS Events Coordinator

This past December I put the final touches on my first full-length documentary, *Lynn Taitt: Rocksteady*, a biography on the Trinidadian-born guitarist who came to Jamaica in 1962 to perform, record and subsequently create through necessity the rhythm that would be known as rocksteady, the precursor to reggae. As an early Jamaican music DJ at WMBR in Cambridge and an admirer of his talent for many years, jazz drummer Eli Kessler and I brought Lynn Taitt to Boston to do a recording session with various local musicians who also possess a deep love for Lynn's talent. Eventually Ran Blake, the legendary third-stream jazz solo pianist and a senior faculty member at the New England Conservatory, joined the session.

After many months of putting the documentary together (almost 87 hours of raw footage) with my editor Michelle Millette and sound mixer London Parker-McWhorter we began the task of submitting the 72-minute work to festivals through the miracle of withoutabox.com, an independent website which works well to expedite the tedious festival submission process. Our first success came as our documentary was selected for and eventually