

CALL FOR PAPERS (submission deadline: Jan. 5, 2007)

Our understanding of the technical and social processes by which culture is made and reproduced is being challenged and enlarged by digital technologies. An emerging generation of media producers is sampling and remixing existing materials as core ingredients in their own work. Networked culture is enabling both small and large collaborations among artists who may never encounter each other face to face. Readers are actively reshaping media content as they personalize it for their own use or customize it for the needs of grassroots and online communities. Bloggers are appropriating and recontextualizing news stories; fans are rewriting stories from popular culture; and rappers and techno artists are sampling and remixing sounds.

These and related cultural practices have generated heated contention and debate. What constitutes fair use of another's intellectual property? What ethical issues are posed when sounds, images, and stories move from one culture or subculture to another? Or when materials created by a community or religious or ethnic tradition are appropriated by technologically powerful outsiders? What constitutes creativity and originality in expressive formats based on sampling and remixing? What obligations do artists owe to those who have inspired and informed their work and how much creative freedom should they exercise over their borrowed or shared materials?

One source of answers to such questions lies in the past – in the ways in which traditional printed texts – and films and TV shows as well – invoke, allude to and define themselves against their rivals and ancestors; and – perhaps even more saliently – in the ways in which folk and popular cultures may nourish and reward not originality in our modern sense, but familiarity, repetition, borrowing, collaboration.

This fifth Media in Transition conference, then, aims to generate a conversation that compares historical forms of cultural expression with contemporary media practices. We hope this event will appeal widely across disciplines and scholarly and professional boundaries. For example, we hope this conference will bring together such figures as:

- anthropologists of oral and folk cultures
- historians of the book and reading publics
- political scientists and legal scholars interested in alternative approaches to intellectual property
- media educators who aim to help students think about their ethical responsibilities in this new participatory culture
- artists ready to discuss appropriation and collaboration in their own work
- economists and business leaders interested in the new relationships that are emerging between media producers and consumers
- activists and netizens interested in the ways new technologies democratize who has the right to be an author

Among topics the conference might explore:

- history of authorship and copyright
- folk practices in traditional and contemporary society
- appropriating materials from other cultures: political and ethical dilemmas
- poetics and politics of fan culture
- blogging, podcasting, and collective intelligence
- media literacy and the ethics of participatory culture
- artistic collaboration and cultural production, past and present
- fair use and intellectual property
- sampling and remixing in popular music

- cultural production in traditional and developing societies
- Web 2.0 and the "architecture of participation"
- creative industries and user-generated content
- parody, spoofs, and mash-ups as critical commentary
- game mods and machinima
- the workings of genre in different media systems
- law and technological change

Short abstracts of *no more than 200 words* for papers or panels should be sent via email to Brad Seawell at seawell@mit.edu *no later than January 5, 2007*. Brad can be reached by phone at 617-253-3521. Email submissions are preferred, but abstracts can be mailed to:

Brad Seawell
14N-430
MIT
Cambridge , MA 02139

Please include a short (75 words or less) biographical statement.

This will be our fifth media in transition conference. The previous conferences were the inaugural [Media in Transition conference](#), [MiT2: globalization and convergence](#), [MiT3: television](#) and [MiT4: the work of stories](#).