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Convergence Consortium Managing its Brand

By Ivan Askwith, C3 investigator

This past fall saw the public unveiling of the Convergence Culture Consortium (C3), a new CMS initiative examining the world of branded entertainment. As new ways of storytelling, advertising and branding emerge, C3's mission is to track them, analyze them, and examine how they can be placed into a larger artistic and commercial context.

The project takes its name from **Henry Jenkins'** forthcoming book, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. **Parmesh Shahani**, a recent graduate of the CMS Master's program, was hired as research manager for the initiative. Graduate student investigators are **IlyaVedrashko** ('06), **Ivan Askwith** ('07), **Alec Austin** ('07), **Sam Ford** ('07) and **Geoffrey Long** ('07). **William Uricchio**, co-director of CMS, and **Beth Coleman**, assistant professor of writing and new media at MIT, join Jenkins as principal investigators for the project.

During its first semester, C3 authored a round of white papers on innovations in advergaming (the convergence of advertising and video games), product placement and fan cultures.

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The group also launched a weekly newsletter about media events for its corporate partners, and started a website at convergenceculture.org, which includes a weblog on issues of media convergence.

Plans for the spring semester include producing five more white papers on topics such as transmedia storytelling, alternative reality games, the use of new technology within the advertising industry and a major ethnographic case study of media use on the campuses of MIT and Northeastern University.

C3 team members have been active at conferences dealing with issues of media convergence. Among the events where members have or will appear are VNU's The Next Big Idea, South by Southwest, MIT's The Economics of Open Content, McGraw-Hill's Media Summit 2006, The Game Initiative's Austin Games Conference, and the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association's national conference. The group is also planning a conference of its own to be held in the late spring.

Additional Members

In addition to C3's core team, the project's affiliated MIT faculty members include **Edward Barrett**, senior lecturer in writing; **Ian Condry**, assistant professor of Japanese cultural studies; **Thomas DeFrantz**, associate professor in the Department of Theater Arts; and **Jing Wang**, section head of Foreign Language and Literatures. They are joined by several faculty members from other universities including Robert Kozinets, associate professor of marketing at York

University's Schulich School of Business; Grant McCracken, adjunct professor at McGill University and corporate consultant; Jason Mittell, assistant professor of American civilization and film and media culture at Middlebury College; **Kurt Squire**, assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and former CMS project manager; Shenja van der Graaf, an international independent media scholar; and Stacy L. Wood, associate professor of marketing at the University of South Carolina's Moore School of Business.

The group's first three corporate partners are the Austin, Texas-based ad agency GSD&M, MTV and Turner Broadcasting.



What is this? See page 6.

directors' column

Who Needs Comparative Media Studies?

By Henry Jenkins and William Uricchio

So you want proof of concept of this whole “Comparative Media Studies” thing?

A look at the reports coming from our alumnae (page 12) demonstrates that our community has done very well indeed. With positions in consultancy (Price Waterhouse, HSBC and Ogilvy Mather), Ph.D. programs (London School of Economics, Wisconsin, UCLA, NYU, Georgia Tech), university teaching, and editorial and producer slots on the cutting edge of the television, film, radio, photography, book publishing, and on-line advertising industries, CMS graduates have delivered on our goal of applied humanism.

Early on, Greg Shaw, one of our earliest backers, told us to prepare students for jobs that didn't even have names yet. And so, just reading the job titles only gives part of the picture. Look closer at the specifics of our alumnae's interventions, from organizing the annual Prague Bollywood Festival, to finding fresh ways of extending public radio's newsgathering activities to its listening community, to designing new mobile technologies and applications.

Our Global Community

Ours is a global community, active not only in North America, but in Greece, Chile, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and elsewhere. It is as dedicated to theory as practice, to intervention as implementation, to critical insight as creative innovation. And it is engaged with media users and producers, with educators and activists, with scholars and ordinary folk. Our students are mapping the future of media.

CMS is an academic program with a difference. Of course we have the usual (and often rather unusual) pro-seminars and workshops. But the



CMS graduates have delivered on our goal of applied humanism.

pages of *In Medias Res* offer an insight into those other parts of the program that do so much to help our students achieve their goals. The weekly CMS colloquium series and the Communications Forum, for example, bring a regular stream of visitors to our community, helping us to bridge the concerns of the academic program with the experiences and insights of practitioners, innovators, activists, and scholars. The mix is crucial to extending ideas from the classroom to the larger world and helping students build networks that they will take with them upon graduation.

So, too, our various research initiatives: New Media Literacy, the Education Arcade, the Convergence Culture Consortium (C3), MetaMedia, and the Beijing Film Academy Initiative. Together, these projects provide ways for CMS to collaborate with colleagues across MIT, helping link the Humanities to the core missions of the Institute, giving substance to our commitment to interdisciplinarity. Our research projects offer working alliances with partners from the corporate world, foundations, schools, and media industries. And they help us to go beyond critical reflection to play an active role in shaping cultural policy, media futures, and cultural ed-

ucation in the broadest sense.

But most importantly of all, they create a context for partnership between the academy and all of the other sectors that are currently being reshaped by waves of media change.

The colloquium series together with the various research projects complement our academic work, where we also do our best to “mind the gap” through courses like the week-long intensive Sony IAP games workshop, or CMS.600, which brings key players from the games industry to the seminar room, or Introduction to Media Studies where **Beth Coleman** has students using wikis and podcasts to pool knowledge and share what they are learning with the world and, yes, they also learn a great deal in subjects where they study Homer, Shakespeare and Lewis Carroll.

Our Students' Work on Display

One of the best measures of how the program brokers the predictable theoretical domains with the concerns of the larger world can be found in our students' research -- their theses in particular. Here, again, you see (on page 6) topics that range from the art world to advertising to education.

You see students exploring questions that might fall through the cracks in a different academic context but which will shape their future academic and professional careers. We hope you will join us on April 21 and hear them share their findings with the larger CMS community. Listen to those students and then ask us again why we need a Comparative Media Studies Program at MIT.

Years ago, we produced T-shirts that proclaimed somewhat self-mockingly, “I have seen the future of media studies at MIT -- and it works.” Now, you can dig them out of your closets and wear them with pride.

people, places, things

Activities Show Breadth and Depth of CMS Endeavor

Faculty

Edward Barrett (Writing) will be a writing fellow at the Writers House at the University of Pennsylvania this spring. Past fellows include John Ashbery, Philip Roth and Denise Levertov. In addition to reading and discussing his latest poetry books, Barrett will also lecture on his concept of sociomedia, a topic he also presented this past year as keynote speaker at the international IT Design conference in Tokyo.

Christopher Capozzola (History) is offering the class “New Orleans: A History in Film” during the winter break. He recently taught a freshman advising seminar on war and mass media, during which CMS visiting scholar **Stefan Werning** took charge for a two-week unit on war games and media studies.

Beth Coleman (CMS and Writing) will be faculty director of the Cultural Convergence Consortium’s game culture and mobile media initiatives. She will chair two panels on “Code as Media”: the first for Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Vancouver; and the second for the Society for Science, Literature, and the Arts, Amsterdam. With the support of the MIT Council for the Arts, Coleman will begin production on *Bobafett’s Day Off*, a machinima film. She will also introduce a new theory and production class to the CMS roster, Sound, the Minority Report: Radical Music of the Past 100 Years (CMS.876).

Peter Donaldson (Literature) is teaching Shakespeare, Film and Media (CMS.840) this spring. His iCampus project, the Cross Media Annotation System, has now been funded for 2006 for its outreach phase, with collaborators at a dozen universities in the U.S.

and Australia. His most recent work on Shakespeare film has just been published (“Game Space/ Tragic Space: Julie Taymor’s *Titus*” in Blackwell’s *Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* and “Hamlet among the Pixelvisionaries” in *Blackwell’s Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Film*). Donaldson is finishing his book on *Shakespeare Media Allegories*.

Aden Evens (Writing) is on sabbatical, hard at work on his next book, *Interface: Creativity and the Digital*. He awaits the publication of two of his articles, one on object-oriented programming and one on intuitionist mathematics. Even while on sabbati-

Why do digital technologies, seemingly sterile, engender so many creative pursuits?
Contact aden@mit.edu.

cal, he would love to hear from any students or colleagues who share his interest in the vexing question of how digital technologies, seemingly sterile, can engender so many creative pursuits. Any programmers out there who would like to think about what parts of their coding involve creativity?

Michael Fischer (Anthropology) recently gave talks on Iranian film at the University of Washington, on STS at Arizona State, on “Emergent Forms of Un/Natural Life” at Chicago’s Divinity School, and organized a panel on “Rethinking American Culture” at the American Anthropological Association meetings (**Henry Jenkins** was a featured panelist). His book, *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice* (Duke 2003) won the American Ethnological Society’s Senior Book Prize for 2005.

Stefan Helmreich (Anthropology) will publish “The Signature of Life: Designing the Astrobiological Imagination” in a forthcoming issue of *Grey Room*, an MIT Press journal dedicated to theory in architecture, art, and media. He is at work on an ethnographic article about his experience diving to the seafloor in the Woods Hole submersible Alvin, a piece that will focus on the sounds of science underwater.

Diana Henderson’s (Literature) edited volume, the *Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*, is now available from Blackwell Publishing, and contains essays by **Peter Donaldson** and **William Uricchio** as well as the editor. Henderson is reviewing the page proofs of *Collaborations with the Past: Reshaping Shakespeare Across Time and Media* (forthcoming from Cornell UP in late spring), and working on several new articles. She became the North American representative on the steering committee for the Shakespeare in Europe biannual conferences this autumn in Krakow, Poland.

Henry Jenkins (CMS and Literature) completed three book projects last term – *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*; *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*; and *The Wow Climax: Examining Popular Art*. All three books will be published by New York University Press this year. He will launch a new book project this summer focused on genre theory and superhero comics. Jenkins spent January celebrating his 25th wedding anniversary by going to New York City with his wife Cynthia, and then focused on writing a white paper for a MacArthur grant and running the SONY IAP workshop for the 7th year.

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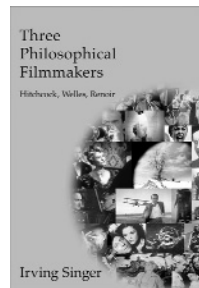
Eric Klopfer, director of the Teacher Education Program (TEP) and co-director of the Education Arcade, has received a U.S. Department of Education StarSchools grant to TEP along with Harvard and the University of Wisconsin-Madison to create augmented reality games for learning. Klopfer will also be involved in another StarSchools grant awarded to the Education Arcade in collaboration with Maryland Public Television. He recently began work on a new book on handheld games for learning with MIT Press.

Thomas Levenson (Writing) received the National Academies Award for Science Communication for his film *Back to the Beginning* in the mini series "Origins," broadcast on *NOVA* on PBS. His recent activities include several invited talks including "The Education of Albert Einstein" at the 41st annual Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, MN; "The Suddenly Famous Albert Einstein" at the Minnesota Science Center; and "Einstein in Berlin" at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC. Levenson recently took a couple of trips to London for ongoing research on a book about Isaac Newton.

Anthony Lioi (Writing) is putting the final touches on his book manuscript, *Enchanting the World: Ideas of Order in the American Environmental Essay*. In Fall 2006, his essay "Of Swamp Dragons: Mud, Megalopolis, and a Future for Ecocriticism" will be published in the edited volume *Coming into Contact* by University of Georgia Press. In the summer of 2005, he was a Coolidge Fellow at the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life in New York City. He is looking forward to assisting CMS graduate student **Sam Ford** with his upcoming class on television and professional wrestling.

Jeff Ravel (History) edited Volume 36 of *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* to be published by The Johns Hopkins University Press in March 2006. The journal is an annual publication of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Charity Scribner (FL&L) is researching the cultural response to the rise and fall of left-wing militancy in Germany. The journal *Grey Room* will publish her comparative analysis of the Situationist International and the Red Army Faction. Scribner will teach a new course this spring: *The City is a Woman: Gender and Modernity* (21F.062).



Irving Singer (Philosophy) has largely completed the third volume in a triad of books on the philosophy of film. This volume is tentatively entitled *Film as Visual and Literary Philosophy*. The paperback edition of the previous volume, *Three Philosophical Filmmakers: Hitchcock, Welles, Renoir*, came out last October. His other work-in-progress, entitled *The Nature of Human Creativity*, is now about two-thirds written.

David Thorburn (Literature) is completing a new essay on "The Sopranos" for publication in a book of essays on TV in the digital age and is polishing his lectures on modern fiction for the Teaching Company, which will release audio and video versions of this work under the title, "Masterworks of Modern Fiction."

William Uricchio (CMS and Literature) has been making frequent trips to the Netherlands where he has been evaluating research programs in the cultural sector, and developing a new research initiative for the European Science Foundation. With

lectures and conferences in Utrecht, Weimar, Cyprus, and Tokyo, and development meetings in Singapore, the frequent flyer miles are piling up. His book *Media Cultures* has just appeared, and he has finished editing *We Europeans? Media, Representations, Identities*, forthcoming later this year.

Jing Wang (FL&L) is going to East Asia in March to give several talks. At Hakuhodo, Japan's second largest advertising agency, she'll present "Localization and Marketing ABCs in China"; at the Department of Communication and Journalism of the Chinese University of Hong Kong she'll present "Hello Moto: Chinese Youth Culture and Cell Phone Branding"; at the launch of China's Creative Commons in Beijing, Wang will speak on "Knowledge Commons: Hopes and Barriers"; and at Lenovo (China's biggest computer maker), she'll cover "MIT's Critical Policy Studies of China." Wang also worked with **Kurt Fendt** to launch a digital animation project showcasing Beijing Film Academy's contributions to China's animation education. This is a project co-sponsored by FL&L and CMS with CMS graduate student **Rena Huang** contributing the hands-on work.

Graduate Students

Ivan Askwith ('07) had a hectic fall term. His energy has been divided between his own research (which examines the cult television hit *Lost* to understand how serial television is evolving in response to media convergence) and his responsibilities in the Convergence Culture Consortium (where he acts as the liaison between MIT and MTV). He also published an essay at Slate.com addressing the implications of video-on-demand on mainstream and cult television programming.

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NML Teaching Transmedia Storytelling Skills

By Margaret Weigel, NML project manager

CMS' New Media Literacies (NML) initiative begins 2006 with a project prototype focused on transmedia storytelling, an innovative library of new media producer profiles, more after school activities in the works and a new team member.

Starting with the curious-looking alien characters from the original 'cantina' scene from *Star Wars IV*, participants create character profiles, investigate locations, write dialogue and augment mood through music that tell the story of how their alien characters made their way to the cantina. The process incorporates basic computer skills such as online searching, uploading and downloading files, writing blog entries and using PowerPoint, as well as the basic vocabulary and conceptual elements of storytelling practice.

In early December, MIT distributed the final beta materials to our development partner, the University of Chicago-sponsored charter junior high school North Kenwood-Oakland (NKO), for testing and assessment. Testing is scheduled to begin by late January 2006.

In addition to our partnership with NKO, NML enjoys a collaborative relationship with the after school media-intensive program New Voices Collaborative at Boston's YWCA for high school students. The students at the Y will be testing our *Star Wars*-based transmedia workshop during the spring 2006 semester.

As part of our community outreach mission, we continue to refine the NML website at www.projectnml.org with new blog postings and an enhanced literature review of new media education history and evolving practices. We have also engaged a broad spectrum of voices outside CMS in the new media literacy field, including Cheskin Research CEO and CMS board member Christopher Ireland, Media Lab literacy leaders David Cavallo and Mitch Resnick, Project Zero's Howard Gardner, Emmy-Award winning producer Alice Markowitz, and esteemed literacies scholar Renee Hobbs. Progress continues on the project's white paper, and the selection of advisory board members.

During the January 2006 Independent Activities Period

(IAP), NML produced the first entries in an online "new media exemplar" library of a wide range of media producers intended to show the language, thinking, processes and people behind media production. Throughout the month, NML research assistants filmed a computer games developer, a comic book artist, a radio story producer, and a special effects film artist. This was the first round of exemplars of what we hope will be a growing and valuable online resource for teachers and students. The spring will focus on producing more exemplar library entries, as well as developing additional after school activities.



The cantina scene from *Star Wars IV* (above) is the inspiration for NML's Cantina interface (below), which encourages students to develop transmedia storytelling skills by creating character profiles, writing dialogue, and augmenting mood with music and other media.

Comings and Goings

Katherine Clinton joined the NML project as educational consultant beginning Feb. 1. With an extensive background in new media literacy, Clinton comes to us highly recommended by our colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (see below).

Our "unofficial" NML research assistant (RA) **Veronica Bollow** is spending the spring semester in Panama completing her thesis; her energy and creativity will be sorely missed at our weekly meetings. RAs

Vanessa Bertozzi and **Orit Kuritsky** will be reducing their RA effort on the NML project to half-time in order to work on the MIT's Terrascope project. Veronica, Vanessa and Orit, as well RAs **Ravi Purushotma** and **Amanda Finkelberg** and undergraduate researcher **Eylul Dogruel** deserve kudos for the successes of the past semester.

Literacies Project Welcomes Consultant

Katherine Clinton has joined the New Media Literacies group as a consultant. She holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and is completing her Ph.D. in literacy studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

As a member of the "Room 130" research group based at Wisconsin, Clinton investigated the connections between videogames, learning, and literacy. As part of her doctoral research, she is analyzing the new kinds of experiences videogames enable and considering how these experiences are, at the same time, a new kind of writing and a new form of learning.

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Alec Austin ('07) continues his work with the Convergence Culture Consortium this semester. He spent IAP revising a white paper on product placement and assisting with an ethnographic study of media use among college students. This spring, he will be researching how production structures in serialized media (such as TV,

comics, and video games) shape their content.



Dan Bersak ('06) visited Washington D.C. during winter break and took this photo (also on the cover) of two people looking up at the Washington Monument.

CMS Thesis Presentation Schedule

Presentations are open to the CMS community as well as the general public.

Monday, April 21, 2006
14E-310

9:30 am-10	Coffee
10:00-10:40	Ilya Vedrashko , <i>Advertising in Computer Game Environments</i>
10:40-11:20	James Nadeau , <i>High/Low: The Television Workshop and Early Video Art in Boston</i>
11:20-11:35	Coffee
11:35-12:15 pm	Vanessa Bertozzi , <i>Unschooling and Participatory Media</i>
12:15-12:55	Ravi Purushotma , <i>Popular Education</i>
12:55-1:40	Lunch
1:40-2:20	Alicia "Kestrell" Verlager , <i>Decloaking Disability: Images of Disability and Technology in Science Fiction</i>
2:20-3:00	Lisa Bidlingmeyer , <i>Image, Identity and Anxiety and the (Tele-) Visual Spy Girl</i>
3:00-3:15	Coffee
3:15-3:55	Dan Bersak , <i>Ethics in Photojournalism: Past, Present, and Future</i>
3:55-4:35	Amulya Gopalakrishnan , <i>Web of Words - Poetry, Fandom and Globality</i>
4:35-4:50	Coffee
4:50-5:30	Orit Kuritsky , <i>Transformational Tales: American Makeover Shows and the Practices of their Consumption</i>
5:30	Reception

Vanessa Bertozzi ('06) continues her thesis research on progressive homeschoolers—often called “unschoolers”—and participatory media. In March, Bertozzi will be giving a paper on her thesis research at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference in Vancouver. She will be a teaching assistant for the Terrascope Radio class this spring with **Orit Kuritsky**. Along with her fellow New Media Literacies research assistants, Bertozzi is shooting and editing demystifying portraits of media producers for a K-12 audience.

Veronica Bollow ('06) is in Panama this year working on a film and media education project with Kuna youth. See page 16.

Tracy Daniels ('07) was in Manila, working on a short documentary in collaboration with the Special Interest Group in Urban Settlement in the Department of Architecture and Planning at MIT.

Kristina Drzaic ('07) published her undergraduate thesis, “Games Without Winning: The Secret Pleasures of Simulation Gaming” in the *Notre Dame Undergraduate Research Journal*. She spent her break analyzing game structures on hand-held devices and helping moderate CMS’s annual IAP class “Storytelling in the Digital Age.”

Amanda Finkelberg ('07) spent the first half of the winter break on Hawaii’s Big Island with her partner hand clearing and mapping their third-of-an-acre lot, which they are slowly developing into a sustainable home and permaculture garden. Finkelberg also went to Los Angeles to interview exemplars for the New Media Literacies project’s media exemplar library; to develop her thesis ideas with visual effects professionals; and to roller skate on the beach.

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Education Arcade *Gung-ho!* this Spring

By James Nadeau, Education Arcade research assistant

The Education Arcade welcomed a cadre of new CMS graduate students this fall: **Kristina Drzaic**, **Peter Rauch**, **Dan Roy**, and **Alec Austin**, all class of 2007, brainstormed and designed *Gung-ho!: A Google Maps Adventure*. The game is intended to harness the popular and publicly available Google Maps service for teaching elementary and middle school students about United States geography.

Staged as a futuristic race across the country, the game challenges students to collaboratively research and synthesize data from several information sources online – including encyclopedias, U.S. Geographical Survey statistics, and weather reports – to locate natural and manmade landmarks. To bring out the emphasis on understanding and correlating multiple kinds of media, **Ravi Purushotma** ('06) of CMS' New Media Literacies (NML) project also participated in game-design meetings.

Virtual MIT Now MIT Ghost

The Virtual MIT project, now known as MIT Ghost, also moved forward. The project aims to create a game-like environment based on student life at MIT, borrowing elements from popular massively multiplayer online games like *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life*.

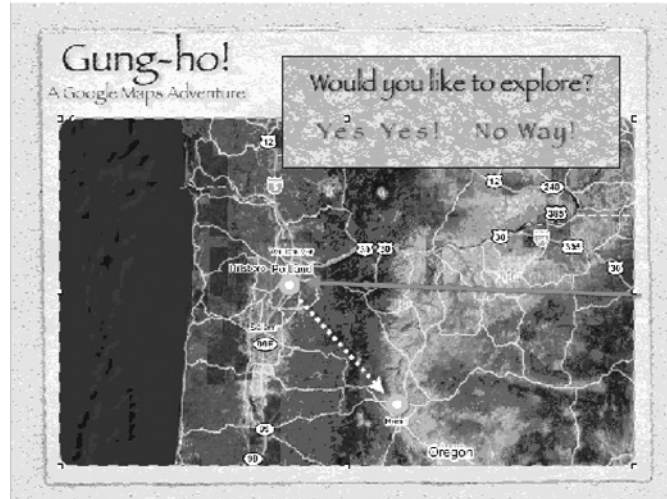
This fall, **James Nadeau** began working on the project with help from visiting scholar **Stefan Werning**. Both Nadeau and Werning worked on expanding the prototype of the game using Ashdown House as a template. The game was formally introduced to members of the MIT admissions team to begin a process of coordinating further progress with them. In addition, the game was brought to the Undergraduate Association who expressed great interest in the possibilities of the project.

For the coming spring term, a team of undergraduate researchers (UROPs) will begin working on a multi-platform version of the game starting with the modeling of a single floor in two dorms. MIT Ghost is co-sponsored by CMS and the Information Services and Technology department.

Sony IAP

During Independent Activities Period (IAP), the Education Arcade also hosted its annual "Storytelling and Games in the Digital Age" workshop. Co-sponsored by Sony Pictures Imageworks, the special effects arm of Sony's movie studio, the workshop challenges teams of students from CMS, computer science, architecture, and beyond to brainstorm and "pitch" a proposal for a commercial game project – from start to finish all in one week. Featured are lectures from CMS faculty, Sony professionals, and local area game developers.

This year, **Kristina Drzaic** led the winning design, a hypothetical photo-journalism game based on a *National Geographic* license. Also leading teams were **Dan Roy** and **Ivan Askwith** (*Lemony Snicket*), **Alec Austin** (*Lord of the Flies*), and **Geoff Long** (*Yojimbo*).



A futuristic race across the country sets the stage for *Gung-ho!: A Google Maps Adventure*, an Education Arcade game designed to teach students about U.S. Geography.

Learning Games to Go Gets Manager

Scot Osterweil joins Comparative Media Studies as project manager of the Education Arcade. He will be leading the Learning Games to Go initiative, a project co-produced with Maryland Public Television.

Prior to his arrival, he was a senior designer at TERC, a research & development center devoted to math and science education, where he participated in research projects on the role of computer games in learning, and on the use of video in data collection and representation. Osterweil designed *Zoombinis Island Odyssey*, winner of the 2003 Bologna New Media Prize, and with Chris Hancock he co-designed the multi-award winning *Logical Journey of the Zoombinis*, and its first sequel, *Zoombinis Mountain Rescue*.

Previously, Osterweil worked in television, on the production of Public Television's *Frontline*, *Evening at Pops*, and *American Playhouse*, and as an animator on a wide range of programs. He is a graduate of Yale College with a degree in theater studies.

CMS Colloquium and Communications Forum Calendar

Thursday, February 9
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *Sex in Games*

Before *Hot Coffee*, before *Playboy: The Mansion*, even before the 1980s Leisure Suit Larry series, there was sex in video games, and lots of it. From flirting in MUDs to hardcore sexual simulators to the emerging field of teledildonics, sex in games is nearly as old as the medium itself. **Brenda Brathwaite**, a game designer, game consultant and, starting late March 2006, Professor of Game Design at Savannah College of Art & Design in Savannah, Georgia, will explore these issues. She has released 21 published titles, is founder and chair of the International Game Developers Association's Sexuality Special Interest Group and her book, *Sex in Video Games* will be released by Charles River Media in fall 2006.

Tuesday, February 14
6-8 p.m.
6-120

Colloquium: *Narrative Across Media*

Cory Doctorow is the co-founder of BoingBoing.net, activist with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and science fiction writer who posts all of his writing on his website at www.craphound.com. He is the author of *Down and Out in the Magical Kingdom*. Doctorow addresses how the Internet creates a need to rethink traditional business models, working with companies like O'Reilly and MicroSoft to address the way in which media products can be distributed without penalizing the consumer with restricted access. Co-sponsored with Writing and Humanistic Studies and MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative.

Thursday, February 23
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater

Forum: *A Conversation with Robert Pinsky*



In this wide-ranging conversation, the former Poet Laureate **Robert Pinsky** will discuss his collaboration on an opera with **Tod Machover** of the Media Lab, his ongoing Favorite Poem Project, his ideas about poetry and democratic culture, and his recent prose book, *The Life of David*, an account of the biblical poet-king. Machover will join the forum at the beginning of the conversation to discuss the opera-in-progress *Death and the Powers*. Forum director **David Thorburn** will moderate.

Thursday, March 2
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *Children's Programming at WGBH*

Kathleen Shugrue, senior producer for *Fetch!*, a new PBS television show for kids, will discuss how to take a germ of an idea and nurture it into a national television show. Shugrue previously served as series producer and supervising producer for *Zoom*, and worked in WGBH's National Productions, where she was involved in the development of numerous national programs.

Wednesday, March 8
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater

Forum: *TV's New Economics*

Though younger technologies such as Ipods and cell phones signify the emerging digital era in the popular imagination, the transformation of television from a broadcast medium offering limited channels to a digitally enhanced environment of (apparently) infinite choice may be far more significant in social and historical terms. Today's Forum will examine the changing economic base of American television, the role of audiences and audience-measurement, the broader role of consumption and advertising in the evolution of American television. Our speakers are renowned for their mastery of this complex economic and demographic history. **Jorge Schement** is one of the leading academic scholar of the statistical matrices of consumption and information exchange. **David Poltrack** is the media industry's most respected expert on audiences and audience measurement. Since 1994, he has been Executive Vice President for Research and Planning at CBS Television.

Thursday, March 16
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *Moving Image Media Mash-Up*

Carl Goodman is deputy director and director of digital media at the Museum of the Moving Image (www.movingimage.us) in Astoria, Queens, New York. Goodman will outline the Museum's efforts to explore contemporary, digitally-driven media through exhibitions and online projects, and discuss some of the more compelling examples of artistic and idiosyncratic approaches to and uses of entertainment media.

- Thursday, March 23**
5-7 p.m.
186 Brookline Ave.
Boston
- Colloquium Road Trip: *TOMB, an Interactive Experience Presented by 5Wits***
- After a walk-through interactive experience using state-of-the-art special effects, *TOMB* creator and 5Wits founder **Matt DuPlessie** will present a behind-the-scenes tour and field questions. Before founding 5Wits, DuPlessie managed projects in the theme park industry for clients that included Walt Disney Imagineering, Universal Creative, museums, aquariums, and haunted houses around the world. See www.5-wits.com.
- Thursday, April 6**
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater
- Forum: *TV News in Transition***
- No aspect of television has changed more decisively in recent years than its news programming. The proliferation of news channels, the passing of the last generation of news anchors bred in the era of the broadcast networks, the appearance of partisan outlets such as Fox News, the fragmentation of the audience, the relative indifference of the digital generation to television news programming of any sort - these powerful and perhaps disturbing changes will be among the topics discussed at this Forum. Our speakers have extensive first-hand experience of the recent history of television journalism. **JuJu Chang** has worked in television news since 1991 as a producer and on-air correspondent. She is currently based in New York as a correspondent for ABC's *20/20*. **Neal Shapiro** joined NBC News in 1993 after 13 years as a producer and executive at ABC News. At NBC, he served as director of news operations of MSNBC where he helped to shape its cable programming and its innovative web site. He was named president of NBC News in 2001, a post he held until September 2005.
- Wednesday, April 12**
5-7 p.m.
32-144
- Colloquium: *Consuming/ Producing/ Inhabiting South Asian Digital Diasporas***
- Radhika Gajjala** is associate professor in the School of Communication Studies at Bowling Green State University and author of *Cyberselves: Feminist Ethnographies of South Asian Women* (2004). In this presentation, Gajjala will examine different aspects of the notion of virtual community with an emphasis on Indian digital diasporas in relation to the United States. Co-sponsored with Center for Bilingual/Bicultural Studies (CBBS).
- Thursday, April 20**
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater
- Forum: *TV's Great Writer***
- David Milch** has been called television's first artistic genius, its great writer. His powerful dramas have troubled the censors in the networks and in Congress and have explored human weakness and violence in disturbing and artful ways. One of television's most honored writers, his credits include *Hill Street Blues*, *NYPD Blue* (co-created with Steven Bochco) and the pioneering HBO series *Deadwood*. In this Forum, Milch will discuss his career as a writer and creator with Forum Director **David Thorburn**, a historian of television who knew Milch as a Yale student. The session will include clips distilled from Milch's best work.
- 
- Thursday, April 27**
5-7 p.m.
2-105
- Colloquium: *Notions of Loyalty within Brand and Fan Cultures***
- Lovemarks* is a term coined by Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi and Saatchi, to describe the passionate relationship that certain products, services and experiences have with their consumers, inspiring a "loyalty beyond reason." Speakers **Ian Condry**, assistant professor of Japanese cultural studies at MIT, and **Robert V. Kozinets**, associate professor of marketing at York University's Schulich School of Business in Toronto, explore different notions of this "loyalty" by drawing on their own research into brand and fan cultures. CMS Director **Henry Jenkins** will moderate the discussion.
- Thursday, May 4**
5-7 p.m.
2-105
- Colloquium: *May Irwin's Kiss: The Beginnings of Cinema and the Transformation of American Culture***
- Charles Musser**, co-chair of the Film Studies Program and professor of American Studies, Film Studies and Theater Studies at Yale University and currently a fellow at the Clark Art Institute in Willamstown, Mass., examines one of the many ways that early cinema disrupted and rapidly transformed American culture by focusing on the John C. Rice-May Irwin kiss and the ways it impacted the two people in the film, and the many others around them. As a bonus, much of this incredible story centers around the Boston area.
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Sam Ford ('07) is concluding his first year in the CMS program by helping lead an ethnographic study of media fan communities on college campuses, and completing two white papers for the Convergence Culture Consortium (C3). In addition to his work with C3, he will be traveling to the national Popular Culture Association conference in Atlanta to present on a panel about the "perils and pleasures" of interdisciplinary study. Ford's essay on pro wrestling star Mick Foley will appear in the book *Bodies of Discourse*, forthcoming 2006 by Hampton Press.

Amulya Gopalakrishnan ('06) continued with her research on online English and Urdu poetry fan communities and their interactions with canonized works.

Rena Huang ('07) spent most of the winter break on campus, working on a pilot version of the digital archive on Beijing Film Academy's Animation School, which is going to be presented to the provost and dean of humanities. She is also working on a paper and planning a short documentary on Chinese animation for the Conference on Asian Comics, Animation and Game. In mid-January, she traveled to Durham, N.C. to spend some time with her husband who is working on his MBA at Duke University.

Orit Kuritsky ('07) is finishing an audio piece on the face of Israeli satire before and after the Gaza pullout. The piece combines commentary and interviews with Israeli comedians, scriptwriters, and network executives. Over the winter break, she worked on a thesis proposal related to American makeover shows and the practices of their consumption. In addition, Kuritsky has been preparing with **Vanessa Bertozzi** for a radio production class they'll help teach to MIT Terrascope students.

Geoffrey Long ('07) has been busy working as a media analyst for the Convergence Culture Consortium (C3) and designing logos, websites, t-shirts and other materials for C3, CMS and the MIT Literature Section (see www.geoffreylong.com). In addition, Long conducted experiments in animation and video game design, helped organize an international conference on innovation in video game design, attended the first Game Writers' Conference in Austin, and headed up a team in the 2006 Sony Game Workshop.

Ravi Purushotma ('07) is working on his thesis exploring the ways in which popular media is often dynamically and modularly constructed, as contrasted with educational media which is often written in a more self-contained manner. He will be presenting work on video game modeling and language learning with **Dan Roy** at the March Game Developer's Conference.

Dan Roy ('07) saw the release this fall of *Making History: The Calm & The Storm*, the first commercial video game he helped to design. He modified another game with fellow CMS graduate student **Ravi Purushotma** to teach Spanish, and the two will present their work at the Game Developers Conference in March. They are also starting an educational game company with MIT alumni. Finally, Roy helped design games with The Education Arcade and the Teacher Education Program, and attended the Serious Games Summit.

Visiting Scholars

Joern Ahrens continues work on his project, "'Acid as Blood': Core Elements of a Mythology of Modernity and its Popular Cultural Representations in the *Alien*-Film Tetralogy." Ahrens analyzes the *Alien*-film tetralogy, created between 1979 and 1997, examining the ongoing relations between myth and modernity,

and exploring whether there is such thing as a mythology of modernity created through the means of popular culture. This is intended to provide a basis for a theory of modernity that lays particular stress on the performative and, in collaboration with a mass medium, myth-generating character of modernity itself.

Stuart N. Brotman begins as a visiting scholar this term. He is past president and CEO of the Museum of Television & Radio and the author of the books *Broadcasters Can Negotiate Anything* and *Communications Law and Practice*. Brotman, an attorney, brings a wide range of broadcasting and media interests to CMS. This spring, Brotman has been working with **David Thorburn** on television-related programming for the MIT Communications Forum, and developing a book proposal on digital television that he has been refining through his discussions with CMS faculty and fellow visiting scholars.

Tomoyuki Iino (that's with a double "i") teaches American literature and culture at Sophia University in Tokyo, where he has been exploring the relationship between American poetry and American music. During his tenure as a visiting scholar at CMS, he plans to focus on two main questions: First, what attracts a poet to particular music at certain times and places, and how does music relate to their writing? Poets John Ashbery, William Carlos Williams, and John Berryman figure prominently in Iino's research. Second, how do changes in media technology affect the quality of music and, in turn, poetry's relationship to music? Iino's stay at CMS begins in April.

Peter Mueller has completed his proposal for a Ph.D. in fine arts (Slade School of Fine Arts, University College London). Under the working

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Animation Archive Draws On CMS Expertise

MIT's Comparative Media Studies and Foreign Languages and Literatures have joined forces to create a digital archive of animated works produced at the Beijing Film Academy's (BFA) Animation School.

China is rapidly becoming a world leader in animation – in fact, major U.S. studios are contracting out their animation designs to studios in China – and more and more animation programs are being created at major Chinese film schools. The BFA's Animation School is among China's oldest and most prominent, having produced animated works for more than 50 years.

Under the direction of FL&L Section Head **Jing Wang**, CMS Co-Director **Henry Jenkins**, and Metamedia and HyperStudio Director **Kurt Fendt**, this new collaboration combines the rich tradition of teaching and producing animation at the BFA with MIT's School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences' extensive experience in creating interactive media projects.

"The digital animation project will enrich the Chinese curriculum at MIT and provide rich materials for new classes," said Wang, who will develop a new course offering around the archive. "At the same time, it introduces the MIT model of digital learning to our partner institution in Beijing.

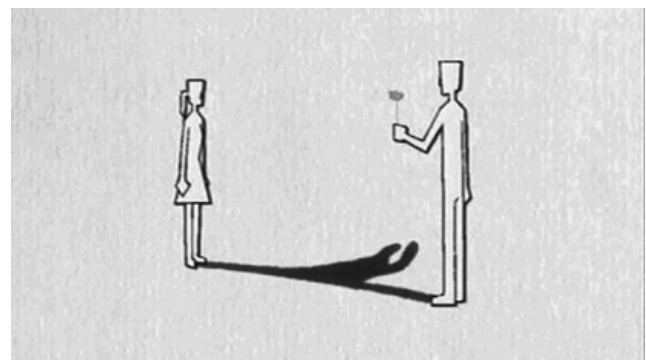
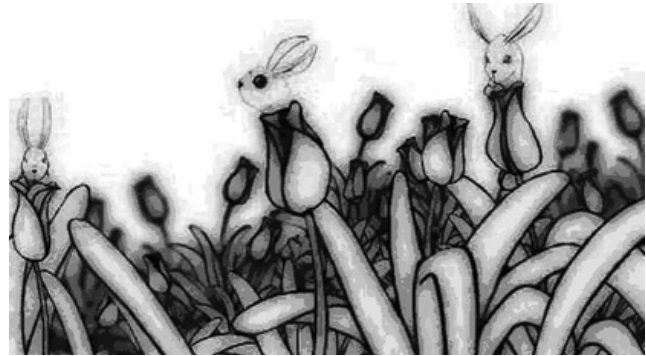
"Our eventual goal," Wang said, "is to make the BFA project open content so that global animation researchers can tap into this fascinating collection.

Based on the Metamedia framework, the collaboration will create:

- A rich, publicly accessible archive of animation films created by BFA students ranging from the most recent to examples dating to the beginning of the school, covering more than 50 years;
- A shared site that allows faculty and students at the BFA and MIT to share teaching materials, curricula, and student works on animation film education; and
- A community site in which students at the BFA can share and comment on each others' storyboard sketches, character designs, and plot ideas. This will give MIT students unique insights into the creation process of animation films.

The Metamedia and HyperStudio teams have created a pilot archive for the new joint project consisting of more than 30 animated films ranging from traditional ink drawing, animated ancient murals, and 2D and 3D animation-reality hybrids as well as a selection of study materials.

The images at right are from animated works from the Animation School at the Beijing Film Academy. MIT scholars are using more than 50 years' worth of work to create a digital archive. Images courtesy BFA.



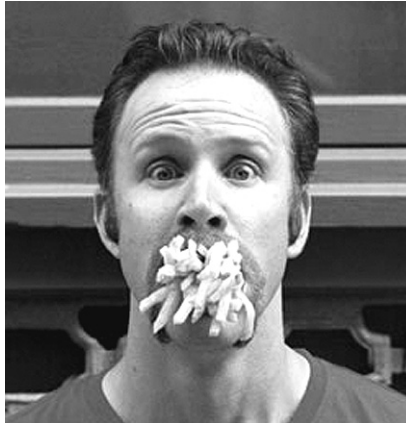
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title, "Give Me a Lab and I Will Destroy the World: The Narrations of Risk in Popular Cinematic Laboratory Stories since the Nineteen Fifties," he is investigating popular images of the natural sciences; how filmic laboratory stories tell the clash of new and old hierarchical orders between humans, technology and nature. In the course of his proposal writing, Mueller visited seminars at Harvard's History of Science Department. He also finished his preparation for an upcoming exhibition in Frankfurt, where he is showing new artistic work on the meanings of fictional scientific instruments.

Doris Rusch joins us as a visiting scholar from her position as a post-doc fellow at the Institute for Design and Assessment of Technology at the Technical University Vienna. She is primarily interested in investigating the emotional design of dramatic computer games, something she has been doing in Vienna and in cooperation with the Department of Digital Aesthetics and Communication at IT University in Copenhagen. Rusch has an eclectic background, having completed studies in German literature, philosophy, English and comparative literature at the University of Vienna, where she also received her Ph.D. in applied linguistics. Her work in computer game studies is part of a larger interest in "narrative worlds" that expands over books, comics, and films.

Stefan Werning worked on his Ph.D. thesis on the staging of war in computer and videogames and interactive media theory. Part of that endeavor included teaching sessions of the history freshmen class War and Mass Media (21L.430). In addition, Werning participated in the Education Arcade project, developing a technical demonstration version of MIT Ghost (see page 7). Furthermore, he wrote an article on the convergence of media analysis and historical methodology with the help

of Professor of History **Christopher Cappozola** taking Frank Capra's *Know your Enemy: Japan* as an example. The article is will be published later this year.

Alum

R.J. Bain ('04) is working for Actual Reality Pictures as associate producer on the television show *30 Days*. *30 Days* is a documentary series created and hosted by Morgan Spurlock (of *Supersize Me* fame, pictured above) that explores social issues by placing individuals in living situations that are antithetical to their upbringing, beliefs, religion or profession.

Jim Bizzocchi ('01) is an assistant professor in the School of Interactive Art and Technology at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His research interests include the emergent aesthetics of high-definition video, issues in interactive narrative, and the use of games and simulations as educational environments. He will shoot his third video art production, "Winterscape," in the Canadian Rockies for an upcoming exhibition at the Peter Whyte Museum in Banff.

Cynthia Conti ('01) is a doctoral student in the Department of Culture and Communication at NYU. Her research focuses on the microradio movement, radio history and broadcast regulations. Before entering the Ph.D. program, she taught courses in video pro-

duction, communications and media studies at several schools and colleges in the Boston area. She lives in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn with her partner and dog.

Francisco DeLaTorre is a visual effects artist for feature films. After leaving MIT, DeLaTorre moved to San Francisco in early 2002 to work for Tweak Films, a small but high-end VFX boutique. His feature film credits at Tweak include *Hero*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *XXX: State of the Union*, and *The Matrix: Reloaded*. DeLaTorre left Tweak to start work as an independent contractor, and is currently working at Ntropic in San Francisco on *Underworld: Evolution*.

Joellen Easton ('05) is a public insight analyst with Minnesota Public Radio, where she will work on extending the news-gathering process into the community and on translating MPR News' public insight model from their regional to their national American Public Media programs.

Clara Fernandez-Vara ('04) is a Ph.D. candidate at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where Janet Murray is her supervisor. Her research focuses primarily on the development of videogame theory, analysis, criticism and design. She is a researcher at the Experimental Game Lab, as part of the Game Ontology project with Michael Mateas.

Cristobal Garcia ('04) is at Price Waterhouse Cooper, and continues work on his Chilean-base World Internet project. Garcia is a founding member of History Unwired, MIT's Global Agenda Game.

Neeti Gupta ('04) is a user researcher and design researcher for Microsoft's mobile division, and work that she did for Microsoft was published as part of the proceedings of the 2004 International Conference on Ubiquitous Computing.

Robin Hauck ('03) is a film writer at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston Film Department. Her responsibilities include researching and writing program notes about films from around the world; writing books for major film series such as the Festival of Films from Iran and the Boston French Film Festival; and writing press releases for upcoming events and calendars.

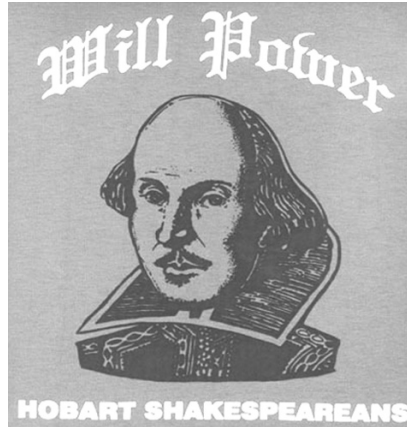
Sarah Kamal ('05) is working on a doctorate in media at the London School of Economics. Previously, she worked with UNIFEM in Afghanistan, working to sensitize Afghan media to gender issues.

Zhan Li ('03) is currently working as an investment banking analyst with the Global Media & Entertainment sector team at HSBC in New York.

Heather Miller ('03) works as freelance educational consultant for UNESCO in Paris. Prior to that, Miller was a supervising editor at Macmillan/McGraw-Hill in New York responsible for overseeing the development of a social studies K-2 program in print and K-6 new media products for adoption in California. She is the author of two novels: *Baseball: A Story of America* and *Grasslands*.

Sophie Ormerod ('02) has been working in online advertising: First for a company called WhenU.com and now for a company called 121Media Inc. where she is their senior vice president of advertising operations.

Aswin Punathambekar ('03) is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Building on his CMS master's thesis on Indian cinema's global flows, he is working on a dissertation that examines the intersections of Indian cinema, the new media industry, and transnational audience communities. He is also co-editing an anthology on Indian cinema to be published this year by NYU Press.



Alex Rotaru, a graduate of the Film and Media Studies Program (the precursor to CMS), is the co-producer, editor and cinematographer of *The Hobart Shakespeareans*, a documentary now being shown on PBS stations around the country.

Sangita Shresthova ('03) is pursuing a Ph.D. at the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA. Focusing on the transnational dimensions of Hindi film (Bollywood), she is a co-organizer of the annual Prague Bollywood Festival. In January, she became a member of the PostNatyam Collective (www.postnatyam.net).

David Spitz ('01) is working as a marketing strategist on Ogilvy & Mather's IBM account in New York. After graduating from CMS, Spitz spent two and a half years as a management consultant with Deloitte Consulting's marketing and e-business strategy practices, and in 2004 he returned to school to pursue an MBA from Columbia Business School.

Michelle Woodward ('00) is photo editor and media coordinator for the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), which publishes the magazine *Middle East Report* (www.merip.org) for which she has served as photo editor since leaving CMS. Woodward says the goal of her job is to "inject into the mainstream media the work and insights of Middle East specialists and photographers

who can provide unconventional and independent analysis and perspectives...about the region."

Yannis Zavoleas ('04) is assistant professor in architecture, teaching means of expression in architecture and architectural design at the Technical University of Crete, where he teaches design strategies and expressive techniques.

CMS Alum Alert

If you are a graduate of CMS, then we'd like to hear from you. Drop us a note at cms@mit.edu and let us know what you are doing now, and let us know the best email address for contacting you as we update our mailing lists.

CMS Promotes Pragmatic Style for Media Analysis

Comparative Media Studies focuses on social and cultural interactions with technology. It is not the study of interactive technologies, per se (although it includes them). The humanities offer a tradition of thinking about media content, genre, storytelling, and pedagogy, while the qualitative social sciences have an equally rich vocabulary for discussing media context, culture, society, and community. CMS promotes a pragmatic style of humanistic and social scientific scholarship that prepares students to think critically and productively about media form, content, and context.

CMS helps students to become leaders who shape and enhance our understanding of media, drawing on their background in the humanities and the social sciences to tackle compelling real-world problems.

The CMS curriculum helps students build upon their prior technical and professional knowledge to develop new conceptual models and new forms of expertise and to expand their brainstorming, problem-solving, negotiation, and communication skills.

Comparative Media Welcomes New Staff



Evan Hinkle is the new administrative assistant for CMS and will be handling schedules for both CMS directors. He graduated from Northeastern University in December 2004 where he worked in a similar capacity for the Department of Political Science. Hinkle's professional experience includes research assistance for the Cyber Privacy Project (based at Harvard) where he helped organize a moot court for the recent Supreme Court case *Hiibel v. Nevada*. A licensed secondary educator with a degree in political science, Hinkle is an active yogi and practices transcendental meditation.

Program Offering Postdoctoral Fellowships

The CMS program is currently soliciting applications for two new postdoctoral teaching and research fellowships: one focused on media education and designed to help support the work of the Education Arcade and the New Media Literacies Project; the second focused on creative industries and globalization and linked to the new Convergence Culture Consortium.

The post-docs will also be teaching courses designed to broaden the CMS curriculum into areas that are increasingly central to the program's research efforts. The fellowship program is also designed to encourage the academic growth of promising media studies scholars with recent Ph.D. degrees. Support for the new postdoctoral program has come from an anonymous donor and from the Dean of Humanities.

Forum Partners with MIT World to Provide Webcasts

Beginning this term, webcasts of all Communication Forum talks will be made available by MIT World, which provides free on-demand video of significant public events at MIT.

"The Communications Forum is a welcome addition to our video collection," said Laurie Everett, MIT World's project manager, about the arrangement. "These scholarly discussions help MIT World stay true to its mission to present a wide range of ideas and topics to a global audience of learners."

The MIT Communications Forum, founded by Ithiel de Sola Pool who taught in the Department of Political Science, has sponsored talks on all aspects of communications for more than 25 years. An article about the Forum and CMS appeared in the fall 2005 issue of *In Medias Res*.

"The rapid expansion of broadband and wireless technology makes these webcasts feasible and significant.

The collaboration strengthens both the Forum and MIT World," said Literature Professor and Forum Director **David Thorburn**.

This spring, the Forum will sponsor a conversation between former Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky and Thorburn; and three linked forums on the state of TV — the economics of television, the changing face of television news and a discussion with David Milch, creator of HBO's *Deadwood*.

The Forum will continue to make audio recordings of its talks available from web.mit.edu/comm-forum about 48 hours following live events. Webcasts will be available from MIT World approximately a month following live events.

MIT World currently hosts nine Forum events. To browse titles, go to mitworld.mit.edu and under "Video Finder" select "MIT Communications Forum" from the "All Hosts" dropdown menu.

CMS Media Spectacle Honors Chris Pomiecko

CMS is looking for films, videos, video podcasts and mobisodes produced by MIT and Wellesley students, faculty, staff and affiliates for its 2006 Media Spectacle.

The deadline for submission is April 10.

Screenings will begin at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 26 in 32-123 (the Stata Center). All formats, styles, lengths and subjects are acceptable. Works-in-progress are welcomed.

The **Chris Pomiecko** Prize will be awarded to the most outstanding undergraduate media submission. The prize is named for the CMS administrator who died in a car accident last year.

To submit a work, send title, format, description and running time to Gene Fierro at generoso@mit.edu or contact CMS at 617.253.3599.

Special Students Arrive From Kainan University

Chung-Yuan Chiu and Jia-Yu ("Elsa") Li are the first special students to spend a term at MIT as part of an arrangement between Kainan University, Taiwan, and CMS and the Communications Forum.

The collaboration, conceived by Forum Director **David Thorburn**, brings four students and two Kainan faculty members to MIT each year. It is supervised by a governing board consisting of Thorburn, CMS Director **Henry Jenkins**, and Kainan President Michael Tang.

National Heritage Museum

A good resource for students of American popular culture is the National Heritage Museum, online at www.monh.org and on the road at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Route 2A in Lexington.

Admission is free and the museum is open seven days a week.

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Every day, the youth group gathers to write the screenplay. Each scene, character, or plot point is based on group members' personal experiences. Amidst the lively discussions that surround each creative decision, I find myself witnessing a new potential for authorship. Because the story of a culture exists as much between individuals as within, we find that we are able to most effectively generate narrative elements as a group.



The result of these dialogues is a cultural representation that challenges an understanding of itself: A fictional work that is also a documentary.

Permission

In September, I started the process of asking permission from Kuna authorities to film on the islands. The Kuna are famous for asking tourists to put their cameras away, charging fees for photographs, and requiring anthropologists and journalists to seek official approval for their endeavors within the communities.

While many filmmakers see this as an impediment to their projects, I was excited to have the opportunity to work with a culture that wishes to have a say in the way in which it is represented across media. The meetings with the elder *sailas* (leaders) were quite rich. I appreciated hearing their view that the "cultural content" of a photograph belongs to the community in which it was taken and thus



Veronica Bollow photos

cannot be "sold" by the photographer. This is particularly meaningful when we consider that while the majority of Kuna people do not have access to a camera, few international visitors would consider taking a trip to an exotic island community without one. So this tension around access and cultural representation becomes a political issue.

I am happy to report that the project was approved enthusiastically by the *sailas*. And when we're done, we'll leave our film equipment behind for the community's continued use.

Veronica Bollow can be reached by email at vbollow@mit.edu.

Development Officer Ederly Not Just Playing Games

When not handling business development for CMS, **David Ederly** has kept busy managing the Cyclescore project, which fuses video games and exercise equipment, and was recently the subject of a report on National Public Radio.

Ederly also recently published in *Gamasutra.com*, where he wrote about in-game advertising. He also recently started a blog covering the video game industry, which, he reports, has become the subject of great interest and controversy (www.edery.org).

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first-person shooter

CMS Graduate Student Films Camera-Cautious Kuna

By Veronica Bollow ('06)

I am writing from Panama where I am in pre-production for the first feature film made by and about the Kuna, an autonomous indigenous people who inhabit an archipelago of 365 islands along the Caribbean coast of Panama and Colombia.

On the islands, life is, what some might call traditional. Villagers fish in small handmade boats, harvest plantains and coconuts, and live in *chozas* (traditional houses). There are no cars, no roads, and less than a handful of communities use electricity.

These days, about a third of the total Kuna population lives in Panama city. There many choose to maintain their traditional dress, language, and general cultural practices. However, life in the city is not without its challenges: the Kuna population is amongst urban Panama's poorest, and

youth, in particular, find themselves with few economic opportunities.

Last winter, I held a digital storytelling workshop for a group of Kuna youth in Panama City. The workshop resulted in the production of a 20-minute video in which participants connected traditional Kuna mythology with stories from their lives in the city.

After witnessing the success of this within the community, I began organizing a larger project that has now taken the form of a year-long program in which students will produce a full-length fiction film.



Veronica Bollow photo

Kuna youth examine a digital camera at a photography workshop in Ipedi Kuna.

For me, the magic in this kind of work comes from the collaborative creative process that can arise across and within cultures around questions of representation.

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