

# *In Medias Res*

MIT COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES • CMS.MIT.EDU • SPRING 2007

## CMS a Major Player in New Game Lab

By Philip Tan and William Uricchio

**T**he CMS-led, five-year game lab initiative announced in the previous issue of *In Medias Res* is steadily progressing toward a final contract and

implementation. CMS and MIT are working with the Media Development Authority (MDA) of Singapore, a statutory board of the Singapore government, to bring the game lab to Cambridge.

Tipping a hat to the Singaporean penchant for acronyms, the newly christened Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab will examine topics from categories including Gamers, Aesthetics, Mechanics, Business, Innovation and Technology.

The five-year research initiative addresses important challenges faced by the global digital game research community and industry, with a core focus on identifying and solving research problems using a multidisciplinary approach that can be applied by Singapore's digital game industry.

Developing its academic program in game research consistent with established MIT academic principles, the GAMBIT Game Lab aims to create a leading international program capable of producing high-impact research benefiting both MIT and Singapore.

The initiative explores topics of relevance to the global academic community and the global gaming industry, supporting game research capabilities in Singapore involving MIT and Singapore faculty, post-doctoral researchers, and students.

CMS Directors **Henry Jenkins** and **William Uricchio** are lead principal



*continued on page 4*



**SPRING 2007**

**3** FROM THE DIRECTORS  
*Henry Jenkins and William Uricchio*

**5** MIT5 FOCUSES ON  
CREATIVITY, OWNERSHIP,  
COLLABORATION

CMS, HARVARD AND YALE  
BRING BEYOND BROADCAST  
TO MIT

**6** NEW CLASS PINS DOWN  
PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING  
*Sam Ford '07*

**7** HYPERSTUDIO RECREATES  
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY  
BOSTON  
*Kurt Fendt*

**8** ARG, MATIES,  
CONVERGENCE CULTURE  
EXAMINES PIRATES AND  
PACK RATS  
*Joshua Green*

**9** PARTICIPATORY CULTURE  
DETAILED IN NEW MEDIA  
LITERACIES PAPER  
*Margaret Weigel*

**10** SKETCHING THE LABYRINTH:  
ARTWORK DOCUMENTS MATH  
GAME DEVELOPMENT  
*Scot Osterweil*

**12** CMS COLLOQUIUM AND MIT  
COMMUNICATIONS FORUM  
CALENDAR

**14** PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS

**17** NEW VISITING SCHOLARS

**18** 2007 THESIS PRESENTATION  
SCHEDULE

**20** CMS CLICKS FOR  
LENSMAN ALUM  
*Huma Yusef '08*

mda

CMS

MIT

ON OUR COVER

SINGAPORE'S MEDIA  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
AND CMS ARE CLOSE TO  
FINALIZING ARRANGEMENTS  
THAT WILL BRING THE  
GAMBIT GAME LAB TO MIT.

TOP

ONE OF SEVERAL SKETCHES  
FOR THE EDUCATION  
ARCADE'S MATH PUZZLE GAME  
LABYRINTH. SEE PAGE 10.

# Adhocracy 101: Insert Yourself Here

By Henry Jenkins and William Uricchio, CMS directors

MIT faculty members sometimes look at Comparative Media Studies from the outside, wondering why it pursues the projects it does and not certain what their role in the program might be. We invite you inside.

What kind of discipline does CMS represent? It is not a discipline in any traditional sense of the word. CMS is radically interdisciplinary – in that our faculty and students come from many different disciplinary backgrounds – or un-disciplined – in the sense that we mix and match different modes of analysis freely in our classrooms and laboratories.

Science fiction writer and blogger Cory Doctorow has coined the term “adhocracy” to refer to “a form of social and political organization with few fixed structures or established relationships between players and with minimum hierarchy and maximum diversity.” Adhocracy is the opposite of bureaucracy.

Adhocracies thrive within a network culture because they depend on temporary and tactical affiliations: individuals come together to work on a specific project, to pursue mutual interests, to pool knowledge to address specific questions, and then disperse or reconfigure to confront the next challenge.

We see adhocracy as a pretty good way to describe the loose affiliations of faculty, students, staff, and collaborators who enable us to do the range of projects which are described in this newsletter. Sometimes these collaborations link us with other parts of the Institute – the Terrascope radio project links us with the Earth Sciences faculty; the new Singapore games lab involves collaboration with computer science; the fifth Media in Transition conference involves collaborations with the Media Lab and the List Visual Arts Center. Sometimes these collaborations take us beyond MIT – as in the work we are doing with American University faculty through the New Media Literacies project; or the collaborations with Harvard’s Berkman Center and Yale University as part of the Beyond Broadcasting conference.

## ‘CMS Is What You Make of it’

Understandably, faculty might feel estranged from such a configuration because it is so different from the



Henry Jenkins



William Uricchio

fixed relationships that professors have to their home departments and deep roots they have put down in their own disciplines.

For our students, though, the situation is different.

Coming from a full array of undergraduate majors and real-world experience, to

them the program is coherent and they take for granted its plurality and richness. It becomes a way of broadening their perspective, developing a Big Picture understanding of the nature of media change, honing their skills and refining their conceptual frameworks.

Either way, CMS is what you make of it. As you look across this issue of *In Medias Res*, suspend your expectations. You have heard that CMS is all about the contemporary – so what do you make of Metamedia’s new project working with the Old North Church to document the culture of Revolutionary War era Boston? You have heard that CMS is all about popular culture – so what do you make of the work which the New Media Literacies Project is doing around Herman Melville and *Moby-Dick*? You have heard that CMS is an apologist for industry – so what do you make of our hosting of the Beyond Broadcasting conference which is centrally concerned with issues of media reform?

This newsletter gives you a glimpse inside CMS. Now, we encourage you to identify projects you would like to pursue with us, to think about ways you might want to work with our students.

You will note in this newsletter the appointment of **Leila Kinney** as the program’s new academic administrator, a position we needed to fill to bolster our outreach. Leila will help us be more effective at connecting our teaching and research missions and to reach out more consistently to the faculty affiliated with the program.

We welcome you to take advantage of the flexibility enabled by our adhocracy to create your own opportunities and pursue your own goals. We hope to build new bridges and create new partnerships as the program continues through its eighth year of operation.

*Confessions of an Aca/Fan: The Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins can be accessed at [www.henryjenkins.org](http://www.henryjenkins.org).*



# CMS a Major Player in New Game Lab

(continued from front cover) investigators coordinating the international effort. CMS alum **Philip Tan** '03 has been named executive director at MIT. The initiative at MIT is one part of a concerted \$327 million effort by Singapore's National Research Foundation to encourage the development of a strategic Interactive Digital Media research program. Interactive Digital Media is expected to contribute significantly to Singapore's media-based economy by creating approximately 10,000 new jobs by 2015 with revenues of \$10 billion per year.

## Collaborative Relationships

The GAMBIT Game Lab focuses on building collaborations between Singapore institutions and various MIT departments to accomplish both research and development. Game researchers from MIT and Singapore institutes of higher learning are invited to submit one-paragraph abstracts to Tan on an ongoing basis. Tan will help connect researchers of similar interests across the Pacific and develop collaborative relationships.

Investigators at both MIT and in Singapore will also be invited to annually submit project proposals (3-5 pages) by the end of each February for review by the initiative steering committee. Tan will work with the collaborators to budget and fit the project plan within the initiative's five-year finance structure. Funding and administrative capability is expected to improve each year, so projects not supported in the short-term may be resubmitted.

Research projects in the GAMBIT Game Lab will involve faculty, post-doc and graduate students from several MIT departments and Singapore institutions. Researchers participating on ongoing projects will submit articles, white papers, journal submissions, and conference presentations to encapsulate and present each year of work within an academic context. In addition, 30 to 40 game development students will visit MIT for an educational experience during the summer. This will bring artists, programmers, designers, and accompanying teaching faculty from undergraduate, polytechnic, and art schools in Singapore to Cambridge for three months.

Since the initial GAMBIT announcement late last year, interest in the initiative has been steadily growing among Singapore and US game industry players. The coordinator for the Singapore chapter of the International Game Developers

Association and co-founder of Singapore game developer Boomzap, Allan Simonsen, notes that "MIT is the world's top university in digital media research, and working with them will allow both local companies and students to work with some of the best researchers in the world. This should provide a catalyst for pushing Singapore's best students and encourage a culture of excellence in the game developers of tomorrow."

## Licensing, IP, Immigration Issues

Jenkins, Uricchio and Tan have been running up the air miles planting seeds for collaborative projects in discussions with MIT departments and Singapore institutions. Tan flies between Singapore and Cambridge every month to find faculty and post-docs with related interests, and MIT's **Eric Klopfer** (Teacher Education Program), **Kurt Fendt** (Metamedia) and **Jing Wang** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) have met with Singaporean academics to discuss topics of games and education.

In the meantime, the principal investigators have been communicating regularly with the MIT's Office of Sponsored Programs as well as MIT legal personnel to complete the contractual agreements between MIT and MDA, balancing the unique elements of the GAMBIT Game Lab with the ongoing developments on a parallel initiative announced between MIT and the Singapore National Research Foundation last year: SMART, the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology.

Given the complex linking of international research and development in both projects, issues of licensing, intellectual property, commercialization, immigration, and accounting have all required careful scrutiny and processes to prepare for the future of the GAMBIT Game Lab. A formal contract for the initiative is expected to be finalized in February.

CMS staff members **Sarah Wolozin** and **Generoso Fierro** have lent their considerable talent and expertise to decipher the complexities of bureaucracy and prepare MIT for the responsibility and the arrival of dozens of Singaporeans in the summer of 2007. Wolozin is also working with Tan, Assistant Humanities Dean Doug Pfeiffer and John Dunbar from the Committee for the Review of Space Planning to establish and outfit the new lab space that will be GAMBIT's MIT home.

Inquiries regarding proposals, projects, and collaborations with the GAMBIT Game Lab should be directed to Philip Tan at [philip@mit.edu](mailto:philip@mit.edu).



*GAMBIT Game Lab Executive Director Philip Tan taking time out from his hectic schedule to practice Tai Chi. The Game Lab has established a blog at [cms.mit.edu/gambit](http://cms.mit.edu/gambit)*

# MiT5 Focus: Creativity, Ownership, Collaboration

Comparative Media Studies and the MIT Communications Forum will host the fifth Media in Transition conference April 27-29 at MIT. This year's conference, focusing on creativity, ownership and collaboration in the digital age, will bring together more than 200 speakers from dozens of countries for a mix of plenary conversations, screenings, and panels.

An opening event at the conference will foreground the relationship between traditional folk culture and the emerging digital culture. Historians, literary scholars, and folklorists will interact with theorists and scholars of contemporary forms of cultural production and distribution. This session sets the tone for a weekend of discussions which seek to better understand how culture builds upon culture, how older traditions inform contemporary modes of expression, and how artists directly collaborate or indirectly appropriate from each other's work.

## Artists Well Represented

A higher than average number of creative artists submitted proposals for this year's conference.

Throughout the event, we will be screening and showcasing their works and there will be a special plenary session focused on creative artists discussing their own appropriations and transformations of existing cultural materials. The plenary session is being planned with help from



the Media Lab's John Maeda and The List Gallery's William Arning.

Issues of appropriation are closely linked to issues of intellectual property, and a key event will showcase work being done at American University, MIT, and elsewhere to identify a framework

for thinking about the fair use rights of media makers and thus reaffirming our rights to quote from and respond to existing works. This strand of programming is being planned in collaboration with Pat Aufderheide, Renee Hobbes, and Peter Jaszi with financial support from the Ford Foundation.

Media literacy will be another key theme throughout this year's conference, culminating in a special Saturday evening event centered around "learning through remixing" and showcasing a number of projects and initiatives that involve young people rewriting classical literary and contemporary media texts. This program, which will combine demos with discussion, is being organized by Project NML and funded through its grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

The conference is being planned by **Henry Jenkins**, **William Uricchio** and **Brad Seawell**. It will include talks from a number of current CMS graduate students (such as **Dan Roy**, **Sam Ford**, and **Geoffrey Long**), post-docs (such as **Joshua Green** and **Alice Robison**), and alumni (such as **Kurt Lancaster**, **Sangita Shresthova**, and **Michael Epstein**).

The conference website can be found at [web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit5](http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit5).

## CMS, Harvard and Yale Bring Beyond Broadcast to MIT

On Feb. 24, CMS will host the Beyond Broadcast: From Participatory Culture to Participatory Democracy conference in collaboration with Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society and the Information Society Project at Yale Law School. The one-day event will bring together industry experts, academic leaders and political activists for panel discussions and focused working groups.

Attendees will explore the means, the message, and the meaning of the post-midterm, pre-presidential YouTube moment. Broadcast media have long played a powerful role in shaping political culture and mediating citizen engagement in the democratic process, and the conference will examine how participatory culture is putting the tools of media creation and critique in the hands of citizens themselves.

The plenary sessions will take place in Kirsch

Auditorium in the Stata Center, followed by breakout groups. There will also be an evening reception in the Media Lab called "Demos and Drinks," showcasing groups that are doing exciting work related to conference themes.

**Henry Jenkins** will give the keynote address, followed by panel discussions from media makers and policy commentators. Details of these panels are posted on the conference website at [www.beyondbroadcast.net](http://www.beyondbroadcast.net).

It costs \$50 to register for the Beyond Broadcast event which includes lunch and the evening reception. The conference follows immediately on the Public Media conference taking place in Boston the week before, and attendees of the PMC can register for Beyond Broadcast for free. There is a 50 percent discount for students.

For more information, contact **Steve Schultze**, CMS '08, at [schultze@mit.edu](mailto:schultze@mit.edu).

# New Class Pins Down Professional Wrestling

By Sam Ford, CMS '07

Comparative Media Studies has a first slated on its spring card as it offers a class on American professional wrestling (CMS.997 / CMS.602). The class will explore the cultural history and media industry surrounding the masculine drama of professional wrestling, as well as the shifting modes of athletic and dramatic presentation that have drawn wrestling fans through the years.

Beginning with wrestling's roots in sport and carnival, the class examines how new technologies and changes in the television industry transformed pro wrestling's style and promotion. The class examines wrestling chronologically from its pre-television roots through its network debut in the late 1940s and early 1950s to the present.

The class will feature visits from World Wrestling Entertainment Vice President Tom Barreca; the voice of the WWE Jim Ross ("JR"); retired wrestling competitor Chris Nowinski; and former WWE World Heavyweight Champion Mick Foley.

In addition to the subject being a non-traditional campus offering, my background is somewhat unconventional in that I will be teaching this course as a master's candidate in CMS. I will teach the class under the advisement of CMS faculty affiliate **Anthony Lioi** from the Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies.

## Wrestling 'has it all'

My interest in pro wrestling began as a child, when my older cousins would talk about watching wrestling shows on cable. For more than 15 years, I have been actively involved in the pro wrestling fan community. As an undergraduate at Western Kentucky University, I co-taught a course with the director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting on pro wrestling during my final semester, and a multidisciplinary study of the world of "sports entertainment," as WWE owner Vince McMahon likes to call it, was the focus of my undergraduate thesis.

Oh, and I'm a licensed professional wrestling manager as



*Wrestler and writer Mick Foley will be on the MIT campus this spring visiting the new CMS class on American wrestling.*

**"Professional wrestling represents the entire history of American popular amusement rolled up in a single package -- whether we read it as the last gasp of the vaudeville and circus tradition or as an important early predecessor of today's transmedia entertainment."**

— CMS Director Henry Jenkins

American popular amusement rolled up in a single package -- whether we read it as the last gasp of the vaudeville and circus tradition or as an important early predecessor of today's transmedia entertainment," says CMS Director **Henry Jenkins**. "Wrestling has it all—expansive worlds, flamboyant performances, melodramatic plots, audience participation, and agitprop themes. And of course, wrestling raises all kinds of questions about the performance of race, gender, sexuality, class, about the staging of violence, and about the crossing of cultural taboos and censorship norms."

well. What does that mean? It means that although I'm not exactly an athlete, I occasionally perform on pro wrestling shows, most prominently as the on-stage owner of Universal Championship Wrestling in Western Kentucky.

I'm interested in pro wrestling as a scholar, a performer, and a fan, and this class will explore the intersection of these modes of engagement.

"Professional wrestling represents the entire history of

## Mobile Media Class Offered

This spring, the Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies will offer a special section of 21W.780 (section 1) on mobile communications taught by **Ed Barrett** (Writing), **Frank Bentley** (Motorola) and **Dan Bersak** (CMS '05). Students in collaborative design teams build and document a semester-long project focused on mobile applications for Motorola RAZR smartphones provided to each student by Motorola.

Students will be given access to all platform application programming interfaces (APIs), including those that are not available to the public. Working closely with researchers from Motorola, students will learn about the latest in mobile applications and communications technology.



# HyperStudio Recreates Pre-Revolutionary Boston

By Kurt Fendt, Metamedia project manager

What was it like to live in Boston before the Revolution? What side did members of the Old North Church congregation take on April 18, 1775, the evening on which the infamous lanterns were hung in the steeple? Every person living in the Colonies on the eve of the Revolution had to decide what they would do if the Revolution came. Either position was a gamble.

No one knew who would win such a war. What if you chose the losing side? What would happen to you, your family, and your property? Even if you felt one way or another, were you in a position that enabled you to act according to your conscience or desires? Each person had to choose based on what was most important to them or the needs of their family within the context of the social roles in which they were cast.

The goal of this new collaboration between the Old North Foundation in Boston, the HyperStudio, and the CMS Metamedia Research Group is to develop educational modules for grades 3-12 that engage students in developing a deeper understanding of historical narratives and their contexts by examining historical documents and events.

## What Historians Do

Using the Old North's extensive archival collection of original documents, the project will reconstruct the



Map showing Boston's defenses, c. 1775

congregation at the Old North Church in 1775, and use it as a microcosm to explore the decision-making process in which individuals and communities in Pre-Revolutionary Boston were engaged. These resources will be used to create first person decision-making modules in which students assume the roles of specific parishioners and determine, based on their specific circumstances, what they would do if presented with such a situation.

Drawing on concepts from projects such as Berliner sehen, Metamedia, and Repertoire, the collaboration with Old North Foundation will generate teaching modules that help teachers present and develop historical thinking and archival research methods in their students.

The activities will be designed to help students understand what it is that historians do; how historical narratives are constructed; and how historical documents can be interpreted in different ways. These educational modules will enrich student understanding of the real-world issues confronting congregation members prior to the outbreak of the American War of Independence.

The project will have both an on-site component and a web-based component to engage a broad and diverse audience. At the same time, the collaboration will develop a sustainable, standards-based digital archive that will give scholars and researchers access to historical records such as documents about the fundraising activities for the building of the church, construction documents, vital records, including marriage, baptism, and burial records, pew records, vestry meeting minutes, and communiqués from different vicars of the church, all dating back to the Church's founding in 1723 and which had not been available to the general public.

metamedia

<http://metamedia.mit.edu/>



Historic Old North Church

# ARG, Maties, C3 Examines Pirates and Pack Rats

By Joshua Green, C3 project manager

Understanding the moral economy of file sharing, the challenge of balancing copious media and too little space, and developing games that blur the boundaries between real and virtual spaces, the Convergence Culture Consortium (C3) has been involved in a cavalcade of work. In fact, the project team rolled out four major research reports.

**Alec Austin's** report on file sharing, "How to Turn Pirates into Loyalists: The Moral Economy and an Alternative Response to File Sharing," kicked off the term. Austin argues the predominant attitude maintained towards file trading by the entertainment industry misunderstands the nature of the relationship between producers and audiences.

This is a relationship governed by a "moral economy," he says, a pattern of relations and obligations that balances production and consumption rights, legitimating power structures and flows of capital. Austin argues this moral economy is upset by a range of factors, including digital locks placed on content and inefficient "official" file-sharing systems

that privilege producer rights over consumer rights.

"Audiences desire engagement, honesty, and respect, and often become advocates and evangelists for a property if they are offered all three," Austin writes. "But if they feel

like their trust has been abused, anger and resentment may cause them to see piracy and copyright violation as legitimate responses to corporate arrogance."

The second major report C3 rolled out was **Sam Ford's** work on media consumption in dorms, "No Room for Pack Rats: Media Consumption and the College Dorm." Based on a small ethnography conducted by Ford and undergraduate researcher **Rachel Shearer**, Ford's work explores the ways in which college students

manage the desire to archive large amounts of media with the limited space provided by dorm living. The report looks particularly at the interaction of close proximity and identity-forming processes, resulting in an understanding of the propensity and drive among college students to share media.

**Ivan Askwith** produced a detailed study of the rise and development of Alternate Reality Games (ARGs), which operate in real and virtual worlds. His research report, "This Is Not (Just) An Advertisement: Understanding Alternate Reality Games," draws on an impressive body of work, concluding that "At their best, ARGs capitalize on the growing awareness that experience is one of the most powerful marketing tools available, and most ARGs have proven both cost-efficient and highly effective in generating public awareness and media coverage for their sponsors and designers."

The final major report for the semester was **Geoffrey Long's** paper "Moving Stories: Aesthetics and Production in Mobile Media." Examining effective strategies for the development of compelling mobile media content, Long's piece analyzes barriers to the development of the mobile fiction market and proposes ways to move beyond technological, licensing, and creative obstacles.



C O N V E R G E N C E  
C U L T U R E  
C O N S O R T I U M

MIT COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES

<http://www.convergenceculture.org>



Two MIT students showed up at a Communications Forum dressed as "digital pirates." C3 researcher Alec Austin examines attitudes about piracy in his white paper, "How to Turn Pirates into Loyalists: The Moral Economy and an Alternative Response to File Sharing."



# Participatory Culture Detailed in NML Paper

By Margaret Weigel, *New Media Literacies* project manager

The New Media Literacies (NML) project's white paper "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century" was highlighted as part of the MacArthur Foundation's launch of a 5-year, \$50 million digital media and learning initiative. The MacArthur Foundation provides the primary funding for NML.

"This is the first generation to grow up digital - coming of age in a world where computers, the Internet, videogames, and cell phones are common, and where expressing themselves through these tools is the norm," said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. "What are the implications for education and for society? MacArthur will encourage this discussion, fund research, support innovation, and engage those who can make judgments about these difficult but critical questions."

The NML white paper proposes an expanded definition of literacy beyond traditional language-based conceptions, outlines problematic gaps in existing mainstream literacy pedagogies, describes critical elements of participatory culture, and proposes a set of emergent skills mapped to examples of best practices.

The white paper, authored by **Henry Jenkins, Ravi Purushotma, Katherine Clinton, Alice J. Robison** and **Margaret Weigel**, will hopefully operate both as a flashpoint for discussion and a blueprint for future pedagogical interventions. Below is an excerpt from the paper's executive summary:

"According to a recent study from the Pew Internet & American Life project, more than 1/2 of all teens have created media content, and roughly 1/3 of teens who use the Internet

have shared content they produced. In many cases, these teens are actively involved in what we are calling participatory cultures. A participatory culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some

type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with

one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created). Forms of participatory culture include:

- Affiliations – memberships, formal and informal, in online communities centered around various forms of media (such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, or MySpace).
- Expressions – producing new creative forms (such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan videomaking, fan fiction writing, zines, mash-ups).
- Collaborative problem-solving – working together in teams, formal and informal, to complete tasks and develop

new knowledge (such as through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, spoiling).

- Circulations – shaping the flow of media (such as podcasting, blogging).

A growing body of scholarship suggests potential benefits of these forms of participatory culture, including opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, a changed attitude toward intellectual property, the diversification of cultural expression, the development of skills valued in the modern workplace, and a more empowered conception of citizenship. Access to this participatory culture functions as a new form of the hidden curriculum, shaping which youth will succeed and which will be left behind as they enter school and the workplace."

"Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture" is available for download from the NML project website at [www.projectnml.org/files/working/NMLWhitePaper.pdf](http://www.projectnml.org/files/working/NMLWhitePaper.pdf).

PROJECT **NML**

<http://www.projectnml.org>



MACARTHUR  
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

## Research Fair Slated for Feb.

CMS will showcase their latest research on Thursday, Feb. 22nd from 5-7pm in the Stata center. Project faculty and staff will be on hand to answer questions. Projects featured include C3: Convergence Culture Consortium, Education Arcade, Metamedia, New Media Literacies, and the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab. Refreshments will be available.

# In Medias Res

MIT COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES

## CMS

**Henry Jenkins** (henry3@mit.edu), Director  
**William Uricchio** (uricchio@mit.edu), Director  
**Beth Coleman** (bcoleman@mit.edu), Professor  
**Alice Robison** (ajr@mit.edu), Post-Doctorate Fellow  
**Sarah Wolozin** (swolozin@mit.edu), Program Administrator  
**Leila Kinney** (lwkinney@mit.edu), Administrator for Academic Programs  
**Gene Fierro** (generoso@mit.edu), Undergraduate Administrator  
**Amanda Ford** (aford@mit.edu), Administrative Assistant  
**Ximena Irizarry** (xforero@mit.edu), Financial Assistant  
**Rik Eberhardt** (reberhar@mit.edu), Technologist  
**Brad Seawell** (seawell@mit.edu), Newsletter Editor

## Research Managers

**Kurt Fendt** (fendt@mit.edu), Metamedia (HyperStudio director)  
**Joshua Green** (jbgreen@mit.edu), Convergence Culture Consortium  
**Scot Osterweil** (scot\_o@mit.edu), The Education Arcade  
**Margaret Weigel** (maweigel@mit.edu), New Media Literacies

## Research Staff

**Anna Van Someren** (avansom@mit.edu), Video Producer  
**Ravi Purushotma** (ravi@mit.edu), Technologist

## GAMBIT Game Lab

**Philip Tan** (philip@mit.edu), Executive Director

## About *In Medias Res*

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**Comparative Media Studies (CMS)**  
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617.253.3599 / cms@mit.edu / cms.mit.edu

Please send newsletter comments to **Brad Seawell** at seawell@mit.edu.

## Design and Production

*In Medias Res* was redesigned in 2006 by CMS graduate student **Geoffrey Long** (www.geoffreylong.com). Design and production of this issue by **Don Marietta/VisualThinker** (donmarietta@comcast.net, www.visualthinker.net).

## Sketching the Labyrinth:

By Scot Osterweil, *The Education Arcade* project manager

Work continues on the design and development on The Education Arcade's (TEA) middle school math game Labyrinth. We are currently play-testing our designs with participants in the Computer Clubhouse at the Boys and Girls Club in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood.

We observe which challenges seem age-appropriate, what parts of the story excite kids' imaginations, and whether the interface and game challenges are comprehensible to them. Testing is still in its early phase, and will continue through the spring. During that time we will complete the design of the 12 puzzle environments that contain the game's core activities which focus on pre-algebraic math with an emphasis on ratio, proportion, number sense, variables, data, and geometry. The story, delivered in graphic novel format, will support literacy goals, as will the challenge of communicating with teammates about problem-solving strategies.

Also in its early phase is the actual game development, now underway in the Cambridge studios of Fablevision. To provide

*In mythology, Iris was the messenger of the gods. In Labyrinth she is the mysterious interlocutor who may or may not be helping you in your quest.*



# Artwork Documents Math Game Development

ager

a sense of how a game evolves from concept to finished product, the following images contain early artwork from Fablevision, illustrating the game narrative we described in the fall 2006 issue of *In Media Res*:

“You are deep in a mysterious labyrinth, searching for a lost dog, trying to rescue it before who knows what will happen to it. You are not entirely alone; from time to time you are visited by an unearthly sprite who takes the form of a young girl. You can’t quite figure out whether she is helping you or leading you astray. More ominously, you feel a chill wind, and the shadow of a Minotaur falls across your path. You flee in terror, not sticking around to confirm what it was that you saw.”

## Elsewhere in TEA

TEA has come to the end of a one-year project called POSIT: Public Opinions on Science using Information Technologies. POSIT is a role-playing game designed to help people engage in

“...ominously, you feel a chill wind, and the shadow of a Minotaur falls across your path. You flee in terror, not sticking around to confirm what it was that you saw.”

discussion around controversial issues in science and technology.

Participants are faced with a single question, such as “Should MIT build a high-security biohazard laboratory?” They move around real locations, meeting virtual characters and collecting virtual items using a handheld computer. Players compete to develop the most persuasive arguments using the evidence they have gathered. Research from pilot tests suggests that high school students became engaged in the controversy and improved their argumentation over the course of the game. POSIT was funded by the MIT iCampus initiative.

TEA is also working on a new History/Language Arts project in concert with several major media companies. Details are still under wraps, but will be announced in the near future, and described in the next issue of *In Medias Res*.



Above: Monsters in a cafeteria setting from *Labyrinth* sketches. Background: The Minotaur seems to be stalking you through the labyrinth.



Animator’s studies of a user’s avatar (in monster costume) for *Labyrinth*.



# Spring 2007 Calendar

February 15

5-7 pm  
room 3-270

## Remixing Shakespeare (Forum)

New technologies are enabling forms of borrowing, appropriation and “remixing” of media materials in exciting, provocative ways. But many creators and observers of such work assume the practice is brand new, a unique feature of our digital culture. The truth is that the act of seizing upon and repurposing artistic materials belonging to others is as old as art itself. The history of the use and appropriation of Shakespeare is an especially instructive instance of this eternal (and necessary) cultural process. In this Forum two MIT scholars who have studied and written about the remixing of Shakespeare will describe their research, show some salient audio-visual examples and discuss the implications of their work for contemporary culture. **Peter Donaldson** is professor of Literature, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and director of the Shakespeare Electronic Archive. Since 1992, the Archive has used computers to develop new ways of studying the text, image and film records of Shakespearean publication and production. **Diana Henderson** is professor of Literature and author of *Collaborations with the Past: Reshaping Shakespeare Across Time and Media*; *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen* and *Passion Made Public: Elizabethan Lyric, Gender and Performance*. She is an active participant in MIT’s partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company. The forum will be moderated by **Mary Fuller** of the Literature Faculty.

February 22

5-7 pm  
Stata Center  
(first floor lobby)

## Converging Media: Games, Literacy and Culture Research Fair

Join us to explore the many facets of research on cutting-edge digital games, media literacy, innovative humanities databases, and redefined corporate/consumer relations now underway in MIT’s Comparative Media Studies program. Faculty, staff and students will be on hand to showcase their work and answer questions about their latest findings. Refreshments will be served.

March 1

5-7 pm  
room 3-270

## What’s New at the Media Lab? (Forum)

A conversation between **Frank Moss**, new director of the Media Lab, and CMS Director **Henry Jenkins** about ongoing projects and inventive digital applications at MIT’s legendary laboratory.

March 8

5-7 pm  
room 2-105

## A Site for Social Data Analysis (Colloquium)

While visualization is traditionally viewed as an efficient way of transferring a large amount of information from a database into an individual’s head, we believe that visualizations become far more powerful when multiple people access them for collaborative sense-making. To test this hypothesis, IBM’s Visual Communication Lab recently launched Many Eyes, a website devoted to a new social style of data analysis and visualization. **Fernanda Viegas** and **Martin Wattenberg** will discuss the design goals behind the site and provide a preliminary report on the usage patterns we have seen. Viegas is a research scientist in IBM’s Visual Communication Lab where her work focuses on social and collaborative aspects of data visualization. Previous projects explored e-mail archives, newsgroup conversations, chat-room interactions, and the editing history of wiki pages. Her visualization-based artwork has been exhibited in galleries in New York, Los Angeles, and Boston. Wattenberg, also a research scientist in IBM’s Visual Communication Lab, focuses on information visualization and its application to collaborative computing, journalism, and art. Wattenberg’s visualization artwork has been exhibited in venues ranging from Ars Electronica to the Whitney Museum of American Art.

March 15

5-7 pm  
room 2-105

## Old World, New World: How Communities, Culture, Connectivity, and Commerce are Changing How We Create Culture, Media, Education and Politics (Colloquium)

**Alan Moore**, CEO of engagement marketing company SMLXL and co-author of *Communities Dominate Brands*, believes that community-based engagement initiatives and the enabling of peer-to-peer flows of communication within organizations, and those that engage with them, will replace the traditional media orthodoxies of government, management, business, media distribution and marketing.

March 22  
5-7 pm  
room 2-105  
or TBA

**“This One’s Gonna Be a Slobberknocker”: A Q&A with WWE’s “Good Ol’ J.R.” Jim Ross (Colloquium)**

**Jim Ross**, the longtime voice of World Wrestling Entertainment, joins CMS graduate student **Sam Ford** to discuss the unique blend of reality and fiction in the world of American professional wrestling world. Ross will talk about how WWE’s distribution across multiple media platforms creates an interesting storytelling atmosphere, and he will share experiences from his many years in the television industry as wrestling has moved from broadcast to cable and pay-per-view and now to DVD distribution, on-demand, and the Web. See Ross’s Web site at [www.jrsbarbq.com](http://www.jrsbarbq.com).

NOTE: This is the first of two colloquia about American professional wrestling being organized this term by **Sam Ford** ’07. Ford is teaching a spring class on the pro wrestling industry (see page 6) and is a researcher for the Convergence Culture Consortium. He is a weekly columnist for the *Ohio County Times-News* in Hartford, Ky., and performs in pro wrestling events on occasion.

April 5  
5-7 pm  
room 3-270

**Evangelicals and the Media (Forum)**

American evangelicals have a long history of engagement with the media, dating back to Great Awakening of the late eighteenth century. Today evangelical groups are active in all media, from the Internet and cellular telephones to print journalism, broadcasting, film, and multi-media entertainment. In this Forum, our speakers discuss the social and political impact of the evangelical movement’s use of media technologies. **Gary Schneeberger** is special assistant for media relations to James Dobson, founder and chairman of the evangelical group Focus on the Family ([www.family.org](http://www.family.org)). **Diane Winston** is the Knight Chair in Media and Religion in the USC Annenberg School for Communication and author of *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army*. The Forum will be moderated by the Rev. **Amy McCreath**, MIT’s Episcopal chaplain and coordinator of the Technology and Culture Forum at MIT ([web.mit.edu/tac](http://web.mit.edu/tac)).

April 12  
5-7 pm  
room 2-105  
or TBA

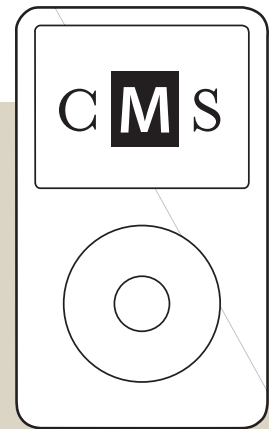
**The Real World’s Faker than Wrestling: Former WWE Champion and Best-Selling Author Mick Foley (Colloquium)**

**Mick Foley**, one of the top wrestling performers of the past decade, will talk about his experiences as an entertainer and bestselling author who has written three memoirs (including *Foley Is Good: And the Real World is Faker Than Wrestling*), two novels, and a variety of children’s books. Foley has been a professional wrestler since the mid-1980s and was a headlining star for World Wrestling Entertainment ([www.wwe.com](http://www.wwe.com)) under the personas of Mankind, Cactus Jack and Dude Love. Foley will discuss telling stories in a variety of written and performative genres and how he has managed to bridge the gap across multiple genres and entertainment forms.

April 19  
5-7 pm  
room 2-105

**Ambiguity, Process, and Information Content in Minimal Music (Colloquium)**

Recent trends in music composition push bounds by creating pieces which are either more complex or simpler than works of the past. And yet, our ability to understand and be interested in the compositions at these extremes has kept pace. In this talk, **Michael Cuthbert** will show how simple minimalist processes give rise to highly ambiguous structures, while many of the most complex moments are reducible to easier to comprehend processes. The effect of potentially endless works—including sections of Beethoven symphonies--will generalize the talk to other musical styles and other media. Cuthbert, visiting assistant professor of music at MIT, has worked extensively on fourteenth century music and on music of the past forty years. A recipient of the Rome Prize of the American Academy, Cuthbert earned his Ph.D. from Harvard in 2006.



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– continued on page 14

## Faculty

**Ed Barrett** (Writing and Humanistic Studies) will publish his prose-poem novel *Kevin White* in April. *Kevin White* is the second installment in a trilogy of Boston-based poetry novels Barrett began with the publication of *Rub Out* two years ago.

**Sarah Brouillette** (Literature) joined the MIT faculty this past fall and is looking forward to a busy spring term. She will be teaching the contemporary British novel (21L.488); traveling to Toronto for the Transnationalism, Activism, Art conference; finishing two articles on the post-Troubles literary and creative industries in Northern Ireland; and eagerly awaiting the May release of her first book, a work addressing the media and market contexts for the emergence of English-language postcolonial literature.

**Beth Coleman** (CMS, Writing) is on junior faculty leave this semester. She is busy writing *The Virtual World Primer*,

a study of virtual world design and use. This summer she and the Project Good Luck team will be returning to China to continue work on social network and mobile media use in professional communities. Please visit [www.projectgoodluck.com](http://www.projectgoodluck.com) for more information on either research project.

**Ian Condry** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) hosts a book-launch party for his recently published *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (2006, Duke UP). A discussion and reception with Condry will be held Thursday, March 1, 4-5:30 pm in room 4-237. That evening, Miss Monday – a female rapper from Japan – will perform at 9 pm upstairs at the Middle East in Central Square. Both events are part of Cool Japan 2007 conference to be held Feb. 28 through March 3. See [web.mit.edu/condry/www/cooljapan/CJ07/](http://web.mit.edu/condry/www/cooljapan/CJ07/).

**Mary Fuller** (Literature) had her book manuscript on the ways Renaissance writing on travel and cultural contact has

entered historical memory accepted at Palgrave. Her session of Media Systems (CMS.400) titled “How to read an early modern book,” will draw on her work in preparing the manuscript. This spring, Fuller’s new class on the poets Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott examines their transformations of classical and medieval epic, and their interest in crafting a local language for poetry.

**Gilberte Furstenberg** (FLL) spent two weeks in Paris this winter with a group of five MIT students exploring different parts of the city as well as its history, visiting several museums and attending a variety of plays from the classical to the modern. She also presented the CD-ROM *A la Rencontre de Philippe at Expolangues*, a yearly event in Paris designed to promote the learning of languages and develop international communication.

**Henry Jenkins** (CMS) spent January traveling to Singapore where he gave the inaugural lecture in the Singapore Press

(calendar continued from previous page)

**April 26**  
**5-7 pm**  
**room 2-105**

### What’s Live Got To Do With It? (Colloquium)

It is possible that live performance is not so live any more. In this talk, **Sharon Mazer** will look at the ways that audience “performances” may be seen to challenge the live-ness of the onstage action in the *Road to Wrestlemania 23*, which the WWE takes to New Zealand in early 2007, and in Te Matatini, the National Kapa Haka Festival, a biennial Maori cultural performance competition happening that same weekend. Mazer is head of the Department of Theatre and Film Studies at the University of Canterbury (Christchurch, New Zealand). Her book *Professional Wrestling: Sport and Spectacle* was published by the University Press of Mississippi, and her current research is focused on Maori performance.

**April 27-29**

### Conference: Media In Transition 5: Creativity, Ownership And Collaboration In The Digital Age

This fifth Media in Transition conference aims to generate a conversation that compares historical forms of cultural expression with current media practices. See [web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit5](http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit5).

**May 3**  
**5-7**  
**room 2-105**

### Love May Not Be in the Afternoon Anymore: A Q&A with Soap Opera Writer Kay Alden About How the Genre Is (and/or Should Be) Changing with the Times (Forum)

Longtime soap opera writer Kay Alden will talk with about her decades in the industry with CMS graduate student **Sam Ford** '07 who is writing his thesis about soap operas. Alden worked for more than 30 years on *The Young and the Restless*, the top-rated daytime drama that she served as head writer for from 1998 to 2006. Recently, she took on a consulting position with ABC Daytime and continues working with the genre during what is seen as a period of substantial change for the daytime television industry. Ford’s thesis, “*As the World Turns* in a Convergence Environment,” focuses on the shifting technologies and cultural patterns that are affecting daytime television.



Holdings Foundation's Media in Transition series, speaking inside the Drama Hall of the National Public Library. He went on to give lectures at University of Southern California, University of California-Los Angeles, and Duke University, as well as visit with C3 research partners Turner and MTV Networks, before finally arriving back in Boston in time for the launch of the Sony IAP workshop. Earlier this fall, he went to Warsaw to help launch the Polish language edition of his book *Convergence Culture*.

**Wyn Kelley** (Literature) published *The Companion to Herman Melville* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers) this fall, and her edition of Melville's *Benito Cereno*, a volume in *The Bedford St. Martin's Anthology of American Literature*, came out at the end of 2006. During IAP, Kelley attended meetings in New Bedford with the Melville Society Cultural Project, where she participated in the *Moby-Dick* Marathon, and worked on a new permanent exhibit at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

**Eric Klopfer** (Urban Studies and Planning), the director of the Teacher Education Program, is on sabbatical this year writing a book on mobile games and learning, the first draft of which is nearly complete. He has been involved with the new Singapore game initiative, and visited Singapore this fall. Over IAP he is working on a beta release of StarLogo TNG, a game and simulation authoring toolkit for kids and teachers. This spring he will be traveling to Irvine, CA and Santa Fe, NM.

**Martin Marks** (Music and Theater Arts) hosted a Jan. 14 IAP event, "The Making of a Silent Film Score: An Open Rehearsal." A chamber orchestra of 16 MIT students performed his score as live accompaniment to the silent film *Where Are My Children?* (65 minutes, Universal Film Co., 1916). The film and Marks's score will be featured in the four-DVD set *Treasures III: Social Issues in American*

## Convergence Culture Wins 2007 Kovacs Book Award

Henry Jenkins's *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* has been awarded the 2007 Katherine Singer Kovacs Book



Award by the Society for Cinema and Media Studies.

The award selection committee members, Greg Smith (chair), Pam Wojcik, and Daniel Bernardi, reviewed 87 books for this year's competition. They drafted the following citation for *Convergence*

*Culture*: "Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide reclaims the new media buzzword 'convergence' as a productive but not quite predictable interaction among synergistic corporations, migratory audiences, and multiple technological platforms.

"He discusses how this unruly process is redefining public culture through popular culture, and Jenkins's approachable prose reaches out to both media scholars and non-specialized audiences alike. The terms he uses ('participatory culture,' 'collective intelligence,' 'affective economics,' 'transmedia storytelling') are already reconfiguring the way we think about the contemporary media environment."

The award will be announced on Thursday, March 8 at the SCMS conference in Chicago.

*Film, 1900-1934*, on sale in the fall of 2007 through Image Entertainment. Marks is the music curator for the *Treasures* set.

**Irving Singer** (Philosophy) recently completed two long-term projects: 1) *Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing Up*; and 2) *Memories of World War II*. He is now seeing through the press his book *Ingmar Bergman, Cinematic Philosopher*, which will be published by The MIT Press this year. In fall 2007 Singer will teach a new course entitled *Aesthetics and Philosophy of the Arts*.

**David Thorburn** (Literature) is in The Netherlands this spring as a

Fulbright Lecturer. He is teaching a course on American TV at Utrecht University and giving lectures on American poetry at the University of Amsterdam. Forthcoming publications include an essay on *The Sopranos* for a collection on HBO from a university press and poetry scheduled for publication in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

**William Uricchio** is on sabbatical in the Netherlands where he has just finished editing *We Europeans? Media, Representations, Identities*, one of the fruits of the European Science Foundation group he led; he is meanwhile writing a book on "televisuality" from the 19th century onwards. Over the coming month or two, his writing breaks will take the form of trips to Bergen, Norway (to evaluate a dissertation on avatars), Tokyo (to lecture at Tokyo University), Rotterdam (to lecture at the Rotterdam International Film Festival), and back to Cambridge and CMS (to catch up on all the developments!).

**Andrea Walsh** (Writing) is currently teaching Expository Writing: Social and Ethical Issues in Print, Photography and Film, and doing research on the portrayal of the American women's movement in documentary film. Walsh also consults to WGBH on a Mellon project to open the station's archives to researchers and teachers. During summer 2007, she will be teaching about the American women's movement in a Summer Institute, "Pursuing Justice," for public school teachers.

**Jing Wang** (Foreign Languages and Literatures) has a book, *Brand New China: Advertising, Media, and Commercial Culture*, forthcoming this year from Harvard University Press.

**Christopher Weaver** (CMS) was awarded one patent for a new type of electronic security device and another is pending for an affinity matching database

locator. He contributed a chapter in the new release of *Fundamentals of Game Design* (Pearson/ Prentice Hall) and is putting together a software business while preparing for his spring term course Media Industries and Systems. He got married in January to his fiancée Nanci.

## Graduate Students

**Alec Austin** ('07) is in the process of completing the rough draft of his thesis (which deals with the creation and fulfillment of expectations in entertainment media), and is preparing for a career as a videogame designer. His abstract for a paper on the nature of authorship in games and interactive media was recently accepted by the 2007 Media in Transition Conference.

**Ivan Askwith** ('07) will spend his final semester focusing on his thesis on television's change to an "engagement medium." Having completed two broad studies on alternate reality games (ARGs) for C3, he will shift his attention this spring to social networking sites. In March, he will travel to Chicago to present his research on *Lost* as a panelist at the annual conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. He is also preparing chapters on *Lost* for publication in two forthcoming academic books; the first, *Third Person*, will be published by MIT Press later this year and will explore the concept of "vast narrative worlds."

**Mike Danziger** ('08) is developing several projects related to his visualization research. He will be chasing his secret childhood dream of becoming an electronic music producer, by way of a collaborative audio project with fellow CMS student **Andres Lombana**.

**Amanda Finkelberg** ('07) took some much needed time this winter to catch up on reading and research for her coming thesis on digital cartography. In addition to wrapping up a video project for the MIT Museum's Biology exhibit, Finkelberg took advantage of her last few months in Boston visiting the new ICA as well as the MFA, the Science Museum, and a smattering of Boston's

## New Faces Among CMS Ranks



Amanda Ford

**Amanda Ford** is the new administrative assistant for the CMS office. She graduated from Western Kentucky University in 2005 with a Bachelor's degree in literature and a minor in film studies. Since graduation, she has presented at the national Popular Culture Association conference on interdisciplinary studies in higher education and taken further classes in history.

**Leila Kinney** is CMS' new administrator of academic programs. In that role, Kinney administers the academic programs in CMS including the graduate and undergraduate programs, the visiting scholars program and the Post-Doctoral Fellows program.

Before joining CMS, she taught modern art history in the History Theory and Criticism section (HTC) of the Department of Architecture at MIT for twelve years and contributed to CMS and Women's Studies courses.

Her publications address the work of early modernist painters, world fairs, hybrid artistic genres, and new visual technologies in the nineteenth century. She served as electronic editor for the College Art Association and co-founded its online reviews journal [www.caareviews.org](http://www.caareviews.org). Kinney earned a BA in English Literature and Art History from Agnes Scott College and an MA in History of Art from Yale University.



Leila Kinney



Anna van Someren

**Anna van Someren** is video producer for the MacArthur Foundation's New Media Literacies (NML) project. Prior to working at MIT, she was Youth Voice Collaborative Program Coordinator at the YWCA Boston, where she developed new media curriculum and taught multimedia production workshops. Someren has taught Digital Editing and Video Storytelling at the college level and is also an accomplished commercial editor and award-winning video artist. She is a graduate of Colgate University and has her Master of Fine Arts degree from Massachusetts College of Art.

many pubs. In January she attended the National Conference on Media Reform in Memphis.

**Sam Ford** ('07) is teaching a course this spring on the history and media industry surrounding American pro wrestling (see story, page 6), bringing together a variety of academic and industry sources and speakers for the CMS course, being conducted under the tutelage of **Anthony Lioi**, a professor in Writing and Humanistic Studies. Ford is also working on his thesis on American soap opera, "*As the World Turns* in a

Convergence Culture," and continuing research for the Convergence Culture Consortium, including case studies on fan proselytism and running the C3 Weblog and internal newsletter. He plans to give presentations related to his soap opera research at the National PCA/ACA Conference and MIT5.

**Neal Grigsby** ('07) returns from IAP having co-taught a class on zombie filmmaking with classmate **Kristina Drzaic**. He also debuted footage from the New Media Literacies exemplar video on Wikipedia at a panel discussion

sponsored by MIT Libraries. For the spring term, he will be a teaching assistant for **Alice Robison's** class on media literacy and finishing his thesis on narratives of adolescence. For NML, he will produce video segments on videogames or social networking and spearhead the design of an ARG aimed at teenagers.

**He Huang** ('07) reports that the past term was busy, bewildering and enlightening, as usual. What was unusual was that she managed to squeeze some time out of her tight schedule to start playing videogames, which she described to people as doing research. While snailing her way through thesis development this winter, she continued to work on the Chinese animation project and looked for new ideas and tools that will better equip the project for future needs.

**Liwen Jin** ('08) traveled to China to spend Christmas with her family and her friends at home. After Christmas, she visited Nanjing and Hangzhou where she gave two lectures to college students, sharing with them her life and studies in MIT. On January 8, Jin returned to Boston and began her IAP activities. She took a class on documentary filmmaking with **Gene Fierro** and renewed her work for C3 and the HyperStudio. She is now working on a white paper about Chinese advertising and marketing.

**Andres Lombana** ('08) is working during IAP on sound design for the Dramashop production *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* directed by **Tommy DeFrantz**. He is also working for the New Media Literacies Project this month on the curriculum materials for his exemplar video on DJ culture. Later in January, he will participate in the CMS Sony Workshop. He is looking forward to collaborating with fellow CMS students.

**Geoffrey Long** ('07) spent the last several months creating a C3 white paper on mobile media, a video game and a novel. This spring finds him creating designs for C3, LIT@MIT, CMS, GAMBIT, and corporate clients, papers for MIT5 and the SMCS Conference, and his thesis.



*Several CMS graduate students will be working with the New Media Literacies project this spring. See the project Web site at [www.projectnml.org](http://www.projectnml.org).*

**Debra Lui** ('08) is beginning work on her spring NML exemplar project documenting the *Moby-Dick* project at Mixed Magic Theatre in Pawtucket, RI. Lui is working with the Convergence Culture Consortium and this January is researching fan practices on YouTube. In the spring, she will be expanding on her knowledge of media education by taking the New Media Literacies class with CMS post-doc **Alice Robison**.

**Dan Roy** ('07) helped organize the First Annual Boston Game Jam this January, bringing together professional game developers to experiment with design innovation. He's preparing to present at the Game Developer Conference again in March on his work designing games with The Education Arcade. He'll spend the spring finishing his thesis on linking cell phones and PC massively multiplayer games (see [crossgamer.com](http://crossgamer.com)).

**Steve Schultze** ('08) is balancing CMS coursework, Harvard Law courses, research with New Media Literacies, and planning for the Beyond Broadcast conference (see story, page 5). He was at the National Conference for Media Reform and will also attend the Digital Broadband Migration Conference. This spring, he will be a teaching assistant for a radio course at MIT and an Internet policy course at Harvard Extension School. Schultze will also present a paper on music and copyright at the MIT5 conference.

**Karen Verschooren** ('07) will be focusing on her thesis for which interviews with Christiane Paul, Steve

Dietz, Barbara London and Benjamin Weil are being scheduled. In addition, she will be co-organizing the MIT Short Film Festival and CONTAGS, an exhibition featuring work from Jonah Brucker-Cohen, Olia Lialina, Alexander Galloway, Cory Arcangel and Marisa Olson among others. Finally, Verschooren is writing an essay for *The Weight of Photography*, a book edited by Johan Swinnen, and an article she wrote on Spanish film history 1936-1939 will be published in May.

**Evan Wendell** ('08) is currently doing research on "historical" video games, especially war games, in an effort to explore the impact these games have on popular understandings of history. At the same time, he is also trying to grapple with the changing face of music, especially indie rock, in the context of convergence, high-quality digital formats, and social networking sites like MySpace Music, and their potential to revitalize the DIY model. Over IAP, Wendell is improving his guitar skills, as well as continuing his work with the Education Arcade on the puzzle-based game Labyrinth.

**Huma Yusuf** ('08) spent the fall immersed in new media. Her early designs for the Pakistani webzine she aims to launch this year were informed by her research on social networking sites for the Convergence Culture Consortium as was her conceptualization of an interactive archival project for Metamedia. Yusuf also fed her interest in online journalism by attending the Neiman Narrative Journalism conference in Boston. This spring, she will continue to examine the transition from print to online journalism during the course of an independent study and begin to document how global media trends impact urban spaces.

## Visiting Scholars

**Frank Flerackers** is dean of the law faculty and president of the Association of Flemish Academics who studied law and philosophy at Leuven University, King's College and Harvard University. He is also a professor of law and conflict analysis at the Brussels University KUB faculty of law and professor of alternative



dispute resolution at the European Academy of Legal Theory. Fleerackers publishes widely on law and philosophy, has authored or edited 11 books, and directs the Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution Enhancement (CARE). His current research focuses on conflict analysis as a context for enhancing legal practice and legal education in an interdisciplinary setting.

**Cabell Gathman** earned her BA in religious studies and her MS in sociology and is currently a Ph.D. student in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is interested in technologically mediated social interaction, particularly how people use multiple technological channels (email, IM, MMOGs, social networking sites, etc.) to develop and maintain relationships, as well as how people perform identities such as gender in online spaces. She recently completed an internship with the PlayOn project at PARC, working on avatar interaction and the properties of 3-D graphic virtual spaces.

**Tomoyuki Iino** graduated from Sophia University in Tokyo, earned his MA in English at University of California, Davis, and received his Ph. D. from Sophia University. Since 2000, he has been professor of English Literature at Sophia where he specializes in American poetry with special emphasis on its various relations to American music, mainly blues and jazz. As a visiting scholar in CMS since April of 2006, he is working on the parallel movements of American poetry and music from the 1950s to 1970s: how “pulse” acted as a guiding principle for elevator music and minimalism as well as for the poetry of Robert Lowell, John Berryman, A. R. Ammons and John Ashbery.

**Bo Kyeong Kim** graduated from Korea National University of Education (KNUE) in 1999, and held a position of teaching as a Middle School computer teacher for three years. Her MA thesis for KNUE was entitled “Activity Theory as a Theoretical Framework for Understanding Activities in Educational Games.” Her PhD dissertation, “Design and Development of a

## 2007 Thesis Presentation Schedule

Presentations are open to the CMS community and the public

**Friday, March 23, 2007**

**Room 1-273**

8:30 am-9:00am	Coffee
9:00-9:40am	Sam Ford, “As the World Turns in a Convergence Environment”
9:40-10:20am	Ivan Askwith, “TV 2.0: Turning Television into an Engagement Medium”
10:20-10:35am	Coffee break
10:35-11:15am	Tracy Daniels, “The Long Tail and Minority Cinema”
11:15-11:55am	Alexander Austin, “Expectations Across Entertainment Media”
12:00-12:45pm	Lunch
12:45-1:25pm	He Huang, “Resisting and Realizing: The (Re)Make of Chinese Animation”
1:25-2:05pm	Geoffrey Long, “Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company”
2:05-2:45pm	Neal Grigsby, “Ceaseless Becoming: Narratives of Adolescence Across Media”
2:45-2:55pm	Coffee
2:55-3:35pm	Karen Verschooren, “.art: situating internet art in the modern museum”
3:35-4:15pm	Amanda Finkelberg, “Spaces, Places, and Databases: Cartographic Technologies in the Networked Environment”
4:15-4:30pm	Coffee break
4:30-5:10pm	Peter Rauch, “Playing with Good and Evil: Videogames and Moral Philosophy”
5:10-5:50pm	Kristina Drzaic, “I am Cheating. Don’t Tell! Mythology and Meaning in Video Game Secrets”
5:50-6:00pm	Coffee break
6:00pm-6:40pm	Lisa Bidlingmeyer, “Identity, Memory, Image and the (Tele)Visual Secret Agent”
6:40-7:20pm	Dan Roy, “Mastery and The Mobile Future of Massively Multiplayer Games”
7:30-8:30pm	Reception

Teaching Simulation to Enhance Teaching Skills” was recently completed at KNUE. Since attending the “2005 Education Arcade Conference” in Los Angeles, Kim has developed a broad interest in designing and developing edutainment applications, using simulation in teacher education.

**Ksenia Prasolova** is a Fulbright visiting researcher currently working on her Ph.D. thesis. She is a graduate of the Faculty of English Philology and a post-graduate student at the Department

of Foreign Literature of Immanuel Kant State University of Russia (Kaliningrad). Her primary research interest is a literary theory take on fan fiction, which she studies on the example of the Harry Potter fandom. Prasolova’s other interests include the theory of translation and interpreting, shopping for books and teaching. Her grant period ends in late June, when she is going back to Russia to defend her thesis.

(from back cover) CMS and earned a master's degree. A stint as a teaching assistant last year inspired him to get involved on a full-time basis.

"I love MIT," gushes Bersak. "The faculty boasts all the leaders in their respective fields across the sciences and humanities. There's a stereotype on the outside that MIT does not have a strong humanities program, but when you're on the inside, you realize that it has one of the strongest humanities faculties of any institution."

Of course, Bersak's enthusiasm for the Institute may stem from the fact that it introduced him, through an undergraduate course, to his first passion: documentary photography. Having discovered his inner shutterbug, Bersak began working for *The Tech* and was soon discovered by the Associated Press, where he worked as a photojournalist for a year after graduation.

"Photojournalism was difficult," admits Bersak. "I worked long hours for pay that was just enough to scrape by on. As a freelancer, I had to maintain my own equipment, which was an added expense." He also points out that exciting assignments were often the most challenging.

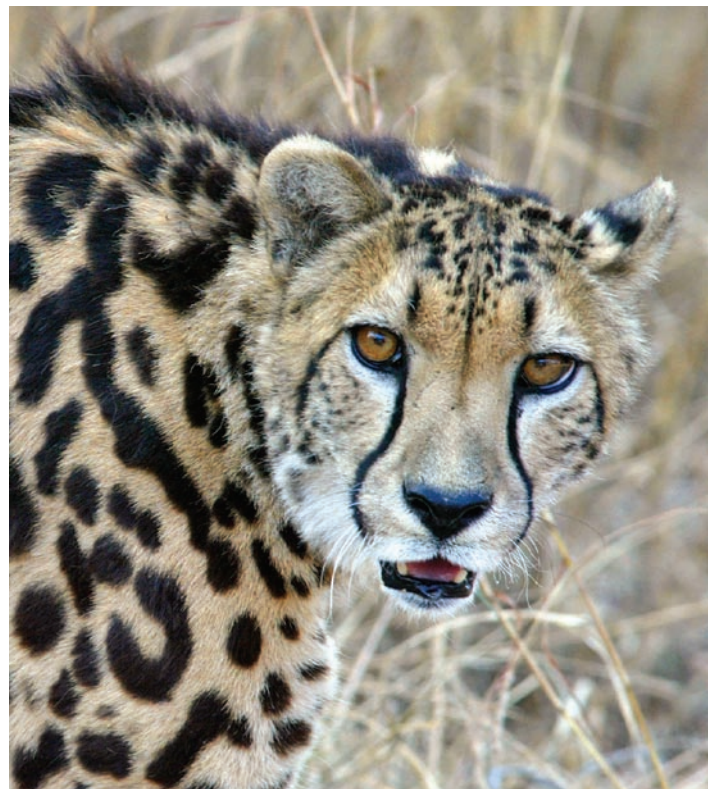
"I covered the Republican and Democrat conventions during the 2004 elections. While it was amazing to be on the floor, barely 15 feet away from the presidential candidates, I had to claim my spot 20 hours earlier than the event began and couldn't move away even for a bathroom break. It was a real physical test of endurance."

### 'That Winning Shot'

Complaints aside, Bersak admits that competing with thousands of other photographers for that one shot that no one else could get is what makes the job worth doing. Not surprisingly, then, his other favorite subjects include protest riots and sports. Ever the MIT student, Bersak likens sports photography to a puzzle: "you have to know the stats. You have to work out the probability of what's going to happen next so that you're ready to take that winning shot."

Given his enthusiasm, Bersak is fortunate to be able to balance his love for photography and pedagogy. Recently, he took time off from work to travel to South Africa where he photographed cheetahs in Pretoria, the slums of Soweto, and the artifacts of the Apartheid Museum.

"I love taking pictures of my dog. Thanks to this last assignment, though, I can finally say that I've done some nature photography," jokes Bersak.



*A teary-eyed infant in Soweto and a cheetah in Pretoria are among the photographs taken by Dan Bersak during a recent trip to South Africa.*



# CMS Clicks for Lensman Alum

By Huma Yusuf '08

Stressed out graduate students will be happy to learn that they have it easy. It could be much worse. They could be photojournalists. Or so says **Dan Bersak**, an MIT alum ('06) who just can't seem to get enough of Comparative Media Studies.

While working as a freelance photojournalist, Bersak maintains his ties to CMS teaching media production and writing courses. His affiliation with the 02139 zip code began in 1998, when he enrolled with the Institute as an undergraduate to study electrical engineering, computer science, and, of course, media studies.

After taking Henry Jenkins's introductory media course – "it was the only humanities course that didn't have a lottery" – Bersak remained with



MIT alum and teacher Dan Bersak has photographed protesters, stars (Snoop Dogg, below left), star politicians (Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, below right), and ball players (ex-Sox Gabe Kapler).



– continued on page 19