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education arcade

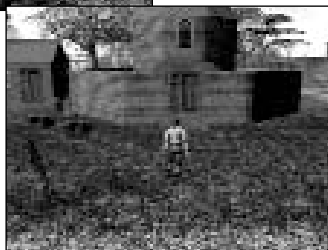
This revolution will be digitized, texturized...

The Education Arcade has confirmed the final agenda for a major games-in-education conference to be held in conjunction with this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). The gaming industry's largest event, E3 will be held in May at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

The goal is to spotlight and build awareness of the use of computer and video games by students, teachers and researchers as learning tools. Session topics range from the theoretical—*Are Games Educational?* and *From Simulation to Interaction*—to the practical—*Fostering Games Literacy* and *Making Tools for Making Games*. Speakers include leading scholars such as David Buckingham (University of London) and Scott Fischer (University of Southern California), and game designers such as Will Wright (*The Sims*) and Sid Meier (*Civilization*).

A complete list of sessions and speakers, as well as registration information may be found at: www.education-arcade.org.

Building on work done through the two-year Microsoft iCampus project Games-to-Teach, the Education Arcade is a consortium of international game designers, publishers, scholars, educators, and policy makers led by **Henry Jenkins**, **Eric Klopfer** and **Philip Tan Boon Yew** in Comparative Media Studies, **Kurt Squire** at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and **Alex Chisholm** at LeapFrog Enterprises. The Arcade's mission is to demonstrate the social, cultural, and educational potentials of



games by initiating new game development projects, coordinating interdisciplinary research efforts, and informing public conversations about the broader and sometimes unexpected uses of this emerging art form in education. By working in conjunction with the Entertainment Software Association and organizing the conference as part of E3 Expo, organizers hope to raise the level of visibility of educational gaming, which has been considered only a small niche within the annual \$10 billion gaming industry.

Revolution is the name of the American history role-playing game being developed with assistance from **Pauline Maier** of the MIT History department and from staffers at Colonial Williamsburg (the screen shots to the left are from *Revolution*). An advisory board consisting of high school social science teachers from schools in the Greater Boston area was recently established, and the board will advise the creators of *Revolution* on the

content and classroom implementation of the game. The *Revolution* team is in the process of consolidating the 3D modeling and texturing work by Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) students

Cassie Huang, **David Lee**, **Andre Sugai**, **James Tolbert** and **Edward Scholtz**.

UROP **Nicholas Hunter** has been prototyping game functionality using BioWare's Aurora toolset scripting language and has developed non-player characters that are smart enough to converse and spread rumors, to maintain levels of friendship or enmity with player characters, to follow the roads in the town, to congregate when they hear of meetings, and to identify and arrest lawbreakers.

CMS graduate students **Brett Camper** and **Matthew Wiese** have been working with the undergraduates to develop overarching plot structures and to revise and document the details of the game mechanics. The group is

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director's chair

Amid activity, year away from cms seems like 20

by Henry Jenkins, director, CMS

Reading through this issue of *In Medias Res*, I feel a bit like Rip Van Winkle returning home after several years of napping. I was only away for a year—and in the age of the Internet and cell phones, I can scarcely claim to have been out of touch with developments here at MIT. But, I have been amazed upon my return to see how many of the things we've dreamed about and worked towards for the past four years or so have started to become a reality.

First, let me signal my deep appreciation for **William Uricchio's** leadership over the program while I was away. He did an excellent job of holding us together through some financially and emotionally difficult times. I am certain that his calm dignity made a huge difference in how our community responded to some of those disappointments and setbacks. We have not simply endured; we have flourished even in the worst of times.

One of the core challenges we set when we launched the CMS program was to embody the concept of "applied humanism." I know the phrase annoys some of my colleagues who feel strongly that the humanities has always been, in some fundamental ways, an applied field that speaks to those things which make us human. Yet, I see a value in holding up the idea that we can become even more engaged with the world around us, that we can be even more committed to translating our ideas into a common language that speaks beyond the Ivory Tower, and that we can be even more determined to translate out research into forms which make a difference in people's lives.

As I look through the contents of this issue, it is clear that this idea of "applied humanism" is being embodied by the day-to-day activities of our students, visiting scholars and faculty.

Several weeks ago, I went to the Museum of Science to participate in the Hi-Tech Who Done It, which was being run as an extension of the work that **Eric Klopfer** has been doing on the educational use of handheld computers. I can scarcely describe the excitement of the kids and their parents as they raced around the museum, looking for clues, and teaching each other about science.

Not long after that, I sat down with American History teachers from around Boston as the *Revolution* team

showed off what they have been working on this fall. The teachers were excited about the potentials of using this game in their classes this coming fall and offered rich insights about what aspects of Colonial American politics and culture we should be incorporating into the next phase of game development.

You see this spirit of applied humanism as you read the accounts offered here by **Peter Donaldson, Wynn**

Kelly, Gilberte Furstenberg and others working on the MetaMedia project. As more and more mini-archives are completed, as they are being deployed in classrooms at MIT and elsewhere, as students discover what it is to express themselves through this new platform, as other groups seek out the

MetaMedia team as collaboration partners, we are seeing the fulfillment of a vision which we all had at the launch of this important initiative — of transforming humanities education through the creative use of digital technologies.

You see that same spirit when we read **Sarah Kamal's** moving account of her experiences in Afghanistan, helping to create a radio station which will allow women, long silenced under the Taliban, a voice in their community.

You see it when you read about a range of student products involving radio, digital filmmaking, or handheld computers or when you read about **Parmesh Shahani's** plans for a film festival focused on the Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transsexual perspectives from South Asia, or when you see the rich mixture of speakers planned for the Communications Forum and Colloquium this term or when you read about how the CMS community is working together to develop an exhibit for a local museum on computer games as art.

The other week, I felt it when I listened to some of our visiting scholars describe the work they are doing this term—the mixture of old and new media, the attempt to bring together global perspectives on media change, and especially the effort to do pragmatic research which can have a real impact on our changing culture.

And I felt it when I re-entered our ongoing conversations with the Royal Shakespeare Company to collaborate across a range of exciting projects in the coming year.

Individually and collectively, we are achieving our vision for CMS! And all of this, amazing as it is, is just the beginning of what we can do together.

“Applied humanism is embodied by our students, visiting scholars, faculty.”

metamedia update

At mit, humanities is a multi-media experience

by Peter Donaldson, head, MIT Literature

The MetaMedia Project began three years ago, with Henry Jenkins, Kurt Fendt and myself as co-directors. Each of us had completed a major project — Henry's was the Virtual Screening Room, an amazing resource for teaching film style and film editing, linking interactive tutorials to editing tools and an extensive collection of clips. Kurt Fendt and Ellen Crocker were the authors of *Berliner sehen*, in which over 20 hours of conversations filmed in the former East and West Berlin can be freely reconfigured by students of German literature and culture as they make sense of a new (virtual) environment by telling their own stories and building their own presentations. My own work was the Shakespeare Electronic Archive, a collection of early texts in photofacsimile, an extensive art collection, and a number of films all linked to the lines of Shakespeare's plays.

We are in the midst of a revolution in how the humanities are taught. As in the past, we need to preserve, arrange, and make accessible broad areas of knowledge — as a college library does. But now our collections are cross-media. We also need to focus intensely on particular texts, passages in texts, even single words. We need to collect and compare texts for ourselves and discuss them with others. In literature, the skills and practices of focused study and discussion are called "close reading."

Now, we need to closely read not only words but the images, recorded sound, and film. We need to read each of these media on their own terms, and also need to learn to

hear, see, ponder and discuss those meanings that cross or hover between media.

MetaMedia deals with both ends of the knowledge spectrum in the humanities by providing tools so that humanities teachers themselves can build media collections that are stable, well organized and easily accessible and also can be easily reconfigured and added to by students as they make their own collections and prepare

materials for close analysis in class or in remotely connected collaborations. MetaMedia addresses the difficult problems of creating fully interoperable, cross-platform archives structured by state-of-the-art metadata. It provides work spaces for students and teachers to use all media to

support discussion and multi-media essay writing.

We planned MetaMedia as a series of new collections, partnering with faculty many of whom have never worked in multimedia before, aiming at creating a small collection or "mini archive" that would support from one week to one month of classroom teaching. In that way, we could form a growing community of faculty and students who could share their experiences in multimedia, as we have done, throughout a wide range of fields.

The results have been extremely rewarding — "mini archives"

on Arab Oral Epic, Early Comics, Spanish and French Culture, Modern Dance, Herman Melville and Toni Morrison have been among the many projects that have been developed in MetaMedia, and there are exciting projects in Shakespeare, Dürrenmatt and mobile museum

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"We are in the midst of a revolution in how the humanities are taught."

See pages four and five for individual project updates

Metamedia archives and project supervisors

The following projects will be added to the archive in spring 2004:

- **Berliner sehen** (Kurt Fendt, Ellen Crocker)
- **Arab Oral Epic** (Susan Slyomovics)
- **Declarations of Independence** (Pauline Maier)
- **MIT-UPV Archive** (Douglas Morgenstern)
- **Shakespeare Electronic Archive** (Pete Donaldson)
- **Au-delà du regard** (Johann Saddock)
- **Memories and Commemoration** (Dagmar Jaeger)

Current MetaMedia archives include:

- **American and British Authors** (Wyn Kelley)
- **Comics and Popular Culture** (Henry Jenkins)
- **Cultura** (Gilberte Furstenberg)
- **Digital Dance Archive** (Thomas DeFrantz)
- **España de cerca** (Margarita Ribas Groeger, Adriana Gutiérrez-Gonzales)

Future projects:

- **Rethinking Early Media: Exploring the Fin-de-Siècle Mediascape** (William Uricchio)
 - **China: In The 60s** (Tong Chen)
- Supervisors to be determined:
- **International Advertising Archive**
 - **Royal Shakespeare Performance Archive**
 - **Beijing Film Academy Archive**
 - **Einstein's Life**
 - **Dürrenmatt's play "The Visit of the Old Lady"**

Archives feature interactivity and flexibility

American and British Authors

This past fall, I experimented with using the archive in two different settings. The first was a seminar (Herman Melville and Toni Morrison) where students delivered extensive reports on topics like Harlem

Renaissance art, Melville and the Mississippi River steamboat, or rural African-American towns in 1930s Ohio. These were lavishly illustrated and well documented. A new feature of the archive allowed students to

annotate their own illustrations, and other students could comment on their work. The results were thoughtful and well written, and reflected the students' respect for and understanding of the imaginative leaps required by this kind of study.

The other project, in a larger Introduction to Fiction class, involved

a one-week study of Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray," in which students commented on a mini-archive of images presented in class and then annotated their comments later.

Both classes expanded their range

produced presentations in multimedia. This term, I am trying two new approaches. In a new section of Introduction to Fiction, I am now having students give five-minute oral presentations using image archives (something I have not been able to fit

into a large class before). And my Writing About Literature class will, for the first time, be creating journal archives of text and images to share with the rest of the class. In both classes, students seem to be learning and using the technology more



of visual and cultural associations with the texts through this work and also gained new appreciation of aesthetic concepts like baroque, modern, sublime, or jazz through the use of nonverbal media. They also became more adept at deploying multimedia information and tools and confidently

quickly than in the past as the MetaMedia site improves in functionality, and they see the advantages of bringing these resources to bear in the study of literary texts.

--Wynn Kelly

Cultura

Since the Fall of 2003, we have used the MetaMedia framework, especially its forums, for the Cultura project, a project that since 1997 has connected MIT students taking an intermediate French class with students taking an English class at a University in Paris.

Through a collaborative process, the students gradually construct a deeper understanding of one another's cultural attitudes, values and frames of references. They use a comparative approach, which leads them to analyze a series of textual and visual materials from their respective cultures that are juxtaposed on the Web, and then to exchange viewpoints on the material — via online discussion forums and each in their own language.

The great advantage of the forums in MetaMedia is that they have allowed students to exchange images as

well as texts. By exchanging visual icons and representations of their respective cultures, or comparing images of an American suburb with a French one or offering photos that reflect different concepts of citizenship, the realities of one another's culture become truly alive.

The very fact that students themselves contribute those images by uploading them onto the Metamedia site brings them to yet another level of exchange and involvement, as they question each other about the context in which these images were taken as well as their purpose. Students explore further, within their respective language classes as well as together across the ocean, what other cultural aspects those images might reveal - thus creating ever new meanings and insights with media.

--Gilberte Furstenberg

Flâneurs savants (knowledgeable wanderers)

Through our work with MetaMedia, we learned of a wealth of photographs and historical illustrations of the Marais neighborhood in Paris that had been gathered and archived by Professor **Gilberte Furstenberg** for a French education CD-ROM.

With the support of Professor Furstenberg, Professor **Edward Barrett**, former MIT student **Raj Dandage**, and the MetaMedia team, we built a walking tour of the Marais using these images, as well as newly acquired images and our own research. We built this using Macromedia Flash, and designed it for use on Pocket PC hand-held devices.

The project, titled *Flâneurs Savants*, is in English. It includes architectural details and monuments, memorials, restaurants, markets, and stores. We installed it on a few handhelds and sent them with Professor Furstenberg and a

small group of MIT students who spent part of their winter break in Paris for their use and feedback.

The two major findings so far are not very surprising: Our next phase of development will require us to visit Paris to expand the tour, and the handhelds themselves raise some usability issues that require upgrades or improvements in what's currently on the market.

We hope to expand the tour in several ways, including deepening the relationship between the tours and the MetaMedia database. That way, we can create image-text modules for easier customization of tours by themes and routes. Since the neighborhood, like many urban neighborhoods, is in constant flux, MetaMedia also provides a way to easily enter and catalogue updated images gathered by future users and ourselves.

--Andrea McCarty and Rekha Murthy

Metamedia interface design

As part of my graduate research assistantship with Metamedia, I have been working on the design and development of the Metamedia application interface.

Like any successful application, it was important for the Metamedia interface to be easy-to-use, well-organized and aesthetically pleasing. At the beginning of the design process, our team held several brainstorming sessions to identify what features we were going to include and the order of their importance.

As Metamedia grows and is used in more classrooms at MIT, I repeat the process of getting feedback on the latest design from the teachers, students and members of Metamedia, then building new prototypes to reflect the comments. The layout, style sheets and images are then implemented in the application by members of our programming staff. In this manner, we can refine the Metamedia interface to create an optimal experience for our users.

--Moneta Ho

Making metamedia tick

MetaMedia relies on XML-based open standards such as Dublin Core, TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) for text documents, MPEG-7 (for video and audio documents), SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) for learning objects, and other standards to ensure portability and exchangeability of all data in MetaMedia archives.

This requires a scalable database to effectively store and retrieve the metadata (MetaMedia currently uses Oracle) and powerful server software to organize and generate the display of media documents (we currently use the open source application server Enhydra and XSLT).

Due to its modular architecture, it is possible to exchange one of the technical components of MetaMedia (such as the database application) without having to rewrite the entire framework.

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learning in preparation.

In addition, we are having exciting discussions with Institute-wide projects such as D-Space and OpenCourseWare about ways in which MIT can strengthen digital collection-building as well as the specif-

ic, daily needs of teachers and students in specific MIT subjects.

Every day, the goals of networked media educations seem closer to realization, as the libraries of the past are supplemented by cross-media digital collections, and as the precious close and contextual interpretive practices of the humanities are extended across

media and across distance.

We are extending the humanists' idea of the classroom as a "reading community" from text to all media; from the small seminar to discussions involving students and teachers in other institutions; and around the world.

Spring 2004 Communications Forum and CMS Colloquium Schedule

<p>February 19 5-7 p.m. Bartos</p>	<p>Forum: Writing and Producing in Prime Time A writer-producer of prime-time series since the 1980s, John Romano, returns to the Forum to offer his personal report card on the state of prime time. Has the writer lost power in the dubious plenitude of the age of cable? What is the significance of the recent dominance of reality programming for the future of TV series and movies? A former English professor at Columbia University and the author of a scholarly book on Charles Dickens, Romano is currently working on the screenplay for Philip Roth's <i>American Pastoral</i>, and is a consulting producer and sometime writer for the current prime time show, <i>American Dreams</i>. Among his other television credits: <i>Hill Street Blues</i>, <i>Sweet Justice</i>, <i>Third Watch</i>, <i>Monk</i>, <i>Party of Five</i>, and <i>Providence</i>.</p>
<p>February 26 5-7 p.m. 2-105</p>	<p>Colloquium: Inter:ReActive Jessica Irish, an assistant professor in the Art Department at Wellesley College, will present and discuss "Inter:ReActive," a local, two-year initiative that produced three alternative media literacy projects in collaboration with Belmont High School, the Urban Education Project, and local artists. Irish is former co-director of OnRamp Arts, a non-profit digital arts organization in Los Angeles, for which she continues to serve on the board of directors.</p>
<p>March 4 5-7 p.m. 2-105</p>	<p>Colloquium: Cartoons and Social Protest Ted Rall has been a leading figure in promoting the use of comics for social documentation and protest. His cartoons now appear regularly in more than 140 publications nationwide, and he was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in political cartooning in 1996. His recent books include <i>Attitude: The New Subversive Political Cartoonists</i>, a collection of alternative cartoons, and <i>To Afghanistan and Back</i>, chronicling Rall's harrowing experiences covering the war for the <i>Village Voice</i> and KFI Radio. Rall will talk about his work, his politics, and the larger contexts in which he operates.</p>
<p>March 11 5-7 p.m. Bartos</p>	<p>Forum: Interactive Television -- Rethinking Interfaces The introduction of the Digital Video Recorder (DVR) has significantly altered the ways many consumers relate to television content -- offering a simple way to access what they want to watch when they want to watch it. How has this new interface altered consumer behavior and their perceptions of the medium? What new models for interactive television are starting to emerge in research labs and think tanks around the country? This panel features Dale Herigstad (Schematic TV), a leading figure in the American Film Institute's workshop on interactive television design, and Josh Bernoff, a principal analyst for Forrester Research, who has done extensive research into the ways that TiVo and other digital recorders are impacting American media consumption.</p>
<p>March 18 5-7 p.m. 4-237</p>	<p>Forum: The Emerging Mediascape National Public Radio ombudsperson Jeffrey Dvorkin and <i>Boston Globe</i> media critic Mark Jurkowitz consider how new sources of information are interacting and competing with traditional forms of journalism. Are we less informed today, amid a torrent of voices and technologies offering us so-called news, than citizens in olden, pre-digital days? How has the role of print or radio journalism changed since the advent of the Web and the 24-7 operations of the TV cable news networks?</p>

<p>April 1 5-7 p.m. Bartos</p>	<p>Forum: New Media, New Audiences Betsy Frank, executive vice president for research and planning at MTV Networks, will discuss the latest research on television-viewing, the emergence of niche audiences, the battle for advertising between broadcast and cable networks, and the whereabouts of audience members in the 18-26 age group (so crucial to advertisers). MTV networks include Nick at Nite, MTV 1 and 2, TVLand, VH1 and Spike.</p>
<p>April 8 5-7 p.m. 2-105</p>	<p>Colloquium: The Global Impact of Japanese Popular Culture Matt Thorn is a cultural anthropologist who examines the role of manga and anime in Japanese culture. He is an associate professor in cartoon and comic art at Kyoto Seika University in Japan, and frequently translates Japanese comics into English, helping to make them more accessible to a global market (tentative).</p>
<p>April 15 5-7 p.m. 2-105</p>	<p>Colloquium: Hindi Films in London Rachel Dwyer examines Hindi cinema, considered the dominant form of Indian cinema. Dwyer looks at Hindi cinema in the U.K., tracing the complex dynamic between the Indian producers and British-Asian audiences within the wider context of British culture. Dwyer is senior lecturer in Indian studies and chair of the Centre of South Asian Studies at the University of London. She is the co-author of <i>Cinema India: the Visual Culture of the Hindi Film</i>, and is currently completing two books: <i>100 Great Hindi Films</i> and <i>Filming the Gods: Religion and Hindi Cinema</i>.</p>
<p>April 22 5-7 p.m. 2-105</p>	<p>Colloquium: The Excavation of Exploitation Eric Schaefer, associate professor of visual and media arts at Emerson College, is considered to be a leading authority on exploitation films, and he's authored "<i>Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!</i>": <i>A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959</i>, for which he received the Theater Library Association's Special Jury Prize for Distinguished Achievement. Schaefer is currently researching and writing a sequel to that book which deals with the early history of soft-core pornography in the United States. Schaefer will be explaining the nature of exploitation films and addressing questions about why and how they should be studied.</p>
<p>April 29 5-7 p.m. 2-105</p>	<p>Colloquium: Visible Proofs and Internet Forgeries – the Chinese-Indonesian Rapes of 1998 Karen Strassler is Hardy Post-Doctoral Fellow in visual anthropology at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. Her dissertation, "Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and the Indonesian Culture of Documentation in Post-Colonial Java" (University of Michigan, 2003) examines the intersection of everyday visual practice, material culture, and political imagination. Her current research continues to center on questions of media and mediation, politics, and visibility.</p>

MIT Communications Forum

For more than 25 years, the Forum has sponsored talks on all aspects of communications. The Forum was founded by the late Ithiel de Sola Pool, a pioneer in the study of communications who taught in MIT's Political Science Department.

All Forums are open to the public.

For more information about the Forum, see the website at <http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum>

CMS Colloquium Series

The Comparative Media Studies colloquium series is intended to provide an intimate and informal exchange between a visiting speaker and CMS faculty, students, visiting scholars and friends.

For information about the series, please contact the CMS Office at 617.253.3599.

Visit the CMS website at <http://web.mit.edu/cms> for information about the program.

people, places, things

CMS engaged in global and local initiatives

Faculty

Edward Barrett's Digital Poetry class, taught as a special topics course this term, has been approved as a permanent class listing.

Odile Cazenave recharged her batteries in the Yucatan over the break, while revising an essay on the new aesthetics of commitment in African literature. She also wrote a review for *Callaloo* on the South African novel *Welcome to our Hillbrow*. This spring, Cazenave is a visiting associate professor at Harvard in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. At MIT, she is teaching a new course for Women's Studies, Women and Global Activism in Art, Media and Politics.

Ian Condry has found a new interest in the "culture of piracy" (file sharing) among music fans, and in what cross-national comparisons between the U.S. and Japan can tell us about changes in the music industry. Condry is exploring these issues in two spring classes: Cultural Performances of Asia and Introduction to Japanese Culture.

John W. Dower's and **Shigeru Miyagawa's** traveling exhibit *Black Ships and Samurai*, will be shown in a variety of places this year including the National Archives in Washington

D.C., the Boulder, Colo. Public Library, and the Honolulu Festival. See the website for *Black Ships & Samurai* at <http://blackshipsandsamurai.com>.

Kurt Fendt was appointed visiting professor at the Institute for Media and Cultural Communication at the University of Cologne, Germany. A January presentation at the Swiss National Library/ Swiss Literary Archive lead to a new joint project that will develop a community-based digital archive of manuscripts, reviews, secondary literature as well as film, radio, and theater versions of one the most prominent Swiss plays *The Visit of the Old Lady* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. This project will be co-developed by CMS MetaMedia, the Swiss Literary Archive, and the University of Berne.

Henry Jenkins is back at MIT and hard at work. He is going to be presenting his ideas about media and education at nine different conferences between now and July, is working to organize the teacher's advisory group for the *Revolution* game and to launch the Media Literacy section of the Education Arcade homepage, is working with a group of CMS graduate students to curate an exhibit on games as art for the Arts Interactive, and is working with **Joellen Easton**, Jason Mittell from Middlebury College,

Initiative Media, and students and faculty from Northwestern's Media Management Center to examine the role that genre plays in shaping patterns of television consumption. He is also continuing to research and write his new book on the ways that convergence is altering the balance of power between media producers and consumers.

Christina Klein will serve as a respondent on the panel "Defining America Abroad: Promoters and Presenters," during March's Organization of American Historians conference. She authored two forthcoming essays, "Martial Arts and the Globalization of U.S. and Asian Film Industries" in *Comparative American Studies*, and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: A Diasporic Reading" in *Cinema Journal*.

Douglas Morgenstern and his project collaborators in Spain published an article on the MIT-Universidad Politécnic de Valencia (MIT-UPV) Exchange in the November 2003 issue of *Syllabus: Technology for Higher Education*.

Jeff Ravel and his family spent the second half of December in Kathmandu, Nepal, where they adopted their fifteen-month-old daughter Naomi. Ravel continues work on his micro-historical study of a notorious late seventeenth-century French legal affair involving bigamy, calumny, and the theater.

Charity Scribner celebrated the launching of her book, *Requiem for Communism* (MIT Press), with a February reception in the Media Lab. Scribner says her new course, *Plotting Terror in European Culture*, might well be the testing ground for an art

Black ships and samurai migrating to mit's opencourseware

In the next month or so, the *Black Ships and Samurai* exhibit will migrate to MIT's OpenCourseWare (<http://ocw.mit.edu>). *Black Ships and Samurai* is about U.S. Navy Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in Japan 150 years ago, and is part of the Visualizing Cultures project by **John Dower** and **Shigeru Miyagawa** in which they study how visual materials can provide insights into history and culture. In their most recent project, they are developing a virtual exhibit site with the Sackler-Freer Museum of the Smithsonian Institution based on the "Yokohama Prints" exhibit originally created by Sackler-Freer and exhibited at their gallery.

exhibition at the Kunst Werke in Berlin in 2005 – “The Myth of the Red Army Faction” – for which she has been named co-curator.

David Thorburn will travel to Innsbruck, Austria, in April to be a featured speaker at an international conference on “Media Communities.” His talk will describe some MIT initiatives to utilize the Web and other digital technologies for non-commercial purpose, in service to ideals of global community and citizenship.

Edward Baron Turk helped launch the Harvard Film Archive’s month-long January homage to the late French film and media critic Serge Daney by introducing the series’ opening-night film, Marcel Carné’s classic *Children of Paradise*, and by discussing his first-hand interactions with Daney.

William Uricchio is on leave for the coming year thanks to a Guggenheim fellowship. He’ll be based in the Netherlands much of the time, working to complete several projects including a book that considers the concept of television as a “new” medium. Uricchio helped to organize the Filming Cities conference to be held at Cambridge University this March (see <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/events2004/filmingcities.html>), where he will present a paper.

Jing Wang held a workshop in November that formally launched MIT’s multi-disciplinary China policy studies program, bringing together partner institutions (universities, governmental units think tanks) from China, Australia and the U.S. While on sabbatical this academic year, Wang is writing a book on advertising in China and will return to Beijing to work at Ogilvy for two months this summer.



Kayla Jones photographed
by Sylvia Sensiper

Visiting scholars

Maureen N. McLane has recently published several reviews on contemporary poetry, queer history, and media in the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Modern Philology*; and forthcoming essays will appear in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*. Her poems recently appeared in *Circumference: poetry in translation*, and *The Harvard Review*.

Curtiss Priest presented a paper, “Media Concentration: a Case of Power, Ego and Greed, Confronting our Sensibilities,” at an American University Law Review symposium on Regulating Media Competition: The Development and Implications of The FCC’s New Broadcast Ownership Rules.

Christoph Ribbat is working on “Six Prodigies: Youth, Authorship, and American Cultural History,” in which he investigates six so-called wunderkind of American literature and their media representations: Mary Antin, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Carson McCullers, Truman Capote, Michael Chabon and Donna Tartt. Ribbat is a recipient of a Fedor Lynen Fellowship.

Sylvia Sensiper’s photographs, many taken while she was creating a photography curriculum at the Peabody Elementary School in North Cambridge, have been accepted to The Boston Drawing Project at the Bernard Toale Gallery in Boston.

Inga Tomic-Koludrovic is analyzing the role of new media in the democratization of post-socialist countries. She is a Fulbright Scholar from Croatia.

Vera Walker-Hawkins is looking at the use of technology to increase curricular accessibility for all students, and she and her team of undergraduate researchers have begun work in the Cambridge public schools.

Yuichi Washida has completed the data collection phase of his media environment survey, and has begun looking at the results with researchers in Sweden and the Netherlands. The survey, conducted in the U.S., Holland, Sweden, China and Japan, will yield an analysis of how people interact with media, especially new media. During IAP, Washida presented a lecture at MIT called, “Keitai Cool: The Latest in Mobile Phone Lifestyle in Japan and Beyond.”

Graduate students

R.J. Bain continued working on his thesis dealing with HBO’s recent original series *K-Street* and considering how the portrayal of actual political events and figures within works labeled as fiction might affect the manner in which some viewers’ choose to learn about politics and government. In addition, as an independent study, Bain is penning a screenplay under the guidance of John Romano, consulting producer on NBC’s *American Dreams*.

continued next page

Graduate students continued

Brett Camper is participating in the ITSelf reading group in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society. This spring, Camper will continue his research into the practices and cultures of computer programming, pursue some new interests around the history of amateur game development, and work outside of class on a miniature golf computer game.

Joellen Easton continues her work as an associate producer with the BBC/PRI/WGBH co-production *The World*, and related programs *The Changing World*, and *The World After the War*. During IAP, she was in the newsroom full-time, learning various producing roles for the daily show.

Michael Epstein is working on getting History Unwired, a mobile technology for the tourism industry, off the ground and into the streets of Venice. Epstein received a Director's Grant from the MIT Arts Council for development of a radio show called *News Lab* on WMBR, 88.1. In March, he will be speaking about *edutainment* in schools at the South by Southwest Conference in Austin.

Clara Fernández is working on her thesis, which combines a study of Shakespeare and film with theatrical performance and radio drama. She says her favorite part of the research so far has been listening to old radio programs, especially Welles' Mercury *Theatre on the Air*.

Cristobal Garcia spent part of the winter break in Chile, and returned to MIT for IAP during which he attended Manuel Castells' seminar on information-age issues. Garcia continues his work on the Venetian mobile tourism project History Unwired, and during the winter break he and fellow researcher **Michael Epstein** visited

potential investors at the Media Lab Europe in Dublin, the Stockholm School of Economics, the Tate Modern in London, and the Alcala de Henares in Spain.

Moneta Ho spent three weeks in China where she spent time documenting the Shanghai/Pudong City landscape for a series of paintings that she received an MIT Arts Council grant to create. Back at MIT for her final semester, Ho is a teaching assistant for **Edward Barrett's** Digital Poetry class, and she is working with curators at the Art Interactive Gallery in Cambridge to create a website for an upcoming exhibit, Pattern Language.

Brian Jacobson spent most of the winter break in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia developing thesis ideas related to marginalized groups' use of media as a tool for political resistance, as informed by the writings of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari.

Sarah Kamal danced her way into the New Year in Kabul, Afghanistan, where she was working with Afghan women journalists on a talk radio program (see opposite page). Spending a few days in Tehran, Iran, Kamal wrapped up her 8-month contract as project manager for the Oxford University Refugee Studies Centre, which entailed gathering data on the long-term effect of forced migration on Afghan refugee youth in Iran.

Andrea McCarty continues her work on a Pocket PC-based walking tour of the Marais neighborhood in Paris. Over IAP, she worked with the French Consulate of Boston to organize and publicize a symposium devoted to film criticism and French film critic Serge Daney. McCarty also spent some time consulting on a collection of 16mm film that included home movies, cartoons and newsreels from the 1940s.

Rekha Murthy spent the last week of December lending a hand to her former employer, NPR's *All Things Considered*. There, amid interview booking and piece mixing, she managed to produce her final paper for **Edward Turk's** course in Major Media Texts as a sound piece. Cambridge-area activities have included submitting to a couple of conferences, watching *Clash of the Titans*, *Les Enfants du Paradis* and *The Fog of War*, and leading a team to victory in **Henry Jenkins's** videogame design competition.

Parmesh Shahani helped coordinate the MIT screening of a documentary on civil rights' activist Brother Outsider and a talk by the film's producer, Mridu Chandra. He presented "Spectacle, Spectator, Specta[c]tor," at the Graduate Arts Forum in January in which he showcased two collaborative CMS projects. Shahani is currently organizing Boston's first-ever festival of Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transsexual South Asian film and identity, to take place April 1-3 at MIT.

Yannis Zavoleas will be participating in the ARCO exhibition in Madrid, Spain, during spring 2004, showing the video and architectural projects "Cannes Reloaded," "Senses" and "Fecund CityScapes."

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Long silenced, afghani women find voice on radio

by Sarah Kamal, CMS

“If we don’t get 160 dollars per month, we’re walking out right now,” Soraya (a pseudonym) said. The two women standing behind her nodded. It was the day before the launch of the first independent women’s radio station in the region, and the staff was threatening to go on strike. I don’t believe this, I thought.

The past week had not gone well. The local partner had said she was receiving daily death threats. The studio had to be stripped and hastily renovated to improve its soundproofing. The faulty electrical system had caused the monitor to blow and the CD player to smoke. Everybody was grumpy because it was Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. And now, to top it all off, the very women we had trained and supported through all this were threatening to go on strike.

The Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan, several Afghani government officials, and most importantly, the city’s warlord-turned-governor were coming to the radio’s inauguration the next day. Soraya and her colleagues had us in a corner, and they knew it.

Things are often not what they appear to be, as I’ve learned to my repeated chagrin in Afghanistan. Soraya had reasons for her opportunism that went beyond personal gain. And the local partner’s death threats and fear of the warlord/governor were something else altogether.

But, I’m getting ahead of myself. I’ve spent close to 4 months in Afghanistan over the last year, and have been granted many interesting opportunities. I volunteered in the drafting of the country’s policy on technologies for the disabled, conducted research on women’s radio listening habits in a remote village,

and trained Afghani journalists during their coverage of the Constitutional Loya Jirga in Kabul.

Radio peace

Perhaps my most interesting project was working with a women’s radio station in a very conservative city in an outlying province of Afghanistan.

The Institute for Media, Policy, and Civil Society (IMPACS), a Canadian NGO, was spearheading the radio’s set-up. I volunteered to help IMPACS launch the station, and they accepted. And after Radio Solh (Radio Peace) was launched (the strike averted via diplomacy), I stayed to observe and support the women in their first week of broadcasts.

I was interested in seeing what Afghan women journalists would say on the air, as there was substantial pressure on them locally to broadcast conservative material. The region is tightly controlled by the governor and his supporters, who have styled themselves after press-unfriendly mentors in Iran.

Women’s singing is forbidden in public, and the region is notorious for its high rates of women’s self-immolation. On the other hand, the region is also well-known for its highly cultured and well-educated women and men. I was curious to see how women journalists would negotiate a space for their ideas in such an environment.

The local partner who had flustered and panicked over death threats and the anger of the governor turned out to be a well-connected supporter of his. It later became clear that there had been no death threats. Her women’s rights activism offered a veneer of a women’s movement, safely diluted to the governor’s



--photo by Sarah Kamal

tastes, to showcase the governor’s progressiveness. One can debate the most effective route for supporting women’s rights in an environment such as hers, but making up death threats is questionable by most standards.

As for Soraya, a visit to her home made a few things abundantly clear. Her young children were well-behaved, but terribly afraid of their father. A harsh glare from the father was enough to make his son shrink and cry.

I later sat with Soraya, regretting my earlier assumptions on her motives. “Life’s difficult, isn’t it,” I said. “There are so many controlling forces, aren’t there? The governor’s supporters out in the streets, employers at work, sometimes even husbands at home.”

She looked down.

“And then there’s the innocent who need to be protected from that.” I continued.

She gazed directly at me.

“Would you eat our sorrow, Sarah?” she asked me softly. I squeezed her hand and we understood each other, and somehow it was enough.

Revolution from cover

aiming to have a nine-person multiplayer demonstration level by the end of summer.

Augmented reality

One of the foci of the Education Arcade has been the development and exploration of educational games on handheld and mobile devices. A specific emphasis has been placed on augmented reality (AR) simulation games that use location-aware handheld technologies to embed players in lifelike situations and provide opportunities to engage in critical thinking through scientific role-playing. The first of these games, *Environmental Detectives*, put MIT and high school students in the role of environmental scientists investigating a simulated environmental disaster. In late January, the Education Arcade debuted its newest AR game *Hi-Tech Who Done It: Mystery @ The Museum* as a short course at the Boston Museum of Science.

Mystery at the Museum paired students (grades 5-8) with their parents to investigate a virtual theft at the Museum. Players guided by location-aware handheld computers physically moved throughout the exhibit halls to collect virtual clues, interview virtual characters, and

attempt to solve the mystery. Players took on distinct roles that provided them with differentiated clues, causing groups to devise and implement collaborative strategies. The game was an unqualified success by accounts from both game participants and Museum staff.

Throughout the fall, CMS graduate student **Parmesh Shahani**, working with **Philip Tan Boon Yew** and **Henry Jenkins**, has done interviews with leading thinkers and researchers in games education. The major task this term is to develop a curricular model for a games-education course that can be taught at the high school and college levels, and will be modeled on CMS' Independent Activities Period (IAP) workshop in game design and interactive storytelling sponsored by SONY. This year, as CMS graduate students **Andrea McCarty**, **Karen Schrier**, **Lisa Bidlingmeyer** and **Rekha Murthy** and CMS undergraduate **Bryan Arbuszewski** led teams in the design competition, scribe **Parmesh Shahani** and videographer **R.J. Bain** recorded their efforts.

The plan is to produce a series of short digital videos documenting the process of the design competition with the aim of helping teachers elsewhere understand the competition's pedagogical goals and how to achieve them.

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