

New Visual Technologies – Shifting Boundaries, Shared Moments

Special Issue of Visual Studies

Editors:

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Synopsis

This special issue of Visual Studies explores the implications of the wide range of contemporary and emerging visual technologies for social groups, professions and institutions. Visual technology has been and is being transformed in a number of areas: carriers (e.g. cellular networks, the Internet), production technologies (e.g. digital camcorders and cameras, mobile phones), display technologies (e.g. public displays, mobile phone projectors) and services (e.g. Flickr, MMS, blogs). Of particular interest for this special issue is the dissolving boundaries of exchange and media mobilities (Urry, 2000) that these transformations entail. New visual technologies (e.g. the Internet) now support sharing of visual media across geographical regions, temporal zones and cultural conventions. This not only has implications for how boundaries between individual (e.g. friends) and groups (e.g. different households) are defined but also for how these boundaries are managed through the use of different forms of media. Some examples of this are the visual narratives portrayed in digital photographs on Flickr and snippets of video on YouTube. Such visual technologies can be used to maintain family through the remote, asynchronous sharing of digital photos or to bring home the experience and impact of a particular event.

The ongoing transformation and exchange of visual media is our concern: for example video taken opportunistically when on holiday, taken up by an organization in a different time zone for later examination, that then is acquired for posterity or is taken up by the a family for remembering an event. This issue also targets how ordinary personal visual media play a role in people's lives and the many forms of looking they afford, one being the well known "gaze" (Urry, 2002; Foucault, 1976). Our concern is not only with the journalistic process of how these media capturing moments are compiled and placed on display (e.g. via digital sharing) but also with the role of *particular* visual media *in* and *through* time in *particular settings* and how they participate in and construct people's personal and collective material lives. The global reach of new distributive technologies also raises questions about cross and intercultural interpretations of visual materials and how visual materials are used to construct, reconstruct and deconstruct cultural identities. Thus our concern is both individual and intimate, regarding these media in the trajectory of people's biographies (Strauss, 1993) and social and community-driven, regarding these media as part of the fabric of particular "social worlds" (Becker, 1982; Strauss, 1978) and (virtual) communities (Mynatt et al., 1998; Rheingold, 2000). We are also concerned with the "reciprocal impact" (Strauss, 1993) of capturing and working with these media, the role they perform in constructing the ways of seeing (Berger, 1982) and for whom. In this focus we are interested in how new visual media are woven together with more traditional written forms i.e. how people *use* different media, the *emotions* involved with their use and their *temporal qualities*. Thus we are not concerned with (new) visual media alone but how these media can interlock and interface with text for example. Our concerns also include the *transformations* which these media support and undergo as time passes – e.g. through the explicit use of digital media as visual activism (e.g. <http://www.wsf.tv> and <http://visualactivism.blogspot.com>), – the importance of these media's different levels of *materiality* as well as their content (Shove et al., 2007) and the practical *ethics* inherent in sharing, exchanging and viewing photographs, video and other images.

This special issue represents an exploration of both new visual technologies material form and their content-carrying capabilities across different settings as well as how these technologies interlock and interweave with more traditional visual (e.g. paper photos) and written technologies (e.g. text on paper) to achieve particular purposes.

Submissions

We wish to gather articles on new visual technologies which represent forays into visual research, explorations of the visual aspects of culture, as well as new or adaptations to existing methods and methodologies for investigating particular social worlds. Submissions can include uses of digital photography and video and other new visual media in domestic, community and leisure settings.

Appropriate longer submissions include:

- Extended reports from the field studies using visual and other technologies;
- Critical literature reviews of uses of visual technologies in other studies;
- Discursive pieces exploring themes in visual technology use and/or their potential in particular settings;
- Developments of existing/proposal of new methods/methodologies.

Shorter submissions can include:

- Reflections on approaches and methods;
- Opinion pieces;
- Early reports on studies of technologies in situ;
- Design proposals addressing particular themes.

Given the topic of the special issue and the nature of the journal, visual materials (e.g. photographs, screen shots, figures) are encouraged as an integral part of submissions.

Relevant dates are below:

<i>DATE</i>	<i>DEADLINE</i>
15 th February 2010	Papers due
31 st March 2010	Notification
31 st May 2010	Revisions due
31 st July 2010	Final notification
15 th September 2010	Final papers due
late 2010/early 2011	Publication

Form

Submitting authors should conform with the journal's guidelines including copyright guidelines available from: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/journal.asp?issn=1472-586X&linktype=44>. Papers can either be long submissions of between 7,000 and 8,000 words or shorter papers of between 2,000 and 3,000 words. Papers should be submitted via email to Connor Graham at cgraham@unimelb.edu.au.

Information on the Visual Studies journal is available from:

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/1472586X.asp>. Please contact Connor Graham (cgraham@unimelb.edu.au) if you have any questions.

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