

Project 4: The Video Remix/Mashup

First, we must learn to understand learning and work in new ways: Creativity is no longer the production of original texts, but the ability to gather, filter, rearrange, and construct new texts—symbolic-analytic work, articulations.

—Johndan Johnson-Eilola, *Datacloud*.

The terms mixing and remixing denote a basic process of digital media on many levels. From the technological convergence of different media, to the cutting, looping, editing, merging, and superimposing of multiple sources within the same media. My interest is how the process of mixing is analogous to thinking, and how digital technology (that enables more robust combinations of texts/images/sounds) facilitates our pursuit of knowledge. Yet the degree to which we “think by mixing” is a contentious topic in light of the traditional view of originality: whereas it is acceptable to “mix” from different source texts in traditional academic writing (with proper references, of course), it is problematical to remix a term paper.

—Jamie O’Neil, “Mix/Remix as Epistemology: The Implications of the Metamedium, Digital Media.”

Introduction

In “Dr. Mashup, or Why Educators Should Learn to Stop Worrying and Love the Remix,” Brian Lamb defines remixes and mashups by their relationship to their source material. He explains:

Remix is the reworking or adaptation of an existing work. The remix may be subtle, or it may completely redefine how the work comes across. It may add elements from other works, but generally efforts are focused on creating an alternative version of the original. A *mashup*, on the other hand, involves the combination of two or more works that may be very different from one another. (14)

Based on Lamb’s definitions, remixes and mashups might be said to differ from traditional academic projects in that they seek not to integrate other sources into a new text but seek to remake or refashion source. While we might be tempted to argue that this distinction is one of originality, with the traditional academic project such as an essay producing an “original” text and a remix or mashup producing a derivative text, it might be more productive to regard this distinction as one of method. In the traditional academic project, the author deconstructs source texts into their constituent ideas and combines them with the author’s own ideas to create a new text. In the remix and mashup, on the other hand, an author keeps the ideas of the source texts whole, that is, still embedded within their original text, and combines them with the author’s own ideas to create a new text.

If we assume the production of knowledge comes from brushing information against information in new and interesting ways, then we need to ask why remixes and mashups are not standard forms of academic work. That is, why should we privilege the mix over remix or the mashup? Is it that one method produces truly original works and the other does not? Or is it that our traditional notions of academic work are still firmly rooted in the nineteenth-century thought?

The Assignment

Your assignment for Project 4 is to create an academic remix or mashup making use of MoveMaker, iMovie, or other video production software. As an academic video remix or mashup, your goal is to combine audio recordings, images, scans of documents, songs, and video clips (either those you find as well as those you create) to make an argument, develop a thesis, or provide information on a topic, roughly 3-5 minutes in length. While you may choose another topic, one possibility is to work with McLuhan’s *The Medium is the Massage*.

In addition to your video, which you will want to submit on a CD-Rom, you will want to write a short (1-2 page) “Author’s Note” in which you define your goal for your project, how you believe you achieved it, and identify your sources.

The Process

After identifying a topic, I strongly suggest making use of storyboards for your project, beginning either before you start looking for source materials or after you have identified some. Either way, you want to begin storyboarding early. Your first storyboard might be rather limited, little more than a list of elements you think you might want to include to achieve your goal. As you progress, you might want to produce more detailed storyboards.

Some storyboard resources can be found at <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3750735>, <http://accad.osu.edu/womenandtech/Storyboard%20Resource/>, and <http://www.usabilitynet.org/tools/storyboarding.htm>.

As you gather materials, you will want to remember where you got them so that you can cite your sources. Furthermore, I strongly suggest that you keep original in a separate location and work with duplicate digital copies in case you modify them in a way you later wish you hadn't.

Resources

Our Texts page includes links to a few McLuhan videos and an audio version of *The Medium Is the Massage*. You might also find interesting Jamie O'Neill's "McLuhan Remix."

Our Resources page includes links to various sources for audio, image, and video sources.

Our Tools page includes links to a number of audio, image, and video editing/production tools.

Our Tutorials page includes links to tutorials for some of the major audio, image, and video editing/production tools.

Due Dates

- In-process draft for review/discussion: April 27
- Final draft: Finals Week, Date TBA

Works Cited

Johnson, Eilola, Johndan. Datacloud: *Toward a New Theory of Online Work*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2005.

Lamb, Brian. "Dr. Mashup, or Why Educators Should Learn to Stop Worrying and Love the Remix." *EDUCAUSE Review* July/August, 2007: 13-24.

O'Neil, Jamie. "Mix/Remix as Epistemology: The Implications of the Metamedium, Digital Media." McLuhan Remix. n.p.: 2006. 16 November 2009 <<http://www.mcluhanremix.com/papers.html>>. PDF file.