

FILE NAME: (150914-STD-CCLRM-AU-DIGITALLIFEWRITING2nd session)

Speaker Key:

V1 Introducer
 CH Craig Howes
 V2 – V13 Participants
 M Monica
 J Julie

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V1 Okay everybody. We're going to resume business now and have just a half an hour discussion this time. We do need to give people a break after this session. So we'll run from now until 6 o'clock and then you'll have half an hour until the public event that'll be upstairs. That roundtable event is going to take place in the Anatomy Theatre, sorry the Anatomy Lecture Theatre which is on the sixth floor. If you go out of here and turn right you get to some lifts and you go up to the sixth floor from there and the reception will be up there as well, just next door afterwards. So you'll have about half an hour before then to sort of relax and go away and come back if you want to. I'm very grateful to Craig Howes who's going to introduce this session. So thank you and over to you Craig.

CH Max asked me to do this this morning. It seems to me that I might be the most appropriate person here to talk about problematic time and space because there's an eleventh hour time difference between where I live, so your papers have all been so fascinating. I've stayed up all night to hear them. It's sunrise in Honolulu at the moment. It's 6:30 in the morning. So Good Morning. [Laughter]. So the dislocation between time and space it seems to me something that we actually can live within the body, but in some ways just a kind of contrast with the way that we frequently conceive of online or virtual environments, going from what was said a little bit earlier, often the Internet presented as this kind of homogeneous and simultaneous sublime, but it's precisely it's everything already all the time, everywhere and it could be caught in the three Ws that appear in front of a lot of older addresses, the World Wide Web, kind of parallel to globalisation. What I want to talk about here just very briefly and get to a conversation literally in 30 seconds though is just point out that in contrast with that notion that somehow or other we are now in a kind of simultaneous and homogeneous space when we are hooked online. Look at the metaphor of the Internet, contained and somehow extends over everything. A lot of this has been sort of questioned or even profitably deployed in such notions particularly as a use of ingenuity.

The notion that human beings are in fact, and certain human beings are making very strong claims for the nature of their situated knowledge, their situated existence that they are

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people of a particular place and that paradoxically the insistence with the assertion on that as parallel in fact globalisation with one of the metaphors for MB. The notion of the Internet or online with the World Wide Web. The other thing I mentioned which has also come up is this notion that in some ways in terms of time that the Internet is this accreted environment in which everything that has happened somehow or other continues to happen or is still lodged there, and it's a kind of perpetual archive that can never lose anything and therefore in some ways stands in opposition to all our previous notions of recorded history for experience.

I will stop right there because it is the middle of the night. Well no it's good morning, and what I'm just going to do is because I think anybody working in this field thinks about these things in relation to time and space and locality and the paradoxes involved in that. I'll just open up the discussion for people's thoughts about that dynamic of time, space and people's needs.

V2 When I think about time and space I immediately think of geographical information systems that are able to show things relative to one another in terms of geographical space, but also increasingly are used through things like timelines to show change overtime, but I've often thought that this is quite restrictive because it appears to provide all these answers to these historical questions. You know, this was how it looked then. This was that place and I worry actually that some of those templates that have been provided by those very coordinates of time and space are actually really restricting our understanding of change over time by simply presenting it in that very visual manner that is so convincing and compelling and interesting, and it seems to appear to answer historical questions somehow, when really I don't think it does often. So that's just my first sort of comment is about whenever you think about time and space online I think the rise of geographical information systems in our life in one of the most important things that we need to look at and whether they've actually constrained or enabled our understanding of the past.

V3 I wanted to just kind of bring into the discussion that maybe, well some of the perception that we may have of not online things that there can be a different view about them as well. For example, concerning the archive and it's also the more current views on what an archive is. It is also more towards this open-endedness and this certain archive is not a closed system. You can also look at it that there is this perpetualness about that. For example, that even if it's a well ordered archive it can be reordered but most archives are not kind of ordered until the last point and once a researcher or somebody goes into the archive all kinds of things can happen and it can extent very easily into them, kind of present and into the future and also kind of outside into the more, I would say, untraditional kind of ways of getting archival knowledge or archival sources. So that it is not...it doesn't necessarily doesn't need to be that kind of opposition in thinking about that when we think about archival term placing [s.l. 07:15].

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- V4 So I was very interested with Claire's mention of the prevalence of irony online and Evelyn's talk about Bonstein's [s.l.07:37] queer strategies and kind of camp [inaudible 07:41] presentation by the idea of irony as a theme that's been running through some of the talks, and that irony is one way to hold kind of reconcilable alternatives, intention without maybe seeking to reconcile or conflate them in the way that an infographic might claim to do. So I wonder if there's something about how irony might allow us to hold alternative spaces, time perspectives alongside one another that might be relevant here.
- V5 For me when mentioning them is your time and space online, I think we need to consider this a problem, this question from the perspective of an embassy language. For example, for us, let me see, in China so we instantly know where you are when we come to you on the website totally in English. We say oh this is the form that the western hemisphere writes and when we read the Chinese or the websites and identify instantly oh this is from Mainland China because in Mainland China we use special, simplified Chinese. So when we see all this, let me see, un-simplified Chinese we know it's from Hong Kong and also from Taiwan or Macao. So you can see we instinctively know that the online, let me see, time and space and also we know the time zone from the language, from the linguistic, and also when we read... So I think this is also the case with English. So I think that in Australia you can distinctively distinguish Australian English and British English. So you can from the language you can even hear the voice right from the written language, right. So, for example, the people in the UK they use a lot of irony. Why you laugh? I pretend that I laugh, but actually I don't understand your irony. So that's the case. I think that linguistically it tells you a lot about the space and time online. So that's something I want to know.
- V6 I would like ask to what extent there is sudden value attached to the idea of being online. I have a feeling that in some of the projects that were presented just now there was, sort of, a privileging of the online as opposed to the offline. When you're asked to what extent the online have repercussions for the offline experience and so on then one has the implication that the online is the model that somehow reflects on what is offline. The same goes off course for being live. One of the publications was called Online and being Live or the real time experience. All of these sort of indicate that there's something outside of these experiences that are less valuable or that cannot cope with the same kind of intensity with what we are talking about. So that is a question I would like to ask the Ego-media Group.
- V7 I'd like to follow up although in a different way with what Alfred just said about liveness. I actually find liveness a really interesting concept. It's in computing, right. Liveness means to create an environment where computer operations where occur simultaneously, but it also can mean what you need to do to make something appear live when it isn't online which to me would indicate that there is a relationship between online and offline things, but that it's not necessarily reflective. It might be productive and I'd love to hear what other people working on liveness have to think about that?

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- V8 Okay. I mean, I don't want to speak on behalf of all the Ego-media people because linguistics and language mentioned I've recently edited a specialist disc of context and media on communicating time and space, place and digital media. It was very interesting for me. It was a whole set of papers, all of which were based on empirical studies. Various kinds of digital environments and one of the things that you could say would bring those papers together was how people, embodied people would actually make their offline time and space. The here and now. They would make it very consequential for their online activities and they would do that in different ways. So, yes, obviously there's something in social media platforms that can signal your time and space, but they would go beyond that and meta-linguistically refer to their here and now, for instance, pace as being very relevant for what they are doing. So there was a lot of, which goes back to your question, a lot of bringing together, and in some cases teasing apart. There's a lot of intermingling of online and offline experience, and even in second life there was a paper on second life, and even the disembodied, well re-embodied avatars would still somehow make sense of their online existence by using offline experiences. [Laughter].
- V9 I actually made this point before, thinking about the brain and what neurologists believe, you know, that the brain is never offline. The brain is always online or what we used to call in older terminology of the stream of consciousness that never ends. It always goes on. So that idea of where is the marker between on and offline that we have, for example, in brain movement, as opposed to technological media. The media that we are concerned with.
- V10 I don't know if this apropos with a conversation, but for me it's interesting to think about parallel online lives and their relationship to offline lives and that we're indifferent online lives and we're in different groups of people are configuring those online lives around different technologies and what makes me think about this is I'm an Administrator. I've been an Administrator for a long time. I'm on social media. It's called my Administrative Email and that's a very different kind of online life and it has a different temporality than the other zones of...zones isn't the right word, but the other scenes of online life that are going on around it. I don't think there's, you know, probably for 12 hours a day I'm not offline. Just because my email box is accumulating. Emails that have to be dealt. It is a social media, but it's a different kind of social media that has to do with professional lives. I suppose you could call the academic world a kind of simulative game of intellect. I don't know. [Laughter]. It's an observation. Well this isn't a follow-up I'm back. Although that's whole other life, but I would say that for me at least both the notions of time and space are sort of abstractions that are really quite troubled and multiply referring. Just brief anecdote. At one point some years ago I worked with a group in Berlin at the Free University that was working on what they described to me as space, but in Germany it was Raum. Raum has so many applications that have nothing to do with geographic location. That when I went to write an essay for this group and to try and theorise it what I had to do was make a whole itinerary of things that had no apparent relationship to one another because the difference even in English between say space and place which is not nearly as subtle as the German complexity of gesturing [inaudible 17:49]. Social configuration became bewildering. I think

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similarly with time to even think about our notion that time means linear progression versus notion say of subjective or experiential time that our non-continuous are reflects of our experience of sometime as contracted and other times of extremely long duration makes me think that we must try to disarticulate these, and this has no relation to it but it's my final comment. There was a point in 70s with early feminism when we knew what we mean when we said location and position which is certain ways had a wonderful clarity to each of them that are not captured by time and space, even though those gestured towards multiple realms.

V11 I'd like to follow up on this idea on online and offline and look at it again from a different angle and think about the idea of virtual space in different media, because it seems to me and this is, I think, part of sort of sketching out a project like Ego-media that the focus is on online and that you have to make a case for this being the absolutely new and the new paradigm and I think this has come through a number of times in projects. It's new. It's new. It's new. It's something completely different and I'm sort of asking myself whether this is really a new paradigm or whether it takes up all the paradigms and intensifies them. Does something to all the paradigms because the idea of trying out identities in a virtual space is something that conventional life writing has always done. That literature has always done. It's a space that literature offers for readers to do. So I'm asking myself what the connections is to more conventional forms of self-invention, self-presentations and how the Internet might impact on that and vice-versa and what is really new about the Internet. Rather than thinking that the Internet is the new paradigm and forget about all the rest. I'm exaggerating now, but I'm interested in the link between the different forms because there seems to be something lost when we don't do that.

V12 I actually wanted to go back to a couple of points. Skirting around games and I'm not saying that I've got an online farm, but if I did...no actually the update killed it and I'm very sad about that, but I think it's fascinating that notion of how a game can try and commodify your offline time. So your cucumbers will take ten hours to grow or you can pay real money which then ties it into the economy of your own labour and your wage salary, but this notion of trying to...the option that is your offline time has now got a value in the game I think is fascinating. Something that I would love us to talk more about is the sort of connections with labour and kind of economies and how those are working out with digital economies.

V13 What I was going to say was something in response to Evelyn's but I think it's a response to Becky as well I hope. Really suggestive to think about this idea of the new actually not being new, because I was thinking about that moment which in suitable temporal distance some cultural historian will be able to identify as a phase of Internet activity. I'm thinking about the teenagers in their bedrooms who had webcams on 24 hours a day. So that you had a kind of conflation of both a small expansion, an expansion into a small space which they occupied, but also a kind of expansion of time in these headcam stuff was never off even. So I think at that moment in Internet practice there was something really interesting going on about time and space, but actually what Evelyn said makes me think how really

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might that be different or not from something like the 18th Century Epistolary novel where you have, say Clarissa in her closet writing continuously. Also a small space you are invited into, but picking up Becky's point in a sense what the connection might be is the valorisation of the labour of writing which in the Epistolary novel is part of the texture process and converted to kind of reading pleasures and I'm really not quite sure what the online equivalent is, partly because I never really got into watching teenagers in their bedrooms, but that it might be something to do with a displacement of value into the labour of watching and the iconic activity that goes on there.

V1 I would suggest Monica and then Julie and then Anne.

M Thank you very much. Monica Souting [s.l. 24:10] from Amsterdam. I also wanted to say something about this question of paradigm and I was just thinking John Acon has written a very nice article trying to see what is new and what isn't and sort of saying, you know, it's not a question of know all and it's old and it's new, etc. etc. I'm thinking of Acon. I would like to go back to what Alfred also said about the body, the human bodily subjects and talking about time and space. We've also heard about existentialism and digital lives and things like that, and I was thinking about the phenomenologists actually about [inaudible 25:10] who has written a lot about human subjects as bodily subjects who live in space and in time. It's never the subject confronted with space and with time. It's the subject in time, as a bodily subject.

J I think I have a bit of a different take on time or temporality and the digital. I tend to think of it, I'm just going to throw this at you now. I tend to think of it as the sociologist say we are living in the absolute present due to our instantaneous communications and our 24/7 culture, but if we think about the Internet in the way Julie does as producing life or making life then we can think about it as a form of life irony perhaps or antinomy of life itself because I see that there is this sense of the transient and the eternal going on at the same time and I would describe the eternal as a net law, like a [inaudible 26:23] online. The net law of the infinite and we can see that in so many different ways. One is what you mentioned, this imaginary sense of the perpetuate archive, but also in the practices I'm looking at, such as posthumous memory work or self-immortalisation. It's not perhaps about infinity or maybe it is, but it's actually about perpetuating yourself into some kind of future. Then you have Google with their transhuman projects. You know trying to solve a death question and that is also a return of eternity in this absolute present.

V1 Let's go Lea and then Alfred. Then we're going to run out of time.

V14 So with all the talk if they're all in their transient and the eternal I think that, well one comment I would want to just get out on the table before we conclude the first day, is what

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it means for women and people of colour to work in the conditions of online media and Facebook and Google and so on and so forth and what it means to be a woman online at any moment needs to be subjects to her harassment of the most daunting kind, not for what you say or what you do, but for simply entering there. So it seems to me that we have to really acknowledge that and try to work through that a little bit too.

V15 I don't know whether I should make this comment, but I will make it anyway because it's late. Talking about presentness, you know, I'm just thinking of the autobiographer [inaudible 28:16] and if you then think about time and space and see it in the way of eternity then you see that [inaudible 28:26] in his autobiography confessions actually conceives of time as present. The present things of the future and the present things of the past. So everything is always in the present. Maybe eternity is online.

CH I'll just add by way of final, like these introduction and other factor, the notions on a lot of social media sites are prescriptive or [inaudible 29:00] notion of time. For example, the Facebook line which actually identifies your moment of birth and then basically runs [inaudible 29:08] and also recognising certain kinds of patterns that you monetise and [inaudible 29:13] or increasingly now we're being confronted with arbitrary associations. This is what you had about five years ago. Would you like to share this? So I think also theoretically these kind of notions of this kind of recursive, both sequential and recursive notions of time which in various ways for whatever reasons are being presented as something that you need to willing participate in within that environment, but we've run out of time and thank you all.

Applause.