

## Call for essays: The "Newness" of New Media

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Outside of the West, communities have traditionally innovated and engaged different forms of media, whether using textiles, dog's teeth, valuables or abacus. These myriad forms remain integral to the networks of communications and relations. Today the new media technologies of the Internet, mobile phones and social networking sites provide another venue for innovation and continuity. Within the Western context, historians of media have demonstrated how new media sparks exaggerated fears that intimate connections will be harmed when a technology is introduced. Thus part of the "newness" of new media is an often-repeated expectation that new forms of representation will disrupt established social organization.

In this special issue, we hope to explore how the "newness" of new media is experienced outside of Euro-America, ranging from how communities have and are responding to the introduction of writing to the introduction of mobile phones and social networking sites. This has a strong historical component; many of our questions arise from the aftermath of colonial encounters. Two themes guide these ethnographic explorations: the "newness" of new media for dialogue and the "newness" of new media for representation.

The first theme explores the ways new media is understood to change how dialogue and dissemination are intertwined. In *Speaking Into the Air*, John Durham Peters argues that in the Western context, people historically feared new media because every new medium alters a precarious balance between dialogue (dyadic conversational turn-taking) and dissemination (broadcasting). As new media becomes incorporated into daily life, each technology becomes valued accordingly. People see each new technology as changing how dialogue or dissemination take place, which introduce new possibilities and new risks to communication. In this issue, authors ask: how are the ways people's historically situated understandings of how dialogue and dissemination should be interwoven affecting how people responded to new media? How are people's epistemological assumptions and social organization shaping how they incorporate particular communicative technologies?

The second theme examines how new media become grounds by which communities can challenge misrepresentations, and assert their identities. If new media enable new forms of collaboration and participation, how then have they enabled communities to manage more effectively how their representations travel? How has this shifted historically from colonial to postcolonial moments? What new forms of creative play have emerged in the process, and how have older forms been extended? If the materiality of media matters as argued by Webb Keane and others, how have these new media forms altered or continued existing representational economies? Whose networks are being extended or cut in the process? To what extent is new

media understood as re-structuring previously established forms of exchange and knowledge circulation? How have these evolving relationships shifted the ways in which scholarship is being, and or should be done?

We welcome essays that address either of these themes. The questions are not meant to be proscriptive, however, and we welcome queries about possible article content and submissions from graduate students.

Completed essays need to be submitted by **June 1, 2012** at which time the editors will make initial decisions. The length of final essays are to be 5,000-7,000 words including notes and please follow the citation style found at [http://www.tandf.co.uk/\\*\\*journals/journal.asp?issn=\\*\\*1473-5784&linktype=44](http://www.tandf.co.uk/**journals/journal.asp?issn=**1473-5784&linktype=44).

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