

**Television, Technology and Everyday Life**  
Flow Conference 2008

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The ability for users to access, manage, filter, and organize information and culture is equally important to an open society as peer produced content. I argue for an inclusive definition of user-generated work; one that acknowledges and appreciates the blurred boundaries between consumption and production in venues such as social networking sites, blogs, and, particularly, media hosting/archival services like YouTube and Flickr. I advocate the creative value of spaces and technologies that allow users to produce, distribute, consume, borrow from, expand upon, share, and build into their profiles resources not originally or wholly of their own making—amateur and professional, commercial and popular—as a means of communicating their identities and interests.

Culture is profoundly tied to everyday life and the right of self-expression, and because of this we need to support popular, transparent, and malleable online spaces that allow nonmarket social sharing as a means of providing the maximum resources and diversity necessary for identity-articulation and informational and cultural exchange. The spaces most accessible for people to produce, share, and discover themselves through networked, digital media are those best able to combine openness and adaptability with ease of use; sites and platforms capable of collecting a critical mass of users who create, adapt, rate, upload, comment upon, or circulate a varied range of content and ideas. Furthermore, these sites allow users the freedom to stretch the limits of and devise new uses for existing technologies and cultural practices.

Copious industry enterprises are happy to pad their wallets by using the guise of interactivity, community, and participation to take advantage of networked and digital technologies, which can give them the opportunity to accrue capital from user-generated labor and/or efficiently gather information on user tastes and practices (which they can also sell to third parties). Such sites and services are ultimately stifling because they offer few options for individual agency and cultural expression. While at the same time our understanding of new media technologies and practices must include how business interests attempt to guide digitization and networking to advance their own economic agendas in ways that can be potentially limiting for users, we must also resist the urge to frame commercial spaces and resources as fundamentally oppositional or contrary to users' sense of affective empowerment. Indeed, there are ample commercial and noncommercial sites and services that grant users wide latitude in producing and sharing content, stimulating rapid innovation and breeding robust communities.

We cannot simply characterize autobiographical agency and user-generated work as enabled by particular websites or media platforms, however, for this ignores the greatest strength of digitization and networking: its massive, rapidly expanding spider web of associations that connect individuals to information and culture through hyperlinking and folksonomic practices such as social tagging and book marking. Recognizing how people make and follow connections between spaces assist us in understanding digital communication as a latticework of disparate technologies and interests stitched together by a truly incredible number of interests. Furthermore, it helps

us to acknowledge the ways in which users have the capacity to overcome the inadequacies of individual sites or services by posting, sharing, and communicating ideas and materials through multiple points of control as part of a decentralized and always changing network of culture, commentary, and information. Ultimately, then, examining not only what and where users post, but also how they find, circulate, adapt, archive, and share content provides us with new insight to how people construct a sense of themselves and their interests, and, perhaps more importantly, helps us define autobiographical and cultural production in the age of digitization and networking as fluid processes rather than finished products.