

The Performative Possibilities of New Media

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We understand new media as performative—a medium that is an active participant in a political dialogue.¹ It is political in its iterability; it performs, over and over, passing as/with information. We see this in our Facebook NewsFeeds and ReTweet of Tweets long gone. In this forum, we hope to show how new media scholarship can be purposefully enacted within performance studies (perhaps marking a slippage . . . perhaps not) to work towards larger critical goals. New media changes what it means to be a performance studies scholar.

This forum germinated from our own discussions about the role that new media played in our scholarship. We were curious as to how other performance/critical communication studies scholars might articulate their own relationship to the shifting landscape. We contacted five other scholars who embrace new media in their scholarship. We asked them to reflect on the performativity of their own new media projects. The responses we received were provocative and enlightening.

Michael Levan and Marcyrose Chvasta reflect on the performance and politics of distribution in the online journal *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*. Jonny Gray considers how the online performance group @Platea exemplifies the possibilities of *Web 2.0* for interactivity and innovation in the production of art. We contribute an essay that centers around our podcast (*The Critical Lede*) that explores how new media breaks down barriers of access that have long been present in academia. Ted Striphos addresses how his blog *Differences and Repetition* (and a companion wiki) trouble the idea of peer review and collaboration. Finally, Craig Gingrich-Philbrook offers a response to these projects and the essays that accompany them by reflecting on how their use of new media transforms scholarly conventions.

This forum will not only reside within these pages. We will incorporate new media into this project and, keeping in line with Gingrich-Philbrook's exploration of the

transformative potential of new media, we seek to transform the academic forum. All of the participants included in this forum will appear on *The Critical Lede* to discuss these essays. We will all read each other's work and respond. This is an example of the power of new media to provide a sense of immediacy and to aid us in the goal of the academic forum: to critically and substantially engage each others' work in a timely fashion. The subsequent discussion can be accessed at <http://www.thecriticallede.com>. It is titled "TPQ Forum on New Media." If you are reading this more than a few weeks after publication, the discussion can be found by searching the archives of *The Critical Lede*. The ability to discuss the ideas in this forum in a roundtable manner that is recorded and accessible to all illustrates the potentials of new media, and its often complicated relationship to traditional print scholarship. And if you are so inclined, include yourself in the discussion on the comments section, or email us your thoughts.

Note

- [1] We would like to mark collaborative generation of this essay and forum and our equal, shared contribution to the writing and editorial process instead of designating a lead author.