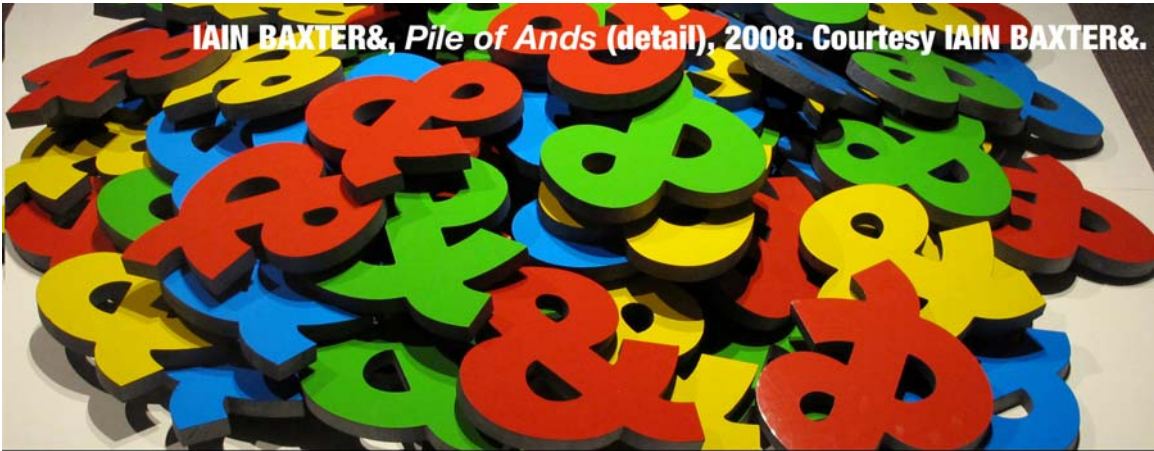


IAIN BAXTER&, *Pile of Ands* (detail), 2008. Courtesy IAIN BAXTER&.



## **interPLAY**

*between creativity & information*

a one-day symposium

@ York University Libraries

March 26, 2012

<http://www.eventbrite.ca/event/2890953921/eseach?srnk=1>



**"stop emitting carbon &  
start emitting ideas!"**



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# *interPLAY*

## *between creativity & information*

a one-day symposium at York University Libraries  
March 26, 2012

Register online:  
<http://www.eventbrite.ca/event/2890953921/eseach?srnk=1>

### **Full Program**

#### **Location:**

##### **“Room A”**

Senate Chamber  
N940 Ross Building (9<sup>th</sup> floor)  
York University  
4700 Keele Street,  
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA, M3J-1P3

##### **“Room B”**

SMIL Screening Room  
Scott Library (1<sup>st</sup> floor)  
York University  
4700 Keele Street,  
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA, M3J-1P3

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**8:30 – 9:00**

*Registration*

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**9:00 – 10:00**

#### **Room A: Welcome**

**Adam Lauder**, W.P. Scott Chair for Research in e-Librarianship, York University

**Walter P Tholen**, Associate Vice-President Research, York University

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**10:00 – 11:00**

**Room A: Keynote**

**Dr. Richard Cavell**, Professor, University of British Columbia  
“Paratactic Informatics: Towards a Soft Ontology of Iain Baxter&”

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**11:15 – 12:45**                      **Concurrent Sessions**

**Room A: “Social Information”**

**Mayu Ishida**, MLIS student, University of British Columbia,  
“Digital Curation of Local Traditional Knowledge: A Case Study at the University of Alberta”

Local traditional knowledge (LTK), often embodied in oral histories, is a significant source of diverse and often marginalized views that can counter the dominant mainstream view to present a more holistic picture of the world. Increasingly, LTK plays an important role in research. For example, in many projects from the International Polar Year 2007-2008, the LTK of Northern communities is considered integral to understanding the challenges of global warming that affects the Arctic and beyond. This type of data will be an invaluable basis of future projects not only by researchers but also by Northern communities who have provided the knowledge as the communities are interested in increasing capacity and self-determination in research. Preservation and reuse of previous interviews can also relieve Elders of response fatigue as Aboriginal communities are feeling weary of answering essentially the same questions over and over posed by different investigators.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a community can incorporate preserved LTK data in teaching its history and culture to future generations. If LTK data are provided in traditional languages, they can help preserve and revive the languages.

As it becomes feasible to amass and analyze a large amount of data, research calls for data sharing and collaboration beyond disciplinary and institutional boundaries. However, this new approach also poses challenges regarding data access and preservation. Particularly, LTK data should be considered as intellectual properties of the communities who provided them; short-term access to LTK data should be restricted while long-term access to / preservation of LTK data should be guaranteed. Memory institutions can help resolve these challenges in the role of data steward. While all memory institutions are obliged to preserve cultural heritage such as LTK, a large academic library is suited to the stewardship of LTK in digital format. Committed to preserving research data in digital format including LTK, the University of Alberta Libraries (UAL) is an ideal data steward since it possesses technically and economically reliable infrastructure built in partnership with the Ontario Council of University Libraries. The UAL also upholds and balances two mandates: 1) the sharing of research data (Open Data) and 2) the protection of LTK data and the communities who provided the data (the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession principle). It has proven to be crucial in the UAL’s curation effort to establish 1) common terminology, 2) authentic relationships with both researchers and communities, and 3)

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<sup>1</sup> Bull, “Research with Aboriginal Peoples,” 16.

digital curation guidelines and protocols that include provisions for data preservation. Finally, early involvement in the research life cycle will be the key in the UAL's future curation projects.

**Siân Evans**, MSLIS student, Pratt Institute,  
“Occupy the Archive: Reimagining Power, Politics, and the Collective Voice in Contemporary Art”

Over the past fifty years, the archive has been unpacked, repositioned, and reimagined in contemporary discourse. The field of archival science, on the other hand, has remained relatively insulated from the terms of these debates. Concurrently, digital technologies are exploding and, in the process, unearthing and giving voice to previously marginalized fields of discourse. The role of social media in the uprisings of this year's Arab Spring and the popularity of makeshift tent libraries at the various iterations of the Occupy Wall Street protests currently taking place across the globe only further highlight the potential of organized information to mobilize these marginalized fields of discourse.<sup>2</sup> In this way, the field of information science broadly construed touches upon what Félix Guattari termed social ecosophy, involving a “reconstruction of modalities of ‘group-being’” through interventions of communication and a re-exploration of the meaning of subjectivity and alterity.<sup>3</sup> Organized information, be it on the web or under a tarp in Boston, has proven itself able to re-envision protest culture and even widespread revolution.

In this paper, I propose taking a fresh look at the claim that archives serve primarily as constructions of power and subjectification. The explosion of theoretical interest in the archive over the past twenty years has brought to light the ways in which archives uphold and reinforce institutional power structures. In his exploration of the “poetics of archival exclusion” literary theorist David Greetham argues that archives construct idealized images of our supposed collective history. Where they purport to unearth historical truths and therefore should reproduce alterity, they in fact reinforce singularity.<sup>4</sup> I argue that engaging with artistic and theoretical understandings of the term “archive” can produce a space in which to grapple with and ultimately challenge this claim. I will look specifically at the work of Brooklyn-based art collective Jen Kennedy and Liz Linden as it intersects with the fields of library and archival science. In Book Swap, which has taken place at a number of locations, including the Brooklyn Museum and the “Missing Library” at the Dumbo Arts Center over the past two years, Kennedy and Linden play with the notion of the feminist canon. The project is an installation of a feminist lending library in which visitors are encouraged to swap any book in their collection of roughly 130 books for any other tome they consider to be feminist. Book Swap is intended to open a non-hierarchical discussion about what feminism means to women today. By indiscriminately allowing others to build their feminist library, Kennedy and Linden literally destabilize *what can be said* about feminism. In this sense, they destabilize Foucault's archive: their project directly engages the feminist archive, the “law of what can be said.” Much like the politicized People's Libraries popping up under tents in public parks across America, Book Swap highlights the ways in which reimagining the organization of information can challenge the role of archives and libraries as foundations of institutional power and control.

**Lisa Sloniowski**, Associate Librarian, York University Libraries  
“Embodying the Archive: The Noisy Feminist Challenge”

This 10-minute presentation will examine the epistemological ruptures created by feminist special collections within libraries and archives. The presentation will explore how feminist collections

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<sup>2</sup> Jess Bidgood, “Occupying Boston and Beyond, With Tent Libraries for All,” *New York Times*, October 21, 2011, accessed December 4, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies* (New York: Continuum Books, 1989): 24.

<sup>4</sup> David Greetham, “‘Who's in, Who's Out': The Cultural Poetics of Archival Exclusion,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 32(1999): 9.

emphasize the embodied and gendered dimensions of archival practices and in particular will focus on two projects – the Feminist Porn Archive and Research Project and the Barbara Godard special collection at York University's Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections.

There are clear connections between the theoretical issues posed by the feminist porn archive and those of the Godard library and archive. In both cases we are forced to confront libraries/archives as sites of hegemonic rationalization which exclude certain forms of lived experience and fixes others into place. There is no political power without control of the archive, as Derrida says in *Archive Fever*. At the same time, libraries and archives may also be approached as places integral to the destabilization of subjects. And so the question that needs to be asked of any explicitly feminist archive or special collection, is whether the collection/archive itself resists or disrupts our usual processes and patterns of archivization? And if so, how and why?

In the case of the Godard library we see a resistance to the ways in which libraries' hierarchal classification systems work to disrupt the intertextual relationships carefully uncovered and preserved by the collector. There is also a particular problem with the ways in which the archival tradition of emphasizing the provenance of the collector ignores the importance and intertextuality of a whole constellation of texts and the history of relationships in feminist communities.

In the case of the Feminist Porn Archive, related questions arise surrounding how classification schemas construct and fix subjects into place. How can we work with material that resists historical understandings of gender and sexuality taxonomies? This collection also makes us aware of the ways in which the pornographic as concept is shaped by the legal system and how this shaping impacts what we can do with feminist porn inside university library epistemological spatializations. Lastly, we wonder if the academic corporate complex is the 'right' site for this material? But what kinds of very important epistemological ruptures do we risk missing if we answer no to that question?

Noisy feminist collections create an opportunity to investigate the ways in which our libraries and archives ignore the lessons of feminist epistemology as well as the voices of queer counterpublics, and actively collude in historical erasures. As Marcel Barriault insists, how do we ensure archives as bodies of knowledge also have knowledge of bodies? This presentation will lay bare the ways in which our technologies of archivization form a particularly rigid system which actively collude in making statements inert, and as Foucault reminds us, begin to govern enunciability itself.

**Cherie Crocker**, student, Emily Carr University, and **Goran Boskovic**, Leadership Program Coordinator, Ryerson University,  
"Going On: Implications for the Node Modality Network"

We will present the interactive Node Modality Network and coinciding paper "Going On" which explores how information can be conceived as non-linear, with many different potential pathways and splits. Participatory interactive engagement has important pedagogical implications as the demand shifts in viewer behaviour back and forth between reception and participation. The benefits of using interactive digital technology resides in its potential to be a means of promoting critical reflection. We take this idea, and in line with Mikhail Bakhtins' discussion of heteroglossia, enrich critical reflection by introducing the medium of the Internet with its' rhizomatic capacity to explore textual communication.

We intend for a dynamic visualization of the Node Modality Network to interact on a screen or projection behind us during the discussion. This visualization of the network will react to the words in the presentation through "speech recognition" as well as mining Twitter through a filter. By monitoring the conversation in real time, both in the venue and online through Twitter, we

extend and challenge the context within which the words are taking place. As certain words are being used to trigger the visualization, the movement and connections made by the central nodes will light up their network counterparts so the interaction is visible to those in the audience.

The paper discusses the implications of rhizomatic communication and information technologies in the academic environment. The Node Modality Network charts the organic nature of thought and the role of community in communication, operating as a dialogic interaction which allows for multiple authorship. As Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests, "... understanding as not being a process inside the head of an individual, but as a practical social phenomenon, between people, to do with them knowing how 'to go on' with each other, we can create a new form of understanding between us, in practice." (Shotter, 1994) The discussion is rooted within participation drawn from a case study of students from Ryerson University and their written critical reflections of leadership. "Going On: Implications for the Node Modality Network" illustrates how information technologies transform students conception and interaction within the social environment via online platforms. Having observed Susan Buck-Morss' interpretation of Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay, we attempt to present and harness interactivity as a strategy to restore the instinctual power of bodily sense as an effective catalysts for learning through innovative new mediums.

### **Room B: "The Information Landscape" (I)**

**Adam Lauder**, W.P. Scott Chair for Research in e-Librarianship, York University Libraries

**TBA**

**Annette Smith**, MA student, University of British Columbia, and **Sandra Danilovic**, PhD student, University of Toronto,  
"What's in a Virtual Name? The Impact of Pseudonyms on Professional Identity in Second Life"

Second Life (Linden Lab, 2003) is a three-dimensional, multi-user, user-generated, virtual reality environment that has been increasingly used for pedagogic, professional, and research activities since its online launch. In virtual and real-time environments like Second Life, users must adopt a three-dimensional avatar and *pseudonym* that hovers above the avatar in real-time and represents the user's identity in search databases. This paper will analyze the intersection of identity, pseudonyms, and information as primarily disembodied concepts whose purpose is to build professional relationships and "boundary objects" (Star and Griesemer, 1989), advance research, and practice advocacy and activism in virtual environments. The focus of this analysis is the use of pseudonyms in the construction of digital professional identity. In this context, does possessing an unusual pseudonym in combination with a stylized avatar alter the way "professional identity" is perceived by others? Does the construction of specific pseudonyms in Second Life impact the credibility of the researchers and professionals?

The intersection of offline and online identity is fraught with contradictions and complexities. The identity that we present in face-to-face meetings is just as constructed and performative (Butler, 2004; Goffman, 1959) as the identities we project in virtual, digital worlds. However, online virtual worlds are unique in that they offer ways of "workshopping one's identity" (Nolan Interview, 2009) in an animated, creative, aesthetically constructed digital universe. Virtual worlds also posit a compelling contradiction in how information is embodied or disembodied in relation to identity construction. For example, information can be conceptualized as embodied in the form of an avatar, a pseudonym, or a boundary object. However, according to Katherine Hayles (1999), "information lost its body" (p. 2) in the virtual universe and thus, is a primarily disembodied concept. Posthumanism and Hayles's argument centre on the de-centering of consciousness and

embodiment (the body) that technology facilitates. Hayles's posthumanist theory conceptualizes information (and awareness) as a pattern that is downloaded into a computer (p. 123, p. 1) where "machines become the repository of human consciousness" (Hayles, 1999, p. xxi). If this is the case, then how can we re-conceptualize the construction of identity and the use of pseudonyms in virtual worlds as disembodied information? If identity becomes disembodied in virtual worlds, then what does this mean for professionals and researchers?

This paper frames the use of pseudonyms in identity theory and posthumanist theory, including interviews with researchers and professionals in Second Life to debate the formation of a new kind of information ecology in the digital universe. In other words, the information landscape in which residents of virtual worlds operate is either fundamentally different from or somehow equivalent to the environment in which face-to-face professional relationships are formed. Either one of those arguments may shed light on the interesting implications that the use of pseudonyms and avatars may have on online-professional identity construction.

**Ariane Cloutier**, PhD student, Université Paris1 Panthéon-Sorbonne  
"Play as a Communication Tool, Analyzing the Work of BAXTER& in Terms of an Aesthetic of the Ludic"\*

[\*Please note: presentation will be in English]

Puisque pour Baxter&, le bonheur est spontanément associé à « everything » et que la vie est elle liée à « & » l'espace de création, lui, se situe dans un lieu intemporel infini qui est percuté sans cesse par un médium de prédilection : l'information. Durant de nombreuses années, l'artiste conceptuel canadien Iain Baxter& jongle avec des modalités de transformation de ces bribes d'information qui traverse son univers.

Pour l'artiste, les influences liées à l'information sont donc omniprésentes dans sa démarche de création personnelle, mais les mots : PLAY, WONDER & LOVE sont également à l'origine de sa philosophie intime.

L'un des objectifs de la communication sera de se figurer et de se questionner sur ces liens intimes qui unissent l'information et le jeu chez IAIN BAXTER&.

Un chevauchement perpétuel existe entre l'information et le jeu. Le jeu : stratégie de digestion des informations du réel, mais aussi attitude, philosophie et mode à penser qui influence l'ensemble d'un être qui imprime ses marques dans le présent.

Par sa gestion du vivant et des résonances du réel, Iain Baxter& vit l'expérience du jeu ludique qui, hors d'un simple jeu actionnel, se définit par un jeu innovateur et plus près du processus créatif, qui se distingue entre autre par une absence de règle, d'obligation, d'esthétisme et qui est le résultat d'une exploration plaisante et instinctive du monde (DeGrandmont, 1991).

À travers la myriade d'informations qu'il rencontre, dans une expérience vive (Bertrand & Dumont, 1976), l'artiste vient colliger des informations/sensations physiques ou immatérielles résonnant dans son aire de jeu. Souvent, les concepts de création émergents seraient à l'origine d'un jeu de mots, de lettres qui se transposeraient dans l'ordre du visuel.

Lors de cette analyse, nous pourrions amorcer des questionnements sur ces interPLAY constitués d'espaces d'information et d'expériences du jeu ludique. Quel est l'état de cette créativité ludique qui naît de l'information? La création qui est RE-utilisation de l'information, RE-construction du réel prend une toute autre dimension lorsqu'elle est incluse dans l'expérience du jeu ludique.

À travers les nouvelles technologies de l'information, la création n'est plus que picturale ou sculpturale; elle devient performance infinie où les caractéristiques de l'expérience ludique sont reines.

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Lunch (provided)

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1:45 – 3:15

**Room A: “The Information Landscape” (II)**

**Vanessa Kam**, Head Librarian, Art + Architecture + Planning, University of British Columbia Libraries,  
“Tactical Media”

In her book *Tactical Media* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), Rita Raley describes a set of discursive practices that activists and artists have undertaken within the last decade. The overarching goal of these practices is to critique life in postindustrial societies and neoliberal globalization. Raley argues that notions around the efficacy of taking to the streets in protest (whether it be against G8 or the WTO, or the greedy Wall Street types which are ostensibly the focus of the Occupy Movements) are being challenged and that newer modes of activism are being sought out. Because the “streets are dead capital” in the minds of some activists, they are choosing to express their dissent in the network, through performative practices, or in other physical spaces where market capitalism usually circulates.<sup>5</sup> These tactical media interventions aim to cause disruptions and to educate; they favor ephemerality and interactivity. They are strategies for expressing dissent yet cannot dictate final outcomes: chance, openness, and open-ended questions are desired over control and closed systems. At best, the disturbance caused by tactical media would bestow upon its participants/audience members “a new way of seeing, understanding and (in the best-case scenario) interacting with a given system.”<sup>6</sup>

Examples of tactical media projects/interventions highlighted in Raley’s book include Josh On and Futurefarmers’ *They Rule* (2001/2004) <http://www.theyrule.net/> using cartography to map out the breadth, influence and power of Fortune 100 directors; online games like TuboFlex by Molleindustria <http://www.molleindustria.org/en/tuboflex> enabling the player to experience the plight of the worker in the assembly line or low-paying service economy jobs; and the Bureau of Inverse Technology’s “BIT Cab” project, which builds upon the GPS infrastructure used to provide advertising, weather and financial data atop the roofs of New York City cabs to insert “critical location-based data such as detail of toxic residues at current GPS position of the vehicle; and realtime news alerts for street-based public actions.”<sup>7</sup>

These examples illustrate that tactical media can result in a host of intriguing aesthetic practices, as well as innovate ways of graphically representing complex research data.

Using the theory of tactical media, as defined by Raley, Geert Lovink and David Garcia, and inspired by the tactical media practices of artists, activists, architects, and urban planners, I will present one or more new works of tactical media. Taking the broader context of the changing academic library in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, my piece of tactical media hopes to cause a disruption/provocation around commonly held notions of the processes of reading, writing, and conducting research. By creating tactical media, I hope to also address how the academic library (and its vast amounts of data) can influence and contribute towards the making and meaning of

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<sup>5</sup> Rita Raley, *Tactical Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>7</sup> From <http://bureauit.org/cab/>



tactical media manifestations. Expressed in other ways, what role can libraries play in activism, and/or what elements of the 21<sup>st</sup> library inspire activism?

**Dr. Christopher M. Drohan**, Sheridan / European Graduate School,  
“Empires of Information”

McLuhan tells us that the "content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph"(McLuhan). In essence, "the "content" of any medium is always another medium" (McLuhan), such that all forms of media are embedded in one another in recursive chains of technology and information.

In today's computerized society, we take for granted the fact that one medium can represent dozens of other media singularly. For instance, with the right software and hardware, the content of one's home computer can be a television, printing press, stereo, telephone, or virtually any other digital device. Whether hard wired or wireless, visible or invisible, digital code is quickly becoming the world's universal medium or 'master language' capable of translating all electric technologies into one another.

Building on McLuhan's work, this paper draws attention to the fact that as more and more of our social, commercial, and political exchanges must pass through this "medium without a message" (McLuhan), our thoughts and actions become 'deterritorialized' to a degree unparalleled in history, creating an and "amorphous continuum" of technologies and information that circulates the globe at the speed of light (Deleuze and Guattari). Accordingly, this paper aims to extend this notion by showing how this exchange erases the difference between 'medium and message', but brings into question other dialectical notions such as "content" and "expression" (Hjelmslev), 'man and machine', 'thought and action', and 'space and place'. Tracing some technologies and industries that are at the forefront of these conceptual shifts (e.g. Google, Rogers, and 4Chan), it argues that we are living within 'empires of information' that succeed because they embody McLuhan's assertion that the medium and message are one.

**Stacy Allison-Cassin**, Cataloging Librarian, York University Libraries,  
“The Possibility of the Infinite Library: Exploring the Boundaries and Possibilities of Works and Texts in Library Cataloguing Practices”

Jorge Luis Borges' short story "The Library of Babel" is often cited as a prophetic and striking as a metaphor for the Internet as a seemingly information-rich and wildly chaotic space, however there are vital elements of the story not mentioned in critical literature: the universe/library's strict adherence to a standardized order and the setting of the story within as a library. Borges' description of the universe in terms of a library of books resonates strongly with the term "bibliographic universe" as used in the professional and academic literature of information science. The International Federation of Library Association's highly influential *Functional Requirements of Bibliographic Records* report utilizes the term but does not define it further than "...the totality of available information resources, within the published output of a particular country, within the holdings of a particular library or group of libraries, etc."(16). In this definition "universe" implies an openness that is not fully illustrated or accounted for by the idea of "totality." The friction between the idea of an expanding bibliographic universe and the need for bibliographic fixedness as enforced through the development and application of cataloguing codes and standards is an issue that has not been suitably addressed, particularly at a time when it seems that substantive changes need to be made in response to a perceived threat of obsolescence. In an effort to affirm their position as a necessary institution in society, libraries are launching new online catalogues with slick interfaces, revising cataloguing rules with the intent of making them applicable to a wider community and offering new "user-centered" services. But these developments lack substantial and critical engagement with the foundations and histories of

the library and librarianship and further, with the roots of Western epistemology. A radical re-thinking of traditional conceptions of the work, text and information is possibly required if we are to have a new vision of “the library.” Especially one that truly approaches a “universe of knowledge.” The central aim of this paper will be to expose the frictions present in the philosophical underpinnings of bibliographic control in libraries through an examination of the treatment of the concepts of works and texts in the literature of bibliographic against the theories of works and texts as developed critical theorists such as Roland Barthes, Deleuze and Guattari, Donna Haraway and Katherine Hayles. Critical assessment of long-standing practices is required to move beyond the fetishized vision of information control. The first section will demonstrate the centrality of the concept of “the work” to libraries through the development of cataloguing codes and practices, and how the dichotomous nature of the texts rubs up against the material nature of library collections. The second section will demonstrate how the standardization and enforcement of “roottree” hierarchies and attributions have forced library information flows into closed systems. The last section will question the long-held and perhaps sacred ideal of bringing order to chaos to suggest we might better work toward an and promiscuity. The nightmare of Borge’s library/universe lies not with dis-order, but with relentless and senseless order.

**Dr. Christine Berkowitz**, University of Toronto Scarborough, **Perry Sheppard**, Manager, Web and New Media, University of Toronto Scarborough, **Paulina Rousseau**, Digital Scholarship Librarian, Library, University of Toronto Scarborough, and **Sarah Forbes**, Scholarly Communication Librarian, Library, University of Toronto Scarborough,  
“The History Engine 2.0 Academic Research and Publishing in Time and Place”

This presentation will highlight the value of and potential for the use of information and digital technologies to foster research and collaboration among students, faculty, and members of the community-at-large, across institutional, disciplinary and regional boundaries. The focus of the presentation will be on the collaborative development of a publicly accessible web-based interactive tool providing a suite of digital resources that fosters applied research and writing skills and exposes students to the methods and practice of both historical enquiry and digital scholarship. This tool will assist in the transformation of typical approaches to teaching and learning by shifting the focus of the students from passive absorption of information to the stimulating work of knowledge creation in and beyond the academy.

In the fall of 2009, the University of Toronto Scarborough became the first Canadian institution to participate in the History Engine (<http://historyengine.richmond.edu>). Launched in 2005, The History Engine is a pedagogically oriented web-based project that captures and organizes concise student-authored narratives about often small, local US-based historical events. When taken together these student publications illustrate the scholarly potential of social media applications. As thousands of these episodes are written and then visually represented both spatially and temporally, the site paints a portrait of life in a specific geographic area throughout its history that is both wide-ranging and deep, one that is fully accessible to scholars, teachers, and the general public. The History Engine database is growing into a rich vein for data mining and visualization.

More recently, the Digital Scholarship Lab at the University of Richmond and the University of Toronto Scarborough entered into an agreement to develop an international partnership to collaboratively redevelop portions of the History Engine adding new features and functionality. These changes and additions will broaden the spatial focus beyond the United States allowing for the inclusion of student publications linked to the social, cultural, and political histories of other nations and with the potential to include projects that cut across regions and geopolitical boundaries. Given that the History Engine is not content driven it is eminently transferable/shareable across disciplines/institutions and will be able to accept any form of documentation/media that can be spatially and temporally linked. It is envisioned that

developments will allow contributions from the general public that will further enhance the knowledge creation and dissemination. The backend of the project will also be enhanced to encourage collaborative research projects, small group writing, and peer review—strategies known to promote active learning and enhanced critical thinking.

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*Short Break*

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**3:30 – 5:00**

**Room A: “Noisy Information”**

**Dr. Gary Genosko**, Lakehead University,  
“Rethinking Matching and Regaining Transmission”

Against the background of the account of ‘matching’ versus ‘making’ in the critique of the transmission model of communication presented by Marshall and Eric McLuhan in the *Laws of Media*, it will be maintained that this dichotomy is false and unproductive and simply reproduces an existing act of violence in the tradition of communication theory, as Steven Maras has argued, with reference to the work of Régis Debray. This paper reveals a number of strategies for regaining transmission from within the seminal papers of Shannon and Weaver by excavating neglected figures such as the ‘discreet girl’ and how the gendered dynamics of a service environment also provide insight into the operator sub-codes embedded within so-called signalethic transmissions. Ultimately, the task of regaining transmission moves toward a critical recognition of the model’s exemplarity. Citing Evelyn Fox Keller’s elegant analysis of models as verbs (*of* processes of analysis, experiment design and execution) and models as nouns (as separable entities *for* new kinds of experiments, questions, etc.), it may be added that all advances in the domain of communication modelling redraw or reference Shannon and Weaver either implicitly or explicitly (often neglecting Weaver’s unique contributions entirely as a proselytizer for big science during the Cold War). The reorientation sought in this paper with regard to transmission is not so much as *model of* an existing real world nor a *model for* investigative activities and ideas to be pursued, but a *model to* the reference point of Shannon and Weaver as well as derivations of their contributions. In other words, it is important to not only historicize modelling in communication studies but to acknowledge the influence of what cannot be taken for granted throughout the field and its practices. Shannon and Weaver’s model is exemplary: it is the index model whose status is reaffirmed with each iteration, adumbration, and criticism, and surpassing. Exemplarity grows in strength over time. It is not simply one among many models, but a general one well-adapted to measuring attempts at generalizing modelling in communication, or scrambling it, as Tony Sampson attempts.

**Dr. Kenneth R. Allan**, University of Lethbridge,  
“Information, the Counter-Environment, and the Lateral Extension of Art”

The paper will continue my work on Marshall McLuhan’s idea of the counter-environment as related to the projects of N.E. Thing Co. Ltd. McLuhan famously coined the saying, “The medium is the message.” Despite his spelling out the relation between them on several occasions, it is seldom noted that this rather vague saying serves as an early formulation of the counter-environment. The counter-environment discussion will be informed by the related notion of the lateral extension of art. This idea suggests that a wide range of information, which is seemingly external to the art object or immediate presentation, may actually be constituent elements of the artwork. Consequently, one can say that much of what we consider to be the artwork is not necessarily manifested in the physical object or presentation as perceived, but exists in extension.

One of the innovations of Conceptual art is the acknowledged role played by external elements in both its creation and reception. The Conceptual artwork is more than its material self and the artist effect can be widely distributed outside of the responsible artists who, nevertheless, set the work in motion. Art generally works with pre-existing cultural forms. Rather than being absolutely new manifestations, Conceptual art (such as that of N.E. Thing Co. Ltd.) tends to highlight and focus attention on the already present, thereby engaging with pre-existing elements of the culture. This idea helps in further understanding that the “location” of art is very diffuse and extends beyond the objects that serve as the immediate phenomena to be attended to and that serve as prompts for extended thoughts.

In 1965, McLuhan wrote: “John Cage has a book called *Silence* in which, very early in the book, he explains that silence consists of all of the unintended noises of the environment. All the things that are going on all the time in any environment, but things that were never programmed or intended—that is silence. The unheeded world is silence. That is what James Joyce calls thunder in the *Wake*. In the *Wake* all the consequences of social change—all of the disturbances and metamorphoses resulting from technological change—create a vast environmental roar or thunder that is yet completely inaudible.” In terms of attention and the counter-environment, McLuhan’s noise and silence are the forms adopted by information in its moments of perceived revelation and unnoticed manipulation. N.E. Thing proposed (like McLuhan) that artistic reception and creation can be extended outside of art itself into other discourses, areas of interest, and manifestations. It is the revelation of the unnoticed environmental context that becomes of prime importance, and there are no rules determining how that revelation is to take place.

**Rebecca Noone**, MMSt student, University of Toronto, **Karen Pollock**, MISt student, University of Toronto, and **Dr. Jenna Hartel**, University of Toronto,  
“Making Noise without Sound: Arts-Based Perspectives of Information”

This proposal outlines a long presentation and a “creative intervention” for the *interPLAY between creativity & information Symposium*. Our project takes an arts-based research approach (McNiff, 2008; Weber, 2008) to the concept of information and explores the conference theme of “Information Noise.” During the summer and autumn of 2011, 137 graduate students at the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Information were asked to respond to the question “What is information?” by drawing with a black pen upon a blank, white, 4”x4” piece of paper, producing what we call an “iSquare”. During the process, participants were prompted to conceptualize *information* in a visual manner and to utilize creativity and intuition from outside the traditional scholarly discourse. The resulting iSquares are personal interpretations of information, employing a visual language not native to the academic context.

The 137 iSquares were subjected to a compositional analysis (Rose, 2007) in response to the questions posed by the interPLAY Symposium: *Can the “noisy” character of information be harnessed as a creative and constructive force within the academic environment? Can information be conceived as non-linear, situated, embodied, physical or material, etc.?* The long presentation will outline the research design, survey the data set, and illuminate “Information Noise” within the iSquares. Then, a “creative intervention” will give symposium participants an opportunity to experience the arts-based research approach by creating an iSquare and interacting with an iSquare exhibit/display.

The iSquare images challenge, like the interPLAY Symposium, assumptions that information is linear, quantitative, or neutral. The iSquares contain expressions of information as visual metaphors, conceptualized sensations, visualized abstractions, and depictions of the everyday life. In most cases, information was cast in multiform compositions, and rarely as a single, solitary ‘thing’. The iSquares capture “Information Noise” in these multiform compositions as (1) Information Collages: depicting a miscellany of objects; (2) Information Clusters: depicting

multiples of symbols and/or non-figurative representations; (3) Information Cacophony: combining Information Collage and Information Cluster.

In order to harness the creativity within the symposium and to celebrate the participatory nature of the study, a “creative intervention” will take place as well. Symposium participants will be encouraged to add to the project by completing their own iSquare at a special workstation. Nearby, a sample of iSquares from the study will be placed on display as an exhibit (shown at right); the student researchers involved in the project will offer informal synopsis of the project and answer questions. Further, symposium participants can contribute to the curation of the iSquare study by regrouping and reordering the iSquare display.

**Leif Penzendorfer**, MA student, Concordia University, and **Adam van Sertima**, External Researcher, Technoculture Art and Games, “Noise, Nietzsche, and McLuhan”

A playful recontextualization arises from the interplay of shared objects inspired by the librarian as Dionysian avatar rather than Appollonian prophet of truth. Librarian as Bacchic oracle of play, drawing forth re-interpretive power through sensual play between media. To paraphrase Nietzsche, we can never Peirce the veil of reality. Rather we impose metaphor in place of the thing itself - our senses give us such reinterpretations. We assert what is pattern and noise. We shift media in time and space to inspire more interesting metaphor.

“It is all encapsulated in the popular variant on Robert Browning: “A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a metaphor.” All media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms.”<sup>8</sup> Media can only extend through time and space but this extension allows it to extend our grasp. Stuart A. Kauffman (2008: xi) presents ceaseless creativity as providing manifold options for explorations that transcend definition. These definitions cause perception to give way to conception. But these conceptions are chimerical boxes that delimit our explorations.

This recognition of the limits of conception underlies the difficulty in utilizing noise as a creative source or a criterion for judging the validity of perception. Noise can be—indeed must be—redefined if we are not to be trapped in the metaphorical limitations of the technical definition of noise. It is here where we can turn back on the process of unfolding each subsequent metaphor inspired by successive media. This unfolding of our own argument is neither more nor less true than another metaphor. Yet by questioning the dominance of metaphor and concept it allows exploration beyond the original intention of the author. Thus the remediation explicit in an online catalogue *raisonnée* project offers different unfoldings that sublimate the interplay of different texts. “Any subject taken in depth at once relates to other subjects.”<sup>9</sup> Contingent and transitory interpretations can be inspired by the interplay of media, and benefit from readings in different eras - a distinction highlighting the import of archiving.

As McLuhan was interested in the interplay between technologies, sic media, and the sub-surface impacts they had on society, different eras would have different manners in which to determine the make-up of their realities. Since we have access to the writings of the print, and pre-print literate cultures (including those recorded from oral cultures by those just taking up the pen - Plato, for example) in our own time of nascent electric media, we by nature must wield words differently than those cultures built of different “The word “metaphor” is from the Greek *meta* plus *pherein*, to carry across or transport. ... Each form of transport not only carries, but translates and transforms, the sender, the receiver, and the message.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, to re-read the words of the past

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<sup>8</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* p. 57 [1964, 1994].

<sup>9</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* p. 347 [1964, 1994].

<sup>10</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* pp. 89-90 [1964, 1994].

is to automatically re-interpret them - the role of the archivist is not to preserve the thoughts of the past but to give access to modern re-interpretations.

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**5:15 – 6:00**

**Room A: IAIN BAXTER&**, Professor Emeritus, University of Windsor,

In conversation with **Dr. Dan Adler**, York University, and **Dr. Janine Marchessault**, York University

IAIN BAXTER& is Professor Emeritus at the University of Windsor. BAXTER& (or, “the&MAN”), has been described as the “the visual Marshall McLuhan of our times.” He is a member of the Order of Canada as well as of the Order of British Columbia and Order of Ontario. He received the Governor General’s Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2004. In awarding the Molson Prize in 2005, the jury stated that, “IAIN BAXTER& is widely influential as an artist and teacher. His art has made us question, laugh, re-examine and think. He is one of society’s greatest innovators.” His pioneering information art—including experiments with Telex and telecopier—establishes BAXTER& as the first Canadian conceptual artist. Moreover, his innovative photographic practice positions him as a founder of the Vancouver School of Photoconceptualism. BAXTER& created and founded the conceptual art project and enterprise N.E. Thing Co. Ltd. in 1966. NETCO was legally incorporated in January, 1969 and co-administered with Ingrid Baxter until 1978. BAXTER& has worked for the Polaroid Corporation and as a creative consultant for Sidney Oland, President of Labatt’s Breweries. His most recent work draws on a life-long exploration of the creative fusion of ecology and the contemporary information landscape.

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**6:00 – 7:00**

**Room A: Refreshments**

The symposium will also feature creative interventions by:

**Sigi Torinus**, Professor, University of Windsor

**Christine Walde**, MLIS student, University of Western Ontario

**For all queries, please contact:**

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