

EDITORIAL

LUKE HEEMSBERGEN & SUNEEL JETHANI, THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Robert Samuels has argued that "individual autonomy is now being generated through technological and cultural automation" where cultural histories are "dominated by the paradoxical combination of social automation and individual autonomy" along with technical automation and socio-political control (2009: ix, 3). In the thematic issue of PLATFORM: Journal of Media and Communication we provide a tangent to Samuels' work by linking concepts of automation and autonomy, and transparency and agency. In what follows, we present an explorations of themes through issues of social assemblage, public-privacy and the relationship between automation, impulsivity and compulsion.

Robbie Fordyce's contribution on Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks looks at the relationship between the idea of the automaton - which the author develops as a concept that questions life, agency, subjectivity and political dissent - and technological networks. Automation here is essentially a digital machine that acts with intentionality but without thought per se, and is considered in terms of its immanence in DDos attacks by the online activist community, Anonymous. Fordyce argues that for "sustained political use of the DDoS attack, it is necessary to find a mix of automated code and social engagement", suggesting that within the idea of political automation, the articulation of political dissent through online networks sees the automaton "as part of a political machine of praxis, rather than an agentless drone of [an] ideology.' Thus, the article surmises that networked political dissent is an "automatic, reflexive and unconscious activity".

Drawing on work occurring the field of "media archaeology", Jenny Kennedy and Esther Milne examine contemporary forms of publically private communication using the tension between "system[s], meaning[s]; form[s] and content" as means of interrogating the relation between automation and autonomy with their study of the zine, *You*, and the website, *Post Secret* (2004-2012). Contributors to the latter are encouraged to anonymously share a secret that they have never shared with anyone before. Kennedy and Milne develop a critique of public privacy centring around the *anxiety* one may feel over potential audience interpretations and desired forms of reciprocity in an initiated act of sharing; *access* to meaning through both content and contexts of production and reception; and *control*, or lack thereof, over potential transgressions of public privacy when the "distribution of content or

information" is situated outside of the control of the "interlocutor who initiated the exchange."

Given the recent debate and introduction of legislation on pre-commitment for problem gambling in Australia, César Albarrán Torres' timely article looks at the relationship between gamblers and electronic gaming machines (EGMs) as Deleuzo-Guattarian "desiring-machines" and cross platform media which merge digital gambling procedures with videogame conventions to form what the author terms "gambling-machines". These gambling-machines, Torres argues, automate the desire to bet by communicating at two levels, one being through aesthetic configurations of immersion and gameplay inciting a desire to win and define destiny, and then on a deeper level, to "spell out discourses derived from wider socioeconomic arrangements" that revolve around "desire intermingled with hope." Further, the article shows how aesthetics of automating desire in game form draw from and rearticulate post-colonial discourses and class related aspirations.

Jenna Benson's article on media violence presents a critical analysis of *The Hunger Games*. Benson specifically questions the *appropriateness* of the *levels* of violence depicted in the texts on audiences aged 9-17 years of age, the *context* of such violence, and the pertinent question, "is the metaphorical nature of the text's overall message something that should be introduced to the leaders of tomorrow, before they actually experience the world as adults?" This question unfurls the consequences of automated regimes of culture creation that position youth as audience to serialised popular fiction that, in each new iteration, acts but does not think through its constituting role in fandom and violent, yet emancipatory, social norms.

PLATFORM was fortunate able to interview Dr. Suelette Dryfus on themes of digital automation and resistance, the power of automating transparency, and how the political space is ripe for resistance and new forms and functions of the whistleblower as a pathway to find autonomy in automation. With the WikiLeaks Party's failed foray into the 2013 Australian election, this timely interview provides prescient insight into the art and state of transparency in media and politics.

ANZCA AND PLATFORM COLLABORATION

We are pleased to present papers from our third collaboration with ANZCA, a professional association for researchers, students and teachers working in the broad field of communication and media studies. To support the work of new and emerging scholars, ANZCA provides post-graduate students with opportunities to publish the best papers submitted to the annual ANZCA conference. In this issue we present six papers from the 2013 conference held in Perth.

Finally, our thanks are due to all our contributors, without them we do not have a journal and we appreciate their support. We would also like to thank our anonymous reviewers for the time they have taken to develop the articles included in this issue. Special thanks are due to Diana Bossio of ANZCA for her continued support and to Dale Leorke, Luke van Ryn, John Stowell, Timothy Smith and Nadia Navie for assistance in putting together the issue.