



Re-Launch of the Journal of e-Media Studies

Mark Williams

After a too-long delay between issues, we are delighted to be back online in a new Scalar journal platform, featuring an expansive special issue guest-edited by gifted colleagues Hadi Gharabaghi and Bret Vukoder.

Hadi and Bret are spearheading a concerted effort to greatly expand scholarly attention to what I refer to as the motion picture studio that few of us know: The United States Information Agency, which produced or distributed over 20,000 films during the Cold War.

For reasons they richly detail in the issue introduction, the motion picture activities of the USIA (often called the USIS outside of the USA) were genuinely global and multi-faceted, but have been inaccessible and crucially under-studied. One key reason is that the films were legally restricted from being screened within the US until a few years ago—a largely fugitive archive of films that were politically and diplomatically intended to persuade and inform.

When Bret and I were invited to virtually meet with NARA archivists about their vast collection of USIA materials, it led to a commitment to help develop USIA studies via [The Media Ecology Project](#) at Dartmouth—a collaborative endeavor that is well underway. I further suggested that we work to invite scholars and archivists from outside the US to help better understand this vast US cultural product: formally and ideologically complex moving image texts that for many decades had only been available elsewhere.

The development of the USIA collection from NARA—plus films from multiple additional agencies collected at NARA, The Sherman Grinberg Library, and other participating archives—has enabled significant curricular development at Dartmouth in relation to The Media Ecology Project, including a new course (“The Idea of Africa: Deconstructing Race in the Iconography of a Continent”) co-created by Prof. Williams and Prof. Ayo Coly, faculty member of Comparative Literature and Chair of African and African American Studies at Dartmouth.

Hadi, Bret, and Prof. Williams have been fortunate to present together on the USIA project at many conferences to help build international awareness to this research. Drawing from the insights and dedicated scholarship that they each have pursued, this special issue makes a necessary and rigorous intervention that is intended to inform and inspire new international cooperation and analysis.

Thanks much to Hadi and Bret and of course to all of the authors and contributors for their spirit of diligence and commitment.

We are extremely grateful to Librarian of the College Susanne Mehrer, Associate Librarian for Digital Strategies Daniel Chamberlain, and Scholarly Publishing Librarian Stephen Krueger for their confidence and support in getting the Journal back into production.

Denise Logsdon demonstrated great skill and cooperation in copy-editing the issue. Lauren Spencer greatly assisted with managing editor duties. Thanks also to Vincent Desjardins for upgrading our *Journal of e-Media Studies* logo into vivid digital resolution.

Lastly, we welcome both new and heartily sustained Editorial Board members to what we intend to be an enduring series of special-themed issues that deepen, expand, and innovate research and scholarship about media pasts and futures. Please let us know if you have ideas for special-themed issues.

About the Author

Mark Williams is Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies at Dartmouth College where he directed a foundational [Digital Humanities Institute](#), founded an e-journal, *The Journal of e-Media Studies*, co-edited the book series [Interfaces: Studies in Visual Culture](#), and directs an NEH-supported DH research initiative, [The Media Ecology Project](#) (MEP).

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<http://journals.dartmouth.edu/joems/>
Article DOI: 10.1349/PS1.1938-6060.A.474

