

## **Video and the Open Web**

H79.2899 Thursday 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

<http://videoontheweb.org>

NYU Interactive Telecommunications Program

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### **Class details**

Most web video is wrapped in a proprietary layer and served cold. It's hard to build apps on top of video services, hard to remix video content, and hard to bring genuine innovation to market. Video is the only web medium that's basically read-only. It's time to change that.

This class will introduce a legal and technical framework for understanding open video. Guest speakers from Mozilla, PCF, Wikipedia, and elsewhere will share advances in platforms, protocols, and politics.

This class will challenge you to think creatively about the potential of web video, and connect the dots between open technology, creative expression, and media democracy. Why is a more video-saturated web in tension with openness? How can we foster more flexible distribution channels in the face of hardening platforms? Are platform operators fairly balancing the concerns of content owners with new forms of speech like remix?

Students will take part in weekly discussions, contribute to a group blog, and tackle some approachable open video hacking—people of all skill levels welcome. Students will also propose and produce a term project that innovates using open video principles.

### **Grading breakdown/evaluation**

40% final project

30% participation and attendance

15% blog posts

15% final project proposal

79%→100%=pass

### **Final project**

You will propose and produce a term project that innovates using open video principles. This can be an original open video production, a new HTML5 video library, a scaffolded proposal for a new web video service—almost anything. The only hard rule is that you must use primarily open source technologies. This

means you'll probably need to learn a bit about HTML5 —which we'll cover in class.

Think hard about how online video works today. Then think how you could foster more participation or make it cooler. That's the key to imagining a cool term project. But don't worry, we'll brainstorm through this together.

Two page project proposals are due in-class on **February 24th**. You'll give a short preview of your project in class on **April 21st**, and make your final presentation on **May 5th**.

### **The Blog**

Though this class covers a broad set of topics, you'll be asked to draw connections between technology, policy, and practice in the world of online video. Please share your insights by producing 3 long-form posts for the class blog. You can make an argument or observation, or simply put some news item in context. You should write one about every third week and give us a quick summary at the start of the next class. For suggestions on where to get news, visit the blog.

## Class schedule and reading

Week 1 — Feb 3rd

### Why video matters

Manovich, Lev. "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life." Video Vortex Reader.

Baron, Andrew. "A Decade In the History of Online Video." [Demobot](#).

Bylund, Anders. "From Cinepak to H.265: a brief history of video compression." [Ars Technica](#).

Heffernan, Virginia. "The Death of the Open Web." New York Times 2010 May 2010, [Web version](#).

Week 2 — Feb ?th

### How a more video-saturated web is in tension with openness

Wu, Tim. "The Master Switch." Chapters 10 ("We Now Add Sight to Sound"), 16 ("Turner Does Television")

Crawford, Susan. "Why Comcast/NBCU Matters" [[Web version](#)] "The Big Squeeze" [[Web version](#)]

Seltzer, Wendy et al. "Video Prison: Why Patents Might Threaten Free Online Video." [New America blog](#)

Boyle, Jamie. The Public Domain, Chapter 4. "The Logic of Perfect Control"

Week 3 — February 10th

### Fostering flexible distribution channels and the economics of content delivery

Guest: Dean Jansen, deputy director Participatory Culture Foundation

Boxee v. Hulu [[Hulu's take](#), [Boxee's response](#), [Congressional inquiry](#)]

Mark Cuban (HDNET) v. Avner Ronen (Boxee) [[part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#)].

Ammori, Marvin. "Net Neutrality, 'TV Everywhere' and Other Cable Industry Assaults on Open Television." 10 Dec 2009. [[Web version](#)]

van Schewick, Barbara. skim: “End to end arguments guide” [IAI blog](#).

Rothschild, Adam. “Peering disputes: Comcast, Level3, and You”. 02 Dec 2010. [\[Web version\]](#)

Week 4 — February 17th

**An Intro to HTML5 and open source video**

Guest: Brian Chirls: ←canvas→ hacking and other fun with HTML5 video

Messina, Chris. “View Source Has a Posse.” [Mix magazine](#).

Mark Pilgrim, “Chapter 5: Video on the Web” Dive into HTML5 <http://diveintohtml5.org/video.html>

“A Gentle Introduction to Video Encoding” <http://diveintomark.org/tag/give>

Week 5 — February 24th

**HTML5 video: Javascript, web service APIs, popcorn and butter**

Popcorn.js documentation; <http://popcornjs.org>

Week 6 — March 3rd

**Video on Wikipedia, semantic video, and the universal edit decision list**

Guest: Michael Dale, Wikimedia Foundation/Kaltura/Metavid

Lessig, Lawrence. “For the Love of Culture.” [The New Republic](#).

Kaufman, Peter. “Video for Wikipedia and the Open Web.” [\[Web version\]](#)

Scola, Nancy. “Washington’s IT Guy.” [The American Prospect](#).

Westenberg, Peter. “Affinity Video.” Video Vortex Reader

Week 7 — March 10th

**Do we need an alternative operating system for web video?**

Stecklow, Steve. “Meet the 21-yr-old Norwegian who defied Hollywood.” [WSJ](#).

Hamilton, Kevin. “Learning Through Handbrake: A Ripping Story.” [Learning Through Digital Media Reader](#).

Doctorow, Cory. Skim: “Microsoft Research DRM Talk,” [http://craphound.com/content/Cory\\_Doctorow\\_-\\_Content.pdf](http://craphound.com/content/Cory_Doctorow_-_Content.pdf) (p. 3-26)

Digital Millennium Copyright Act § 512, <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/512.html> (Read sections 512 (c) and (f) only) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online\\_Copyright\\_Infringement\\_Liability\\_Limitation\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_Copyright_Infringement_Liability_Limitation_Act) (Read Overview, Safe Harbor Provision for Online Storage, Criticism)

Check out UGC Principles, <http://www.ugcprinciples.com/> and Digital Entertainment Content Ecosystem <http://www.uvu.com/>

Week 8 — March 24th

### **A Remix Manifesto**

Guest: Brett Gaylor, Mozilla/WebMadeMovies  
Jonathan McIntosh, Rebellious Pixels

Watch Rip: A Remix Manifesto

Fred von Lohmann, YouTube’s January Fair Use Massacre, <http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2009/01/youtubes-january-fair-use-massacre>

Browse video takedowns with §512 in mind: <http://youtomb.mit.edu>

Miller, Liz Shannon. “[To Kill a Meme: Hitler Downfall Videos Get Takedown](#)”

Explore YouTube Audio ID and Video ID. <http://www.youtube.com/t/contentid>

Week 9 — March 31st

### **Midterm check-in and project brainstorming**

Week 10 — April 7th

### **HTML5 video: Canvas, Javascript, and CSS3**

Opera web curriculum TBD

Week 11 — April 14th

### **Multi-screen storytelling**

Guest: Lance Weiler, Workbook Project

Exploratory links will be provided.

Week 12 — April 21st

### **Project previews**

#### **Piracy**

Tehrani, John. "Infringement Nation: Copyright Reform and the Law/Norm Gap." <http://epubs.utah.edu/index.php/ulr/article/view/7/11>

Baumgärtel, Tilman. "Media Piracy and Independent Cinema in Southeast Asia." Video Vortex Reader.

Liang, Lawrence. "Piracy, Infrastructure, and Creativity." [Link](#).

Week 13 — April 28th

### **Dicey dimensions in online video**

#### **Guest TBA**

Gregory, Sam. "The Ethics of Online Video: Questions on Dignity, Re-Victimization, Consent, and Security." [WITNESS blog](#).

Peraica, Ana. "Chauvinist and elitist obstacles around YouTube and PornTube." Video Vortex Reader.

Behavioral tracking beacons TBD

Week 14 — May 5th

### **Project presentations**

## **Suggested reading**

These blogs regularly cover issues relating to open video, the economics of content delivery, copyfighting, and more. They will help you synthesize and source your arguments on the blog.

NewTeeVee  
Open Video Alliance  
Planet Xiph  
Susan Crawford  
Ed Felten  
Ethan Zuckerman  
Create Digital Motion

## **Sources of free/public domain video**

You may need raw material for your projects. These resources can provide video material that you can freely scratch, share, or syndicate.

[publicvideos.org \(alpha\)](http://publicvideos.org)

A free archive of short openly licensed videos, encoded in all formats open and encumbered. Also has a cool interface and a public API.

[FedFlix](#)

Info liberator Carl Malamud has devoted his life to digitizing and sharing public domain government video. Some very useful stuff here.

[MetaVid](#)

A semantically-tagged archive of CSPAN and other legislative video, this Sunlight Foundation-sponsored project was one of the first sites to experiment with HTML5 video.

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

Wikipedia's media archive is 100% Creative Commons-licensed video. This collection is growing, but is generally lower quality and only available in open formats.

[Prelinger Archives @ Internet Archive](#)

One of the original troves of Creative Commons-licensed archival material.