Video and the Open Web
H79.2899 Thursday 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
http://videoontheweb.org
NYU Interactive Telecommunications Program
benjamin.moskowitz@nyu.edu

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**


Baron, Andrew. “A Decade In the History of Online Video.” Dembot.


Week 2 — Feb ?th

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


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].

van Schewick, Barbara. skim: “End to end arguments guide” IA blog.


Week 4 — February 17th
**An Intro to HTML5 and open source video**
Guest: Brian Chirls: ←canvas→ hacking and other fun with HTML5 video


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


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.

Doctorow, Cory. Skim: “Microsoft Research DRM Talk,” 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 (Read Overview, Safe Harbor Provision for Online Storage, Criticism)


Week 8 — March 24th
**A Remix Manifesto**
Guest: Brett Gaylor, Mozilla/WebMadeMovies
Jonathan McIntosh, Rebellious Pixels

Watch Rip: A Remix Manifesto


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**


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

Week 13 — April 28th

**Dicey dimensions in online video**

**Guest TBA**


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)
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.