

Royal Anthropological Institute
EASA Workshop: The Frontiers of Visual Anthropology
18 September, 2005
Organized by Marcus Banks
Oxford University

1400-1415	Demo1. DZ. <i>Audionote: a field tool: photo elicitation with teeth</i>
1415-1430	Demo2. Jerome Lewis <i>Video annotation tool from the DART project at Columbia and LSE.</i>
1430-1500	Stephen Lyon and Emma Gilberthorpe <i>Interactivity, Experimentation and Digital Video</i>
1500-1530	Dr. Bella Dicks <i>Building hypermedia ethnography</i>
1530-1600	Michael Fischer <i>Interactive Multimedia in the Field: Applications for Ethnographic Research</i>
1600-1615	tea
1615-1645	Alan Macfarlane and Xiaoxiao Yan <i>Digital Anthropology: Some Examples</i>
1645-1715	Christian Heath <i>Video, ethnography, and mundane materials</i>
1715-1730	Peter Biella <i>Research in Ethnographic Multimedia: Examples from Maasai Interactive</i> (Abstract, p. 5)
1730-1800	DZ <i>Provocations for Visual Anthropology</i> and Closing Discussion

Demo 1 DZ. *Audionote: a field tool: photo elicitation with teeth*

Demo 2 Jerome Lewis *Video annotation tool being developed in the DART project at Columbia and LSE*

Speaker: Stephen Lyon and Emma Gilberthorpe (Durham University)

Title: Interactivity, Experimentation and Digital Video

Digital video has expanded the possibilities for use of visual data in research and dissemination of visual anthropological material. Rather than simply producing an ethnographer controlled linear narrative (as in conventional ethnographic films), digital video on CD-ROM, WWW or DVD-ROM facilitates more user interaction with the material. Many of the techniques for interactive use have their origins in methods that pre-date the use of computers in the field (pile sorting, pair associations, free association, reconstruction of sequences etc), however, it has become not only possible but relatively

simple to integrate digital video clips within these data generating methods. Nearly five decades ago Timothy Ash decided the best use of much of the Marshall's Kalahari footage was for dissemination to undergraduates (and others) rather than attempting to produce extended, coherent narratives; we have applied this idea to video footage taken during research about perceptions of development in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. A fraction of the footage has been used to produce a single film by Gilberthorpe, but the remaining footage can enhance learning and dissemination by providing a series of interactive tools to facilitate understanding of development and tradition within anthropology and cognate disciplines. The tools can be used to create one or more extended coherent narratives (by students or in research settings) which may be used for discussion or comparative analysis of the range of ways in which people make sense of other people's perceptions. Interactivity is clearly on the increase in every area of computing and networking and we in anthropology are in a powerful position to make far more of visual materials in research and dissemination by innovating how we build in such capacities within our research outputs.

Speaker: Dr. Bella Dicks

Title: Building hypermedia ethnography

This session will focus on the ethnographic use of hypermedia, understood as Hypertext + multimedia. It will report on research undertaken at Cardiff that has been conducted in order to test out the feasibility of using hypermedia for ethnographic fieldwork, analysis and representation. It will focus on the challenges, problems and issues involved in doing ethnography through digital media, and will explore how hyperlinking can assist in the production of ethnographic knowledge. It will particularly focus on the implications of combining and integrating different media on the computer screen in the representation and analysis of multimedia materials.

Speaker: Michael Fischer

Title: Interactive Multimedia in the Field: Applications for Ethnographic Research

The use of ethnographic multimedia in Anthropology and Ethnographic research more generally has largely been limited to dissemination and teaching. There are notable examples of Multimedia for teaching and even scholarly dissemination, but relatively little used in the field itself beyond simple visual elicitation slideshows.

This workshop will examine more direct use of multimedia resources as a part of the fieldwork process, with a particular focus on the construction of interactive materials in conjunction with local people and using interactive materials as to explore our ethnographic understandings, including simple interactive simulations.

Speaker: Alan Macfarlane and Xiaoxiao Yan

Title: 'Digital Anthropology: Some Examples'

Alan Macfarlane will talk about two recent developments in digital anthropology: the use of 'Dspace' (Digital Space) at Cambridge to archive and make available interviews with 60 leading anthropologists and others; the development of a powerful multi-media web-based information retrieval system for anthropologists ('Bamboo'). Xiaoxiao Yan will talk about the setting up of the Digital Orient site and the development of the SILK (Simple Interface for Linking Knowledge) software.

We would need a data projector and, if possible, a fast connection to the internet, if that is possible.

Speaker: Christian Heath & Paul Luff

Title: Video, ethnography, and mundane materials

In recent years there has been a growing interest in developing tools and technologies to support the use of video in social science research. These developments are often driven, or informed by, particular methodological commitments, and have frequently involved replacing the use of material artefacts with advanced digital solutions. In this paper we would like to discuss an alternative approach, an approach that takes conventional material artefacts seriously and explores the ways in which we can interweave the digital or electronic with the more mundane resources that continue to pervade ethnographic and qualitative research in the social sciences. Drawing on a range of projects that we are currently undertaking, including studies of control centres, auctions houses, operating theatres and museums, we wish to explore how developments in paper technologies and computing systems can begin to provide resources that enable us to enrich the collection, analysis and presentation of ethnographic 'data' including video recordings whilst supporting the use of conventional paper based materials including field notes, transcripts, reports and articles. In particular, the paper discusses the ways in which we can create systematic links between various electronic resources, including video, text, art work and the like and conventional paper documents, and discuss the implications of these developments for video-based, ethnographic studies of conduct, interaction and culture.

Speaker: Peter Biella

Title: Research in Ethnographic Multimedia: Examples from Maasai Interactive

Time based media – video, animation and audio – are useful to anthropology for a number of reasons. They can communicate rapidly and viscerally. They can provide kinesic, linguistic and contextual information that is difficult to transmit in words. In addition, moving images and audio allow emotional entry points into cultural worlds otherwise unavailable. Not least, time- based recordings also provide an empirical foundation for subsequent research and theorization. This presentation will consider the latter use.

Before the video revolution, the high cost of 16mm film production acted as a break on experimentation, restricting film length and frequently obliging filmmakers to cater to the needs of large audiences. As such, films made for the purpose of assisting empirical research were rare. With the advent of less expensive video, more anthropologists were able to produce time- based recordings that served smaller audiences including those interested in research. Yet research was still often stymied by media. Video and audiotapes often lacked systematic textual commentary which made them hard to evaluate and the basis of their collection opaque. Moreover, like fieldwork observations, video and audio exposition remained intransigently linear, empirically raw and far more resistant to abstraction than written ethnography.

Only recently, the multimedia integration of video and audio recordings with text-based exposition has made ethnographic footage not only accessible to specialized groups of users but also much more convenient for research. The convenience is due to the multimedia's integration of time-based recordings with the tools of print-based scholarship.

Over the last fifteen years, I have developed a multimedia application about Iparakuyo Maasai of Tanzania. This work includes many narrative elements, with vérité style audio and photographic recordings joined into themed chapters. In addition, however, Maasai Interactive also provides many tools for independent research. It contains twenty hours of audio recordings, fifteen of them translated, four of them transcribed and subtitled. These recordings were made in conjunction with five hundred photographs documenting fragments of a month in the life of an Iparakuyo family. In this presentation, I will show how the audio recordings and photographs have been made amenable for multimedia study or “virtual fieldwork.” I will also present ways in which several hundred pages of textual annotations provide a researchable and interactive companion to ethnographic recordings.

Speaker: David Zeitlyn 2

Title: Provocations for Visual Anthropology

In order to start the discussion a series of provoking thoughts to irritate and question some assumptions and presumptions.