

Brian Le

May 7, 2013

DSC 294 – Final Paper

### What is Media Editing?

Media editing is the arrangement of media, or information, in a way that is original and compelling. As oppose to creating media, such as photography, filmography, drawing, painting, recording, etc., media editing takes these existing mediums and arranges them in a way that is better understood.

Throughout the class, we have explored tools and techniques to manipulate media for both aesthetic and intellectual purposes. “Media” in the sense of the class had a broad meaning. It included traditional aspects, such as photos, sounds, and videos, but also took on a more abstract interpretation to include the scopes of words, numbers, space, emotions, people, and life. Not only is media capable of incredible influence on the world, but it also unavoidably surrounds us. Especially in the age of digital media, we are constantly feed and have access to infinite amounts of information, and it is important that we find a way to make sense of all of it. This overabundance of information only becomes valuable once it has meaning or context, and this is where media editing plays a role.

The first module of text and graphics was probably my favorite. Aside from being personally interested in graphics, I also think that images are ultimately the most powerful form of media. Words

require the person to stop and read, and is sometimes cannot live up to the vividness of ideas that images can portray. Videos require people to stop, watch, and listen. Images are a bit more



direct; billboards and giant posters force people to look at them, whether or not they are interested. This ease of access to an audience is what I think makes images powerful. In the context of media editing with text and graphics, the idea of portraying a new thought using existing images is particularly interesting.

This graphic banner (above) for the final project in module 1 was one of my favorite creations in the class, and an example that I feel encompasses the essence of media editing. The assignment was to take our image editing skills and put together a banner that represents a



quote to live by, which again, utilizes the concept of manipulating media for new meaning and context. In making the banner, I took ideas from [Banksy](#) the street artist. In some of Banksy's work, he references known and iconic ideas or images, and then recreates them to make social or political commentary. For example, the instantly recognizable image of the crying and naked civilian child from the Vietnam War holds hands with icons of American corporations, Mickey Mouse from Disney and Ronald McDonald. The original photo of the child is likely to bring upon feelings of pity and sorrow, while the faces of Mickey and Ronald is likely to bring upon feelings of lightheartedness and youth. However, when these images are joined in the way Banksy has done, it takes on new context (possibly political commentary) that builds upon the original meaning.

The same applies for Banksy's image of Queen Elizabeth sporting with David Bowie's iconic Ziggy Stardust makeup, or Tarantino's most famous characters Vincent and Jules holding bananas instead of guns. The context of the original image or idea is used to build upon new and compelling meanings. The banner I created for my project takes on these concepts. Using Lady Gaga's iconic meat dress as original context, I manipulated the image along with text to comment on ambition being my personal life quote.

These ideas were applied to nearly every module in the class and I feel it is the heart of media editing. For example, the video module focused on editing together clips to create context. We read about the [Kuleshov Effect](#) in montages in which scenes are cut together in a way to create meaning. Again, this presents the idea of manipulating existing media with the intentions of new context. I applied these ideas to other projects such as the final in module 7, where I created a visual piece to represent raw data and helped correlate seemingly different aspects of life into a correlative understanding.

Aside from traditionally known forms of digital media, new mediums such as life logging expand the scope and power of editing. Life logging is the recording of a person's life over large periods of time. It is essentially turning every day, real life actions, into raw information. Editing life requires a way to make sense of this large amount of information. Work such as that by [Byrne et al.](#), experiment with ways to repurpose recordings of life actions into a cohesive and understandable arrangement.

In the grand scheme of things, the media arts are a nonstop cycle of creation. In addition to the artist's intention and meaning, there is an audience that creates personal interpretations of the work. This interpretation can be physical, in referencing or borrowing ideas, or purely intellectual in which viewers may appreciate a piece differently than the creator. Media editing is any repurposing of ideas. In an abstract form, it can refer to thinking about or speaking about greater meanings, and in technical terms, it is applying tools and skills to repurpose an existing work or idea into something original and compelling. We edit media to make sense of information that is presented to us, and in some cases, to make sense of ourselves. In a modern world where information is at the peak of creation and distribution, it is important both intellectually, and for the sake of time and manageability, to think about larger context and meaning. We edit media to not only understand, but also to create new and original information to be put back in the cycle.

## References

1. Byrne, D., Kelliher, A., & Gareth, J. Life editing: Third-party perspectives on lifelog content.