Writing Otherwise
Philosophy, Communication, Technology

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Why write?
- What’s the matter with books?
- Questions / Discussion
Introduction
Introduction
Introduction
Introduction

Transgression 2.0
Media, Culture, and the Politics of a Digital Age

Digital Game Studies

8 June 2011
Digital Game Studies is open for business. Today we registered the digitalgamestudies.org domain and officially launched the DGS website. DGS is a new book series dedicated to examining all forms of digital games. The series was founded and is edited by Robert Brookely and David Gunkel, both at Northern Illinois University, and published by Indiana University Press. The website was designed and programmed by David Gunkel and registration was funded by the Department of Communication at NIU.

1 May 2012
Two titles have now been signed to the series. The first is an anthology of essays addressing virtual worlds and religion, tentatively titled Finding Religion in Digital Games. The collection will be edited by Heidi Campbell (Texas A&M University) and Gregory Grieve (University of North Carolina). The second is a collection of interviews and conversations with leading figures in game development, game studies, and the gaming industry. This project will be directed and edited by David S. Heinemann (Bloomington University of Pennsylvania).

International Journal of Žižek Studies

International Journal of Žižek Studies

Launched in January 2007, IŻS is a peer-reviewed, open access academic journal. As its title unambiguously proclaims, it is devoted to the work of Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian philosopher cultural theorist. Despite such predictably celebratory media portrayals as ‘the Mao of cultural theory’ and ‘the Marx brothers’, Žižek has attracted enormous international interest through his application of otherwise esoteric scholarship to contemporary mass culture and politics.

With a desire to avoid “how many Žižeks can dance on the head of a pin?” types of debate, and more naivagogy, IŻS aims to provide a valuable resource for those interested in his inimitable brand of critical thought. Just one small indication of Žižek’s wide appeal is apparent from the diverse nature of IŻS’s editorial board and the journal will be devoted to engaging with the substantive
Why Write?

Why do we Write?
Why do I Write?
Why Write?

Money
Fame/Prestige
Expression
Compulsion
Compulsive Writing

“I write because I have to write. And I have to write in order to first know what it is that I think. Writing is not an expression of thought but the order of precedence is reversed: my thoughts are a product of the writing.”
The greatest advantage of polythesism - For the individual to posit his own ideal and to derive from it his own law, joys, and rights—that may well have been considered hitherto as the most outrageous human aberration and as idolatry itself. The few who dared as much always felt the need to apologize to themselves, usually by saying: “It wasn’t I! Not I! but a god through me.”

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1887
Consequences:
- Authorship & Authority
- Creativity & Artistry
- Responsibility
Chapter Two

What’s the Matter with Books?

Ceci n’est cela — Victor Hugo

The question “what’s the matter with books?” may be understood on multiple registers: for example, a query of the state of things, the question of whether the future will look more like the past or vice versa. This question was perhaps most famously posed by the late Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who noted that the future of the book is in doubt.

Issues:

Title – What’s the Matter with Books?

Epigraph – “This will destroy that”

The Future of the book
What’s the Matter with Books?

Title: What’s the Matter with Books?
The question “what’s the matter with books?” may be understood on multiple registers. Taken colloquially, it asks about print technology and its product. Such a query usually denotes a worry or a concern over something that has perhaps gone wrong, become a problem, or deviated from accepted practices or anticipated outcomes. At the same time, however, the question may also be understood in a more literal and material sense. In this way, it inquires about printing’s matter, questioning both the subject matter of print and the materiality of its product. This question is perhaps the query most appropriate at this time, in an era that is commonly called the ‘late age of print.’ It especially matters when, for example, the computer is purported to replace the printed book as the depository and definition of human knowledge. The question, then, is palpable at this point in time when we read so much about the end of the book, the death of literature, and its remediation in digital form.
What’s the Matter with Books?

**The Gutenberg Elegy**
The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age

Sven Birkerts

**Avatars of the Word**
From Papyrus to Cyberspace

James J. O’Donnell

**The Death of Literatur**

Alvin Kernan

**Ink into Bits**
A Web of Converging Media

Charles T. Meadow

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The archdeacon gazed at the gigantic edifice for some time in silence, then extending his right hand, with a sigh, towards the printed book which lay open on the table, and his left towards Notre-Dame, and turning a sad glance from the book to the church, "Alas," he said, "this will destroy that [ceci tuera cela]."
What’s the Matter with Books?

Notre Dame Cathedral (1330)

Gutenberg Bible (1455)
What’s the Matter with Books?

Gutenberg Bible (1455)

Computer (1976)
What’s the Matter with Books?

Remediation
A new medium does not simply replace an old medium; the content of the new medium is the old medium it is said to be replacing. Likewise remediation describes the shift from one form of information technology to another, ‘in the sense that a newer medium takes the place of an older one, borrowing and reorganizing the characteristics of writing in the medium and reformulating its cultural space.

Consequences:

We are living through a change in the dominant form of information and communication technology (ICT).

The transformation from one ICT system to another appears as both a threat and opportunity.

We need to be informed and knowledgeable about new technology by engaging with it.

Expanded understanding of “writing” and “publishing.”
Writing in the sense of placing letter and other marks one after another, appears to have little or no future. Information is now more effectively transmitted by codes other than those of written signs. What was once written can now be conveyed more effectively on tapes, records, films, videotapes, videodisks, or computer disks, and a great deal that could not be written until now can be noted down in these new codes.

Vilem Flusser, 1987
Are we perhaps still too much under the impression of the initial consequences of this event—and these initial consequences, the consequences for ourselves, are quite the opposite of what one might perhaps expect: They are not at all sad and gloomy but rather like a new and scarcely describable kind of light, happiness, relief, exhilaration, encouragement, dawn.

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1887