Digital Newspaper Theatre:
Social Media and Process Drama

Rebecca Anne Wotzko

A dissertation submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Performance Research

Department of Theatre and Performance
School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies
University of Warwick
2009 - 2010
Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Professor Baz Kershaw, Dr John Carroll, David Cameron, Jerry Boland and C&T.
This dissertation is best read in conjunction with the following two websites:

http://rewire2.wordpress.com

http://twitter.com/rewire2
## Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 1

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 2
   1.1 Area of Research ..................................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Justification of Research ....................................................................................... 5

2. Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 7
   2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 7
   2.2 Social Media .......................................................................................................... 7
   2.3 Process Drama ........................................................................................................ 8
   2.4 Digital Process drama ............................................................................................ 12
   2.5 The Anthropology of Digital Performance ............................................................ 15
   2.6 Going Mobile ......................................................................................................... 16
   2.7 Mobile Citizen Journalism ...................................................................................... 17
   2.8 Twitter Authenticating the News ............................................................................ 19
   2.9 Newspaper Theatre ............................................................................................... 20
   2.10 Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 24

3. Research Methodology ................................................................................................. 25
   3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 25
   3.2 Practice as research in performance ..................................................................... 25
   3.3 Interpretative Paradigm ......................................................................................... 26
   3.4 Performance Ethnography ...................................................................................... 27
   3.5 Case Study ............................................................................................................. 28
   3.6 Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 29

4. Creative Exegesis .......................................................................................................... 30
   4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 30
4.2 Why [digital] newspaper theatre? ............................................................... 32
4.3 Framing the Drama exercise ................................................................. 37
4.4 Twitter in role ..................................................................................... 38
4.5 Digital Pre-text .................................................................................... 49
4.6 Development of the Digital Pre-text .................................................. 50
4.7 Use of the Twitter Interface ................................................................. 51
4.8 Working in groups ............................................................................... 52
4.9 Digital Newspaper Theatre: Step by Step ......................................... 54
4.10 Limitations ......................................................................................... 56
4.11 Future Applications ........................................................................... 57
4.12 Conclusion ......................................................................................... 58
5. Conclusion ............................................................................................. 59
Appendices ............................................................................................... 68
List of Figures

Figure 1: Twitter Cross Reading ................................................................. 34
Figure 2: Twitter User as Role ................................................................. 39
Figure 3: Role as Twitter profile VS Role as Textual Indicator............... 42
Figure 4: Framing a Role ........................................................................ 43
Figure 5: Sample of Digital Newspaper Theatre ................................. 44
Abstract

*Digital Newspaper Theatre: social media and process drama* explores the construction of a process drama exercise that applies Augusto Boal’s principles of Newspaper Theatre to the digital stage. This is developed through the creation of a fictional underground culture jamming society, Rewire2, that encourages its members to fight back against the mainstream media’s use of Twitter, a social media tool that is centred around 140 character posts or ‘tweets’.

Rewire2 forms a case study for a model of Digital Newspaper Theatre that is targeted at participants in their first year of university study in communication including the fields of advertising, commercial radio, journalism, public relations and theatre/media. This model proposes methods of role play and reframing of media stories using the Twitter interface with the aim of developing students’ dramatic and analytical skills and increasing their social media literacy in the ever-changing communication landscape.
1. Introduction

In a 2009 episode of *The Simpsons*, ‘Bart gets a Z’, Bart’s teacher Edna Krabappel takes a breath before entering the classroom, reassuring herself that ‘if you can teach one kid one thing then today has been a success’. She then opens the door to find a classroom full of students tapping on mobile phones and is so overwhelmed by the technology that she confiscates it.

Welcome to the classroom of the 21st century, a classroom full of students who are what Marc Prensky calls Digital Natives being taught by a teacher who is a Digital Immigrant. Digital Natives are those who have been born into digital technology and are thus ‘native speakers’ of the technology, and the Digital Immigrant is one who has immigrated into digital culture later in their life. These digital citizens live in an immersion of digital media technologies that empower them with the ability to self-publish, share and participate in a range of new entertainment and dramatic forms. These technologies are referred to as social media, the media forms surrounding Web 2.0 (O’Reilly), the ‘second version’ of the internet driven by user-generated content of blogs, wikis, photo sharing, video and audio podcasting and collaborative sharing and tagging.

In 2009, the micro-blogging tool Twitter has grown exponentially in popularity. It offers users a simple way to publicly broadcast or ‘tweet’ about news, activities, thoughts, feelings or to share links, videos or photographs, all through a piece of text under 140 characters in length. The site has received a lot of attention due to its use in crisis incidents such as the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and the 2009 bushfires in Victoria, Australia. Twitter has been
successfully integrated with mobile technology giving users the ability to both broadcast information via a text message or the mobile internet and to receive or track other messages. The emergency landing of an aeroplane into the Hudson river in New York in January 2009 was first reported by Twitter user who sent a photograph from his mobile phone to the website prior to the arrival of emergency services. Twitter has also been used for political protest, the most notable example following the 2009 Iran elections where it became an outlet for citizens to express injustice felt surrounding the results of the election to the outside world despite the Iranian government shutting down access to other modes of communication. An analytical discussion of the use of Twitter in this instance is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The mainstream media\(^1\) has recognised the use of Twitter as a citizen journalism device and many online news sites are now using it as another way to research stories and obtain public opinion or eyewitness accounts or events. In addition to this Twitter is being used to promote music, screen-based entertainment, brands, products, public figures and events. Due to the uptake by the mainstream of what was once a citizen-powered platform of communication, there is a new opportunity to apply analysis and criticism within a process drama exercise with the use of Brazilian director Augusto Boal’s method of Newspaper Theatre from Theatre of the Oppressed\(^2\). This brings us to the following central research question:

\(^1\) ‘Mainstream media’ refers to the large media conglomerates that are funded by either advertising or government. Examples include newswires such as Reuters and AAP; and companies such as Sky News, the BBC, and CNN.

\(^2\) Newspaper Theatre is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.
How can Newspaper Theatre be applied to the digital stage of Twitter to facilitate a process drama activity that critiques the media?

Sub questions:

How can digital pre-text be used to successfully engage participants in an online drama that critiques the media?

How can dramatic tension be maintained in the digital theatre working space?

1.1 Area of Research

As social media has been recognised as a new dramatic form due to its potential for role play, identity maintenance and user-generated story telling, *Digital Newspaper Theatre: process drama and social media* will explore the application of process drama to the medium of Twitter in order to analyse and critique the mainstream media by using a tool of social media that now has been taken up by the mass media themselves. Augusto Boal’s principles of newspaper theatre will be used as a framework for the reframing and critique of stories on the digital stage and role play in the dynamic medium of Twitter will be explored.
1.2 Justification of Research

In October 2009 at Griffith University, in Brisbane, Australia, Twitter was used as a platform for assessing journalism students on “the challenges they faced when writing a series of news stories” (Jensen). The students were required to ‘tweet’ 140 character updates from their Twitter accounts to document the production phase of news story writing. However, not all students reacted in a positive manner to the use of the social media tool Twitter within the classroom. This came as a surprise to the lecturer conducting the exercise, Jacqui Ewart, as she assumed “…that all school leavers knew what Twitter was and would have a good grasp of how to use it” (Jensen).

In a survey of first year communication students conducted by David Cameron at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia in March 2009, it was revealed that 93.8% of students have never used Twitter.

As Twitter is being used within many of the communication industries – whether it be for bite size news stories, promoting a new product or marketing an event or personality - it is essential that students of communication understand how the medium can be used, understood and manipulated. This research project explores the application of process drama to the digital stage as one way to explore the hybrid communication medium of Twitter. The project aims to design a model that can be used in the

---

3 See Appendix 1, Survey of first year communication students
university environment, using the methodological framework of Practice as Research in Performance (PARIP) to guide a case study where an experiment is conducted with the application of Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre to the social media tool Twitter.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The dynamic of the relationship between artist and audience is changing as digital media tools continue to grow in convergence and popularity. The ability to self publish allows the modern audience to become “directors of our own reality” (Virilio). This is an exciting site to work with due to the emergent overlap between social media and process drama. As social media continues to link itself to news media through content sharing and news creation, a triangle between process drama, social media and citizen journalism emerges. This becomes a space to take cultural action by applying techniques such as Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre as a potential exercise in drama and media education.

2.2 Social Media

The modern buzzword ‘Web 2.0’ was coined by technology publisher Tim O’Reilly to put a name to the internet post the 2001 dotcom crash. Web 2.0 refers to the ‘second version’ of the internet, no longer a platform just for information and entertainment, instead it is a social and personal tool that is at the core of ‘interactive technologies that are entertainment, identity maintenance and communication devices all at the same time’ (Carroll, 16). Social media refers to the media forms surrounding Web 2.0; the user
generated content of blogs, wikis, photo sharing, collaborative tagging and sharing, video blogs (vlogs) and audio podcasting (O’Reilly). You are the creator of Web 2.0 content: you are the You in Youtube, the My in Myspace, the Face of Facebook. The encouragement of interpersonal networking and community in these social media spaces means that users are likely to engage in role performance online through the assumed identity found within ‘email, passwords and internet persona’ (Shaughnessy, 208). In the digital world you ‘project a version of self that is inherently theatrical’ (Nakamura, 713) through the aspects of self that are selected to be presented in an online format, whether that be through a web page, avatar (digitised character of self) or a social networking page (Carroll, Anderson & Cameron). Paul Sutton of the theatre and technology company C&T also argues that the ‘…construction of new identities on the internet is an accepted convention and that this could be regarded as another form of being “in role”’ (Shaughnessy, 206). Modern audiences demand authenticity in mediated performance (Carroll) and the tools enabled by social media are a way to provide it. Role play within social media allows us to apply principles of process drama to the digital stage, taking advantage of the participatory culture and collaborative nature of social media for new opportunities to develop dramatic work.

2.3 Process Drama

Process Drama was developed from the work of practitioners such as Dorothy Heathcote, Cecily O’Neill, Gavin Bolton and others who used drama in education as a method to teach through the application of role play and
improvisational techniques (Bolton in Heathcote). Heathcote states that ‘dramatic activity is the direct result of the ability to role-play’ (49) placing the act of educational drama in its simplest form as ‘role-taking’ in order to understand or experience a social situation. Bowell and Heap describe process drama as ‘the genre in which performance to an external audience is absent but presentation to the internal audience is essential’ (7). Play in process drama creates meaning for the participants rather than projecting meaning for a watching audience. Process drama is ‘lived at life rate’ (Heathcote, 52) and is discovered in the moment rather than performed from memory.

This activity is also referred to as ‘Applied Drama’ (Nicholson) in reference to its use to socially benefit individuals and groups beyond the classroom and outside mainstream theatre. This ‘suggests that applied drama is primarily concerned with developing new possibilities for everyday living rather than segregating theatre-going from other aspects of life’ (Nicholson, 4). Nicholson acknowledges the use of the term ‘Applied Theatre’ for similar practices and views ‘Applied drama’ and ‘Applied theatre’ to be somewhat interchangeable terms. Nicholson views the distinctions made between the two terms by Philip Taylor - distinguishing applied drama as process and applied theatre as practice - similar to the distinctions made in the 1970s and 1980s between ‘drama in education’ as a teaching methodology, and ‘theatre in education’ as practice. The use of ‘drama’ or ‘theatre’ as an applied practice is frequently related to Bordieu’s debate about class divisions in the arts (Nicholson; Kershaw (Radical)). Applied practitioners thus attempt to distance themselves from a mainstream theatre that is seen as ‘a social engine that helps to drive an unfair system of privilege’ (Kershaw, Radical, 31). Nicholson’s examination
of Applied Drama goes so far as to detach itself from the institution of process drama in the classroom with little mention of the pioneering work of Dorothy Heathcote in these overlapping fields. The Australian based journal *Applied Theatre Researcher* takes a broad approach to all practices of non-traditional theatre and drama, whether it be process drama, applied drama, applied theatre, drama in education or theatre in education, stating ‘it focuses on performance practices with specific participant or client groups in a range of social contexts such as: drama and theatre in education, theatre for development, theatre in therapeutic settings, theatre in business, theatre in political debate and social action, theatre in life-long education, theatre in prisons, theatre in health education and awareness, theatre in aged care, theatre in hospitals, youth theatre’ (Bundy). Of course for each of these applications of drama/theatre, there are methods and techniques used in planning specific activities.

Bowell and Heap (10 - 11) locate six planning principles in process drama:

- Theme – focus, topic
- Context – circumstances in which the theme is explored
- Roles – roles played by participants and facilitators
- Frame – tension in the drama
- Sign – signifiers, artefacts
- Strategies – experiments in time and space

As a part of this process, the teacher-facilitator of a process drama activity will often use pretext to frame the dramatic work. Drama educator Cecily O’Neill describes pretext as below:
'Pretext frames the participants in a firm relationship to the potential action and furnishes an excuse for an immediate action or task or carries an implication of further action, so that participants’ anticipation and search for fulfilment can begin’ (O’Neill, 23).

Pretext has a degree of ‘openness’ to it as it can be reused to generate a unique creative outcome because it facilitates a series of ‘unique encounters among the participants’ (O’Neill, 23). Outcomes within process drama are also intended to have a degree of ‘unpredictability’ (O’Neill). The ‘openness’ and unpredictability of pretext can be linked to Umberto Eco’s idea of The Open Work. Eco theorised that interactive art and media forms are facilitated by ‘openness’; created not for reception but as a two-way transaction between the artist and the viewer. The artist purposely leaves some constituents of the work for the viewer to create, gaining a power that parallels that of the artist (Lovejoy). In the open work, the role of the artist changes from producer to facilitator of ‘elements and experiences’ (Lovejoy, 167) and from ‘wordsmith to concept and content creator’ (Cooke). An open work is rewarding to its user by making them an active participant in the construction and development of the work (Jennings). The ability of process drama to lend itself to interactive digital media becomes intrinsically clear. Espen Aarseth refers to interactive media works as ‘ergodic literature’, from the Greek words ergon (work) and hodos (path), defined as ‘open, dynamic texts where the reader must perform specific actions to generate a literary sequence which may vary from reading to reading’ (Aarseth, 1). This links to improvised performance, a method used in process drama, as ‘each time a work is performed, any number of factors can significantly change how it is realised in the moment’ (Carver). This can depend on the participants, the setting or
the nature of stimulus material or pretext that is provided. In order to effectively engage the audience as co-constructors of the work in digital improvisation and role play, a digital pretext must create an ‘immersive’ experience in order to effectively link process drama and digital media.

2.4 Digital Process drama

The interaction of process drama and online media was demonstrated by Dr John Carroll and David Cameron in their 2003 project, *To the Spice Islands: Interactive Process Drama*. They found that ‘the use of Web-based communication deliberately blurs traditional boundaries between participant and spectator, actor and character, interactor and viewer’ (Carroll & Cameron). *To the Spice Islands* was designed as ‘an experiment in digital multi-platform dramatic learning’ (Carroll & Cameron) to explore the experiences of survivors of the Dutch shipwreck Batavia off the coast of Western Australia in 1629. Participants in the project were two groups of Dutch upper primary students and a group of Dutch tertiary drama students (Carroll & Cameron). The media content was framed around a fictional organisation, the Australian/Netherlands Maritime Research Centre (ANMRC) and made use of interactive online texts such as a blog, hyperlinks and a ‘timescope’ which streamed short video clips as a window to the past. Students acted in-role as trainee marine archaeologists to uncover the fate of a child onboard the trip via a mysterious letter ‘discovered’ by the facilitators of the drama.

The framework for *To the Spice Islands* can be broken down using Bowell and Heap’s process drama planning principles as follows:
- Theme – historical exploration of the Batavia shipwreck
- Context – Australian/Netherlands Maritime Research Centre,
- Roles – Students as trainee marine archaeologists, facilitators as ANMRC representatives and passengers and crew of the Batavia
- Frame – ‘request for help to solve the mystery behind a recently discovered letter’ (Carroll & Cameron, 2)
- Sign – letter, blog, videos, hyperlinks, email
- Strategies – timescope to allow a look into the past

The project ‘attempted to progressively match levels of dramatic engagement with levels of digital interactivity’ (Carroll & Cameron, 1). The integration of digital content into the planning of the process drama ensured that tension and the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ (Coleridge) is maintained. When the audience engages with an online text by using in-role techniques, they enable themselves to become ‘immersed in an ‘alternate reality’’ (Dena, 14). Carroll, Anderson & Cameron (Real Players) term this as being in ‘situated role’ – positioned in the tension between process drama and digital technologies. Dena’s idea of ‘digital immersion’ is also described as ‘removing the fourth wall’ (Carroll, Anderson & Cameron, Real Players, 30); the audience are no longer an audience, rather a participant within the work. C&T, a theatre and technology company based in Worcester, UK developed the concept of ‘dramatic properties’ that ‘use theatre as an applied experience, working with real people in real situations to solve real problems and bring about personal, social and cultural change’ (C&T). The ‘audience’ of a dramatic property are participants in the work and are ‘valued as artists in their own right’ (C&T). This links back to Augusto Boal’s idea of the ‘spectactor’, where participants
are both an actor and a spectator. The nature of online drama and digital performance lends itself to these ideas where participants are artists themselves. Brenda Laurel’s 1986 thesis in interactive narrative defined online drama as ‘a first person experience within a fantasy world in which the user may create, enact and observe a character whose choices and actions affect the course of events just as they might in a play’ (Laurel in Aarseth, 4).

Although Laurel began to see the link between role playing in a theatrical setting and role playing within a digital setting, her definition is biased towards the open text found within the mediums of digital gaming and simulations. In these instances, the text does not exist without input or interaction from the user (Carroll). Considering online drama as an interactive and intertextual medium extending beyond the simulated world of gaming, researcher and interactive writer Andrew Stern offers a better definition: ‘the general concept of an interactive drama is the following: a dramatic situation in which you are free to say things and take actions that affect how the drama unfolds’ (Stern).

Stern’s definition sounds very much like the agency given to participants in a process drama exercise. Janet Murray (Hamlet on the Holodeck) terms interactive online drama ‘cyberdrama’4 where the audience, as participants must experience ‘dramatic agency’ (Murray, From Gamestory); i.e. potential for impact on the world in which they are participating. Espen Aarseth’s concept of Ergodic Literature requires a similar consequential impact on the world, defining the interactive framework for an online drama to operate.

---

4 See also Giannachi.
2.5 The Anthropology of Digital Performance

Victor Turner (*Are there universals*, 31 - 32) saw that ‘both drama and film are collaborative social performative systems’ requiring active involvement from all participants for a ritual/drama to be completed. This is indeed applicable to the practice of process drama. In digital performance, French cybertheorist Pierre Levy refers to this as the ‘collective intelligence’ of participants, also known as ‘smart mobs’ (Rheingold). A drama occurring digitally works in the tension between the Turner’s ‘liminal’ and ‘liminoid’ space, liminal as thresholds encountered by a group in a ritual/dramatic situation and liminoid as the ‘successor of the liminal in complex large scale societies, where individuality and optation [desire or choice] in art have in theory supplanted collective and obligatory ritual performances’ (Turner, *Are there universals*, 29). Giannachi sees the tension of the ‘hypersurface’ - where real life and the virtual meet - to be a liminal space. Turner’s work in the anthropology of performance shows that ‘rituals, dramas etc are often orchestrations of media, not expressions in a single medium’ (Turner, *The Anthropology*, 26). This is true to the ‘intermediality’ (Jenkins) of social media, making it an execeptional working space for the application of process drama and other practices of applied performance.
2.6 Going Mobile

As Carroll, Anderson and Cameron ask in Real Players?, ‘Where is your mobile phone now? Is it switched on?’ Social media is becoming increasingly mobile. Social networks such as Myspace, Facebook and Twitter enable updates to be posted to each respective site via a mobile phone whether it be through the mobile internet, email, texting or multimedia messaging. Both Facebook and Twitter allow the user to upload photos directly to their online profile from their mobile phone. This allows a real time story-telling that does not require the user to be in front of their computer, giving their online persona a new dimension of authenticity as they are able to be in-role in real or ‘live’ time. Auslander views this as a new kind of ‘liveness’ enabled by digital media, the ‘instant’ nature of the internet paralleling the liveness found in live, real life performance. The immediacy of the interaction between real life and online works on a sliding scale of Boal’s ‘metaxis’; simultaneously participating in reality and the ‘image of reality’ (Boal, Rainbow of Desire, 43). The ability to live through the lens (or mobile phone, or keyboard) and document one’s life whilst participating in it works on this scale. Not only does this have implication for documenting life experience but it enables social media users to become instant citizen journalists as they report on a wide array of daily encounters that may enter the public sphere.
2.7 Mobile Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism has grown exponentially with the tools enabled by social media and by the accessibility of cameras on mobile phones. Blogs have been central to this growth and are ‘more dynamic than older-style home pages, more permanent than posts to a net discussion list. They are more private and personal than traditional journalism, more public than diaries’ (Jenkins, *Fans, Gamers and Bloggers*, 179). Henry Jenkins in his paper, ‘Blog This’, first published in 2002 proposed:

Imagine a world where there are two kinds of media power: one comes through media concentration, where any message gains authority simply by being broadcast on network television the other comes through grassroots intermediaries, where a message gains visibility only if it is deemed relevant to a loose network of diverse publics (Jenkins, *Fans, Gamers and Bloggers*, 180)

In 2009, tools such as the micro-blogging service Twitter have made Jenkins’ idea of the future of news become a reality. Founded in 2006, Twitter works with bursts of communication in 140 characters or less – only 20 characters shorter than a mobile text message. Twitter is based around one simple question, ‘What are you doing?’. Answers to this question sent to a publicly accessible database of tweets can vary from the seemingly banal, such as what someone is eating for lunch, or to the extremity of ‘Arrested’ – a tweet posted by an American photojournalist as he was arrested in Egypt that gained widespread media attention (Sagolla). For the most part, tweets are a ‘stream
of consciousness...social media sites are not doing journalism, though sometimes breaking news shows up there. For the most part they rely on news coverage from mainstream media organisations to produce their value’ (Skoler). In social media such as Twitter ‘the concept of ‘the trusted referral; is integral to the success of content sharing’ (Zuckerberg in O’Connor, 1).

Contacts in your social media network or profiles you follow in Twitter share and filter content that is relevant to you. Many users turn to Twitter to find resources and commentary related to breaking news (Coyle). Twitter co-founder Biz Stone views Twitter as a ‘24 hour feed of everyone in world [sic]; a soundtrack to our universal film; the Zeitgeist to news on wires. Twitter is social media, but NOT a social network...its a place where you can zoom in and out on trends and emergent topics’ (O’Connor, 3). Twitter acts as a filter rather than an internet search tool (O’Connor) where topics can be filtered using the ‘search’ function or tweets can simply be filtered by the users you choose to follow on your home page which forms a customised news feed. Jenkins (The Message) uses Marshall McLuhan’s idea of ‘the medium is the message’ to describe Twitter as ‘Here It Is and Here I am’ – ‘Here It Is’ relating to its ability to share media and ‘Here I am’ relating to the personal content that is posted.

Twitter users can answer ‘What are you doing?’ using non-textual media by posting hyperlinks to other web content or posting images using the add-on website, Twitpic. The 2009 emergency landing of an aeroplane into the Hudson river in New York was first reported by twitter user Janis Krums who sent a photograph of the crash from his mobile phone, scooping the story ‘despite the fact that the headquarters of international wire services, major
metropolitan newspapers, and big time television networks are literally opposite the crash site...all while rescue boats were still en route’ (O’Connor, 3). The image spread so rapidly that heavy traffic to Twitter soon crashed the site, the photograph receiving nearly 40,000 views in four hours (O’Connor).

2.8 Twitter Authenticating the News

Online news media have caught on to the power of Twitter and seeking out eyewitness accounts of news events. Large news companies such as Reuters and CNN have started examining Twitter for trends – keywords from the top stories on Twitter appear on the home page – and using it as a resource to write stories (O’Connor). The Los Angeles Times placed a Twitter feed about the California wildfires on their homepage (O’Connor). Australian newspaper The Sydney Morning Herald provides a unique ‘hashtag’ – developed by the Twitter community as a way of tagging tweets to organise them into groups of topics – for each online news article to encourage readers to comment, share or add information to a news piece. The Sydney Morning Herald’s online news coverage of the February 2009 bushfires in Victoria, Australia frequently quoted tweets from Twitter users to give an insight into a broader public experience of an event. These eyewitness reports authenticate the news, gaining public trust of the mainstream media in a time when its credibility is dropping due to the accessibility of news from other sources, such as blogs and Twitter. A blog in The Sydney Morning Herald’s digihub on the 8th of March 2009 asked ‘Did the earth move for you on Twitter?’, outlining the documentation of a small earthquake in Melbourne on Twitter. The article
cites that it was 20 minutes before news of the earthquake made radio
bulletins, and another hour before word of the quake made television. This
clearly demonstrates the function of Twitter as a citizen journalism device –
eyewitness reports can be broadcast to the public in real time. The Melbourne
earthquake quickly became the second top ‘trending topic’ on Twitter that
day.

Considering the interaction between social media, citizen journalism and now
the mainstream media using grassroots tools, there is opportunity to resist
and critique the mainstream media’s integration of what was once an
underground activity. As social media has demonstrated, it can be used as a
platform for process drama and other applied performance activities such as
Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre can be applied as a method of analysing
and reframing the online news media.

2.9 Newspaper Theatre

Newspaper Theatre was devised by Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal
as a method of simple techniques used to devise a theatre piece that reframes
and demystifies how the news is understood. A news story can be reframed
using one or many of the following techniques:

- Simple reading - detaches it from the context of the newspaper
- Crossed reading - two news items are read in a crossed form, one
  throwing light on the other
- Complementary reading - data omitted by the media are added to the news
- Rhythmical reading - as a musical commentary, filters the news, reveals true content
- Parallel action - actors mime parallel action while news is read - acting what the news really means
- Improvised - news is improvised on stage to explore possibilities
- Historical - data showing the same event in other historical moments or other countries/social systems are added to the news
- Reinforcement - news is read/sung with accompaniment of other material to reinforce reframing
- Concretion of the abstract - abstract information is made concrete on stage - Boal gives the examples of torture, hunger, unemployment
- Text out of context - news is presented out of the context in which it was published. (Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*).

Newspaper Theatre is a great method of cultural action, cultural jamming and a stimulating way to rethink the media. Boland & Cameron use Newspaper Theatre as an educational exercise for first year communication students at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia to inspire media literacy and criticism and to ‘question the notion of objectivity’ (4). Boland & Cameron use Friere’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed to guide these educational exercises as it ‘empowers students to construct a range of role-based communication initiatives that can explore multiple responses to a given topic’ (Boland & Cameron, 10). This is a technique also used by C&T in their process drama project ‘The Living Newspaper’.
The Living newspaper is described by C&T as ‘a global network of ordinary people – young people – making their voice heard, exploring ideas, challenging expectations, playing their part in the drama of world events. Using an innovative mix of drama and ICT the livingnewspaper.com is a unique network, researching, exploring and dramatising major international news stories as they break. The livingnewspaper.com gives a unique insight into the things that matter to young people – enabling them to articulate their thoughts, feelings and ideas about world events as they happen’ (Carroll, Anderson & Cameron, 82). Paul Sutton, director of C&T outlines The Living Newspaper manifesto as:

The Living Newspaper does not exist.
The Living Newspaper.net does not exist.
The idea of a covert organisation committed to uncovering the truth behind the drama of world events is ridiculous.
To believe that the world’s news media at best ignore young people, at worst twist and distort what they say, do, think and feel, is self delusion.
The notion that young people across the world could forge a network of Docu-Dramatist cells committed to challenging those distortions through theatre, is fantasy.
And that drama and the Internet could be the tools to challenge those deceptions, lie and mistruths is plainly laughable.
And that this network, through its strength in creativity, might actually change the world for the better is the biggest joke of all.
The idea is pure theatre.

Face facts. (Shaughnessy, 207)

The manifesto highlights The Living Newspaper to be in every part as constructed as the media itself, engaging students’ critical interest immediately (Carroll, Anderson and Cameron; Shaughnessy). Upon visiting http://www.thelivingnewspaper.net, five ‘rules’ are explained to its users via embedded Youtube video clips:

- Be funny
- Be direct
- Juxtapose
- Agitate
- Let the facts speak for themselves

These parallel the techniques of Newspaper Theatre, such as role play, direct address, plus the methods of simple reading, concretion of the abstract and crossed reading. The Living Newspaper website provides hyperlinks to news articles that act as pre-text to inspire students to consider various social issue. The website also presents examples of ‘Living Newspapers’, videos of live performances produced by students. As the website is a ‘dramatic property’, it acts as a pre-text resource rather than a platform for the drama to occur. To stage Digital Newspaper Theatre, the next step is to make use of a social media tool such as Twitter to critique the media. Here is where the creative aspect of this research project lies.
2.10 Conclusion

Social media and process drama both blur the lines between artist and spectator and allow participants to work in the site of Boal’s metaxis, holding in mind two spaces simultaneously, reality and the ‘image of reality’ (*Rainbow of Desire*, 43). The instant capture of life and news stories enabled by mobile technologies and social media have enabled every user of these media to generate news content as citizen journalists. Combining this ability with the application of process drama to the digital stage provides the dynamic environment for cultural action using Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre.
3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research project and exegesis is to create and explore the application of process drama, specifically Boal’s Newspaper Theatre, to the digital stage using the social media tool Twitter. Research found in the field of the arts and social sciences is best approached qualitatively through methods that utilise rich, descriptive data (Denzin & Lincoln). I have thus chosen to use Baz Kershaw’s work on Practice as Research in Performance (PARIP) as a methodological rationale towards this project to inform my selection of an interpretative paradigm and research methods.

3.2 Practice as research in performance

Baz Kershaw (PARIP) acknowledged a ‘theoretical and methodological shift in the performance disciplines as traditional approaches to the study of these arts are complemented and extended by research pursued through the practice of them’. This recognises that researchers need to demonstrate research findings that can be extracted from the performance and not ‘simply locked into the experience of the performance itself’ (Shepherd). This requires the performance practice to be extensively documented in order to be referenced as research (Kershaw, PARIP). This sets a new academic standard in creative performance work (Kershaw, PARIP) which can thus be applied to
the selection of research methods and an interpretative paradigm for the
digital theatre.

3.3 Interpretative Paradigm

The interpretative research paradigm recognises the researcher’s position in
the ‘universal sense in which all human beings are guided by highly abstract
principles’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 22). These ‘abstract principles’ are comprised
of a ‘net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and
methodological premises… [providing] a basic set of beliefs that guides
action’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 72). Such frameworks in qualitative research
approaches are referred to as being interpretative, constructivist or post-
positivist in their paradigm (Leedy). My position in relation to the research
will be one of a Participant-Observer using a Constructivist paradigm.
Constructivist approaches to research are about ‘meaning making’ (Denzin &
Lincoln), hence the researcher is a constructor, actively and creatively
involved in the research. This paradigm provides credibility within an
interpretative case study and ethnography by acknowledging that the
researcher is actively involved in the construction of meaning from the work
(Denzin & Lincoln).

It is important to acknowledge that it is impossible for any researcher to be
truly objective as ‘…we as human beings have no access to an objective reality
since we are constructing our version of it while at the same time
transforming it and ourselves’ (Fosnot, 23). It is hence important for the
researcher to recognise their position in the research landscape in order to apply methodologies effectively and recognise their limitations.

I am involved creatively in the work as both a designer, writer and as a performer. This closeness to the work will yield practical insights, however it is imperative to acknowledge that my view of the project is thus highly subjective.

The use of multiple research methods ‘reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 5) in order to reveal different perceptions on the data or phenomena, helping to ‘clarify meaning and identify different realities (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 454). I have hence selected to enable the research project as a case study and to apply performance ethnography to the provision of raw data collected through documenting the production process.

3.4 Performance Ethnography

The practice of performance ethnography draws on participatory research (Denzin & Lincoln) to ‘challenge the meanings of lived experience as simulated performance’ (Denzin, 94), undoing the ‘voyeuristic gazing eye of the ethnographer, bringing audiences and performers into a jointly felt and shared field of experience’ (Denzin, 94). Through examining Victor Turner’s work into anthropological experience and performance, Denzin cites the performance text as ‘the single most powerful way for ethnography to recover
yet interrogate the meanings of lived experience’ (95). Denzin’s idea of the ‘performance text’ can refer to ritual, dramatic play or in this case, the liminal space enabled by digital process drama.

I will use performance ethnography to reflect on the role-play and performance conventions being explored for the first time on the Twitter platform. This will be enabled by a reflective production narrative that uses thick description to explore the ideas of Twitter as a performance space on the digital stage.

3.5 Case Study

The qualitative method of the case study defines the field of research to a particular person, group or situation and is designed to reveal in depth details about a particular case. The method is ‘especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation’ (Leedy, 135). The researcher continually redefines theory as the study progresses, informed by the history of the case and its context to other studies (Denzin & Lincoln). When using this methodology, it is important to remember that ‘the purpose of a case report is not to represent the world but to represent the case’ (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 460).

As this is the first time that Twitter has been used as an enabling device for Newspaper Theatre, the design of the classroom exercise will become a case study to set the groundwork for future applications and exploration.
3.6 Conclusion

The application of Practise as Research in Performance (PARIP) as a methodological rationale to inform the research paradigm and methodologies for this project ensures that the data remains academically credible. The combination of a case study of a self developed digital Newspaper Theatre project plus planning material, and the reflexive practice of performance ethnography should yield some useful insights into the emerging area of digital theatre research.
4. Creative Exegesis

4.1 Introduction

Twitter was selected as a stage for the process drama to occur due to its rise in popularity as a social media tool in 2009, to consistent reference to it in the news media and because there seem to be no significant examples of it being used as a dramatic tool. Educators must stay relevant to the environment and media being lived and experienced by students.

The target group for this work of process drama is based on my previous teaching experience of first year BA Communication students in the subject Media Production and Presentation at Charles Sturt University, in Bathurst, New South Wales, Australia. The subject is taught to a cohort of 200 students studying communication specialisations in either advertising, commercial radio, journalism, public relations or theatre/media. The subject involves a one hour lecture, a two hour studio workshop where students engage in physically-based presentation exercises such as voice work and role performance, and a one hour Mac lab that focuses on digital production. Teaching this subject and having studied it myself in my first year of university, I was always interested in the link between the live performance and digital production. A live seminar presentation could be supported by digital materials in the form of Powerpoint slides or be documented in a html-based digital portfolio in the Mac lab. As an educator I am always seeking more ways to bridge the live and the mediated in the interest of digital media
literacies required for work in the communication industry in the 21st century. As a part of the Mac lab tutorial students learn a range of media production skills including basic video editing, podcast production, image manipulation and website design. It is not uncommon for students to lack confidence when it comes to learning web design skills as many still view it to be in the exclusive domain of information technology engineers rather than communication and media innovators. The irony in this is that many students have already engaged in web design prior to taking this class on social networking sites such as Myspace that allow them to customise page backgrounds, colour schemes and fonts. They also may have used blog sites such as Blogger, Wordpress or Livejournal that allow the manipulation of page design and the addition of other features such as widgets that link to other media such as a music player or a barometer. Engaging in web design develops their digital media literacy and allows them to ‘talk the talk’ when working in the professional environment. We constantly remind students that there is every chance that they will work in an online news room where they will need to know web design technical terms and basic skills in order to upload their stories, or be working at an advertising agency where they will need to be able to communicate effectively to the design department. The digital media skills introduced in the first year put the students in good stead for a recently introduced third year subject, ‘Social Media’, which recognises social media’s integration and evolution in the communication industry by integrating it into the curriculum. However, the use of social media by online news media within articles (by referencing public opinion on Twitter) and by using it as a broadcast tool (for example, the Sydney Morning Herald’s Twitter site that provides news headlines http://twitter.com/smh_news) suggests
that social media literacies should be introduced as early as first year in order to keep pace with the ever-changing communication industry.

4.2 Why [digital] newspaper theatre?

As discussed by Boland & Cameron in their paper ‘Newspaper Theatre: Applying performance-based learning to journalism education’, Boal’s Newspaper Theatre is a method that can be used in the university environment to raise critical awareness of the media and encourage critical thinking and analysis of the world around them. Students also develop their capacity to

- Present an analysis of media communications using concepts such as framing and reframing, dramatic role conventions, and in-role performances to create a critical communication transaction with a live audience
- Demonstrate interpersonal, vocal and presentation skills in live and mediated performances
- Manipulate image, sound and text for presentation purposes; and
- Work collaboratively to conceive and develop and produce live and electronically mediated performances (3)

As Boal’s principles are designed for non-performers (Boal, Games), the focus is not on performance conventions, rather using the principles of Newspaper Theatre to reframe the news. Boland & Cameron note that students ‘naturally
draw upon their experience of popular culture to find their own suitable performance frames such as musicals, reality TV, game shows, and sitcoms’ (5). Hence their Newspaper Theatre exercise was framed by providing students with the text of Boal’s description of Newspaper Theatre (*Theatre of the Oppressed*). In addition they encouraged students to take note of news stories and other media articles that are of interest to them, in order to begin to narrow down a selection of topics that can be used for as themes for the performance work.

Positioning Newspaper Theatre on the digital stage of Twitter, especially with the ability to add multiple layers of media to the 140 character tweets opens up many options for the work. In this environment I consider that effective uses of Digital Newspaper Theatre will require students to either:

- Comment on the news media over a period of 2 weeks using Boal’s reframing techniques.
- Specifically target news articles that quote the twitter community or are about social media crises.
- Or, require the selection of one news article or current affair and gather information about it in order to present a Digital Newspaper Theatre performance piece.

Boland & Cameron outline their use of Newspaper Theatre as a live performance exercise and how, in the planning process, groups of students are required to take note of stories and media material that interest them and use this as stimulus for a final topic for their performance. This allows
students to become both knowledgeable and critical about a specific current affair. When considering how this may translate to the digital stage, Twitter could be used as a space to share and document links to news stories, photographs and video material between participants in a group. An example is provided as follows:

Figure 1: Twitter Cross Reading

The website http://bit.ly allows social media users to shorten a web address for sharing purposes in order to make it easier and tidier to forward to other users. In the Twitter environment it ensures that there is still space within the 140 character tweet limit for commentary next to the link.

Contrasting these three articles together uses the Boal Newspaper Theatre technique of the ‘Crossed Reading’, comparing the excess of food consumption in the US to starvation in developing countries. It also makes note of bias in a community edited encyclopaedia article on hunger that provides detail on the issue of hunger in the US rather than developing countries - contrasting both the Guardian article on the growth of food consumption in the US and the World Vision information addressing the global food crisis. By a simple 140 character tweet of three articles, already themes and questions are beginning to emerge.

The five minute video by World Vision outlines the issue of ethanol bio-fuel production in the US – and that the amount of maize required to produce one tank of ethanol (232 kg) is the same amount of maize that could be consumed by one person in a year, suggesting that cars may be being fed more than people. This can act as a springboard for the collection of related media material – for example, the recent ‘green’ rebranding of McDonald’s in Europe, both using the colour green in store behind the golden arches, and promoting use of their waste oil for biofuel (Associated Press). An example of a subsequent image that could be brainstormed could show Ronald McDonald filling up a car’s petrol tank with hamburgers whilst a group of people watch helplessly, rubbing their stomachs with hunger. This image could form part of a live performance or be digitally created using Adobe Photoshop. A stream of such images could form grounds for a scenario or
storyboard for a digital performance that is collated into a video or animation that is uploaded to Youtube.

At this stage, potential uses of Twitter for Digital Newspaper Theatre can be selected as follows:

1. A planning and documentation tool for a live Newspaper Theatre performance
2. A planning and documentation tool which progresses to create images (whether they be textual, image or video based) that form a digital Newspaper Theatre performance

Desired outcomes and skills to be developed by students engaging with Twitter as a platform for Digital Newspaper Theatre in addition to the critical, performative, production and presentation skills already described include:

- A critical awareness of the use of social media in the news media
- An understanding of the communication and role-play conventions used in social media sites such as Twitter

The submission of a written self-reflective summary after participation in the Digital Newspaper Theatre exercise could provide grounds to assess how successfully students have achieved these goals. However, to successfully frame the exercise and engage students, the application of process drama to the digital platform of Twitter will need further consideration.
4.3 Framing the Drama exercise

Following Bowell & Heap’s process drama planning principles, the Digital Newspaper Theatre exercise can be planned as follows:

- Theme – Newspaper Theatre, focus topics selected by students
- Context – Rewire2, an underground culture jamming society
- Roles – members of the Rewire2 group, facilitator as the omnipresent group leader
- Frame – fighting back against the mainstream media’s oppression and manipulation of a story telling device that was once in the exclusive domain of the Rewire2 community
- Sign – digital artefacts on a blog and Twitter page
- Strategies – using Twitter to reframe and perform news stories

Considering these 6 steps, the framework for the exercise begins to emerge more clearly. To perform Digital Newspaper Theatre using Twitter, there are a few more issues to be addressed in regards to role play, the development of a digital pre-text that frames the drama activity in this volatile environment and how a work of Newspaper Theatre may be performed.
4.4 Twitter in role

In the development of an online drama, *Four*, in 2007, Wotzko & Carroll (2009) identified social networking website Facebook as a platform for in-depth character development and creation due to its ability for maintenance of an online identity. The site allows users to upload a profile picture (or avatar) and define basic statistics such as birth date and relationship status and also allows the listing of interests, favourite bands, films, quotes and many more aspects of an identity. Wotzko & Carroll used this as a method of character development for actors in their drama, providing some basic detail then giving actors some creative licence to expand on the frame and allowing them to become thoroughly immersed in the character. As a ‘micro-blog’, Twitter does not require such detail from users, which limits its capacity for a full-blown online drama with in-depth characters. However aspects of the Twitter interface can be used to create a basic frame for identity\(^5\) and role play.

Decisions surrounding the identity of the facilitator of the digital Newspaper Theatre exercise are listed as follows:

---

\(^5\) See Appendix 2, Twitter and identity maintenance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Username</th>
<th>Rewire2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Seeking a username that alluded to reframing (hence ‘re’) and could be linked to digital technology (hence ‘wire’) without using clichés such as ‘iRewire’.  
- A gender neutral name that could slide between leader, organisation and activity  
- ‘Rewire’ was already taken – so the next best was Rewire2 – the inclusion of a number suggests that there are multiple options for the reframing or ‘rewiring’ of culture. The use of the number 2 links back to Web 2.0. |
| Profile picture | - Mobile phone and laptop in the one image showing the different platforms on which Twitter can be browsed or updated  
- Image captures part of the Twitter interface and Mac OS X dock icons of applications related to communication - Safari (internet browser), Mail, iChat and Skype.  
- Photograph of taking a |
photograph – in reference to surveillance culture and living life ‘through the lens’ and the idea that instant and ambient documentation of life is enabled by Twitter technology

| Background | A pattern selected from Twitter’s own range of themes for its gritty, technical feel. A similar design was selected for the Wordpress blog to create unity between the two sites. |
| Location | Neither here nor there. | Both everywhere and nowhere, creates mystery about the Rewire2 identity |

After uploading the first Rewire2 avatar, I decided it was difficult to appreciate the detail in the image when it was viewed at thumbnail size. Keeping with the principles of good design, I redesigned the avatar into a more simplistic image that was unified with the background design of Twitter and the blog. The position of the role of Rewire2 is that of facilitator who maintains the tension in the drama and act as a resource for the successful application of Boal’s techniques to the digital stage. Rewire2 is both the name of the underground group and the leader of the group, the sliding scale

---

6 See Appendix 3, Rewire2 avatars
between group and individual creating mystery and intrigue that adds tension to the drama exercise.

There are several questions to be raised surrounding the roles of participants in this exercise. The framing of the drama positions the participants as members of the underground Rewire2 group, but how will these roles be played using the Twitter interface? There are two stages to the digital newspaper exercise – the collation of ideas, and the performance of those ideas. Is it possible for those two activities to occur simultaneously? Will students use their real identities for the collation of ideas or develop an alternative identity in line with the idea of Rewire2 being an underground organisation? How will roles be assumed when using Boal techniques to present news from the perspective of, for example, the Prime Minister or a doctor? Will students require multiple Twitter accounts in order to separate these roles? What conventions can be designed (such as visual or textual signifiers) to encourage the development of a Twitter-based role? How will these conventions be communicated to participants? Should the role have the ability to be digitally archived or just lived in the moment?

Twitter gives users the ability to change not only their basic information but also their username and real name. This could make it possible for a participant in a drama exercise on Twitter to change from their real name, for example, ‘Rebecca Wotzko’, to a role-based name such as ‘Prime Minister Rudd’ (the Australian Prime Minister) or ‘Larry Emdur’, an Australian game show host. By removing the physical body, the possibilities of role play become endless (Carroll in Anderson). However, after consulting the Twitter
help guide, it appears the name change is not archived in the news stream of tweets which means it is impossible to follow when a participant slides in and out of various roles. This presents two options:

1) New Twitter profiles are created for each role in the final Newspaper Theatre piece
2) A textual convention is created to indicate when a participant is ‘in-role’ and to identify what that role is.

Figure 3: Role as Twitter profile VS Role as Textual Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role as Twitter profile</th>
<th>Role as Textual Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- requires the maintenance of multiple online profiles, separates creative planning phase from performance</td>
<td>- requires creation of a tag that allows participants to change roles easily using their own Twitter profile, allows participant to simultaneously build the creative process and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- allows selection of an avatar and 160 character long biography to help frame the role</td>
<td>- may require the use of extra tweets to assist in signifying a character – of course, images or videos can be linked to these tweets to work around this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- may face difficulty in selecting a username to present public figures as many variants of the usernames may be taken by other Twitter users (for example, a search for the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd provides over 50 profiles varying from the real Prime Minister’s account (<a href="http://twitter.com/KevinRuddPM">http://twitter.com/KevinRuddPM</a>) to Ruddshadow, UnrealKevinRudd or KevinRuddAM.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due to the difficulties that may be faced in selecting usernames for playing roles of public figures and the risk of breaking the flow of the creative process and role play, a textual indicator for role will be used. It will be affixed to the beginning of a tweet to frame the content of the tweet. Possible forms as demonstrated in Figure 4 are:

**Figure 4: Framing a Role**

Putting ‘RW2’ in front of KevinRudd indicates that it is in the context of performance in the digital Newspaper Theatre, however it is easier and much tidier to read if this is placed at the end. Hashtags, a way of tagging and categorising tweets (eg #Rewire2 as seen above) can be suffixed to the end of a tweet to indicate it is a part of the Rewire2 digital Newspaper Theatre. The textual indication of role also enables individuals to take on multiple roles and perhaps even make the digital Newspaper Theatre an individual
performance exercise. A brief example follows on the next two pages (read from bottom to top):

Figure 5: Sample of Digital Newspaper Theatre

BarackObama: Keep it up Kevin 07. And 08, 09, 10, 11. #rewire2

less than 10 seconds ago from web

KevinRudd: Stop! Dissolute! Thank you Mr Obama but I think I need to bid less. #rewire2
1 minute ago from web

LarryEmdur: Lets lock it in. #rewire2
2 minutes ago from web

BarackObama: 17% #rewire2 #greatworkaustralia #whataboutsomemoretroopsforiraq?
3 minutes ago from web

LarryEmdur: Barack, your bid? Carbon emission reductions for the United States. #rewire2
6 minutes ago from web

KevinRudd: 25% #rewire2 #whatever
7 minutes ago from web
The above screen shot is taken from the Rewire2 profile page which only shows tweets by the Rewire2 account. The positioning of role at the beginning of the tweet makes a change between characters very easy. Towards the end of the example I experimented with using hashtags as an internal monologue. As hashtags are used to categorise tweets, they could also be used as a device to reveal what a role or piece of news really means outside of the voice of the tweet itself. Unfortunately the hashtag device does not allow spaces between words for them to be indexed together, meaning that the words need to be strung together as one long word. The hashtag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User</th>
<th>Tweet</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LarryEmdur</td>
<td>The first prize tonight is a reduction in carbon emissions: how much would you like to bid? #rewire2</td>
<td>8 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LarryEmdur</td>
<td>Kevin, do you want Tony Abbott to play? If not, hurry up and come on down!! Gentlemen, let's play the Climate is Right! #rewire2</td>
<td>9 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KevinRudd</td>
<td>Today I went to primary school and played with worms. Big ones, fat ones, skinny ones, short ones. [link] #rewire2</td>
<td>12 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KevinRudd</td>
<td>No! I'm coming! Top world leader, here I come! So what if my country only has 20 million people, I'm a super power too! #rewire2</td>
<td>15 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LarryEmdur</td>
<td>But we haven't started playing the game at Copenhagen. You're in the audience for this one, Kevin. #rewire2</td>
<td>17 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KevinRudd</td>
<td>Wait! If Obama is coming down then I should come down too! I want to bid lower! #rewire2</td>
<td>18 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LarryEmdur</td>
<td>Hi, I'm Larry Emdur and welcome to the Climate is Right!! Barack Obama, come on down! #rewire2</td>
<td>18 minutes ago</td>
<td>web</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'#whataboutsomemoretroopsforiraq' can be read as if it has been said without taking a breath. Adding the hashtag #rewire2 to each tweet in this mini-drama means that when #rewire2 is clicked on, a search is conducted for all tweets with that tag. This means that anything associated with Rewire2 can be filtered out from other Twitter content as a Twitter user’s homepage includes not only the tweets they make, but the tweets of users they follow. This aids the archiving of the live performance. As Twitter places the most recent posts at the top of the page, it is easier to follow a stream of dialogue such as experimented with as it happens. This follows the idea of process drama being lived in the moment and ensures that it is for the benefit of participants rather than an external audience.

The sample provided uses three characters: the Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd; the American President, Barack Obama; and a well known Australian game show host, Larry Emdur. The topic of the work surrounds the upcoming United Nations Climate change summit (December 2009) in Copenhagen, Denmark. The US President has applauded Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s attitudes on climate change, a good sign for a continuing alliance between the US and Australia. However, as America is the world super power, Australia sadly has been tending to follow its lead more than that of the mother country, the United Kingdom. It has been speculated in the media that if America’s carbon emission reduction targets are lower than Australia’s at the summit, Australia may also lower their emissions. A link between Obama and Rudd makes an interesting comparison to the link between Bush and Howard, the previous leaders of the two countries who had a strong alliance and, some may say, love affair. The sample of
Newspaper Theatre in Figure 5 frames the relationship between President Obama and Prime Minister Rudd as one where the first Australian Prime Minister from the Labor party in over 10 years is keen to impress the US and furthermore, play with the big boys in Copenhagen.

Obama has praised Rudd for his emission reduction targets which creates a bond between the two men, and indeed increases the alliance between the two countries. The interaction is framed as around the game show *The Price is Right* where the opening game is to make the closest (and lowest) bid to the value of the prize. In this instance, the two leaders are bidding on carbon emission reduction targets. Rudd is behaving quite childlike and demanding a turn to play, representing Australia as a much smaller and younger country than the US and the others at play in Copenhagen. Rudd has received criticism in Australian politics for attempting to participate in global policies whilst ignoring local issues that require more attention. In the Twitter dialogue, after declaring he is just as super and important as the other leaders such as Obama, Rudd chants a nursery rhyme about worms in reference to a doorstop media conference he recently made at a primary school to discuss climate change. A hyperlink is provided to a transcript of the media event in order to explain the tweet.

The host of ‘The Climate is Right’, Larry Emdur, asks Rudd if he would prefer that Tony Abbott, newly instated leader of the opposition party play the game instead which forces Rudd to lock in his bid. When Obama bids less than Rudd in the game, this makes Rudd want to change his bid with ‘Stop! Dissolute!’ in reference to the imminent dissolution of the Australian
parliamentary senate by the Prime Minister as they are not agreeing with any of the bills he is putting through the house in relation to climate change. Obama’s bid praises Rudd for bidding for a higher percentage of reductions through the hashtag #greatworkaustralia then uses that praise as a military alliance building opportunity by asking Rudd to commit more troops to Iraq in the hashtag #whaboulsomemoretroopsforiraq?, an echo back to the relationship of former Prime Minister John Howard and former US President George W Bush.

The Newspaper Theatre conventions at play in this piece of dialogue are ‘text out of context’ and ‘reinforcement’. Text out of context is applied by positioning the news of the climate change summit as a game show and reinforcement is used within the chant of a nursery rhyme to reveal the dynamics of the relationship between the Australian Prime Minister and the American President. These two techniques used within the sample of dialogue provided in Figure 5 already reveal a fresh perspective on a current affair. Based on this experiment, it is important that the framing of roles within a tweet are supported by hashtags or external content, whether it be a link or a self-constructed image or a short video clip to give extra dimension to the characters and roles played as the body is removed from the digital stage of Twitter.
4.5 Digital Pre-text

To engage participants in the drama, the development of a digital pre-text is required especially as it outside the ‘live’ workshop environment where the role play convention is more openly accepted. Although role-play and online drama as a form has been justified, it can not be assumed that students will have an understanding of these conventions. The digital pre-text will aim to frame the exercise as a dramatic activity and encourage the use and understanding of Twitter as both a documentary and a performative tool.

Considerations to make when forming this pre-text are:

- How will the Twitter interface be used to communicate something that is inevitably going to be longer than a 140 character piece of text?
- What sort of guide will be provided to participants to help them understand how to communicate clearly and effectively using the Twitter platform?

The pre-text needs to be communicated in such a manner that it will be accessible and re-accessible as this may be the first time that participants are engaging with the Twitter medium and, on a broader scale, it may be the first time they have consciously used it as a performance medium. As Twitter functions as a stream of information, it would be difficult to track back to a flurry of tweets that each communicate a point of the framing pre-text. For this reason I have decided to construct a blog that will be linked to the Twitter site and host the digital pre-text and any other materials that are required for
students to engage in the drama exercise. The site selected to host the blog, Wordpress, allows the addition of ‘widgets’, a tool that imports information from elsewhere on the internet. This allows a reciprocal link between a Twitter account and the blog because the user profile on the Twitter interface allows a link to an external website whilst the Twitter widget on the Wordpress blog provides a live stream of tweets from the same user.

### 4.6 Development of the Digital Pre-text

Following a research hub on Drama Education and Digital Technology at the 2009 International Drama in Education Association (IDIERI) conference in Sydney, Australia, an online working group was developed for the discussion and development of digital pre-text. This online space was hosted at ning, a site that allows the creation and customisation of a social network that utilises social media tools and conventions such as ‘friends’, blogs, forums, chat and the ability to share links, photographs and media. Participants in the group are those who attended the research hub at IDIERI and invited drama educators and researchers who are interested in this particular field of research. One of the participants in the project, Sue Davis, who developed the cyberdrama *Cleo Missing* in 2006 ([http://www.cleo-missing.com/](http://www.cleo-missing.com/)), started an improvisation game to build a story, ‘one lexia at a time’. The requirement of this game was that contributors each took a turn, providing a hyperlink.

---

7 See Appendix 4, Rewire2 Wordpress blog
8 See Appendix 5, Digital pre-text workshop site
9 See Appendix 6, ‘Let’s play a game’
within a sentence that built the story. The idea behind this exercise is that a
digital pretext could be developed and could be used as a point of departure
for online drama exercises. The game itself is still in progress (December 2009)
however the ideas appearing in the text as it stands are relevant as stimulus
material to frame the Digital Newspaper Theatre exercise. The development
of the pretext game saw the emergence of the idea of an underground group
who fight against ‘power elites’ who are in control of digital information. This
drew a parallel to the integration of digital communication technologies into
the mainstream media that were once the exclusive domain of citizen
journalists. I make reference to this in the construction of pre-text that invites
participation into the Rewire2 Digital Newspaper Theatre work\textsuperscript{10}. This was
developed as a textual based invitation to the process drama; however, it is
important to note, as with live process drama, a pretext does not need to be
purely textual based – it can be visual, audio or another artefact. The aim of
the pre-text for the Digital Newspaper Theatre project is to engage students in
a dynamic way to encourage the application of Newspaper Theatre and
critical thinking within the social media environment.

4.7 Use of the Twitter Interface

It should not be presumed that all first year communication students are
social media literate. In order to engage successfully with an online process
drama project making use of social media tools, a quick reference guide was
developed for students to use so they can quickly immerse themselves in the

\textsuperscript{10} See Appendix 7, Rewire2 Digital Pretext
drama rather than being concerned about how to use the technology\textsuperscript{11}. The guide introduces Twitter communication conventions so students can understand how to construct a tweet, and then move on to apply this as a performance device. The experiment in framing roles showed ways to create a role for a piece of Digital Newspaper Theatre without needing to create a new Twitter account and demonstrated that the Twitter convention of hashtags can be used to provide more depth to a character by associated keywords or posing an internal thought. These methods have been outlined on the blog\textsuperscript{12} and demonstrated by the Rewire2 account so they are easily accessible to participants in the drama. The blog also gives an outline of Boal’s Newspaper Theatre conventions\textsuperscript{13}. This arms students with enough information to be able to use the combination of Newspaper Theatre and Twitter with confidence without imposing a ‘right’ way for the collaboration of these two forces to occur.

\textbf{4.8 Working in groups}

Presuming Digital Newspaper Theatre is used as a classroom exercise, it will work most efficiently if students are split into groups of 4 – 6 participants. Together, these students can share and discuss news stories of interest in order to find a topic for their Digital Newspaper Theatre piece. It is then that a narrative and roles are devised.

\textsuperscript{11} See Appendix 8, How to Twitter
\textsuperscript{12} See Appendix 9, Role play and Twitter
\textsuperscript{13} See Appendix 10, Augusto Boal’s Newspaper theatre
Previously in this chapter a way for one user to change roles whilst working with digital newspaper techniques was presented. In a group situation these role play conventions still apply; however, a way to track the collaborative efforts and dialogue of the group needs to be devised. One way, of course, is the hashtag device – creating a unique tag for each group of participants that is tagged in the tweet after ‘#rewire2’. The tag would need to be short and incorporate numbers so it does not use up too many of the precious 140 characters in the tweet post. A tag could incorporate the subject code for the first year communication subject Media Production and Presentation, the students of which are being targeted for this activity. The code for the subject is COM130, and to add a group identifier to add on to the end of the tag could designed as follows: #COM130wg1. Of course, tagging the digital newspaper tweets with an administrative code risks breaking the frame of the Rewire2 underground organisation that has been established. The tension between the embodied nature of live Newspaper Theatre performance and digital Newspaper Theatre performance again comes to the fore. A possible way to more securely organise groups of Rewire2 participants is to use Twitter’s new ‘Lists’ feature, introduced in November 2009, which allows users to organise the users they follow into different groups or lists. Organising users into a list means that news feeds can be personally thematised, for example, a user may create a list called ‘Music’ of musicians they follow on Twitter. When clicking on that list they filter out the tweets of those musicians from the other personas they follow on Twitter. Lists can be useful for the teacher/facilitator of a digital Newspaper Theatre exercise from an administrative point of view as they will be able to review how each group has worked together. However the use of a hashtag identifier on each tweet means that the Rewire2 persona
can direct tweets at a group to maintain dramatic tension or to ask a problem-posing question during their creative process. To view what their fellow classmates have been working on, the use of the hash tag identifier is also useful for participants in the exercise.

4.9 Digital Newspaper Theatre: Step by Step

Following this discussion and exploration of many aspects of a digital Newspaper Theatre performance, the exercise can be broken down into the following steps:

1. Establishment of Digital Pre-text
   a. Frame critical reframing exercise as an underground culture jamming group, Rewire2, fighting back against the mainstream media’s use of social media by using Twitter as a tool to shed new light on the news.
   b. Decide how the digital pre-text will be presented. Will it be a series of Tweets (hashtagged appropriately so participants can find them) or will it be posted separately at a blog? Direct students to the blog or Twitter pre-text by providing them with a link via email, in this instance http://rewire2.wordpress.com/what-is-rewire2/
   c. Provide participants with Newspaper Theatre text as outlined in Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* (preferably uploaded to a blog or
as a hyperlink to a pdf) and a guide on communication conventions (tagging etc) for Twitter as seen at
http://rewire2.wordpress.com/toolbox/

2. Creative and Research phase
   a. Students organise themselves into groups (best if this happens in the live workshop environment). They sign up for Twitter accounts (if they don’t already have one) and are assigned a hashtag group identifier to suffix on to their Twitter posts in addition to the #Rewire2 tag.
   b. Students begin tweeting news and other media articles of interest and using Newspaper Theatre techniques as a method of critique. Students will be encouraged to examine how the media makes use of social media and how this may affect their presentation. A topic for the digital Newspaper Theatre begins to emerge. In Real Life group meetings, a basic narrative framework for the role play is established.
   c. Students could also explore enhancing their Twitter posts with the creation of visual media such as Photoshop images and self-directed video (created using Apple’s iSight camera, a video camera built into the top of Mac laptops and monitors) and then post a tweet that provides a link to this media.

3. Digital Newspaper Theatre
   a. Let the twittering begin! Students twitter in signified roles based on the narrative they have created and assigned within their
group during the production planning process. Digital Newspaper Theatre then reveals, reframes and rewire the news in a new way.

b. Students submit a self-reflective written analysis of their participation in the Digital Newspaper Theatre process to the teacher/facilitator. This allows both participants and the teacher/facilitator to reflect on the activity and evaluate how students’ social media literacies, dramatic skills, and analytical skills have developed.

4.10 Limitations

Limitations of the Digital Newspaper Theatre exercise fall within the medium of Twitter itself. As Digital Newspaper Theatre is performed in a disembodied way on the digital stage, it could be argued that participants are not participating in as an immersive experience as they would in a live way. Digital signifiers such as hyperlinks, images and videos need to be added to tweet posts in order to add more depth to role play. As Twitter is a live news stream, it can be difficult to track the history of tweets unless they are appropriately organised using hashtags. The risk of using too many hash tags is that they can begin to infringe on the space of the 140 character long twitter post used for dialogue and the provision of supporting materials.
4.11 Future Applications

As Twitter is a globally accessible stage for process drama, there is potential for digital newspaper theatre performances to be shared internationally. If addressing a topic that has an international, or indeed global impact, there is no reason why digital newspaper theatre participants from different countries could not share the different narratives of news they have been provided with and expand their analytical scope beyond local media content. This would provide another level of reframing and provide further enrichment for all participants by gaining other cultural and national perspectives on a news story.

There is also ample opportunity to consider how the use of mobile phones, for example to update and upload to Twitter on the go would have an impact on the notion of digital newspaper theatre. Twitter limits tweets to 140 characters and Twitter usernames to 15 characters so together they are within the 160 character limit for a single mobile phone text message. In the digital newspaper theatre model presented, students have the opportunity to capture media content, such as a billboard or other ambient advertising whilst they are mobile. This gives participants the opportunity to react using Boal’s techniques whilst they are in the moment and viewing a media article for the first time. The mobile-enabled abilities of Twitter could transform it into a localised game where the provision of stimulus material from the teacher/facilitator figure provides clues on how the work must be completed. The exercise perhaps could be to don the journalist hat and to research a local news story of the town or city they are located in, interviewing people from
the community and recording quotes, photographs and video using their mobile phones and reframing it on the go as they see fit.

4.12 Conclusion

The social media tool of Twitter provides an interesting stage on which to use process drama techniques such as role play and apply Augusto Boal’s techniques of newspaper theatre. Framing the digital newspaper participants as members of an underground culture jamming organisation, Rewire2, creates tension and motivation in the process drama activity. The planning process of Rewire2 suggests several techniques in which communication conventions of Twitter can be used to frame roles, add depth to characters and to use Boal’s Newspaper Theatre process, all within 140 characters or less.
5. Conclusion

The triangulation of process drama, social media and citizen journalism provide a dynamic space for the application of Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre principles to the digital stage. The model proposed in this dissertation for Digital Newspaper Theatre uses process drama techniques of pre-text and role play to frame the activity and engage students in the creation of dynamic and creative analysis and reframing of media content. The activity of Digital Newspaper Theatre is proposed to be staged on Twitter, a social media tool that provides textual posts called ‘tweets’ in 140 characters or less, forming a news stream of posts. The Twitter interface allows users to include links to other websites, images and video in their posts in order to provide more depth to the message. This is explored in terms of creating a Twitter-based dramatic role for the Digital Newspaper Theatre exercise. The activity is framed through digital pre-text via a blog that invites participants to join an underground culture jamming organisation, Rewire2. This provides context and dramatic tension for the application of Boal’s newspaper theatre to the Twitter platform and engages students with role play in order to shed new light on the media. The next step in this research is to pilot the suggested model to a group of students and gauge their reaction, responses and engagement with the material and the role play within it. The interaction of process drama, social media and newspaper theatre thus provides a dynamic stage for play and innovation in education as suggested by the Digital Newspaper Theatre activity, Rewire2.
Bibliography


Boland, G., and D. Cameron. ‘Newspaper Theatre: Applying Performance-Based Learning to Journalism Education.’ *Journalism Education Association Conference*. Ed.


Carroll, J, and D. Cameron. ‘To the Spice Islands: Interactive Process Drama.’ *DAC*. Ed.


Gillmor, D. We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media, 2006.


List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey of First year Communication students ............................ 70
Appendix 2: Twitter and Identity Maintenance ........................................... 72
Appendix 3: Rewire2 Avatars .................................................................... 73
Appendix 4: Rewire2 Wordpress Blog ......................................................... 74
Appendix 5: Digital Pre-text Workshop site .............................................. 75
Appendix 6: Let’s play a game! ................................................................... 76
Appendix 7: Rewire2 Digital pre-text ......................................................... 79
Appendix 8: How to Twitter ....................................................................... 80
Appendix 9: Role play and Twitter ............................................................. 82
Appendix 10: Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre ...................................... 83
Appendix 1: Survey of First year Communication students

3. On average, how often do you visit these Websites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1.1% (2)</td>
<td>0.6% (1)</td>
<td>0.6% (1)</td>
<td>4.6% (7)</td>
<td>93.8% (165)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>74.8% (136)</td>
<td>21.6% (39)</td>
<td>1.7% (3)</td>
<td>1.7% (3)</td>
<td>5.9% (7)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>18.3% (32)</td>
<td>12.6% (22)</td>
<td>7.4% (18)</td>
<td>33.7% (59)</td>
<td>26.5% (48)</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>2.3% (4)</td>
<td>4.0% (7)</td>
<td>2.8% (5)</td>
<td>16.4% (28)</td>
<td>74.6% (132)</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendster</td>
<td>0.9% (2)</td>
<td>0.6% (1)</td>
<td>0.6% (1)</td>
<td>2.4% (5)</td>
<td>95.6% (170)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>76.5% (132)</td>
<td>22.3% (41)</td>
<td>0.6% (1)</td>
<td>0.6% (1)</td>
<td>6.6% (1)</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>18.0% (32)</td>
<td>44.9% (80)</td>
<td>18.0% (32)</td>
<td>18.0% (28)</td>
<td>2.5% (5)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
<td>10.7% (19)</td>
<td>33.9% (60)</td>
<td>20.6% (36)</td>
<td>25.4% (45)</td>
<td>4.0% (2)</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eBay</td>
<td>3.4% (6)</td>
<td>16.6% (29)</td>
<td>20.6% (35)</td>
<td>36.9% (65)</td>
<td>14.3% (25)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 194
stopped question: 0
Appendix 2: Twitter and Identity Maintenance

Profile picture/Avatar. Can be clicked on and inspected at a larger size.

User name – in the URL and top of the page. Can provide clues to identity

Name can be real or alternative identity.

Location – geographic or other position.

Web address to point to an associated site (e.g., a blog) and provide more detail.

Biography limited to 160 characters.

Page background can be customised, can provide visual cues to frame or persona.
Appendix 3: Rewire2 Avatars
Appendix 4: Rewire2 Wordpress Blog

Role play with Twitter

29 November, 2009  rewire2
To indicate a role you are playing whilst Rewiring and Reframing on Twitter, put the name of the character/role at the start of the tweet. For example:

KevinRudd: Today I went to primary school and played with worms. Big ones, fat ones, skinny ones, short ones.
about 18 hours ago from web

Role Framing

Tag each post with #rewire2 so it can be added to the Rewire2 project archive. You can also add tags that emphasise aspects of a character or reveal an internal thought:

BarackObama: 17% #rewire2 #greatworkaustralia #whataboutsomeomemoretroopsforiraq?
about 18 hours ago from web

Hashtags and character

- Rewire2
  How to, Reframing, Tips, Twitter

Newspaper Theatre

rewire2 twitter feed

- BarackObama: Keep it up Kevin 07. And 08, 09, 10, 11. #rewire2 1 day ago
- KevinRudd: Stop! Dissolute! Thank you Mr Obama but I think I need to bid less. #rewire2 1 day ago
- LarryEmdur: Lets lock it in. #rewire2
  1 day ago
- BarackObama: 17% #rewire2 #greatworkaustralia #whataboutsomeomemoretroopsforiraq?
  1 day ago
- LarryEmdur: Barack, your bid? Carbon emission reductions for the United States. #rewire2 1 day ago

Archives

- November 2009

Tags
Appendix 5: Digital Pre-text Workshop site

Welcome to digitalpretext, Rebecca Wotzko! Here are a few things you can do right now...

**LATEST ACTIVITY**
- Rebecca Wotzko replied to Sue Davis's discussion “Let’s play a game!”
  - September 15
- David Cameron replied to Sue Davis’s discussion “Let’s play a game!”
  - September 11
- Jennie Fellows replied to John Carroll’s discussion “Notes on the first pre-text discussion held at IDIERI (July 19 2009)”
  - September 9

**MEMBERS**

**FORUM**
- Let’s play a game! 11 Replis
  - Started by Sue Davis. Last reply by Rebecca Wotzko Sep 14.
- Notes on the first pre-text discussion held at IDIERI (July 19 2009)
  - 10 Replis
Appendix 6: Let’s play a game!

Let's play a game!

Posted by Sue Davis on August 2, 2009 at 11:18am

I’m sure everyone knows the old improv game - phrase at a time... so how about 'lexia at a time'? Shall we have a go at building the landscape of the future - the world of the pre-text? Each person can add a phrase or sentence at a time - attach a link to a photo or video clip. No-one can post consecutive additions. To add to the evolving story copy what has gone before, then add your piece... make sure you consider what has gone before and extend upon it - think 'yes and' in your head before you add your part. As it develops consider the who, what, where, when, how and why questions - you don't need to answer them all... but think about them

Let's see how it goes... I'll start in another post!

Replies to This Discussion

Reply by Sue on August 2, 2009 at 11:30am

In the year 2050 technology is ubiquitous but since the 2045 global crisis, new power elites are in control.
These power elites exert their influence through their monopoly of technologies storing/disposing of CO2 emissions - the dominant global currency post 2045.

http://www.futuregenalliance.org/technology/carbon.stm

Human work is defined as symbolic manipulation of data, the worst thing that can happen to a worker is to be infected by a mind virus,

http://www.memecentral.com/ a meme that develops new unacceptable art forms or proscribed cultural product, So ......

the power elites have invested heavily in information filter technologies to prevent the spread of unauthorised 'wild' memes, while encouraging the pandemic spread of approved ideas and cultural artefacts.

However breakaway groups and 'refuseniks' seek to block the mind viruses and commit acts of protest.

In an attempt to avoid digital detection and prosecution, the refuseniks use a parallel version of the internet to communicate.

Portals to this alternate communication channel are disguised as 'everyday' media forms. Refuseniks share clues, codes and puzzles to point each other to
these hidden resources.

Reply by Max on August 20, 2009 at 8:26pm

These codes, clues and puzzles are a way for the Refuseniks to try to weed out those who are not truly committed to diversity of expression and ideals from entering and compromising the underground group.

Reply by John on August 21, 2009 at 10:24am

They also attempt to work in a collaborative way and take the Rhizome as a model for production of hyperlocal digital art forms. This structure, http://www.rhizome.org/art/ allows a viral spread of their productions...

Reply by David on September 11, 2009 at 6:16am

Mobile media and portable data storage devices are central to the underground, with data (art, information, codes) transferred quickly and secretly through wireless technologies.


Reply by Rebecca Wotzko on September 15, 2009 at 1:59am

The use of QR codes to transfer information makes it easy to organise underground digital flash mobs to jam information controlled by the power elites.

http://digitalpretext.ning.com/forum/topics/lets-play-a-game
Appendix 7: Rewire2 Digital pre-text

Welcome.

Whether you have stumbled upon this site or received an invite, you have entered the underground world of rewire2. Rewire2 is fighting back against the infiltration of citizen journalism by the mainstream media.

Social media tools such as blogs, discussion boards, wikis and twitter once gave us the power to be independent from the mainstream. Now the mainstream not only use these tools themselves but look to them for eyewitness accounts of news stories.

We must fight back.

We can use Twitter – the tool a lot of media organisations have latched on to – for rewiring, reframing and rethinking the news.

You will find me on Twitter as rewire2.

Follow me and await further instructions.

– Rewire2
Appendix 8: How to Twitter

Published at http://rewire2.wordpress.com

Twitter: a short guide (longer than 140 characters)

Getting started

Twitter is a micro-blog powered by 140 character long updates, or ‘tweets’. What you need to do to take part in Rewire2:

If you don’t already have an account, sign up at http://www.twitter.com by clicking on ‘Get started’ on the Twitter home page. After you have activated your account you can edit personal details and add a profile picture.

To follow rewire2, click on ‘Find People’ from the menu in the top right hand corner and search for rewire2.

You may also like to look for other people or groups to follow. Look at who Rewire2 is following by visiting the Rewire2 profile and click on ‘following’.
To tweet: Click on ‘Home’ and type something into the box that asks ‘What’s happening?’.

Twittiquette

To direct a tweet at a particular user – type @ and then their username.
To mention a user in a tweet, do the same.

@rewire2 keep up the good work.
less than 5 seconds ago from web

Hashtags: hash tags are keywords used to help categorise a Tweet. Eg
#badjournalism #controversial #whatihadforlunch
RT (short for ‘retweet’): a way of sharing tweets

Twitpic: the add on site that allows you to tweet images
http://www.twitpic.com

Bit.ly: Most web addresses are too long to fit into Twitter’s 140 character limit so shorten them by plugging the original address into the box at http://bit.ly

See also the ‘Howcast’ video at http://help.twitter.com/portal
Appendix 9: Role play and Twitter

To indicate a role you are playing whilst Rewiring and Reframing on Twitter, put the name of the character/role at the start of the tweet. For example:

KevinRudd: Today I went to primary school and played with worms. Big ones, fat ones, skinny ones, short ones. 
about 18 hours ago from web

Tag each post with #rewire2 so it can be added to the Rewire2 project archive. You can also add tags that emphasise aspects of a character or reveal an internal thought:

BarackObama: 17% #rewire2 #greatworkaustralia #whataboutsomemoretroopsforiraq?
about 18 hours ago from web


- Rewire2
Appendix 10: Augusto Boal’s Newspaper Theatre

From Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (143):

Newspaper Theatre

It was initially developed by the Nucleus Group of the Arena Theatre of Sao Paulo, of which I was the artistic director until forced to leave Brazil. It consists of several simple techniques for transforming daily news items, or any other non-dramatic material, into theatrical performances.

a) Simple reading: the news item is read detaching it from the context of the newspaper, from the format which makes it false or tendentious.

b) Crossed reading: two news items are read in crossed (alternating) form, one throwing light on the other, explaining it, giving it a new dimension.

c) Complementary reading: data and information generally omitted by the newspapers of the ruling classes are added to the news.

d) Rhythmical reading: as a musical commentary, the news is read to the rhythm of the samba, tango, Gregorian chant, etc., so that the rhythm functions as a critical “filter” of the news, revealing its true content, which is obscured in the newspaper.

e) Parallel action: the actors mime parallel actions while the news is read, showing the context in which the reported event really occurred; one hears the news and sees something else that complements it visually.
f) Improvisation: the news is improvised on stage to exploit all its variants and possibilities.

g) Historical: data or scenes showing the same event in other historical moments, in other countries, or in other social systems, are added to the news.

h) Reinforcement: the news is read or sung with the aid or accompaniment of slides, jingles, songs, or publicity materials.

i) Concretion of the abstract: that which the news often hides in its purely abstract information is made concrete on the stage: torture, hunger, unemployment, etc., are shown concretely, using graphic images, real or symbolic.

j) Text out of context: the news is presented out of the context in which it was published; for example, an actor gives the speech about austerity previously delivered by the Minister of Economics while he devours an enormous dinner: the real truth behind the minister's words become demystified - he wants austerity for the people but not for himself.