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# Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube™'s Digital Sphere



Matthew Crick

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# Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube's Digital Sphere

Over the last several years, YouTube™ has become a public forum for creative, informative, and political endeavors around the globe. As the website's influence and appeal continues to grow, questions regarding the legal usage of material, as well as potential governance issues regarding surveillance and political sway, are becoming more relevant.

**Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube's Digital Sphere** examines the imaginative, socioeconomic, and innovative features of the video sharing community of YouTube™ and how these areas traverse the digital world. Highlighting theoretical concepts and empirical research, as well as in-depth discussions on cultural studies, participatory experience, and media theory, this publication will appeal to professionals, practitioners, researchers, and students interested in the use of video sharing as a means of surveillance, communication, or personal promotion.

## Topics Covered:

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- Democracy
- Online Participatory Culture
- Social Media
- Surveillance Theory
- Video Sharing

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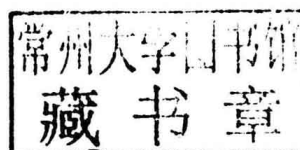
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# Crick Power, Surveillance, and YouTube's Digital Sphere

# Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube™'s Digital Sphere

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A volume in the Advances in Social Networking  
and Online Communities (ASNOC) Book Series

**Information Science**  
**REFERENCE**

An Imprint of IGI Global

Published in the United States of America by  
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)  
701 E. Chocolate Avenue  
Hershey PA, USA 17033  
Tel: 717-533-8845  
Fax: 717-533-8661  
E-mail: [cust@igi-global.com](mailto:cust@igi-global.com)  
Web site: <http://www.igi-global.com>

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

CIP Pending

ISBN: 978-1-4666-9855-0  
eISBN: 978-1-4666-9856-7

This book is published in the IGI Global book series *Advances in Social Networking and Online Communities (ASNOC)* (ISSN: 2328-1405; eISSN: 2328-1413)

British Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

All work contributed to this book is new, previously-unpublished material. The views expressed in this book are those of the authors, but not necessarily of the publisher.

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# Advances in Social Networking and Online Communities (ASNOC) Book Series

Hakikur Rahman  
*BRAC University, Bangladesh*

ISSN: 2328-1405  
EISSN: 2328-1413

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## Foreword

Matthew Crick is one of those rare professors who is as happy to be creating his own vision on film as he is animatedly teaching television production theory and practice in a classroom or studio. A rare breed indeed, a hands-on and passionate practitioner who also understands that a rich, deep knowledge of television production and YouTube only further informs his own craft, and that of his students. Crick excites his students with captivating YouTube content, and challenges them to identify the implications of the immersive and interactive YouTube experience. After all, even a passive YouTuber is not only a participant in the YouTube phenomenon, but is perhaps playing an unwitting part in a new surveillance culture.

There is perhaps also duality in this book's methodology, having been written from the perspective of someone who has an excellent track record of producing emotionally compelling on-screen storytelling, but also is thoughtful about how such content could be delivered to and received by a larger audience. Crick finds the balance between offering relevant and engaging examples of YouTube content with seeking understanding of the significance and cultural implications of such material. *Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube's Digital Sphere* is multi-faceted in its approach to helping us understand how YouTube has thrived in multiple and complex cultural domains.

Such rapid success and widespread mass adoption has resulted in YouTube becoming the preeminent global purveyor and repository of online video content today. The amount of video uploaded to YouTube every day, and stored in seeming perpetuity is simply vast. This book offers a compelling story of the successful development of YouTube from its very first video upload, through important viral events that include both graphically visceral and humorous moments, to serious content such as scholarly lectures, political movements and news stories. YouTube offers entertainment in abundance, as well as self-empowering amateur and professional content. Yet, there is also nonsensical material, often the subject of morning talk shows, that has little redeeming value but simultaneously attracts a large audience. YouTube is the domain of both the amateur and the professional. Through the story of landmark moments in YouTube's history, Crick delivers an astute exploration of how such developments altered and ultimately made YouTube into the platform it is today, a source of seemingly bottomless information and content.

Crick, as this book will attest, understands that the history of YouTube's development is complex. The messy rise and steady mass adoption of the internet has seen websites and digital ideas and technologies come and go. Yet the enduring story of YouTube, and Google's role in it, is surely remarkable as its own progress and expansion in the larger culture of mainstay online entities has been inextricably entwined with the worldwide expansion and development of the Internet. YouTube's impact upon society is rightfully questioned by Crick, who examines its power upon society and questions the potential surveillance



## **Foreword**

aspects of the website and YouTubers' themselves. This approach is most welcome in a time that finds the lines between private and public behaviors and creative expression increasingly blurred.

This book is a valuable insight into the development and continuing influence of YouTube upon society as a whole, and a substantive effort toward filling the deficiency of scholarly research on YouTube in this particular area. Crick offers us fresh perspectives, including his own original research, with which to evaluate the impact that YouTube continues to have on the billions of YouTubers around the world. Crick's text is the best explanation yet of how YouTube has historically developed to become, for better or for worse, a prime influencer of popular culture today.

*Rob Quicke*

*William Paterson University, USA*

## Preface

*Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube™'s Digital Sphere* provides a comprehensive look at how YouTube functions, how YouTubers—people who upload, share, and watch YouTube videos—use the online social networking and video sharing platform, and examines YouTube's place in the broader conversation about how power and surveillance function in social networking sites. The book also analyzes, in detail, the economic, theoretical, creative, cultural, and technological features of YouTube and how these areas intersect in YouTube's worldwide digital sphere.

On the surface, YouTube appears to be a morass of user-generated “homemade” videos of kids doing silly and often dangerous stunts. There's also commercial content that you can watch for free, some of it violating copyright laws and some of it posted by the copyright holders themselves in the hopes of generating revenue. This book is not focused on user-generated content alone. While this content represents a large portion of videos available on YouTube, it is actually not the majority of YouTube video content. YouTube is, at the core, a much more complex worldwide cultural system and phenomenon that simultaneously provides tantalizing and sometimes shocking user-generated content and offers thoughtful political commentary, YouTube Channels, educational videos, professionally produced commercial content, and historically relevant moments captured live by citizens around the world. Only 10 years ago, without YouTube, important international events such as *Arab Spring* would have been experienced by only a handful of people instead of billions worldwide. To a large degree, the YouTube user-generated and controlled web environment is an entirely new cultural phenomenon in the world of media consumption and distribution. Never before have so many people participated in the production of so many widely distributed, viewed, altered, and reproduced cultural products in the form of video, audio, and textual information.

YouTube also reproduces and challenges traditional forms of media power, similar to the television broadcast networks and film studios and their traditional, highly centralized modes of production and distribution. But YouTube also *decentralizes* those structures, as well. Still, YouTuber participation in video creation and distribution, while democratic in many ways, is defined by a highly structured, legally defined system comprised of familiar capitalistic and restrictive goals, rules, and regulations. That said, uploading a video to YouTube is very easy with a Google account. So the first barrier of entry into this relatively new cultural phantasmagoria is quite low, compared to traditional broadcast television, cable, film, and even streaming technologies.

To be commercially successful in YouTube with a particular YouTube Channel or video, a certain threshold of viewers—an audience—must be reached. At that point, YouTube Partner status is achieved, bringing opportunities for shared advertising dollars, celebrity, and the potential to cross over into the traditional television broadcast and film mediums. YouTubers employ business methods and strategies to

achieve success similar to those used in broadcast television and film. In fact, the various “step-by-step” phases (pre-production, production, and post-production) parallel traditional broadcast television and film. This is in part why original content from YouTube is often duplicated and distributed in traditional media in television news and talk show formats as it looks, sounds, and is constructed very much like what we see every day. The technology and tools used to distribute YouTube videos are also similar.

One significant area of inquiry begins with a detailed description of the technological aspects of YouTube, with deep roots that have changed with the rise and influence of Internet technologies. The importance of this discussion should not be understated, primarily because the technological design of YouTube, bound and driven by the technological form and functions of the Internet, influences and aids (or not) the empowerment of some people and the disempowerment of others. YouTube’s history, scholarly research, and the relationship between traditional forms of media power in the YouTube space are also discussed.

This book is also devoted to a thorough discussion of Cultural Studies (CS) and Medium Theory. This discussion is by no means exhaustive and the book is not meant to be the definitive work on these important theoretical perspectives. No doubt, some readers will take exception that the author has not mentioned particular scholars or research in CS and Medium Theory discourse; unfortunately, there was not enough space to address all of the scholars and their theories. Fortunately, there are many books on CS, filled with essays and musings on communication technology that shape much of the accepted scholarly belief and critique. The purpose of inserting CS theories in this book is to shed light on YouTube in new ways, in the hope of stripping away YouTube’s veneer to reveal something much more interesting.

This book presents, for the first time, original YouTube empirical research that describes how some people think about power and surveillance in terms of YouTube. Nonstatistical research results from the initial Bronx pilot study research study, the first of its kind, and the subsequent larger New Jersey YouTube Experience research study, suggest that YouTube is a site in which much more than social networking and watching videos occur; active and pervasive learning also occur.

*Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube™’s Digital Sphere* offers three main propositions to negotiate the technological, theoretical, and intellectual viewpoints presented in the book. These propositions are closely interrelated. The first proposition is that *YouTube’s technologies parallel the historical development of Internet technologies*, specifically video sharing, compression, bandwidth, and streaming technologies. For instance, humans have created all Internet technologies and, as a result, certain technological functions are privileged or work better than others. This is one reason YouTube has been such a successful website in a relatively short time: it is easy to use and understand by everyone, independent of culture, language, age, and so forth. Sometimes, designers are unaware of this privileging and its consequences. But these consequences often occur in purposeful ways, through design, to reveal a larger corporate purpose. For instance, it is by deliberate design that YouTube requires you to choose from only three possible privacy settings before uploading a video. Also, there is the design presumption that you are a Google+ subscriber and have a Gmail account.

The second proposition is that *YouTube is heavily reliant on Internet-based technologies for its proper function and positive user experience*. Therefore, understanding Internet technologies, technologies associated with creating YouTube videos, older traditional media creation technologies, technologies associated with advertising on YouTube, and technologies related to managing YouTube subscribers and videos is vital and informs broader critical knowledge and understanding related to YouTube’s place in our shared culture.

The third proposition is that *YouTube should be theorized using tools from the Cultural Studies tradition*. This “lens” provides the best and most important historical, nontechnological point of view and connects YouTube with common human communication practices that we see every day inside and outside YouTube’s digital sphere. Absent the strong theoretical perspective that frames this book, YouTube remains just another website, full of ones and zeros, ripe for another writer’s “how to” perspective of YouTube’s marketing and economic magic.

Embracing these three propositions, understanding them, and applying them when using YouTube leads to the best overall understanding of YouTube and its role in our culture. YouTube creates an historical, technological, and cultural body of knowledge, second by second, distributing content worldwide. These three linked propositions paint a complete picture of YouTube. When our knowledge is complete, we are empowered to make better choices about how we use YouTube (and technology in general) and how we promote our own ideas about improving our world through something as deceptively simple as YouTube. We can also better predict what will happen with YouTube and social networking sites in the future.

People around the world, young and old, are learning in YouTube, communicating new ideas and new visions, enacting political change, and reproducing their own words and images for potentially billions to see and share. Unlike television and film, this process happens in YouTube at more than a billion uploads per second. Not surprisingly, this significantly speeds YouTube’s cultural influence and impact. For instance, in less than 10 years, YouTube has become the world’s largest free repository of audio and video material and provides the largest free searchable database and historical record of human activity in perhaps the past 100 years.

There are several books on YouTube. Books about “famous” viral videos and YouTube “stars.” Books about how to market your business using YouTube and how to master Google’s Adwords and Adsense programs are quite popular. Put another way, many writers offer books that discuss YouTube’s function and use and present step-by-step tutorials on how to make and market videos, primarily so the reader(s) can become financially successful and famous or at least embrace the hope of doing so. The ubiquitous nature of the aforementioned reading material supports very common and limited views of YouTube. This popular framing of social networking sites persists because it’s easy to digest and reproduce for the masses.

*Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube™’s Digital Sphere* is significantly different and more complex, as well as timely. YouTube has enjoyed meteoric financial growth in the past few years and even greater international appeal and influence. Therefore, a book that asks questions about how surveillance and power function in YouTube is relevant now, particularly given the recent spate of popular press regarding government surveillance practices and the legality of using mobile and landline telephone records.

YouTube is also a site of legal battles about copyright and enforcement of the relatively new Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). YouTube challenges our understanding of copyright law and how our use and participation in YouTube shapes copyright law. Copyright law cases in other media, such as television and film, are for the most part well settled, aside from the occasional egregious violation. The legal system functions well regarding the television, book, and film industries. However, the DMCA has particular importance in YouTube and has been used extensively and often in YouTube, especially in the past several years, for instance when it’s necessary to determine which video and audio content should be removed from YouTube. The legal concerns in YouTube have proven a bit more complicated than in traditional media, as the DMCA provides for so-called “safe harbor” technologies and websites.

## Preface

Each chapter in *Power, Surveillance, and Culture in YouTube™'s Digital Sphere* presents a discussion of YouTube's technological characteristics, theorizes YouTube, and reviews the historical themes that connect and contribute to how we experience YouTube today, along with YouTube's cultural significance. The three propositions frame the broader discussion and “knit” the book's chapters into a cohesive piece.

## Chapter 1

YouTube is more than cute pet videos and aspiring musicians. Understanding YouTube and how it influences, reproduces, and changes our culture begins with understanding the role of technology inside and outside of YouTube. The history of the Internet and its technologies and YouTube's connection and historical trajectory frames the first proposition in this book: *YouTube's technologies parallel the historical development of Internet technologies*, in particular, video sharing, compression, bandwidth, and streaming technologies. When considering the Internet's important technological innovations, YouTube is transformed in our minds and daily lives from a simple user-generated video and audio repository to a powerful cultural change agent, like the Internet itself. The tools and technology associated with the Internet, which are richly integrated and manifest in YouTube, allow us to change and influence the world around us. Thoughtful consideration of the function and design of Internet-specific technology and how we experience social networking contextualizes current trends in terms of YouTube. Finally, technological relationships, such as the connection between Internet speed and user experience or learning and education in a media-rich context, reveal a deeper perspective on the broader cultural and participatory experience with YouTube far beyond cute pet videos.

## Chapter 2

Less than 2 years after YouTube was created, the search engine giant Google bought the start-up for 1.65 billion dollars. According to the Associated Press, the announcement “came just a few hours after YouTube unveiled three separate agreements with media companies to counter the threat of copyright infringement lawsuits” (Liedtke, 2006). Eight years later, YouTube's legal concerns continue, as Google has recently lost a court battle, forcing it to remove content from YouTube. The recent lawsuit is just one example of YouTube's significant and global influence and its deep and abiding connection with larger social institutions and concerns, such as freedom of expression, the power of democracy, and computer-mediated communication. YouTube's functionality, history, corporate ownership, and influence and cultural recognition make it a place where seemingly disparate themes and practices coexist. YouTube is also a site of academic scholarship and shared broadcast television and film communication technology history. YouTube is a vast video game training and collaboration space, especially for globally popular games such as “Angry Birds” and “Candy Crush.” All of this activity—some of it virtual labor, some of it playful, much of it democratic and free, and some of it very personal—is tempered by YouTube LLC's predetermined economic goal to increase revenue streams through advertising and content creation. To those ends, YouTube provides detailed instructions on how to make videos and how to advertise. YouTube LLC gives users very clear definitions, rules, and instructions on how to make money. YouTube's technological and economic functions and processes are best explored using a YouTube video, created and uploaded to YouTube for monetization, as the “unit of analysis.” This case study involved the creation of a single video and a detailed analysis of the beginning, middle, and end of that video's path through the YouTube advertising process completes this chapter.

## Chapter 3

YouTube is a social network, also known as a *platform*, and the social media created and distributed in YouTube can be examined through many theoretical “lenses.” One particularly influential form of analysis that scholars have identified as important in terms of how the concepts of power and surveillance are made concrete in mass mediums, like broadcast television and film in the past, is Cultural Studies. Cultural Studies makes assumptions about how media and power coexist and operate, as well as how specific media power structures strengthen traditional ideas of who should have power and how individuals, groups, and organizations use power and what is “natural” in our culture. Cultural Studies also interrogates the differences between cultural or constructed knowledge and knowledge that might be assumed to be more objective in nature. Medium Theory is connected with Cultural Studies but is concerned specifically with cultural and human activity in and around television, film, and the Internet and how individual media consumption influences us. Medium theorists such as Marshall McLuhan, Neil Postman, and Joshua Meyrowitz, as well as Cultural Studies scholars such as Stuart Hall, provide strong theoretical ideas and thus ground this book’s analysis in terms of YouTube and its historical place among more traditional forms of electronic communication. Other scholarly discourse around post-modernism and Uses and Gratifications provide additional frames for the discussion, as well as original research studies completed in 2009 and 2014. There are many types of social networking sites and social media worthy of examination, but YouTube is clearly the most culturally influential social networking site, due in large part to its technological connection with Google. YouTube is an enormous, easily searchable database, available to the whole of humanity with a simple mouse click.

## Chapter 4

*With the shift of television to digital format in the next decade, it will become virtually interchangeable with the Internet. Hence, those firms that come to dominate digital television may well be poised to play a major role in the Age of the Internet. (McChesney, 1999, p. 167)*

The above quote written long before YouTube existed, is somewhat prescient. Clearly, YouTube is a website of influence and power for traditional media conglomerates. Even early in the academic scholarship about mass media, scholar Todd Gitlin suggested that human experience has become a commodity. According to Gitlin (1980), the only way to solve that problem is to “demolish the media and to create a movement as an alternative source of values, network of relations and standard of authenticity” (p. 255). His politically charged language frames well what it means to be political in YouTube. What it means to be “political” in YouTube is different for everyone, but all of the definitions resonate with traditional ideas of political activity in terms of demonstrations and the exercising of democratic and free speech. For many, the 2008 Presidential campaign is a watershed moment for YouTube, as the website is credited with helping candidates to gain supporters, specifically younger voters. While this technologically deterministic view is limited, YouTube provides an inexpensive and socioculturally relevant platform for political messages from politicians and the YouTubers who support them.

International politics, in particular the *Arab Spring* and the spate of horrific murders committed in the name of fundamentalist political groups and religious fervor by ISIS and others, have found a worldwide audience in YouTube who comment, post, and repost videos and generally provide criticism about what’s happening. This is an obvious contradiction of what many in the popular press see as YouTube’s *raison*

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d'être. YouTube is also a place for local political activity, although not nearly as prevalent as national politics and not used as efficiently, either. In terms of political activity, user-generated videos uploaded by "citizen journalists" have been credited with helping to motivate change in countries around the world.

## Chapter 5

All of the propositions discussed in this book suggest that the history of Internet and media technologies is a good way to explore and analyze YouTube. However, as YouTube is a very young technology and cultural influencer, a historical examination using YouTube as the tool for this effort presents a challenge. Fortunately, YouTube's content is mostly prerecorded video from news and journalistic sources, and much of that content is historically relevant (e.g., important political events, elections, concerts, newscasts and wars)—events that were cataloged and recorded using still and moving images.

One particularly influential historical event—the Vietnam War—can easily be traced by watching YouTube's compilation reels, archived network news broadcasts from during the Vietnam War, and pictures of what people were saying about the war *during the time of the war*. The Vietnam War is considered to be the first filmed war and it provides an excellent case study for YouTube's historical value, not just for archived video but also for *current* critical and public comment on the Vietnam War and other armed conflicts around the world happening right now. In other words, YouTube is the bridge between our shared histories and it allows us to reach through time and communicate with and about our past, present, and future. Viewers who watched the television news in the late 1960s—live—were shown poignant and sometimes shocking images of the war. This was the first time American audiences had ever seen authentic images so raw and graphic. America's first filmed war serves as an important historical touchstone and lens through which to analyze YouTube's cultural, social, and technological importance. Television news technology, specifically the reduction in equipment size, accessibility, and cost, has facilitated new ways of telling the "story" of war in the current historical moment.

The filmed Vietnam War was communicated as a mass *live* experience, in a "top down" way, because national television networks were the only content creators. They delivered that content to the people through the relatively new medium of broadcast television. But YouTube doesn't operate that way, at least not in such a strict way. YouTube is on-demand and content is altered, "rebroadcast," with textual comments from people around the world. Developing and defining terms suited for the YouTube platform and linking early television broadcast technologies with YouTube's social networking technologies can help in understanding YouTube's historical and social significance. There are still many lessons to be learned from the Vietnam War. YouTube provides the words, images, and sounds to teach us.

## Chapter 6

According to the London *Telegraph* (Barrett, 2013), online London has one CCTV camera for every 11 people in Britain. The average number is most likely around five million cameras in total. MSNBC (Timm, 2013) reported in August 2013 that the number of security cameras in the New York City public sector was as many as 6,000. In Chicago in May 2013 (Cox, 2013), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported a "frightening number" of surveillance cameras, with as many as 22,000 citywide, posing what Adam Schwartz of the ACLU called a menace to privacy. The twin concepts of surveillance and power are expressed in unique ways in YouTube. Philosophers such as Michel Foucault have written extensively about these ideas, comparing cultural institutions to prisons. In many ways, YouTube is

organized and exhibits similar expressions of who has power and who is watching us. However, YouTube is also different in that the Internet and YouTube have made *citizen* surveillance among ourselves and from our governments fast, inexpensive, and easy. While at times YouTubers have power (i.e., they can upload almost anything they want, repurpose and re-upload videos they don't legally own), there are still classic structures of domination in so-called "old" media in YouTube. Scholars are developing intellectual tools for understanding how surveillance works, in particular across the Internet and in YouTube, but this research is in its infancy compared to research in older media such as television, newspapers, and film.

According to many companies and corporations, including YouTube's parent company Google, consumers are tracked. In fact each mouse click is tracked to provide better services and more products and to prepackage demographic and socioeconomic information that corporations and companies sell to other for-profit entities. Google and YouTube make this easy with *AdSense* and *AdWords* technologies and, like television and film, the YouTube worldwide audience is ripe for commodification, often with YouTubers' full knowledge and consent once they consent to YouTube's Terms and Use agreement. YouTube advertising strategies are widely used by large commercial entities such as Banana Republic, Warner Bros., and Pepsi. Advertising expenditures in YouTube by those companies most likely account for significant reductions in advertising dollars spent in traditional media such as television and newspapers. For instance, a full-size YouTube banner advertisement can cost \$200,000 or more. YouTube provides a place to make money (although not a living wage for most YouTubers) and this possibility and cultural narrative is widely disseminated throughout the Googleverse and YouTube.

Similar to broadcast television, YouTube audiences are measured using A.C. Nielsen tools. This company creates and controls the measurement technology used to determine YouTube's monetary value so advertising costs can be institutionalized and made part of the larger media economic model. This model encourages YouTube Partners to work hard to become wealthy, successful, and perhaps stars. Essentially, YouTube's monetizing aspects keep the dream alive for millions of YouTubers.

## Chapter 7

YouTube offers a wealth of combined, creative, and surprisingly expert-vetted knowledge on a variety of topics across ethnicities and culture. Even though it appears that YouTube is limited to videos about kittens, pandas, and exploding bottles of soda, actually YouTube creates and distributes knowledge across a wide spectrum, from how to play piano or iron a shirt to learning about hegemony from Noam Chomsky via *The Chomsky Videos* channel on YouTube (TheEthanwashere, 2012). Partly through its design and ease of use, various purposes and worldwide ubiquity, YouTube has become a stockpile for enormous amounts of historically relevant and interesting material that is not easily found elsewhere.

In 2009, an important research study focused on YouTube and gathered new empirical data on YouTubers' attitudes, beliefs, and activities. The Bronx Pilot YouTube Study, described in detail, provides the foundation and research design for a larger and more robust study in 2014: the New Jersey YouTube Experience Study. Both research studies incorporate the theories and ideas expressed in prior chapters, embodied in survey and research questions and assumptions about what people do when they use YouTube.

The Bronx YouTube Study focused on YouTubers rather than video content and gathered information from users atypical of most communication research. In fact, most scholarly research about YouTube has focused on YouTube content (i.e., types of videos created and/or shared, marketing and commercial aspects of YouTube, specific groups in YouTube and their political activities, and of course the unusual videos that "go viral" and end up on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* or *Tosh 2.0*). While YouTube content



## Preface

is a very important aspect of YouTube research, this is not the focus of this chapter. The main concern is the interrelationship between the types of videos uploaded, watched, and YouTubers' textual comments and how YouTube fits into that group's socioeconomic and cultural landscape.

## Chapter 8

YouTube has changed dramatically since 2005 in terms of look and functionality. Many culturally and internationally relevant events probably would have not received as much attention from the popular press without YouTube's video sharing and distribution power. YouTube is a global social networking site. The name can now be used as a verb, as in "I *YouTubed* it." Using Google's powerful and increasingly intuitive search functions, including predictive spelling, videos are easily searched and relevant YouTube playlists are generated for the user. As a result, YouTubers are encouraged to spend even more time on YouTube, precisely because it *seems* to take *less time* to find what the YouTuber wanted in the first place.

Using research from the 2009 Bronx Pilot YouTube Study, a larger and more narrowly defined research study—the New Jersey YouTube Experience Study—presents empirical research on YouTubers' attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs about YouTube. There are significant differences between the two studies, notably the revised theoretical and empirical models and survey questions better suited to exploring the concepts of learning, surveillance, and power in YouTube's digital sphere. New research results in the areas of privacy offer insight into how research participants (university students in New Jersey) use YouTube and what they think about privacy while using YouTube. These empirical observations provide new and important groundwork for future research possibilities in a growing body of scholarly work regarding online social network site activity and the relationship between new technologies and human beings. The data presented are nonstatistical and descriptive only, opening the door for other researchers interested in truly random and experimental tests involving YouTubers. As the data suggested in the 2009 Bronx study, YouTubers in the 2014 New Jersey YouTube Experience study are aware of YouTube and Google surveillance strategies and understand that they are not necessarily in control of those strategies, yet they have very little concern regarding surveillance unless money or email information are at stake. A variety of charts, images, and figures provide powerful visual evidence of what's happening beyond the surface in YouTube, at least for a particular group, at a specific moment in history.

The New Jersey YouTube Experience survey focuses on how YouTubers learn and acquire knowledge. The descriptive results indicate that, as suggested in the earlier Bronx study, YouTubers obtain information from a variety of sources, including professional academics, lay people, corporate interests, and random commenters. YouTubers learn at every level and people of all types participate in transmitting knowledge. Generally, this happens with little immediate financial benefit, although profit-driven education and learning models in YouTube are becoming prevalent. While knowledge creation in YouTube is not all accurate, or even always relevant, and sometimes comes with strong bias and personal agendas, this is also true in traditional education (even though many of us would like to think otherwise).

## Chapter 9

In academic and business institutions around the world, the transfer of knowledge and the awarding of academic degrees or certificates have been educational and economic practices for decades. However, in recent years, postsecondary degrees and certificates are available more cheaply and in greater numbers, and require less time to complete. Full online academic degree programs, massive open online courses