

dPATH

Digital Performance, Art, Technology and Humanities

dPATH: A Proposed Graduate Program in Digital Performance, Art, Technology, and Humanities

1. Introduction

dPATH is a proposed interdisciplinary research and curricula that takes advantage of what CU Boulder could uniquely offer students - a program whose structure cannot be replicated in an online environment: a hands-on, experiential-based learning environment focused on creativity and practice-based research that reflects the rapidly transforming knowledge systems and new media economies emerging from the substantial technological shifts currently taking place in our society.

2. Program Overview

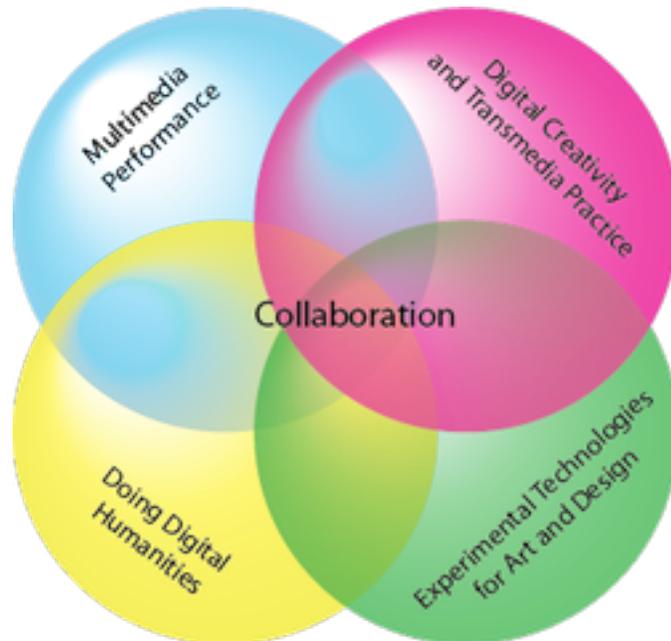
The imminent formation of a new college (or other entity) focused on digital creativity, media, and technology is an important impetus to create radically new learning and research structures. Digital creative work and critical media literacy play an increasing role in our information society and are transforming all aspects of contemporary life, including the way many professional artists and theorists pursue their research. Traditional scholarly and creative work outputs such as the single-authored print book or conventional gallery exhibitions are being challenged by the emergence of multi-authored and/or hybridized forms of transmission such as Internet art sites, multi-platform digital or transmedia narratives, works of software art, interactive works of electronic literature, politically-charged video games, community media activism, telematic performance art, and innovative art applications for mobile devices and tablets. These emerging forms significantly expand the possible research and pedagogy practices of contemporary artists, writers, and humanists.

Thus, dPATH could serve the university as both an incubator and a transdisciplinary research and learning program. The proposed program would enable rostered and affiliated faculty to work with graduate students probing the significance of a collaborative, lab-based, and digitally-expanded research environment. With practice-based research at its center - or, the emphasis on research creation as the primary means for both making discoveries in the pursuit of new forms of knowledge and creating a theoretical framework to help contextualize these discoveries in a contemporary new media context - dPATH seeks to provide a flexible pedagogical structure that can bring about the creation of new and hybridized forms of art, literature, performance, scholarship, theory, design, curation, exhibition, and publication appropriate for our current cultural moment. Our program embeds digital forms of creativity into the research process itself, enhancing the larger agenda of the university to cultivate cutting-edge investigations into the practice, theory, history, and philosophy of media and its relationships to creativity, communication, technology, and information.

Expanding creative arts and humanities practice into new areas of hands-on, technology driven, interdisciplinary research and pedagogy will greatly benefit our current student population and also help attract top-notch faculty and graduate students. A collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between dPATH and various preexisting programs already at CU, especially in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Music, and ATLAS, will significantly strengthen the program. All of the authors of this document have already developed collaborative research affiliations with ATLAS and have begun nurturing relationships with representatives from the thriving local and regional community of digital entrepreneurs and patrons of the arts, many of whom are equally committed to building Boulder's national and international reputation as a hotbed of innovation in the new media economy. We believe the time has come for a more cohesive campus wide strategic research initiative in the digital arts and humanities that syncs

with the reputation our region has built as a hub of innovation in digital art, electronic publishing, and social media networking culture.

Below we identify four initial areas of practice-based research that we are well positioned to implement immediately. These research areas would overlap, converge and, over time, open up new areas of research still yet unimagined.



Each semester, graduate students will circulate in the various collaboratories listed below which will be led by a dPATH faculty member, an affiliated professor from another department on campus, or a visiting professor/artist. In addition to lab work, students will take courses and workshops designed to both develop technical skills as well as historical and theoretical understanding appropriate to media-based research in performance, arts, technology, and humanities. Although the courses offered will evolve and modify as technology evolves and modifies, all graduate students will take certain dPATH-specific courses. These courses could include Interdisciplinary Practice-Based Research, Critical Issues in New Media Practice, Graduate Arts Collaboratory, and Advanced Experiments in Digital Arts, Textuality and Technology.

2.1 Multimedia Performance

Multimedia Performance explores how emerging technologies can create, amplify, transmit, and establish new contexts for the visual, aural and interactive elements of live and networked performance and performance art. Research and course material will challenge established assumptions about: 1) performance spaces -- both physical and virtual, 2) the integration of live and mediated experience, 3) the job description of and relationships between audience and performer, and 4) authorship, autonomy, interactivity, and collaboration. Performance work will manifest across a wide variety of platforms including tablets, the proscenium stage, websites, tweets, blogs, and games. Examples could include: video mapping within interactive space, sound and video installations that are controlled by both the viewers and performers, performable websites that consistently generate new content, and apps that empower users to choreograph and direct video content. Performance artifacts and archives will also be explored. Real-time audio and video systems such as Max MSP and Pure Data could be utilized

alongside various DIY analog or digital technologies to create technologically and conceptually integrated interdisciplinary work. The Black Box within ATLAS is an invaluable resource for the production of this work.

2.2 Digital Creativity and Transmedia Practice

Research into emerging forms of digital creativity and transmedia practice explores contemporary approaches to the making and distribution of digital art, electronic writing, and live audio/visual performance. A course related to this research group could evolve around the concept “remixed realities.” This course would investigate the emergence of social media art practices that experiment with the art of remixing and that investigate the long history of artist-driven postproduction methods including but not limited to literary cut-ups and procedural composition, image appropriation, generative net.art, video mash-ups, glitch aesthetics, collage film, interactive/participatory art, live A/V performance (DJ, VJ, live coding), culture jamming / hactivism, and other art forms that engage with renewable source material. Students would engage in the production of new art work as well as develop a digital-expanded poetics to theoretically contextualize their practice-based research. Another course related to this research group could be focused on “transmedia writing and publishing.” Sometimes referred to as multi-platform storytelling or interactive narrative, this course would focus on the development of experimental art and writing projects that explore new modes of presentation and social integration. Collaborative works of digital scholarship and experimental theory production that invent new digital/print publication hybrids would also be examined. Students would engage in an experiential, process-based collaboratory that encourages experimentation across media genres and platforms and would engage the political, ethical, and cultural implications of the digital distribution environment as it relates to networked forms of publication, exhibition, and telematic performance.

2.3 Doing Digital Humanities

The field of digital humanities (DH) is increasingly becoming a locus for larger debates about the future of the academy and the fate of scholarship in a digital age. DH is also a term that describes a broad and emerging field of humanities scholarship, teaching, and creative practice, often incorporating a range of computational and data-driven approaches. That said, while this research group would have the flexibility to allow students/researchers to pursue these wide-ranging aspects of DH, it would focus on practice-based critical media studies and work related to digital archives and preservation. Courses related to this research group could be based on explorations of software studies, platform studies, or media archaeology which would make possible approaching the digital in relation to earlier, analog-based histories.

2.4 Experimental Technologies for Art and Design

The array of powerful new tools for artists and designers is growing rapidly, and includes software environments such as Processing (visual design), Blender (3D modelling), Max/MSP/Jitter (realtime sound and video processing), open hardware development kits such as Arduino (enabling physical computing with sensors, motors, lights, etc.), and fabrication tools such as 3D printing and CNC machining. Equipped with these tools, students can take courses that explore a large variety of creative engagements, such as technology-intensive performances, interactive art installations, fabrication of novel artifacts, physically responsive and intelligent architecture, and exploratory creative work with robotics.

3. Environmental Scan

Thinking through the role that digital forms of art, performance, literature, media, theory, and technology will play at CU, we have been conducting an environmental scan of graduate programs that address similar issues and research agendas to the ones we outline here.

Although arts/humanities programs focused on digital research-creation and digitally processed forms of publication are not completely new, they are only now gaining traction in American universities. Following are some notable examples of both American programs and programs in Europe and Australia (please see Appendix 2 below for a more detailed description of the graduate programs we have investigated):

- The graduate program at the University of Washington, also known as DXARTS, offers a PhD that is similar to the kind of degree program we are considering in that it aims to explore the intersection of creativity and research within the fields of digital arts and experimental media. A student can receive his or her PhD in three to six years by completing three “phases” of study: coursework and the qualifying exam, study for the general exam for doctoral candidacy, and the final project. Students are funded through TAs, RAships, and as research fellows. Some current students’ research includes expanding the cinematic experience into the context of interactive art, interactive multimedia installations, sound art, light art, sonic and visual extensions for acoustic pianos, and “exploring questions of embodiment, cognition, and identity through installation, performance and interactive artwork.”
- The Digital Arts and New Media MFA Program (DANM) at the University of California Santa Cruz attracts students from different backgrounds, including the arts, computer engineering, the humanities and the social sciences to “pursue interdisciplinary artistic and scholarly research and production in the context of a broad examination of digital arts and cultures.” The program is organized into four pursuits: New Praxis, Studies, Collaborative Research, and Pedagogy. Like dPATH, the program’s focus is on faculty and student collaboration in a lab-based environment. It is a two year program.
- The Interdisciplinary Creative Practices program, run by Simon Biggs and housed within the Edinburgh College of Art at the University of Edinburgh, is a Masters of Science program with the aim of preparing students for further research, usually as PhD candidates. Students work both collaboratively and autonomously, and can take courses across the university according to their particular courses of study.
- The PhD program in the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University prepares students to participate in innovative research and teaching of the history and theories of various media. Though dissertations are generally presented in a traditional manner, MCM has a Production Facility which allows the integration of practice into theoretical discourses.
- The Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT) at MIT offers a Masters of Science centered around the ACT Studio courses. These courses facilitate the students’ thesis development. An ACT thesis is both a realized project and a written thesis book. Projects vary based upon student interest, but they include installation, sound art, and sculpture. The program has twelve students and six faculty.
- The University of Technology Sydney houses the Creativity and Cognition Studios, a “multi-disciplinary environment for the advancement and understanding of practice in digital media and the arts,” in which UTS PhD students engage in practice-based research. Their research is “based upon a belief in the importance of working partnerships and collaborative effort.”

Given our findings in the environmental scan as well as recent developments and explorations documented at the ICJMT website, we have concluded that CU Boulder is now ideally positioned to support the development of a new graduate program primarily focused on experimental forms of practice-based research in digital creativity, new media scholarship and electronic publication, and emerging technologies.

Appendix 1
Interviews with Faculty and Staff from Related Graduate Programs

Email Interview with Linda Candy - Professor in the Creativity and Cognition Research Studios at the University of Technology, Sydney where she supervises practice-based PhD programs and advises on the evaluation of interactive art installations. She is the author of *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner*, and numerous articles on practice-based research.

Dear Aaron

Thank you for your enquiry about our graduate programmes at UTS. I would be very interested to know the outcomes of your investigation and what you decide to do. Our work is in the public domain and you are welcome to use it. Appropriate acknowledgements would be valued.

I have copied this to Ernest Edmonds and Andrew Johnston as Co directors of CCS at UTS. They may wish to add points and would, I am sure, be interested in the outcomes of your work.

Here are my responses to your questions

1 – Would you call the work being done at UTS practice-based research? If so, how does it figure into your program? What might a dissertation look like at UTS?

The answer to the first question is yes, we would call the research program "practice based". Such research forms the core of the PhD program. The key defining characteristic is that, under UTS rules, a PhD candidate is allowed to submit an "artifact" as part of the work. A typical submission consists of the outcome of the practice, normally documented on a CD, DVD or disk drive, and a thesis based on the generic outline provided at <http://www.creativityandcognition.com/research/practice-based-research/outline-for-a-practice-related-thesis/>. Other forms of "artifact" submission are also allowed. See <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/policies/examnotprint.html>

If you read my chapter entitled "Research and Creative Practice" in the book 'Interacting: art, research and the creative practitioner' (Candy and Edmonds 2011, pp 33-59) you will find some definition and discussion about it which specifically draws upon our doctoral program at the Creativity and Cognition Studios (CCS) in UTS. The book exemplifies the kinds of practice based research programs we have undertaken; the chapters are written by graduates from that program.

Go to the CCS web site for other information directly related to your query.
<http://www.creativityandcognition.com/research/practice-based-research/>

2 – Could you briefly address the ways in which theoretical and historical concerns incorporated into your program?

The second question requires more detail than a few minutes will allow but is discussed in detail in the publications mentioned. In Edmonds and Candy (2010) we first described our framework that can be used to help specify the particular, individual, approach that a given student uses. There is no single way that works. Each case must be considered on its merits, but placing it

within the framework enables one to compare different approaches and enables the student to articulate their methods.

All our students must include a state-of-the-art chapter, which fully covers the history and current context of their work. Insofar as they innovate in practice-based research methods, they are expected to include the history and context of this approach as well as of the core concerns of the research. Each PhD is a unique research program within a general practice-based framework: there is no general course of study required that covers history in a general way.

If I have misunderstood your question, please do not hesitate to come back to me on this.

3 – Are the UTS faculty entirely employed within the department, or are they “shared” with other departments?

I am not certain what this question means exactly, but main supervisors determine the Faculty within which a student is deemed to study. A second supervisor may be from another Faculty or, even, another institution. Probably “shared” is the correct answer.

4 – What is the relationship between professional development and artistic development at UTS? What are some of the typical outcomes for students? What do they do after they graduate?

I am not clear about the distinction that you are making between artistic and professional. For artists, their art practice is their professional activity. Candy and Edmonds (2011) contains a set of case studies that help to answer this question, as well as a range of background material. It is intended to help students and staff involved in practice-based PhDs.

If there is any further clarification you need, please let me know.

[As a complete aside to this, you might be interested to see a recent review that covered both the work of Ernest Edmonds and Mark America: [http://rhizome.org/editorial/2012/dec/12/ernest-edmonds-manfred-mohr-and-digital-aesthetic/?utm_source=pulsenews&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rhizome-fp+\(Rhizome+%3E+Front+Page\)](http://rhizome.org/editorial/2012/dec/12/ernest-edmonds-manfred-mohr-and-digital-aesthetic/?utm_source=pulsenews&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rhizome-fp+(Rhizome+%3E+Front+Page))]

References

I refer you to the book and some of my other publications for a fuller account of the theory and practice behind this approach.

Candy, L. and Edmonds, E.A. (2011). *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner*, Libri Publishing Ltd: Faringdon, UK.

Obtainable:<http://www.amazon.com/Interacting-Research-Creative-Practitioner-Management/dp/1907471480>

Candy, L. (2011). Research and Creative Practice. In Candy, L. and Edmonds, E.A. (eds) *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner*, Libri Publishing Ltd: Faringdon, UK: 33-59.

Candy, L. and Edmonds, E.A. (2010) The Role of the Artefact and Frameworks for Practice-based Research. *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, M. Biggs and H. Larsson (eds), Routledge.

Edmonds, E.A and Candy, L. (2010) Relating Theory, Practice and Evaluation in Practitioner Research, *Leonardo Journal* 43 (5) 470–476.

Regards

Linda

Email Interview with Simon Biggs - a new media artist, writer and curator with interests in digital poetics, auto-generative/interpretive (affective) systems, interactive and performative environments, interdisciplinary research and co-creation. He is Co-Director, MSc by Research in Interdisciplinary Creative Practices at the Edinburgh College of Art.

Hi Aaron

Your new programme sounds great. Good luck with it.

The ICP programme is in ESALA, which is part of ECA. I work in the School of Art, which is also part of ECA. ECA is, in turn, part of the University of Edinburgh and is located within one of its three Colleges, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. ECA is one of 23 Schools in the University. Staff in the University can teach on courses and programmes in any area of the University, although it is unusual for a Programme Director or Course Leader to be responsible for a programme or course outside the School in which they are located. The reason I am one of those rare staff members who is in this situation is to do with the complicated history of ECA's development and my own evolving role in the institution. None of this is salient to the Programme so I'll not bore you with the details. The ICP Programme is led by myself but is supported closely with a range of staff from other Schools, including Informatics, Literature, Bio-sciences, Law, History and other subject areas. This should answer your third question.

ICP is a Research Masters of Science Programme. Note it is a research Programme with taught elements, not a taught Masters Programme. It's main aim is to prepare students for further research, usually as PhD candidates. If they successfully complete the Programme then they would have satisfied some early requirements of a PhD programme, meaning they will not need to do that work again. It is practice-led and students are required to undertake practice-based work throughout each semester. Their main project, which is worth 60 credits (one third of the value of the whole Programme) is practice-led. The details for the structure of the Programme are in the attached Programme document. You will note the students are required to undertake 20 credits of research methods training and 40 credits worth of options as well as follow the Programme's core courses ICP1, ICP2, ICP Project and ICP Final Project. If you look at the sections dealing with each of the courses you can see how assessment is structured and the balance between practice and written work.

As a general rule of thumb practice-based subjects at Post-Graduate research level in the UK require a 50/50 split between written and practical work. For a PhD this usually means a 40,000 word thesis and a serious body of practical work presented to a professional standard. For an MSc by Research student on ICP that means 3000 word essays in semesters 1 and 2 and a 6000 word report in semester 3, as well as professionally completed practice based projects in each semester. In the final semester the project is expected to be substantial. We expect the relationship between written and practical parts to articulate how each is essential to the research process. They should be equal parts of a process of research.

History and theory are incorporated into the Programme through the seminar programmes ICP1 and 2. This is a seminar series led by a different discipline expert each week. Students also attend monthly research group meetings (CIRCLE, url in my sig) and complete the Research Methods course in semester 1, where they are introduced to methods from across the arts, humanities and sciences. Being fundamentally interdisciplinary there is no single theoretical

thread in the Programme. The students gain an overview of many, mainly through the seminars. The attached document outlines each of these in short.

ICP does not have typical outcomes as our students are rarely typical. It has also only run for two years so we only have one cohort of graduates. Of these one is still enrolled as they are part-time (but they are also a lecturer at another institution - their intention following this programme is to follow on to PhD and then to a Professorial role). Of the other four (it's a small Programme, as research programmes usually are) two are now registered for PhDs (here in Edinburgh and elsewhere), one is working at Harvard (where she came from) and another is applying for a PhD to start next year. These are pretty typical research trajectories - but the subjects involved are broad. These include film and video, sociology, English literature, music psychology and computer science.

Hope this is helpful.

best

Simon

Email Interview with Lynne Joyrich – associate professor of Modern Culture and Media where she has taught film and television studies, as well as gender and sexuality studies, since 1999. She is the author of *Re-viewing Reception: Television, Gender, and Postmodern Culture* and of a number of articles and book chapters on film, television, feminist, queer, and cultural studies in various journals and anthologies.

Hello.

Your email was forwarded to me as I am serving as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Modern Culture and Media. You can read about the program at <http://www.brown.edu/academics/modern-culture-and-media/graduate-program>; there is a lot of information there about how the program operates. But also to try to answer your specific questions about the program:

1 – Would you call the work being done at MCM practice-based research? I was looking through the list of completed dissertations on the MCM website, and they seem to be “traditional” dissertations. Is that how you’d characterize them?

Yes: our graduate program focuses on media and cultural studies, not media/technological/aesthetic practice (in distinction to our undergraduate concentration, where there is a "track" for students specifically interested in media/creative production). As you can see from our website, graduate students can count 1 production course for credit toward their degree, but, other than that, the course load really is for theory/criticism courses, and the dissertation has to be a written scholarly work, not a media/artistic practice piece (or even a combination written/production piece).

2 – How are theoretical and historical concerns incorporated into your program?

There is a great deal of flexibility in the program, with different students emphasizing different scholarly issues, and thus with some more historically oriented than others. The program in general, though, does very much stress theoretical approaches to the study of media and culture, and so all of our students are very theoretically engaged. Formally, both historical and theoretical approaches are a part of students' coursework. As you can see in the "Program Requirements" section of the website, students must take courses designated in each of the following three areas: Theory, Textual Analysis, and Historical/Cultural Locations. This thus operates as a kind of "distribution requirement" for our graduate students. Later, in the Preliminary Exam, there is also a kind of distribution, as students put together 3 areas in which to be examined (as elaborated in our Graduate Handbook, which you can also access from the website given above). These are individually designed, but the areas must fall into the following categories:

*Field 1: in the history and theory of a medium.

*Field 2: in modern cultural theory.

*Field 3: an elective field that is designed to provide a comparative perspective.

Thus, both theoretical and historical concerns (and also textual concerns) are part of all students' work, though the particular ways that these are combined differ for different students.

3 – *Are the MCM faculty entirely employed within the department, or are they “shared” with other departments?*

Some of our faculty members are solely within MCM, while others have joint appointments with other departments. And still others are "housed" within other departments but are considered "affiliated faculty," so that their courses are regularly cross-listed with MCM, and they can also serve on MCM graduate committees. For more information on our faculty, please see <http://www.brown.edu/academics/modern-culture-and-media/faculty> .

4 – *What is the relationship between professional development and artistic development at MCM? What are some of the typical outcomes for students? What do they do after they graduate?*

Again, our graduate program is a scholarly one, not a practice-based program. Thus, while some of our graduate students also engage in artistic/creative practice on their own while pursuing graduate work here, this artistic work was not officially part of our program. After they receive their PhDs, most of our graduates go on to academic positions (including postdoctoral fellowships, adjunct work, and tenure-track professor positions--including some positions in which our graduates do theory/practice work and so can then make use of their creative as well as scholarly talents). [Our undergraduate students have a wider variety of outcomes, as they've gone on to a huge diversity of fields, working in everything from media production, to media education, to arts/museum administration, to law, to humanitarian work, etc., etc. You can read more about our undergrad alums at <http://www.brown.edu/academics/modern-culture-and-media/alumni>. Some of our graduate alums have also pursued non-academic careers (instead, going into things like archival work), but, as I said, most come to our program with the goal of working in the Academy.

Hope that this helps. If you would like further information, there is a wealth of material on our website, so feel free to peruse that. You might be interested too in checking out other graduate programs at Brown. For instance, both the Theater and Performance Arts graduate program and the multimedia MEME program from the Music Department here combine theory and creative practice, and so might be in line with what you are considering. Good luck in setting up your own program!

best,
Lynne

Appendix 2
Overview of Existing Programs

The Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University

About the Program

“Modern Culture and Media is committed to the study of media in the context of the broader examination of modern cultural and social formations. Our curriculum proposes a distinctive subject matter, stresses comparative analysis and theoretical reflection, and highlights the integration of theory and practice, creative thought and critical production. In research and teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate level, MCM combines the analysis of diverse texts — visual and verbal, literary and historical, theoretical and popular, imaginative and archival — with the study of contemporary theories of representation and cultural production and creative practice in a range of media. Through studying MCM, students will be critically sophisticated and knowledgeable about the theory, history, and analysis of media and cultural forms and who are able to produce innovative work — whether in theory, media practice, or historical scholarship — that interrogates and transforms conventional understandings of these forms.”

<http://brown.edu/academics/modern-culture-and-media/welcome-department-modern-culture-and-media>

Graduate Program

“The Ph.D. program prepares students to engage in rigorous and innovative scholarship and teaching in the theory, history and critical analysis of one or more media, in ways that encompass diverse cultural contexts and historical periods, and within methodological frameworks that include awareness of modern and contemporary textual, cultural and social theory.”

<http://brown.edu/academics/modern-culture-and-media/graduate-program>

University of Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture, Research in Interdisciplinary Creative Practices Programme

The MSc by Research in Interdisciplinary Creative Practices is a unique programme of study that responds to emerging practices that work across diverse disciplines in the creative arts, humanities and physical and social sciences.

The programme is predicated on the understanding that the convergent nature of Information and Communication Technologies has facilitated the adoption of methods from across disciplines but recognises that practitioners often require a deeper appreciation and experience of such methods to assure their ability to undertake such practice. The programme also recognises that potential students may have completed their initial studies in another academic domain and seek to situate that subject knowledge as creative practice. Based in a lively studio environment, drawing on resources within Edinburgh College of Art (eca) and more widely across the University of Edinburgh, the programme introduces students to a wide range of disciplines and associated methods within a critical framework that encourages reflective

experimentation.

Students are encouraged to work autonomously and collaboratively and are offered the opportunity to study with others in subject specialisms from across the rich and diverse courses offered by the University and eca. This provision is negotiated with the prospective student from the outset to ensure an appropriate fit and the viability of the overall programme of the student's study.

Core faculty undertake research and practice in the digital arts, film, philosophy, architecture and related subjects. Associate faculty work in genomics, law, urbanism, geography, ethnography, performing arts, music and informatics. Many of the faculty are members of the Creative Interdisciplinary Research in Collaborative Environments (CIRCLE) research group (www.eca.ac.uk/circle/) and students on the programme will have the opportunity to fully engage with this group of researchers.

(http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.103042!/fileManager/ICP%20MSc%28R%29%20Handbook%202012-13.pdf)

CUNY Graduate Center, Interactive Technology and Pedagogy

The Doctoral Certificate Program in Interactive Technology and Pedagogy responds to strong doctoral student demand for interactive digital technology (IT) training and certification. It aims to better prepare doctoral students for life and work in the contemporary university and to impart valuable IT skills and experience that will make CUNY Ph.D. holders more competitive when they enter academic job markets. The ITP certificate's interdisciplinary approach is designed to provide a critical introduction to the constellation of questions related to science, technology and critical thinking, to explore pedagogical implications of interactive technology, and to advance students' skills as creators and users of technology-based educational tools and resources. Like all GC certificate programs, the Certificate Program in Interactive Technology and Pedagogy is limited to CUNY doctoral students; upon successful completion by the student, the certificate is awarded when the doctoral degree is conferred.

The certificate's sequence of courses provides theoretical, historical, philosophical, literary, and sociological perspectives on technology and pedagogy and their intersection in the classroom. The program will provide students with the critical skills to reflect on and then design and implement IT tools for use in teaching, primarily at the college level. Like other certificate programs at the GC, information technology is an emergent field that is well served by multidisciplinary approaches. And though the program draws on the discipline-based expertise of many doctoral faculty members, it also strives to build a collective conversation about the broad implications of emerging educational technology for intellectual work and classroom practices.

(<http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Page-Elements/Academics-Research-Centers-Initiatives/Certificate-Programs/Interactive-Technology-and-Pedagogy/The-Certificate>)

University of Technology Sydney and the Creativity and Cognition Studios

UTS: Information Technology is among the leaders of IT education in Australia. Our links with the IT industry are second to none with all our courses developed in consultation with industry, and providing a valuable combination of technical knowledge and practical experience.

UTS: Information Technology offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses that produce graduates who are highly sought after by the IT industry and who enjoy high levels of employment in both Australia and overseas. Also offered, are a range of short courses for the working professional or anyone wishing to upgrade or extend their IT skills.

(<http://www.it.uts.edu.au/index.html>)

Housed at the University of Technology Sydney are the Creativity and Cognition Studios, led by Professors Linda Candy and Ernest Edmonds, Creativity and Cognition Studios (CCS) in an internationally recognised multi-disciplinary environment for the advancement and understanding of practice in digital media and the arts. It provides nationally and internationally recognised artists and technologists with a space in which to collaborate, experiment and create, as equal partners, in practice-based research .

CCS is committed to disseminating its results internationally through research publications, exhibitions, the co-ordination of an international conference series and through the provision of high quality postgraduate education.

Our research is based upon a belief in the importance of working partnerships and collaborative effort. Collaboration takes place within the University, nationally and internationally. The CCS Partners and Associates constitute an international team of experts who ensure that the research is at the cutting edge in all of its areas of concern. Within the University, our work complements and adds to a strong range of existing research and development in Digital Media and Creative Cultures across three Faculties.

(<http://www.creativityandcognition.com/about/>)

The Digital Arts and New Media Program (DANM) at the University of California Santa Cruz

New technologies have profoundly changed contemporary culture and inevitably altered the role of the arts in society. The Digital Arts and New Media MFA Program serves as a center for the development and study of digital media and the cultures that they have helped create. Faculty and students are drawn from a variety of backgrounds, such as the arts, computer engineering, humanities, the sciences, and social sciences, to pursue interdisciplinary artistic and scholarly research and production in the context of a broad examination of digital arts and cultures.

The Digital Arts and New Media MFA Program (DANM) is a two-year program organized into four interdependent and equally important pursuits:

New Praxis—The term “Praxis” has many meanings, which include “translating ideas into action” and “action and reflection upon the world in order to change it.” New Praxis in DANM is comprised of “critique” and “practicum” which provide students with both the practical training and critical dialogue necessary to pursue their own individual goals as artists and cultural practitioners.

Studies—DANM “Studies” include required core seminars that allow students first, to explore an array of recent methods and approaches in Digital Arts and Culture, and then to pursue the construction of specific genealogies and theories with a sustained focus on a particular topic by engaging in various dialogues at the intersection of theory and practice, while developing their thesis project and paper.

Collaborative Research—Students and faculty engage in research collaborations resulting in publications and exhibitions in one of four possible focused research areas—Mechatronics, Participatory Culture, Performative Technologies, and Playable Media.

Pedagogy—DANM trains future arts academics through practical experience. Students are awarded teaching assistantships as part of their overall support package as well as opportunities to assist faculty in workshops.

The program is a two-year MFA resulting in a practice-based thesis.

(<http://danm.ucsc.edu/programs>)

Rensselaer's Department of the Arts

Rensselaer's Department of the Arts is generally considered to be the first integrated electronic arts program within a research university in the United States. Founded in 1972, the department initiated the inclusion of electronic media in 1981. The department features an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to the arts with a focus on the use of experimental and electronic media in artistic creation and performance. The work of the department's distinguished faculty and alumni are represented internationally in museums, galleries, festivals, publications, and performances.

The department and studios have historically been referred to as iEAR (Integrated Electronic Arts at Rensselaer). A leader in multimedia arts education, the department's MFA in Electronic Arts was created in 1991 and, in collaboration with Rensselaer's Department of Language, Literature and Communication, the BS in Electronic Media, Arts, and Communication (EMAC) was established in 1996. A multi-departmental BS in Information Technology (IT) was instituted in 1998 and in 2002, a BS in Electronic Arts (EARTS) was introduced. In 2007, a multi-departmental BS in Games and Simulation Arts and Science (GSAS) enrolled its first students and a doctorate in the electronic arts was inaugurated. One of the first PhDs of its kind, this program expands the traditions of arts pedagogy through interdisciplinary research in contemporary media theory, practice, and production. The iEAR studios provide specialized facilities for students, faculty and visiting artists to engage in individual and collaborative

research projects.

iEAR Presents! is a series of public performances, exhibitions, screenings and lectures dealing with innovative aesthetic, cultural, and technical explorations of experimental media and electronic arts. Curated by Arts Department faculty, iEAR Presents! seeks to bring artists into a creative dialogue with the Rensselaer community and the general public.

(<http://www.arts.rpi.edu/>)

University of Central Florida Texts & Technology PhD

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Texts and Technology PhD program focuses on theory and practice in new media combined with historical grounding in pre-digital media studies. This program prepares students for positions in research, teaching and program development, including web design, multimedia production, distributed education, entertainment, publishing, information architecture and visualization.

CURRICULUM

The Texts and Technology PhD program requires four core courses (12 credits), four restricted elective courses within the Texts and Technology course offerings (12 hours), three restricted interdisciplinary electives (9 hours), two courses in the internship and teaching area (6 credits), three credit hours for candidacy examination, and at least 15 credit hours of dissertation work for a total of at least 57 semester hours of credit taken at UCF beyond the master's degree.

Students must write a dissertation on their research that will explain and defend a significant original contribution to the field of Texts and Technology. Students choose their dissertation adviser and committee from within the program. Students will submit at least one substantial scholarly article to a national peer-reviewed journal with the approval and assistance of the dissertation chair and the director of the doctoral program.

Students must write a dissertation on their research that will explain and defend a significant original contribution to the field of Texts and Technology. It may be of a theoretical, historical or pragmatic nature, but must meet conventional academic standards. The dissertation committee administers the candidate's oral defense of the dissertation, with passing determined by acceptance by a majority of the committee.

(<http://www.graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/programs/program.aspx?id=1454&program=Texts%20and%20Technology%20PhD>)

Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice at the Dublin Institute of Technology

Located in the College of Arts and Tourism, School of Creative Media, Dublin Institute of Technology, the Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice (CTMP) offers a distinctive, interdisciplinary postgraduate and research environment, dedicated to scholarly and public understandings of migration and globalization, diasporic formations and transnationalism, media and civil society activism, post-conflict/border zones and transcultural identity formations in Ireland and beyond. The Centre promotes the use of ethnographic and documentary modes of practice in social research, utilising new and established media technologies. CTMP constitutes a dynamic interface between lens and screen-based scholarship, ethnography and media and public policy/education.

Centre Objectives:

- To foreground the research merits and critical application of lens and screen-based scholarship;
- To disseminate the outcomes of Centre research projects, utilizing diverse media formats such as film, photography, installation, new media and publications;
- To develop a dynamic interface between lens-based research practice, public policy/education and civil society organizations;
- To generate and share new knowledge with other scholars, national and international academic institutions, NGOs, local community-based organizations and governmental agencies;
- To provide a creative and genuinely interdisciplinary environment for postgraduate research;

(<http://www.ctmp.ie/index.php>)

Appendix 3
Interviews with Current/Recently Graduated Students

Summary of interviews with current and recent graduate students

Our Graduate Assistant, Aaron Angello, discussed the developing program with students who we as a group thought might be interested in and appropriate for a program like dPATH. Aaron had conversations with the following people:

Student 1 - is a recent graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder with an MFA in creative writing. S/he writes and publishes electronic literature and is currently working in the private sector.

Student 2 is currently at Brown University where s/he is working on his MFA in Literary Hypermedia. S/he will be going to MIT where s/he will work in the media lab.

Student 3 is an Associate Professor in the MFA in Creative Writing and Poetics program at a liberal arts college. S/he earned her PhD in literature in 2010 and served as Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities at MIT. S/he works in digital writing and has utilized augmented reality extensively in her poetic work.

Student 4 has an MFA in creative writing from the University of Colorado. S/he is currently applying to PhD programs in the Digital Humanities.

Student 5 is a filmmaker and digital artist who is currently in his/her second year of the MFA in Studio Art at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Student 6 is a video and sound artist who is currently in his/her second year of the MFA in Studio Art at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Student 7 is an interdisciplinary artist and musician. S/he recently received his MFA and is currently an adjunct instructor of interdisciplinary art.

These interviews generally followed this format: Aaron would explain the program as we envision it, then ask what would make them (the person being interviewed) want to come to a program like this. From there, the conversation moved to whatever the “potential student” found most important about his or her work, and how the program might facilitate that work.

Funding

Virtually everyone brought this up right away. In order to attract the best students, we must be able to offer them full funding through teaching opportunities, fellowships, etc.

Also, several students mentioned the need for studio/lab space, whether shared or private, and the access to funding for materials.

Student 2 - “Is it free? Huge concern. Are there equipment funding opportunities? I've been constantly raising money from Brown to purchase projectors, harnesses, materials, tents, etc. I think that applying for project-funding is no problem, but there's got to be some place you can apply to. If you guys already have a bunch of equipment-- that's awesome. If you have a bunch of “experimental technology,” or the means for us to think it into existence-- that's also awesome.”

Student 1- “Funding is my number one concern... [I]f you're trying to promote a collaborative work environment, then you're creating a competitive work environment when you [fund some people and not others].”

Student 3 - "Funds to travel to conferences, or the opportunity to apply for travel funds in order to attend e-poetry, ELO, AndNow, and any pop-up conferences at Brown (a tall order, I know, but a \$500 stipend for conference travel would be great, as would the chance to apply for additional funds for international travel)"

Training

Several "potential students" asked if they'd have the opportunity to learn aspects of technology that they don't currently know; in other words, they want classes that teach them software and programming.

Student 4 - "Can I just take some basic undergraduate classes? It seems like a lot of PhD programs want you to be taking things at a graduate level. I couldn't do a computer science class at a graduate level. I don't have a whole lot of expertise in that area. I've got some experience working with e-book technology, which is kind of the area into which I want to go, but aside from that, I've got pretty basic computer skills."

Student 3 - "[I would want] Some sort of theoretical introduction to media arts (like an Art/Media Theory 101 class) that equips me to theorize my work and locate it in the current conversation...[and] Additional classes that involve close study of new media to complement the creative practice."

Student 1 - "On the one hand, yes you should have some technical literacy when you come into a program like this. But on the other hand, you should have access to resources, the like, okay, I need to make all these blocks turn to the right. And if I need to know X programming language, you should be able to take a class on how to program that. You should not pay for it. That should be part of the program. Where you're allowed to take coursework in technical foundations."

Faculty

The "potential students" were concerned with the caliber of the faculty, and the accessibility of the faculty.

Student 2- "Does the program have great writers, great tech people, great artists-- and can you string them together into a triple-class and triple-advising structure?"

Student 3 - "Close mentorship by a member of the faculty"

Student 1 - "Being Miss practical, I could get a grant and do all this on my own. Why do a PhD program? The main thing is resources. I can't do it on my own because I don't have access to a department that can teach me Java. I don't have access to these connections, these faculty."

Those who know the four faculty members involved with the formation of this program see them as a main selling point of the program.

Student 6 - "I happen to know three of the four people that you mentioned [Profs Amerika, Ellsworth, and Theodore], and respect them as the highest caliber - of anyone really. So I think communicating that to grads, I mean, this is who these people are and this is what they do, this is what is gonna happen, is really - I mean, I'm interested already. This is something that I would want to do."

Student 3 - "Seems like an excellent program you are putting together (with you, Mark Amerika, and Lori Emerson, how can you go wrong?)"

Student 7 - is very concerned that the program doesn't promote the idea of the individual, genius artist. He says, "That's been the way it has been. The university, you know, that's how they hire people. So is there any wonder that it's difficult to do interdisciplinary teaching within a department?"

Balance

There is a sense that students want a balance between the theoretical and practical.

Student 5 - "It's important that we be given the tools, but be able to incorporate those tools into practice. If you're teaching painting, it's easy enough to pick up a paintbrush, go to a canvas and start painting, but with digital media, the same can't be said. There's program like Max MSP or Processing that you need to create digital media. So for me, what I would want is something that blends both."

Student 3 - "A balance between learning to write and create with technology and time to generate work, [and] A balance between high and low tech classes."

Student 6 - "I'm interested in how these workshops [labs] are working. They certainly sound interesting to me, in how the technical and theoretical are merged. That's really what - and Paul and I have talked a lot about this - is finding the theoretical, the conceptual, all that kind of stuff, in droves here. It's bountiful. But having to really kind of seek out technical stuff. Especially with regards to digital because it's a specialized sort of knowledge. Yeah you can sort of find that stuff on the internet, but to have access to people who are able to do that stuff simultaneously while being in an environment that's conceptually rich, it sounds incredibly appealing to someone like me."

Collaboration and Practice-Based Research

Everyone seemed incredibly excited by this approach, and most people needed it explained to them. This indicates the need we have to communicate what practice-based research is, and what we mean by collaboration.

Student 2 - "In NY at least, most art (good art) seems to be happening with a lot of people bringing a lot of different kinds of skills to the table."

Student 4 - "And I like the idea of - and this goes into the whole practice-based research thing - but I really love the focus on *doing* things, you know. I like the idea of coming up with a form of technology that actually aids in research in some way. Which is really the direction in which I'm heading."

Student 6 - "It's like in other fields with PhD's, where you write an article and the professor gets published and that's how you get published for the first time."

Student 6 - "I think articulating that kind of approach, too, because that seems to be a recurring theme between you, Mark Amerika - this sort of new approach to academia is almost like a selling point to me. We're not reinventing the wheel here, but we're doing things a different way. Equally academic, the bar is just as high, it's just a different media. It's a different way of communicating now."

Philosophy

The “potential students” all seem very interested in the philosophical approach being taken with regard to the formation of this program, even if they don’t have all the information. For example, Student 2 said he’d like to be a part of a program “where you can ‘build it around yourself,’ as it were.

Student 7’s concern that the program focus on methods that encourage collaboration and discourage the idea of the genius, solo artist is echoed in the philosophies of the program’s faculty developers.

Student 7 - “For me, collaboration is the same as John Cage using chance in his compositions. It brings in an “x” factor that is surprising. I’m bored with my stuff. I know what I’m gonna make every time. I can do that forever. But you bring somebody else in, then somethings going on that I can’t control.”

Enthusiasm

Across the board, the people I interviewed were very excited about the program. I feel this sampling indicates a real desire among creative artist/scholars to be able to work in this emerging way, under a new paradigm.

Student 3 - “Keep me posted about what you are up to. I’d bet our program would send some students your way once you got up and running.”

Student 6 - “So I think communicating [what this program has to offer and how it will operate] to grads, I mean, this is who [the faculty] are and this is what they do, this is what is gonna happen, is really - I mean, I’m interested already. This is something that I would want to do.”

Student 2 - “First of all, the idea of a program like this sounds SUPER EXCITING. Wow!”

Full Student Interviews

Interview with Student 5 and Student 6 –

Student 5 is a filmmaker and digital artist who is currently in his second year of the MFA in Studio Art at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Student 6 is a video and sound artist who is currently in his second year of the MFA in Studio Art at the University of Colorado Boulder.

A- (After I describe dPATH, I ask Student 5 and Student 6 what would attract them to a program like this.)

S5- It's important that we be given the tools, but be able to incorporate those tools into practice. If you're teaching painting, it's easy enough to pick up a paintbrush, go to a canvas and start painting, but with digital media, the same can't be said. A program like Max MSP or Processing that you need to create digital media. So for me, what I would want is something that blends both. Something that's not a technical school, perhaps a little more the way Atlas goes about it, where you go there and do learn software for fifteen weeks. Something that's not just theory based like a liberal arts approach or something where you're just doing readings, writing papers, talking about the theory of electronic or digital media, but taking both - learning aspects of the technical realm and learning aspects of the research realm, and bringing them together in a very well distributed whole.

A - Admission into the program would be based upon diversity - there's this idea of collaboration. In film, you can't do everything...

S5 - It's typically separated in film like that. You have the director and the producers - you have the person making the film but not making creative decisions necessarily. But when you get into experimental cinema, or small independent films, that's where you see the blend of a director who is also a writer..

S6 - And a producer.

S5- So I feel like that, especially since we're not dealing with digital media on a mainstream scale in that sense, that it is easier to model that and have that hybrid of practice and theory.

S6 - Yeah, I would really echo what Student 5 has to say about a combination between a technical approach and a theoretical approach. I realize once you're getting into those higher echelons of your degree that maybe some of the technical stuff is maybe less focused on. You sort of have to do more of that yourself. But to answer your question, the thing that would make people like us interested in this program (and I already am interested) is clearly communicating what is involved and how things are. I'm interested in how these workshops [labs] are working. They certainly sound interesting to me, in how the technical and theoretical are merged. That's really what - and Student 5 and I have talked a lot about this - is finding the theoretical, the conceptual, all that kind of stuff, in droves here. It's bountiful. But having to really kind of seek out technical stuff. Especially with regards to digital because it's a specialized sort of knowledge. Yeah you can sort of find that stuff on the internet, but to have access to people who are able to do that stuff simultaneously while being in an environment that's conceptually rich, it sounds incredibly appealing to someone like me. And really, I happen to know three of the four people that you mentioned [Profs Amerika, Ellsworth, and Theodore], and respect them as the highest caliber - of anyone really. So I think communicating that to grads, I mean, this is who these people are and this is what they do, this is what is gonna happen, is really - I mean, I'm interested already. This is something that I would want to do.

S5 - Yeah.

S6 - So, to answer your question, communicating what you've communicated to other students the way you've communicated it to me I guess would be the first step in getting them interested.

What I would be also curious about is making it clear about how the transition from the Masters into the PhD would work. If you already have a Masters.

A - (I explain that this is something we are still working out, but we want people with MFAs to come and credit would likely transfer. I then say that as far as coursework is concerned, classes would be modeled on a practice-based model. For example, Prof Amerika's Remix Culture class.)

S6 - Yeah, that's the most engaging way. That's the most engaging way for me to bring theory directly into my practice. That's one of the most important things to me about Mark's class - the way of engaging theoretically with - making.

S5 - And it's also approaching theory with, well, what I would call non-academic theory. Meaning there are staples - Deleuze, Nietzsche - in the theoretical realm. But with Remix, you're approaching theory with, say, DJ Spooky or the Yes Men. And it's as profound as what these traditional theories are suggesting. It just doesn't have the academic veneer that they do. It has a more contemporary sense to it. So it hasn't withstood the test of time the way Nietzsche or Deleuze or Kant or whoever has stood the test of time. However, the flip-side is it's more relevant to us now because of our environment, our atmosphere, and it's directly applicable to the situations and the media that we discuss. I mean, one of the things that I find most interesting is Benjamin's article about Mechanical Reproduction - it comes up a lot. And if you look at that essay, it was written when film was about 40 years old, and TV didn't even exist. We take that as a doctrine and transfer it to today, but in reality it's somewhat outdated. How would Benjamin have changed that essay if he had experienced TV? Or how would he have changed that essay, the idea of the aura and a work of art, if he had experienced a hundred years of cinema. So there's a lot of things that get closed out when you're dealing with academic theory simply because it doesn't have the same contextual emphasis that something from today would have. An understanding I guess you could say.

A - (I explain a bit more about collaboration in the labs and working with the professor who is leading the lab)

S6 - It's like in other fields with PhD's, where you write an article and the professor gets published and that's how you get published for the first time. My question is very practical - Is this actually going to be available within the next five to ten years? So that I could actually get a PhD? Because I'm actually pretty interested in pursuing a PhD.

A - I hope so. That's why we're doing it.

S5 - I would say when I was looking for schools, I looked for schools that had a digital, new media, emerging media identity. If you're stressing new forms of art creation with media, I wanted to read what classes you have, I wanted to read what your curriculum was, how long your program was, how does one class gel into the other? What was the experience of your faculty members within that realm? And I think, honestly, those pieces are here, in terms of strong faculty, known artists, potential to have great classes, and some really good classes existing now. But I just think it needs to be, in some way, bundled and sold and marketed in a way that it's going to have that digital identity. I don't know what else to call it.

S6- You mentioned that the dissertation would be a creative work? I would like to know more about that.

A - (I explain practice-based and practice led research)

S6 - Yeah, you've already got - I'm actually really serious about doing something like this. I think it's time our field had more PhD's.

S5 - There's also the emphasis in education that it's heading in this direction. I mean, UC San Diego already has something along these lines. There's a book - I believe the title is *Artists with PhDs*. it's leading towards this idea of hybridization between practice and research.

A - I'm really interested in sort of subverting the existing paradigms of what academic research is supposed to look like. Why does it still have to look like a book?

S6 - I think articulating that kind of approach, too, because that seems to be a recurring theme between you, Mark Amerika - this sort of new approach to academia is almost like a selling point to me. We're not reinventing the wheel here, but we're doing things a different way. Equally academic, the bar is just as high, it's just a different media. It's a different way of communicating now.

Email Interview with Student 2 – an Associate Professor in the MFA in Creative Writing and Poetics program at a liberal arts university. She earned her PhD in 2010 and served as Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities at MIT. She works in digital writing and has utilized augmented reality extensively in her poetic work.

I'm very excited about the prospect of the dPATH program, and I think you are uniquely positioned to offer it there, given the faculty already present and the transdisciplinary energy in the art and literature world in Colorado right now.

If I were entering, what would I want?

--Full funding / teaching opportunities

--Studio / Lab space, whether shared or private

--Some sort of theoretical introduction to media arts (like an Art/Media Theory 101 class) that equips me to theorize my work and locate it in the current conversation.

--Additional classes that involve close study of new media to complement the creative practice.

--Funds to travel to conferences, or the opportunity to apply for travel funds in order to attend e-poetry, ELO, AndNow, and any pop-up conferences at Brown (a tall order, I know, but a \$500 stipend for conference travel would be great, as would the chance to apply for additional funds for international travel)

--A balance between learning to write and create with technology and time to generate work

--A guest speaker series that provided a chance to interact with luminaries in the field

--A balance between high and low tech classes

--Close mentorship by a member of the faculty

I think that covers it! If you want to talk to anyone else, I know a couple of the current MFA students at Brown, and one of them is currently looking for PhD opportunities. He's thinking of MIT, but if a program like the one you are describing were available, I think he would really go for it. He could likely tell you what it is he wants next.

Keep me posted about what you are up to. I'd bet our program would send some students your way once you got up and running. Seems like an excellent program you are putting together (with you, Mark Amerika, and Lori Emerson, how can you go wrong?)

Interview with Student 7 – an interdisciplinary artist and musician with years of experience outside of the university system. He recently graduated with his MFA and is currently an adjunct professor of interdisciplinary art.

A – (I explain the program to him) if you were just coming out of your MFA, but with the experience you have and the knowledge you have, what would you want out of a program like this?

7 – When you say there some sort of project at the end of these labs, is everybody collaborating to make this happen? Do people do individual work as well?

A – I think people will be doing individual work, but the labs themselves will be focused on one collaborative project. Or maybe a couple collaborative projects that are somewhat related to each other.

7 – What’s an example of what that thing might be? Is it a theme or is it a performance at a museum?

A –It would and could be any of these things. So for instance, if your research area is performance, you will likely be creating performances that are working across media. If you’re working in the Transmedia narrative and publishing area, you might work on some sort of mobile application that everyone is working together to create. But the idea is that the faculty member would come up with the idea and then work collaboratively with the graduate students. In labs might continue over multiple semesters if it’s a big project.

7 – Would this be commercial projects, or would this be research projects with funding from the University? How does that part of the work?

A – This is something that isn’t entirely clear. I think the people that are involved are looking are looking to – they want to make art. They don’t want to develop something for Google.

7 – Exactly.

A – At the same time, if things are structured properly, finding funding from outside sources could be a good way to go. If you’re doing Transmedia narrative and publishing, there’s no reason why you couldn’t get funding from Amazon, for example. You just want the terms of that to be – appropriate. But ultimately the people that are involved with this want to make art. That’s what it’s about.

7 – It’s pure research, but it could be funded, possibly, by an Amazon or somebody doing something similar...

A – It’s tricky because you don’t want to...

7 –...sell your soul. You don’t want to make a capitalist endeavor. And it changes it once it’s based on the idea of profit. It does change things. Even if it’s purely research. MIT deals with that. They’re much more overtly capitalist in what they do, but it’s pure research.

Well that sounds really cool. So how can I help?

A – The question is, if you were in a place for you wanted to do something like this, where you’re looking at these kind of programs, you’re looking to get your PhD in practice-based research , what would you want out of a program? What would you like to be offered as a student? What would attract you to it, you know?

7 – You’re saying, as of right now? Where I am? Or I was before got my MFA?

A – Oh, I don’t know, either way.

7 – I mean, I’ve had so much practice in the world at this point. What I try to do is contain a space that allows people to come in and sort of say, “Well, I’m sort of interested in doing this.” “Good! Go, do that.” You know? And I think to varying degrees people have success or they don’t. But I’d say, in this context there needs to be away to get people on the same pages, where we trust one another, we’re willing to open up and do things that are frightening to us, we’re willing to let go of everything we’ve learned in the past. Part of interdisciplinary work is holding on to all the principles, history, and theory of a given discipline, and then try and combine it with another. You come with a bunch of baggage. Somehow you have to say, for

example, writing exists, but let go of what writing is. I am going to let go of all my concepts of writing. Dance exists but I am going to let go of all my concepts of dance. Now what happens when you put these together? Gosh, you could do this, this, this, this. Make a building out of letters and jump off into a wading pool or something.

And so it's all about this idea, and this, I truly believe, is about letting go of those historical disciplinary preconceptions. I don't think that's as easy as people think it is. A lot of times you have interdisciplinary classes that say, okay, let's be interdisciplinary. We have our foundations, let's go. In some ways foundations in the discipline are really important. Letting go of them is equally important.

So I wish there had been more of that in my education; help me unlearn the need to learn more on top of what I already know. I need to know certain things, but I don't need to do that in a military way. I need to do that in a way that helps me as an individual.

A – I think what you're interested in – it is the intention of this faculty to do that. I think it's really great, and I think you articulated it really well.

7 – But I think the other thing is that that idea that you just articulated, which is, you come into it this idea of what is good and what is bad. I'm really curious what happens when you take money out of the equation – because everything, even if you're an artist, has to do with money in this culture. Money changes things. It always changes things, regardless. One of the few places you don't have to deal with art on that level, unless you're independently wealthy or have a job, is the University. It gives you this golden opportunity, which is, you don't have to deal with capitalism, but you also don't have to deal with anybody liking your work. And if nobody has to like it, what would you make? Including yourself. What would you make if you didn't have to like it? If "liking it" was off the table. Then what happens? I mean, all of a sudden, it just frees everything up. And there's this playing field that you don't get anywhere else, and you make something you've never even thought of your whole life. That is one of the most exciting places – it's like the final frontier. This is the place you never get in this culture. In this culture it's all about pleasing somebody. You've got to do things to make people happy. You've got entertain. What if you're not making art that's entertaining? What if you're not making art that is going to make you any money, or do anything good for anybody? It's just a pure expression of what you want to do if you just turn your brain off and go. What would you do? Very few people even think about that idea. But the stuff that comes out is so much more revealing and so much more cool you are.

So whatever any of this interdisciplinary stuff is about, or however it manifests, really what we need are people who have a deeper sense of who they are, and a deeper, wider sense of how to solve problems. That's really, in my opinion, what it's about. There are so many problems we can deal with in the world because we were not smart enough, and were stuck to old systems. At some point going to have to open our heads in our hearts and our bodies and our social structures entirely different ways before we can even start thinking about how to fix the issues that we have to deal with. We are not there yet. We have to evolve. I mean, this is an something I talk about much, but that's why I do this. For me as well. It's a very personal thing, but it's also – this is necessary. If we don't do this we're just repeating, repeating, repeating, – were Xerox copies of the last generation, repeating over and over again, certainly in the pop-culture world, work that is completely derivative. It doesn't even matter anymore. And it's the same way in the art world. Galleries still exist. Museums still exist. There all these places for dead art. And it's all based on rich people supporting it.

A – So to come back to the program, that's what would attracte you to the program? A program that is open to an approach to the creative process in the way described?

7 – Exactly. And in an individual sense. Before anyone even gets in here, what do you want? What are really looking for in this thing? I mean, some sort of articulation of either? "I'm really lost and I don't know what I want," or "these are the kinds of things that I am finding are unsatisfying to me now." What are some ways we can think about, before we get into these

research programs and everything else, how can we prepare somebody for this journey? I'm not talking about spirituality or New Age, or any of that kind of stuff. This is more about, how can we get somebody's head ready to go in here. Like some sort of foundations class, or seminar class, that you go into it really sort of opens the possibilities. Instead of you coming in with your baggage, places a buffer zone.

A – That's funny. That's the opposite of what most people I've talked to so far have said, which is, they want some sort of technical grounding when they come in. They say, "I feel comfortable is creative artist. I want to know how to code. Or I want to know how to use this or that software program." And you're right. That's stuff is incidental. You can pick it up.

7 – That's the easy stuff.

A – That's a great idea. And what a great way to approach the whole thing. The mission of the whole program. People have been talking about the need for interdisciplinary work across the University, across the humanities, for 30 years. But it's still not happening. People's identities are so tied to a specific discipline. They can't let go of that.

7 – It becomes an ego thing. It becomes the definition of who you are. I agree. And that's been the way it has been. The solo genius sort of sort of attitude. And that's how the University hires people. So is it any wonder that is difficult to do interdisciplinary teaching in a department? I like to collaborate. I think it's much more interesting. To me, collaboration is the same thing as John Cage using chance in his compositions. It brings an X factor that is unexpected. I'm bored with my work. I can do that every time. But you bring somebody else in, it's like – woah! Something's going on that I can't control. And it's a surprise.

A – I think that's one of the strengths of this program, if it actually happens. The strength is the people. What is the medium that Mark Amerika works in? You can't identify it. He works in all mediums. The student will come in with an expectation of what they're supposed to do. The work will sort of present itself where it needs to present itself.

7 – And you may start somewhere and end up somewhere completely different. Which is another thing that happens a lot in the art department. Students in the graduate program – almost every one of them – start somewhere – film, sculpture, painting – and then they end up either in integrated arts, or they find something else. So it's a dynamic program. What you're talking about is a super dynamic program. Somebody may think they want to do this, learn code, and in two months into it there doing ballet and pouring paint on their head (laugh). And that's the thing about the program too. If it's too outcome-based, it's going to become rigid. And so somehow there has to be flexibility built into the people teaching it to feel that way. And of course you have some great people that are very open to that. But I see, through the structure, it gets too big or expensive, how could easily become rigid. It has to once you've taken on an Amazon project. Yet three quarters of the way into it, and you're stuck there, we find it's awful thing. There's not much you can do.

Sometimes, as I get older, I wonder if dealing with failure isn't important. The idea of what this failure mean, what does it mean in the arts, is a good or bad thing. Is it something that we should really practice experiencing? Because most people are very terrified of failure and it paralyzes them. But only in their work but in their life. If there's a way to practice intentional errors. Actually practice, as Michelle said, bad art, but it lets you know, so you're directly confronting this idea of what this failure means to me? How can I practice doing it? How can it be less of a guardian at the gate, and more of a – just a – thing. In the same realm as everything else.

A – Yeah, you have to take away the whole cultural idea of what makes something successful or not. It's so ingrained in our consciousness.

7 – It is. And it's also – I have a book at home called *Failure*, it's one of those Whitechapel books. It's just essays by different artists on the idea of failure. On what it means to them, how they work with it, how they deal with their lives. I think that something that would give people so much freedom in an interdisciplinary context. The less it could be about outcome, and the

more it could be about the creative process, and what you can do – permission, permission, permission – you now have permission to do this. You have permission to fail. More often than not, giving someone permission to fail will make them succeed on a level that they've never been able to before.

Interview with Student 1 – Student 1 is a recent graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder with an MFA in creative writing. She writes and publishes electronic literature and is currently working as an online marketer in the private sector.

A – (I explain dPATH)

1 – I remember one of the questions I had was whose project are you working on in the labs.

A – The work would be co-authored, I imagine. You would get sort of co-authorship on it.

1 – Are there labs where you do get to work on your own stuff?

A – Seems to me a dissertation might manifest in a lab. You'd have a team of people working with you on it.

1 – I would want to be able to work on my own stuff as much as possible. It just has to be structured so that, I just would hate to see those labs be a nuisance or distraction from what people really want to be doing, you know I'm saying? Unless it was done right. And I don't know what that means. I don't know how to do it right necessarily. I guess I'm having a hard time understanding the difference between a lab and the courses.

A – Primarily what you do is work in labs. The focus of the programs lab work. You're basically making and doing all the time, working collaboratively. The idea's that you have all kinds of different people with all kinds of different skills, you'd work together and bring what you have, your knowledge, to the table.

1 – But will any of the lab courses be to teach you technical stuff? Software or programming?

A – As I understand it, you have the opportunity to go wherever you need on campus to learn what you need to learn. But there could be a sort of fundamental class that everyone takes. And people would come in with certain skills, and collaboration is a way to share the skills.

1 – You remember integrated arts seminar? In our group, we didn't collaborate correctly. The right way is to assign specific parts, and then put it together. It sounds like it could be a cluster if you have 10 super talented artistic people working on this project and they all and want to go in a different directions, whether they have Michelle or Michael leading them or not. But the way it should be is one or two people are assigned this aspect and one or two people are signed this aspect, and that, I think, would be really awesome. And you probably learn a lot when you have your role. When everybody's doing everything, that's what I was worried about. Things you can't do alone, that is the only way I think those labs would be, super awesome.

So the labs would be a semester long? Sounds like they should be a year-long.

A – The labs would likely carry over, depending on what you're working on.

1 – That all sounds a lot better to me. Doing projects you could not do alone, that is crucial. Why would I be in this class if I could just do it by myself? But a big project – that's really exciting.

A – What would you want to get out of a program like this?

1 – Funding is my number one concern.

A – Yeah everyone's been saying that. It's kind of a given. There was some talk about some people being funded and others not.

1 – That's typical, but if you're trying to promote a collaborative work environment, then you're creating a competitive work environment when you do that. That kind of stuff is real. Money is time. You're privileging some people with funding, your privileging them with more time so they could potentially get more out of the program. It's not a good idea. I like the way the art department used to do it. I don't know if they still do it, but at the end of the year, if you aren't performing, you'd lose your funding – it will go to somebody else.

Anyway funding. Access to faculty. I'd like to know whether or not the faculty are getting teaching relief from their departments, that kind of thing.

A – If this program were to happen, you definitely have access to faculty. That's hugely important.

1 – Are they of that department?

A – It'd probably be some kind of arrangement, sharing. That all needs to be worked out logistically.

1 – So it sounds like for it to really be more successful, we learned this from Atlas, and I know this isn't easy, but you need to get those faculty members released from their departments.

A – If you were going to come into a program like this, will be something you would like to work on as an artist?

1 – I think the idea of working on mobile apps would be awesome. Coming up with really beautiful art pieces for mobile devices – that's something I'd like to work on. And I guess the performance stuff. Big crazy performance stuff. Really anything.

A – I guess if you're going into a PhD program, you'd know what research area you wanted to be involved in. I mean I think you'd be really interested in Transmedia narrative and publication. For instance, there could be a workshop that would focus on developing new methods of publication.

1 – Yeah, I would love that. And I really like installation. Especially live installation. I would want time to work on art.

On the one hand, yes you should have some technical literacy when you come into a program like this. But on the other hand, you should have access to resources, the like, okay, I need to make all these blocks turn to the right. And if I need to know X programming language, you should be able to take a class on how to program that. You should not pay for it. That should be part of the program. Where you're allowed to take coursework in technical foundations.

A – And I think that could be something that comes in during the labs. You decide there's something you need to learn, so you bring someone into the lab to teach it.

1 – Yeah exactly. That would be great. But yeah I think that needs to be available. Otherwise, if you already know everything, why are you coming?

Being practical, I could get a grant and do all this on my own. Why do a PhD program? The main thing is resources. I can't do it on my own because I don't have access to a department that can teach me Java. I don't have access to these connections, these faculty. I don't have access to all these labs. That all needs to be highlighted as a benefit to the program. You spend a lot of money and a lot of time being in this. The PhD is awesome. And I'm sure people in this program will get a job. But it's got to be worthwhile. So yeah resources will be the main selling point for me. Funding, faculty, and access to the different labs and space. Faculty funding and facilities. The three F's.

Interview with Student 4. S/he holds an MFA in Creative Writing and is currently applying to PhD programs, where s/he intends to pursue work in digital humanities.

A- (I describe dPATH. I say I am talking to people who are the types of people we'd like to attract to this program. We want to know what you'd like out of a program like this? What would attract you to it?)

4 - I think that some of the stuff I'm hearing that sounds interesting is practice-based research. That definitely appeals to me. It sounds like the labs would provide a little more hands-on guidance in terms of using the programs and using the tools. And finding new ways to use those tools rather than just having to approach a lot of that on your own. Which is one of the things that I'm getting a feeling about as I'm applying to a bunch of these schools. That's one of the things that I've been thinking a lot about - to what extent am I going to have to teach myself how to use these programs and teach myself how to code. And how much help will I be able to get in that regard. So that's kind of a big question mark. I'm applying to Maryland, where I know there's a lot happening with the digital humanities. Am I just gonna show up and be way behind because I don't know how to do any coding? And will the people who are there be expected to help me in that regard? Or are they just gonna be, like, you kinda signed up for this program, so it's on you.

A - So you'd be interested in having mechanisms in place that could help you learn these technologies?

4 - Yeah.

A - (I talk about the collaborative nature of working in the labs, and the fact that different participants will have different strengths. I mention that we'd talked about using electives to fulfill gaps in technical knowledge.)

4 - That's one of the things I've been thinking about. Can I just take some basic undergraduate classes. It seems like a lot of PhD programs want you to be taking things at a graduate level. I couldn't do a computer science class at a graduate level. I don't have a whole lot of expertise in that area. I've got some experience working with e-book technology, which is kind of the area into which I want to go, but aside from that, I've got pretty basic computer skills. I think a collaborative mode would definitely work in that regard. I mean, if I were working with other students, maybe I'd feel a little freer to say, hey, maybe you can show me how to work on this. And I could kind of pay them in trade - if there were a poetic element, or some other area where I have some expertise, a design element or a book design element, I could maybe offer that. Whereas, if I'm asking that of an instructor - I doubt you really have an hour to just sit here and show me how to use this program.

And I like the idea of - and this goes into the whole practice-based research thing - but I really love the focus on *doing* things, you know. I like the idea of coming up with a form of technology that actually aids in research in some way. Which is really the direction in which I'm heading. That's also the wall I'm hitting when writing a statement of purpose - that disjunct between, you know, theory and practice. And having to back up the ideas that I have that I know will aid in humanities research, and having to say here are the theorists that validate my ideas, which seems less useful to me. I feel that could become frustrating at some point.

You were saying that it's going to be a MA/PhD, or an MFA?PhD?

A - It's not set yet, and we've been talking a lot about that. (I explain some of the discussion we've had around this topic.)

4 - Yeah, I can see it going either way. I can see people coming in expecting to be able to pursue a line of digital poetry or digital poetics. I haven't heard of other places really having a whole lot to offer there, where there's actually an institutionalization of digital art and digital

media. Well, digital art and media have been pretty well institutionalized. I took a digital art class in undergrad. But there certainly wasn't a digital writing, a digital poetry focus on anything at any point.

A - And I think that would be a possibility in this program.

4 - That seems pretty interesting. And if CU wants to sell itself as an experimental MFA, having that as an option would be huge I think.

A - You mean in the English dept?

4 - Yeah, within the English dept. I'm not so sure that's the way it feels in terms of the writing itself. When the boundaries are being pushed, you often have to confront the digital in some way. Who knows what the preferences are for the department - how they'd like to be considered.

A - Well, this wouldn't be a part of the English dept most likely. This would be its own program. But what I'm hearing from what you're saying is that in the way we present and develop this thing, you would be interested in really highlighting the fact that this is an experimental writing program, or has the option to pursue these new forms of writing.

4 - Yeah. I've yet to pursue that in my own creative work, but I can see that being appealing to a lot of people who want to. I think of someone like Erik Meyer, who uses digital elements in his own writing, and it is creative work, and just thinking of what working with Lori and working with Mark Amerika could provide him. It seems like there's a lot of young and interesting people doing work in those areas looking to institutionalize it in some way. I'm sure not everyone wants to work on the margins forever, you know.

But I guess that doesn't really apply to me. At this point, I don't use those tools in my own writing. Although lately I've been considering it. I've been thinking of ways to digitally annotate my own book.

A - (I mention Prof Amerika's interest in exploring the future of publishing, and Prof Emerson's DH and Media Archeology focus)

4 - It sounds like [Transmedia Writing and Publishing] would be almost exactly what I'm looking for. If I was thinking more seriously about staying in Colorado, that would be directly up my alley. That kind of broadens the scope of that project I was just talking about to, well, what are the potential ramifications of that project? how can it be applied more broadly? Those are the terms that we're talking about. We're talking about transmedia, and looking at new modes of publication, maybe new modes of peer-review, you know, the different ways in which peer-review can happen on the internet. Maybe act on the edges of institutionalization, rather than strictly within the institution.

A - The people who are involved with this are very concerned with creating a program that is different than the traditional, institutional thing. Institutionalization is a problem, and it's a problem that they're addressing. This idea that the way knowledge is gained and presented is completely irrelevant to the way we live - across media.

4 - Yeah. That makes a lot of sense. And this seems like an activist idea, but get publically funded research and make it available to the public.

A - So is there anything else, if I were trying to recruit you, what you would want to hear? To know about?

4 - Just exactly how much time there would be, what the core curriculum would be. I wonder what faculty I'd be working with and to what extent. If it's not in the English department, in what way is Lori associated with it.

A - Well, one of the strengths of the program is that there are four different people heading it up right now, from four different departments, and each one of them presents his or her research in a unique way. Lori writes books and blogs online, Michelle does videos of performances and live performance, Michael Theodore works in sound and in installations, and Mark does the things he does.

4 - So would a dissertation - you said it would take a creative form - but I assume it would have an extensive written component like any other dissertation. Would it be a combination of things? Would it be a 100 page dissertation plus some creative element? Would the creative element have some sort of written component? Or is that just sort of up for negotiation?

A - I think it would be up for negotiation. But the primary goal of practice based research is the production of a creative work.