

Call for Papers: “Streams and Torrents” – *montage AV* 26/1/2017

The distribution of films and other audiovisual works has been radically transformed in the course of the so-called digital revolution and by new possibilities of transferring large amounts of data. In addition to a proliferation of legal service providers, a wide range of illegal practices and grey areas have flourished. Not only young cinephiles and computer freaks make use of such forms of “informal film distribution” (Roman Lobato), but theatre operators, critics and film scholars, as well. Saving time and money is not the only motivation, since many films are not available except through file sharing networks or shady streaming services. Media studies have begun to investigate the informal economy of cinema, but it has rarely been looked at as a practice that one uses or has to use oneself.

This issue of *montage AV* will try to take a look at file sharing and streaming as two technical forms of distribution, going beyond the perspective of screen studies to investigate practices of circulation, copying and swapping. The semantic and ideological aspects of the concepts will play a role, as will economic models such as paid content, licensing models, geo-blocking, and strategies to work around it. We find it important to question concepts such as legal/illegal, one’s own involvement, as well as the (utopian) potentials of such activities. We are looking for theoretical discussions, historical accounts, and shorter reports on work in progress, which point to the current state of various techniques and practices.

Possible themes and issues:

- How do torrents function technically and culturally, what types of users and user behaviour do they lead to? How has the technology changed in recent years? What do the metaphors of “torrents” and “streams” tell us? What ideological implications do they contain?
- How do these new practices relate to older forms and networks of private (and sometimes illegal) exchange, such as Super8, 16mm, VHS, DVDs, TV recordings, or bootlegs?
- How have the new technologies and online platforms transformed the access to film and TV history? How does that affect film studies? How do new forms of access change our ideas about film collections and film as an object to be collected? How can and should public institutions like film archives deal with this?
- How do informal networks affect the film industries in various parts of the world?
- How do technical means affect the acceptance of practices seen as illegal? To what extent do such discourses influence the work with or about these media? What legal implications or changes in attitudes toward the law do these distribution apparatuses bring with them?
- How do new and different dispositives and para-textual environments affect the filmic or televisual texts? What effects do they have on the quality of the products and on the users’ expectations?
- What forms of communities arise in large-scale file sharing networks?

We would be glad to consider manuscripts of up to 35,000 characters (around 6800 words). Please submit them by November 12, 2016 to Guido Kirsten (guido.kirsten@ims.su.se), Florian Krautkrämer (fl.krautkraemer@hbk-bs.de) or Patrick Vonderau (patrick.vonderau@ims.su.se), who will be editing this issue.