

Video & the Commons
Intimate working group by invitation
January 19, 2016 / 9:30am — 4:00pm
Columbia University (facility TBD)

We are delighted to invite you to an intimate, full-day working group designed to *accelerate the production and distribution of video for the Commons* (that is, material free of barriers to sharing and re-use). This meeting will gather institutions and practitioners to explore new open licensing and peer production models in video.

Part One of our workshop will feature a demonstration of collaborative video editing over the web—with Wikipedia as one case study—exploring what might be possible with new open source tools and technologies.

Part Two will feature new case studies on producing and releasing open video content from the worlds of public media, publishing, and education.

Part Three will be a discussion about collaborations we can pursue together and immediate next steps.

Background

Video is today's medium of record, and it is where an enormous amount of audience attention is concentrated. Yet very little of it is produced the "open source" way. More than a decade since the founding of Creative Commons, the Open Courseware movement, and other cutting-edge initiatives in the space, the "open source" model has been successfully applied to the distribution of all kinds of knowledge and media. Yet video content still lags far behind that of the other media in the Commons, such as text, image, audio recordings, and statistical data.

Some 40 percent of US smartphone owners record videos with their devices, 25 percent of adult internet users have posted a video online, and 20 percent have posted original content they've created themselves. YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Vimeo all rely heavily on DIY producers for their video content, and many educational institutions produce video for their online and hybrid courses. Yet virtually none of this content today is explicitly shared as part of the Commons. Owing to technical and production-related friction, it remains challenging for producers and users to remix, add value or to re-purpose video. And on the professional side of the spectrum, while rich practices have emerged for media producers and key networks to fund and distribute their works in a Commons-friendly way, the medium of video—with its complex thickets of rights, norms, and technologies—continues to vex.

About the Working Group

If today's Commons-oriented public media institutions can coordinate, help surface tools and practices, and together encourage innovations in this area, we can build a future in which editing video is as fluid as editing text. We can ensure that communication systems and structures relying on video are built by the many, rather than the few.

Workshop participants will be asked to roll up their sleeves and *coordinate a portfolio of projects that demonstrate the value of open licensing and peer-production in video*, and to surface further areas for attention and investment. The workshop will emphasize the social and practical needs of these projects rather than their clear resource deficiencies. We will build field

knowledge and momentum toward bigger, more ecosystemic solutions that partners might pursue together in the future.

Through the working group, we will surface global collaborations to make video more modular (divisible into components that can be independently, and asynchronously, produced), granular (allowing people with different levels of motivation to work together by contributing small or large modules), attributable (providing credit where credit is due), and enabling technology that can be easily deployed (so that sharing and remix can be made easier across platforms).

Public and private funders who support public media, academic research, and the development of new educational resources increasingly expect—even require—that their grantees abide by open access mandates; attention to the development of applicable tools and practices for video will help producers to meet these important new mandates. The benefits that result from achieving such goals across all media will be productive for public discourse, democracy, media literacy education, and other domains. We anticipate participation from Creative Commons, Columbia University, Hewlett Foundation, Internet Archive, MacArthur Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, Netherlands Sounds & Vision, Sloan Foundation, University of Michigan, Wikimedia Foundation, YouTube and others.

Areas of Interest

The working group will focus on increasing shared understanding of tools, content, and best practices for open video, featuring investments that several of our invitees (Mozilla, MacArthur, Hewlett, and our host institution Columbia University) have made in the area:

Tools — deployment of tools that facilitate open licensing, open distribution, remix and editing of open video content (e.g., Popcorn—Mozilla’s open source, browser-based cloud video editor)

Content (upstream) — case studies of projects, such as MOOCs or documentaries, which could be completely “open sourced” with metadata and open licensing down to each individual asset (also: outreach to the GLAM sector and support for ingest.)

Models for learning, engagement & best practices—case studies of projects, such as assigning “video essays” or Wikipedia in the classroom, that demonstrate the pedagogical / constructivist value of a significant Commons of video (e.g., university students producing video-enabled Wikipedia entries as part of coursework; high-school students developing media literacy education through deconstructing / re-contextualizing televised political debates; other benefits to “end users”)

Expected outcomes

This workshop will result in better understanding and working relationships across stakeholders (platforms, producers, teachers, funders and users) working in open content and open video. We will develop user-centric stories about what becomes possible through the deployment of public infrastructure for open video (which will enable us to subsequently prototype and test these ideas).

This exercise will help increase visibility across organizations’ roadmaps, discover where collaborations may be ripe, where gaps exist, what new defaults might be appropriate, and what barriers to sharing and peer production remain. Finally, we will seek to surface the possibility of jointly developing flagship projects to move faster as a field.