



## Afterword

Just as the AIDS pandemic has transformed since the heyday of queer AIDS media in the late 1980s and early 1990s, so too has the media ecology in which social movements and moving-image media intersect. The rapid development of digital video technology in the late 1990s enabled greater access to media production. Higher-quality images could be shot on both consumer and semi-professional equipment, while nonlinear editing software gradually deskilled postproduction to the point of it now being a standard feature in software packages for personal computers. The distribution of digital video images has also been revolutionized by a range of online services and practices that include blogs, peer-to-peer file sharing (BitTorrent), video-uploading sites (YouTube), social networks (Facebook), and collaboratively authored sites (wikis). The processes of convergence involved in this new media ecology are not merely technical but also cultural, facilitating the emergence of what Henry Jenkins has dubbed a new “participatory culture” that has the potential to employ the “collective intelligence” of its users for “serious” purposes and not merely leisure activities.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the hugely expanded capacity of non-professionals to “archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content” has permitted remix practices to extend well beyond the avant-garde, activist, and subcultural contexts in which they originated.<sup>2</sup> The media piracy now rampant throughout this new media ecology ranges from the radical appropriation of corporate intellectual property to the banality of endless Internet movie parodies and mashups.<sup>3</sup>

So what relationship do queer AIDS media hold to this new media ecology? First, we must acknowledge the variety of ways in which queer AIDS media pioneered practices that have become central to the convergence culture posited by Jenkins. As I discussed in chapter 2, AIDS video activists involved in **ACT UP** were among the first to exploit the consumer technology of the VHS