

id you hear...

MAX/FLICKR

Jumping on the Flickr bandwagon is German magazine *Max*, who've done a one year deal in which *Max* editors will publish selected photos from Flickr galleries and interviews with the photographers. The photopool has amassed around 2,000 photos so far. www.flickr.com/groups/maxmagazine

STREETWARS

Great commanders have posited that the art of war requires skill, patience, determination and respect for the enemy. Streetwars have posited that all you need is a water balloon and the enemy's home address. www.streetwars.net

UNITEDVISUALARTISTS

UnitedVisualArtists have launched their latest creation, described as 'a selection of imagery from a recent prototype of a combination LED/3D camera interactive installation which is affected by the user's gestures and motion'. In case you didn't quite catch that, it's a beautiful shifting display of lights which follow you around. www.uva.co.uk

DUCATI/TOMBRAIDER

Lara Croft has ditched her Jeep in favour of an infinitely racier (read: more phallic) Ducati motorbike. Apparently she uses the Monster 2SR and 999 models to get her out of some tricky situations in her new adventure, Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend. www.tombraider.com

INBOX

A whole world of words, represented in images. For when only a picture will do. thevisualdictionary.net

Aside from Bush and Blair, real clowns head to the world's war zones. www.circus2iraq.org

Black Gold - documentary about the shady side of coffee-dealing currently winning plaudits at the independent film festivals. www.blackgoldmovie.com



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Wildfire /

Remixing the future

'Talent imitates, genius steals' - TS Elliot

The idea of the remix belongs to the philosopher John Locke. Back in the 17th century, he posited that human imagination was essentially a sampler and sequencer - cutting and pasting reality into new constructs. Complex ideas are combinations of simple ones: to form an idea of a unicorn, take a horse and a horn and mix them.

The remix's long relationship with media began with the author William Burroughs and some scissors. Along with collaborator Brion Gysin he created the cut up technique, incorporating snippets of other texts into his own work, synthesising to create. They attempted to replicate this in audio with reel-to-reel machines that they called 'God's Little Toy'.

Hip-Hop is a musical form predicated on the remix. Dj Kool Herc entertained block parties by isolating the percussion breaks in songs and mixing them into each other. Since then, remix culture has dominated dance music. The advent of the digital sampler allowed musicians to easily recycle hooks from old tracks. Then those tracks themselves would be remixed by others in a continuous (re)cycle. This gave rise to the mash-up - a genre which, in its purest form, consists of the combination of music from one song with an a cappella of another. A seminal 2001 release, Soulwax's 2manyDJs, combined 45 different tracks into a single complex.

As William Gibson, the author who coined the term cyberspace, has pointed out, 'the remix is the very nature of the digital'. The cut up is habitual for the connected generation, normalised via Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V. And as technology develops, the scope of remix has grown too.

'Trailer trashing' is the term for remixing a movie trailer. This trend began last September when a post-production house organised a competition to re-cut trailers, making them seem like different



movies. The winning entry remixed *The Shining* into a romantic comedy and spread like wildfire. It has spawned an entire sub-genre as consumers attempt to outdo each others' ingenuity, facilitated by YouTube. The latest iteration, a trailer for *Titanic 2*, splices together footage from more than a dozen different movies. www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKZUmYGk1M

Start-ups Eyespot and Jumpspot are video remixing communities. Like YouTube, they enable users to post videos to the Web, but they also provide tools to remix the videos online, blending elements from other posts into new movies.

Brands have started using the remix to make their advertising more engaging. Old Spice lets you remix their latest ad at www.whensheshot.com and GM ran a co-promotion with *The Apprentice* for Chevy Tahoe where users could build a 30 second spot out of existing collateral. <http://chevyapprentice.com>

Video games are also in tune with this trend. MTV Music Generator 3: This is the Remix! on the Xbox allows players to remix popular tracks. Tony Hawk Underground 2: Remix was recently released on the PSP. The rise of the remix has even spread to the physical: Innertee.com allows you to remix T-shirts.

With the emergence of Web 2.0, things start to get really interesting, as open source web standards allow for the remixing of applications. Flickr, photo sharing site and Web 2.0 darling that was bought last year by Yahoo!, has a host of remixes including games like Flickr Sudoku and tools like the Colr Pickr, that pulls up images matching

specific colours. A book called *Flickr Hacks*, which explains how to remix the site, was released in February this year. www.beckysweb.co.uk/sudoku/flickrsudoku.asp www.krazydad.com/colrpickr

Google Maps is also one of the most mashed - the Google Maps Mania blog-googlemapsmania.blogspot.com tracks several new ones every day, as users integrate the map functionality into other data sets, to display anything from houses for rent on Craigslist to celebrity sightings in New York on Stalker.

Netvibes, the Google IG and Microsoft's Live.com all let you remix your homepage, pulling in content from different parts of the Web, from blog feeds to a Flickr photostream or your email. Taking this one step further, a new plug-in for the browser Firefox, Greasemonkey, allows you to remix any aspect of a web page's design or interaction on the fly.

As all media becomes digital, the remix will emerge as its dominant construct. An understanding of this is crucial for anyone interested in how people consume and interact with media: no longer passive but recombinant and collaborative. Culture has become inherently intertextual as media users mix and blend references and material. The only limit, as Locke would have pointed out, is your imagination.

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