Guest Editor's Note

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In this guest edition for the Spring issue 2011 of the Global Media Journal, we invited submissions of essays and scholarly articles that builds on the relationship between new media, informal learning and social change. We were particularly interested in articles that pushed the boundaries on how people in diverse transnational and cross-cultural environments learn to use new media technologies for a wide spectrum of social activity. With any novel tool, there are intentions, as well as a range of actions and consequences, often facilitated through the informal processes of learning and teaching within social groups. This edition provides a wide perspective on such critical interactions. Interdisciplinary work has been particularly sought after as well as work situated within marginalized and disadvantaged contexts where such new media tools are being tried and tested to enhance the human condition. Articles here address topics such as:

- the construction of everyday knowledge online

- local empowerment through ICT dissemination and usage in marginalized contexts

- indigenous language revitalization through new media tools

- shaping of female political agency through online video platforms

- building of social capital through social network sites

More specifically, in the invited papers section, **Gillian Andrews** and **Hervé Varenne** draw attention to the critical fact that much learning with new technologies takes place outside schooling and does not necessarily subscribe to the conventional curricula approach. By analyzing the interaction between bloggers and commenters on what constitutes as ignorance and knowledge within blog spaces, the rules of learning become explicit. The authors argue that, "in this perspective, knowledge is not a pre-condition for participation in everyday life. Rather, knowledge is produced on an ongoing basis during the course of everyday life." Thereby, we are reminded of an important fact that people are constantly in the process of learning and teaching as new technologies provide

opportunities where experts and amateurs come together to jointly address "ignorance." And more profoundly, there is an underlying systematicity to such informal learning that propels us to expand our notions of education.

In the peer-review section of this edition, **Magda Pischetola** takes on the highly acclaimed One Laptop Per Child project to investigate the sustainability of local empowerment through such new media platforms. By delving into the execution of this project in Italy and Ethiopia, the author situates culture as central in the pursuit of digital inclusion. She highlights how the formal education model can be significantly transformed by altering how learners access information within their varied contexts. Information retrieval through ICT platforms like OLPC can create a shift in the approach to learning and teaching; through the adoption of such tools, learning can become "focused on personal discovery rather than unilateral transmission of information, on practical and substantial skills rather than on formal processes, and on unexpected outcomes rather than standardized educational paths." Additionally, the role of the teacher becomes that of a facilitator and catalyst and less of a depositor of curricula. Thereby, these new media endeavors are looked upon as not technology projects but rather, as learning projects.

In the next article, **Gooyong Kim** focuses on the everyday learnings with new media, emphasizing the agency aspect of users when capitalizing on these tools. In this context however, the author focuses on the political potential of online videos in mobilizing collective grassroots action. Situated within the context of Korea's candlelight movements in 2008, the author highlights how "the traditionally marginalized political subjects such as teenage school-girls and stay-home mothers come to exercise their political agency in the age of Web 2.0." Here, pop culture is appropriated in the pursuit of critiquing Lee's policies on health and community issues, bringing to the fore the fascinating relationship between entertainment, politics and citizenship.

Following which, **Elizabeth Sumida Huaman** in her paper emphasizes on the range of struggles that ensues in preserving and reigniting indigenous languages and how new media can serve as a novel tool in this important endeavor. Given that this process has been tremendously challenging for indigenous groups across decades, the author argues that new media platforms can serve as a fresh and creative venue for continuing this language revitalization effort. Focusing on a student-driven blog by indigenous postsecondary students at a US university, we gain insight into the creative appropriations and cultural constructions by these students online as they continue to grapple with "language and cultural revitalization and navigating multiple definitions of global citizenship." In essence, this article reveals how indigenous youth are faced with the significant challenge of functioning effectively as members of different communities and how new media can serve to mitigate and perhaps circumvent some of these oftentimes contradictory membership positionings.

For the graduate student section, **George Konetes** and **Matthew McKeague** note that university students use social networking sites as much as nine times over the average population. Given the differences between undergraduates and graduate students for

pursuing higher education, the authors set out to investigate the extent to which both groups of students use social networking sites to advance social capital and seek relationships with shared interests. The authors describe a pilot study that took the form of a survey with 67 students. The authors share their lessons on the challenges that they encountered, which would be of interest to the broader community who is interested in the ways that social networking sites can advance social capital and relationships.

Overall, this issue serves as an opportunity to remind us that education needs to be reframed within out of school contexts where much learning and teaching take place for political, social and cultural purposes. Furthermore, new media platforms can offer new spaces for a range of communities to interact, enact and negotiate for empowerment and social change.