

In preparation of [Videovortex 2](#) (Amsterdam, January 18/19) I sent the video activist and artist DeeDee Halleck (Paper Tiger TV) from New York a few questions. I love [her blog](#) named after her book Hand Held Visions, have you read it?

GL: How do you look at YouTube from your long media activist perspective? So much of the earlier dreams seem to come true.

DDH: Yes, more people are able now to share their stories in electronic form from many corners of the globe- which enables more connections to more places. But I have an inherent suspicion about the contract one agrees to on the corporate sites- youtube or even blip. After you post, you are giving up your right to determine the use. Who knows how your creativity, your hard work, the good-hearted collaboration of your friends/subjects will be used in the future? You won't have any say in that! Is this autonomy? That's why I hope the transmission folks come up with a good interface and some huge servers.

GL: Can we speak of a pleasure to roam around such large video databases? Do you enjoy the abundance after so many years of hardship (little money, heavy equipment, difficulties with distribution)?

Occasional pleasure, maybe. but overall a sort of slot machine. The jackpots are far between. Distribution is still difficult. The infrastructure for non-commercial media is under siege all the time now. The great experiment in media democracy-public access- in the US is about to be legislated out of business by the Verizon and ATT lobbyists.

The whole so-called public interest infrastructure in the US is full of mine fields- or perhaps it's more like a field of hungry replicant ghouls. From the art centers to alternative media channels to the whole media education system. Take USC for instance. There we have an educational institution that feeds the creativity of its students to the military machine. The Department of "Defense" has taken over the centers of media experimentation and development- MIT and USC and many others are basically branches of the military now. Homeland security is using PEG gov channels to promote their snooping. See anything suspicious? Public access channels now have news programs and recruitment promos from many branches of military. Join the coast guard and secure our borders! The educational channels are running programs for Bush's abstinence initiatives.

GL: From the conservative perspective we hear complaints about copyright

abuse and futility of the amateur. One could say that there is not enough activist video out there. But is this really true and would such a critique make sense?

DDH: Copyright? Well if the corporations own the distribution system who's to worry? What ever brings eyeballs is what they count on. They can take it down when the initial attraction is over. My step son in law is a stand up comic who is sometimes on jay leno, etc. his fans tape him and everyone loves it. it's the best publicity Jay Leno ever had. They take it down when the hits level off. No, it's not the futility of the amateur- the amateurs are the utility of the professionals. It's really a form of feudalism. We're the serfs. They get a big percentage of our crops. The biggest problem is the isolation of this stuff. It is so addictive and comforting to have your PC on your lap. How are we going to get people into the streets?

GL: Thanks, DeeDee.

(in a separate mail she sent me the link to this YouTube video, a message to a soldier in Iraq:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Remd2KYmW7Q>)