New literacies and social practices of digital remixing

Introduction

As a concept associated with cultural practices, ‘remixing’ involves taking cultural artifacts and combining and manipulating them into new kinds of creative blends and products. In this very general sense, cultural remixing is nothing new – the Ancient Romans remixed Greek art forms and ideals in their own artworks; democratic forms of government remix a range of ancient and not-so-ancient forms of governance; architecture has always remixed styles and key structural forms.

As a term associated with contemporary cultural practices, however, the word ‘remix’ has until very recently been linked almost entirely with remixing music. ‘Remix’ in this sense refers to mixing together or reworking elements of different recorded songs or music tracks whereby the ‘source song(s) retain their identity in some recognizable form’ (Jacobson 2010: 28). Erik Jacobson (2010) points out that interpretations of songs and music by musicians and singers have always involved a form of reworking the original version into something that is new but, nonetheless, more or less recognizable or traceable to its original source music. The potential
that recordings offer for remixing music in inventive ways reached new 
highs in the 1990s. During this period, remixed music became popular 
a cross a range of genres – notably, in hip hop, house and jungle music, as 
well as in mainstream pop, and rhythm and blues, and even in heavy metal 
music. What is perhaps most notable about turntable and digitally mediated 
music remixing is that it is open to ‘people who cannot play any [musical] 
insitments themselves to rework and reshape previously existing songs’ 
(ibid.: 28).

Most accounts date modern music remixing to Jamaican dance hall 
culture in the late 1960s, and the interventions of DJs and music recording 
producers who, for example, used twin turntables with different versions 
of the same song to be played together while controlling for speed (beats to 
the minute), or edited tapes to produce versions of songs suited to different 
 kinds of audiences. Remixes sometimes simply provided a speedier version 
of a song, or a leaner, more stripped-back sound, or an elongated song to 
keep people dancing longer. Once digital sound became the norm, however, 
all manner of mixing and ‘sampling’ techniques were applied using different 
 kinds of hardware devices or software on a computer (Hawkins 2004; 
Jacobson 2010).

From around 2004, discussions and conceptions of remix have been 
expanded and enriched as a result of trends clustering around the 
convergence of ‘new ethos stuff’ and ‘new technical stuff’ within popular 
cultural production and expression. As more and more people have used 
published/copyrighted cultural artifacts as resources for their own cultural 
c reations – especially, although by no means only, through the use of digital 
technologies – sections of the ‘culture industry’ have sought to assert their 
property rights through digital rights management (DRM) codes and, as a 
final resort, legal action. Non-formal cultural producers, for their part, have 
pursued ways to access copyrighted material for their creative purposes as 
‘freely’ and ‘anonymously’ as possible, and some commercial producers 
of popular cultural artifacts have made resources available for remixing 
purposes from the perspective that this will be good for their business. 
Notwithstanding such initiatives, tensions between the will to engage in 
free cultural creation and expression drawing on resources readily available 
in everyday environments, on one side, and the will to retain control over 
the use of ‘owned’ cultural resources, on the other, intensified to flashpoint. 
All-or-nothing, win-or-lose, winner-take-all polemics have created the risk 
of serious losses for both sides of the divide. Within this context, and the 
search for a fruitful resolution, ‘remix’ (see, especially, Lessig 2004, 2005, 
2008; Lessig, in Koman 2005) has emerged as an important rallying point 
for reasoned discussion and understanding of what is at stake, and for
seeking ways of ensuring that what is legitimate and valuable on both sides of the divide stands an optimal chance of being preserved, enhanced, and leveraged for the greater good.

For present purposes, two points emerging from recent discussions and elaborations of ‘remix’ and ‘digital remix’ are especially relevant, namely:

1. the general principle of remix as a necessary condition for a robust and democratic *culture*; and
2. the status of digital remixing as a new norm for writing.

We will briefly discuss these in turn.

*Remix as a necessary condition for culture*

More than any other author, Lawrence Lessig (2008) has developed and discussed the concept of remix as a necessary condition for cultural sustainability, development, enrichment, and well-being. At its most general, simple, necessary, and profound, remix is quite simply the idea ‘of someone mixing things together and then someone else coming along and remixing that thing they have created’ (Lessig 2005: n.p.). For example,

You go see a movie by Michael Moore [or whoever] and then you whine to your friends about how it is the best movie you have ever seen or the worst movie ever made. What you are doing is taking Michael Moore’s creativity and remixing it in your life. You are using it to ... extend your own views or criticize his views. You are taking culture and practicing this art of remixing. Indeed, every single act of reading and choosing and criticizing and praising culture is in this sense remix. And it is through this general practice that cultures get made.

(ibid.)

When seen in these terms, we can say that remix is evident in every domain of cultural practice – including everyday conversations – and that ‘culture is remix’. At the broadest level, remix is the general condition of cultures: no remix, no culture. Cultures have to be *made* – created – and they are made by mixing ‘new’ elements with ‘pre-existing’ elements in the manner of ‘conversations’. We remix language every time we draw on it, and we remix meanings every time we take an idea or an artifact or a word and integrate it into what we are saying or doing or being at the time.

In more recent work, Lessig (2008) distinguishes between two broad types of cultural engagement; two different types of culture and cultural experience. One he calls ‘Read/Only’ (RO), the other ‘Read/Write’ (RW).
RO culture emphasizes the *consumption* of professionally produced cultural tokens or artifacts. The relative few produce cultural items for the many to view, read, listen to. As Lessig (ibid.: 28) puts it, a Read/Only culture is a culture that is ‘less practiced in performance, or amateur creativity, and more comfortable (think: couch) with simple consumption’. Read/Write culture, on the other hand, is one in which those who ‘read’ the resources of their culture also wish to ‘add to the culture they read by creating and re-creating the culture around them ... using the same tools [e.g., certain kinds of musical instruments, image capturing and enhancing tools, writing and drawing technologies] the professional uses’ (ibid.). Of course, the distinction is more one of degree than absolute. In RO culture there inevitably will be some degree of remixing on at least the lines of conversation and comment illustrated in Lessig’s example of watching a movie, or in terms of sharing a cultural resource with others because someone thinks others will enjoy it, find it interesting, or see it as an instance of something they have commented on or evaluated in a particular way.

Making reference to an interesting historical example, Lessig (ibid.: 23–33) highlights some of the stakes that are under contest in any tug of war between the two cultures, such as that occurring at the present time. He describes the case of John Philip Sousa, an American conductor and composer who, in 1906, gave evidence about the inadequacy of existing copyright law to protect the interests and incentives for creative work of musicians within the context of (then) new technologies of player pianos and phonographs. Lessig says that for his time Sousa was a ‘copyright extremist’ seeking redress against machines that could make copies of compositions and sell them without having to compensate composers – because the copyright laws did not clearly cover the kinds of copies being made. In the course of giving evidence Sousa argued that these new machines not only infringed musicians’ interests in terms of copyright, but also constituted a grave threat to a ‘democratic culture’. The new machines were, in today’s parlance, ‘Read/Only’. Their commodities were for mere consumption: *listening*. For Sousa, their proliferation would undermine amateur musicianship – people making their own music – at the same time as they infringed the rights of composers. They would undermine the process of people at large growing the technical development of music and musical culture, by supporting the production and take-up of musical instruments, amateur music teaching and sharing, and so on. Sousa feared that with the spread of such a RO musical culture ‘the tide of amateurism [would] recede, until there will be left only the mechanical device and the professional executant’ (ibid.: 26). Moreover, and crucially, Sousa did not accept that any copyright law covering public performance of another’s work did or should extend to amateurs. In his
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view, there had to be sufficient Read/Write culture that permitted sufficient sharing of RO cultural resources to keep a democratic culture of amateur musical creation and development alive and thriving.

Lessig summarizes the position admirably. He says that Sousa did not fear that the ‘actual quality of the music produced in a culture’ would decline if RO culture displaced RW culture in music. Rather, his fear was that people would be less connected to, and hence less practiced in, creating that culture. Amateurism, to this professional, was a virtue – not because it produced great music, but because it produced a musical culture: a love for, and an appreciation of, the music he [and others like him] re-created, a respect for the music [people like him] played, and hence a connection to a democratic culture.

(ibid.: 27, our emphases)

This is not simply about reproducing the music, since no reproduction can ever be exactly ‘the same’ as the original. There is always some degree of interpretation, making do, revision of, building upon, experimentation, and so on, involved in any taking up of cultural resources and tools. Learning to be a researcher, for example, presupposes taking up the concepts, theoretical components, data collection and analysis tools of others, and applying them to our purposes. The originals inevitably get remixed to some extent in the process of this kind of learning. No good researcher is ever going to resent or challenge this, if only because without others doing that kind of remixing, there will be no ongoing research community – or, at best, a lesser one – to perpetuate and validate the work s/he and other professional researchers and theorists do. No remix in research, then no robust and democratic research culture.

The status of digital remixing as a new norm for writing

As noted in Chapter 3, Lessig (2005) refers to a particular practice of creative writing within the school curriculum in parts of the USA. In this practice students read texts by multiple authors, take bits from each of them, and put them together in a single text. This is a process of taking and remixing ‘as a way of creating something new’ (ibid.: n.p.). Until recently this kind of remixing was done with paper, pencil, typewriter and the like. These same tools were used for learning to write in the most general sense, which, it can be argued, is also a practice of remix. Learners take words that are presented as text in one place or another and they use these words and texts and the tools of pen and pencil to make new texts, or to remix text. Lessig says that we learn to write ‘in one simple way, by doing it’ (ibid.). Hence, there is a
literacy ‘that comes through the practice of writing; writing [means] taking these different objects and constructing with them’ (ibid.).

We now have digital remix enabled by computers. This includes, but goes far beyond, simply mixing music. It involves mixing digital images, texts, sounds, and animation; in short, all manner of found artifacts. Young people are picking this up on a massive scale and it is becoming increasingly central to their practices of making meaning and expressing ideas. Lessig argues that these practices constitute remix as writing for these legions of digital youth:

When you say the word writing, for those of us over the age of 15, our conception of writing is writing with text … But if you think about the ways kids under 15 using digital technology think about writing – you know, writing with text is just one way to write, and not even the most interesting way to write. The more interesting ways are increasingly to use images and sound and video to express ideas.

(in Koman 2005: n.p.)

Lessig (2005) provides a range of examples of the kinds of digital remix practices that in his view constitute ‘the more interesting ways [to write]’ for young people. These include remixing clips from movies to create ‘faux’ trailers for hypothetical movies; setting remixed movie trailers to remixed music of choice that is synchronized with the visual action; recording a series of anime cartoons and then video editing them in synchrony with a popular music track; mixing ‘found’ images with original images in order to express a theme or idea (with or without text added); and mixing images, animations, and texts to create cartoons (including political cartoons and animations), to name just a few types.

Reflection and discussion

• Do you accept Lessig’s extension of the concept of ‘writing’ to include practices like digital remix? If so, what are your reasons? If not, what are your reasons?

• Try to locate in the literature examples of literacy scholars who take a different view. If you adopt the standpoint of Lessig, what arguments and evidence would you present against the opposing view? What arguments and evidence from the opposing view would you bring against Lessig?
We accept this conceptual extension of ‘writing’ to include practices of producing, exchanging, and negotiating digitally remixed texts, which may employ a single medium or may be multimedia remixes. At the same time, we remember that not all popular cultural remix involves the use of digital technologies. For example, when fans dress up as their favourite anime, fantasy, or science fiction characters and engage in role play as a form of cosplay, they can often be seen as remixing cultural resources, but there is no necessary digital dimension in such in-person remixing, any more than there is when a barbershop quartet remixes a medley of popular songs by interspersing and overlaying content and/or playing with the genres. Equally, music remixers who use twin turntables and vinyl recordings, and video remixers who use magnetic video tape recordings, are engaged in analogue rather than digital forms of popular cultural remix. So are fan anime artists who create elaborate drawings and paintings using paper, canvas, pencils, acrylic paints, and so on.

Some typical examples of remix practices

As various kinds of sophisticated digital editing software and online read/write resources and spaces have become widely available and accessible, the nature and scope of digital remixing activities engaged in by everyday people and professionals alike, and that can be usefully understood in terms of new literacies, have grown rapidly. There are many more of them than can adequately be identified and discussed within a single chapter. To maximize coverage we have identified a selection of currently popular kinds of digital remixing activities and organized them into a large table, presented as an Appendix to this chapter (see pages 127–140 below). We briefly discuss a small sample of these practices as new literacies, and then provide more detailed and nuanced discussions of online fanfiction and anime/manga fan remix practices – which are among the most significant contexts of new literacies practices among young people.

The following remix practices are identified and summarized in the Appendix: making machinima movies, making movie trailers, creating fanfiction short movies, making music videos, creating fanfiction, photoshopping images, creating fan art, producing political remixes, remixing music, mashing up web applications, cosplaying/live action role playing, and modding video games. It is important to note again that several of these do not (necessarily) involve using digital technologies. At the same time, those that do not – like cosplaying and creating fan art – are often
practised by digital remixers and integrated into their digital remixes (such as when cosplay sequences and fan art are recorded digitally and included in music videos or fanfiction short movies).

To understand these practices in terms of new literacies we have used four organizing concepts in the Appendix: ‘Kinds of remixes’, ‘Kinds of involvement’, ‘Some literacy dimensions’, and ‘Some online spaces, sites and examples’. This is intended to help explicate the complex relationships among social practices, participation in practices, Discourse affiliations, situated literacy performances, sites and contexts of activity, roles and relationships within interest communities, and so on. For example, one might participate in a music video remix affinity/community without ever actually making or posting a music video; hence, without ‘doing’ many of those ‘new literacy bits’ that individuals who regularly create music videos from scratch engage in. Conversely, some ‘full-on music video creators’ may rarely engage in many of the literacy performances other aficionados prioritize – like participating in forums, contributing free resources for remixing, etc. Alternatively, a person who mashes up web applications as a business proposition is not ‘doing the same thing’ as someone who creates a mashup to help resource a fan interest and further build an affinity space. A certain degree of button pushing and code writing might be as much as they have in common.

To indicate how the kind of information provided in the Appendix can be cashed out for some typical digital remixing practices that are currently popular we will briefly discuss photoshopping, music remixing and creating serviceware mashups.

‘Photoshopping’ as image remix

Adobe’s famous digital image editing software, Photoshop, has been appropriated as a verb for diverse practices of image editing, some of which involve remixing images (as distinct from just editing them by retouching them, changing their colour balance, etc.). With the growth of affordable image editing software and enhanced online storage capacities, and image-friendly website hosting sites and services, photoshopping quickly became a popular online practice, engaging a wide range of contributors with different levels of artistic and technical proficiency. Image remixing can take various forms. These include adding text to images, creating photo montages that mix elements from two or more images together (including prankster-type remixes that place the head of a famous person on, for example, the body of someone caught in a compromising situation), changing the image content itself in some way (e.g., removing someone’s hair or body
parts, adding additional legs to a moose), and changing image properties (e.g., changing the colours or image focus, fiddling with brightness levels or shading).

People engage in digital image remixing for a range of purposes and in the context of various kinds of practices and memberships in different kinds of communities and affinities. For example, organizations and artists, like Adbusters.org and Propagandaremix.com, respectively, produce and/or invite image remixes to make political points, mobilize activity around causes, spoof advertisements for products and services they believe should be discouraged, and so on. Elsewhere, images are remixed simply for fun – to get a laugh – and/or to generate a hoax (e.g., Worth1000.com, SomethingAwful.com). Some community websites (e.g., Fark.com) invite members to comment on topical news items and other web content and, as part of this, host regular image remixing contests to tap into users’ points of view (especially satirical or sardonic) on selected images. Not infrequently, images are remixed with a view to generating or participating in a meme (Knobel and Lankshear 2007: Ch. 9). In a very popular case, which became known as the Lost Frog Meme, a member of an image-sharing forum scanned a flyer he had found in the street that looked like a young child’s announcement of a lost pet (named Hopkin Green Frog) and uploaded it to a popular discussion forum. Features of the flyer, which comprised a hand-drawn image of a frog accompanied by text, captured the imagination of other members of the forum, who quickly began using image editing software to manipulate the original. The meme caught on, and photoshoppers from all around the world weighed in with wide-ranging and often hilarious variations, frequently drawing on motifs and conceits embedded in internet culture and humour. Collectively, the contributions narrate a massive fictional citizen ‘mobilization’ in an ongoing search for Hopkin Green Frog. The remixed images include typical ‘missing persons’ announcement vehicles (e.g., broadcast media news reports, milk cartons, road signs), crowd scenes seemingly devoted to spreading the news about the lost frog (e.g., ‘lost frog’ banners at a street march and at a crowded soccer match), and a host of other ‘remember Hopkin’ scenarios (e.g., lost frog scratch-it lottery tickets, Hopkin’s ID on someone’s instant messaging buddy list, Hopkin as a ‘not found’ internet file image). References to popular culture artifacts and practices abound, and include reworked book covers, music album covers, video games, eBay auctions, and so on. Other images spoof advertising campaigns (e.g., an Absolut Vodka spread becomes ‘Absolut Hopkin’; a Got Milk? advertisement becomes ‘Got Frog?’). Many of the lost frog images refer to other memes as well. For example, an aeroplane pulling a lost frog announcement banner also appeared earlier in an ‘All
When we come to look at the kinds of literacy components associated with digital image remixing, we find that they are much more diverse than we might at first expect. If we just focus on what is involved in producing image remix artifacts we will capture only a fraction of the literacies dimension. At the level of ‘skills’ and tool use we may recognize such things as knowing how to use the marquee tool to crop around a portion of an image, or using the eyedropper tool to match colours, or eraser tool for getting rid of unwanted lines or items, and the like. With respect to relevant knowledge we might include knowing the kinds of content, effects, and nuances to include in our creations that are likely to be appreciated by others, and how to realize them within our remix. We might also include under the artifact production aspect such specific practices as knowing where to go for advice and how to phrase a specific query that attracts the most useful help, or where to go for exemplars and role models to emulate. This, however, is just a small part of it. When we turn to the idea of participating in remix affinities or communities of remix practitioners, we need also to include such literacy performances as sharing your photoshopped images online for feedback or providing feedback on the quality of someone else’s photoshopped image (cf., Photoshopforums.com; Worth1000.com/community), practising and refining one’s photoshop skills and understanding, writing a tutorial, or thanking someone for the useful tutorial they’ve written (e.g., Worth1000.com/tutorials), contributing to a photoshop contest or to a meme (e.g., Somethingawful.com/d/photoshopp-phriday, Fark.com/contests, Knowyourmeme.com), knowing when a deliberately ‘bad’ photoshop will suit your purposes more effectively than a fine-tuned one (e.g., for humorous effect, to spoof newbie contributions to some communities), and so on. Different ‘practitioner identities’ will include different mixes of such literacy practices, and some of the most committed members of image remix communities may produce and publish/post relatively few image remixes, preferring to devote their time and energies to other membership roles and services (e.g., archiving images, passing resources on, setting up contests, helping newbies).

Music remixing

Within the world of digital remix, music currently is remixed in two main ways: in an audio-only form, and as audio accompanied by moving or and still images. On a second dimension, music is remixed by professionals – people who do it for a living or for significant economic return – and by
amateurs. Within these parameters the range and variation in music remixing are enormous: in terms of type/kind, genre, quality, purpose, cultural affinities, techniques, tools, degree of collaboration and interactivity, and so on. In this section we look briefly at pure music remix (audio-only). We will discuss a particular kind of music video remixing in the final section of this chapter, within the context of one fan’s anime and music remixing.

Music remixing basically involves taking components of existing songs and recorded music and splicing them together to create something that differs to a greater or lesser extent from the original(s). Jacobson (2010: 29) identifies an important issue within music remix to do with how far remixing music can go before ‘it becomes something substantially new’, rather than a remix and, conversely, about what the minimum is that must be done – is duplicating a chorus enough, asks Jacobson – to warrant saying: ‘Remixed by ......’? For some, the ‘aura’ of the original source(s) should always remain dominant, or at least clearly present and recognizable, for something to count as a remix (cf. Navas 2007, in ibid.: 28). For others, so long as one is working with extant recorded music, a creation is a remix even if the resulting collage buries all significant traces of the original source songs and music. Nonetheless, professional and amateur remixers alike often aim to call attention to their use of samples from originals, as part of the meaning or significance of the remix. Hence, remixers often expect their audiences to experience recognizing samples as part of the enjoyment and meaning making of listening. Indeed, part of the enjoyment of remixes is identifying how parts of the ‘original’ sound within the context of the remix (e.g., spotting the music to Dr Who or Inspector Gadget when they are remixed with other songs). This recognition often draws on a shared nostalgia (‘Do you remember that?!’) and supports a sense of connection between the remixer and the audience.

(Jacobson 2010: 28–9; original emphases)

In some remixes the creators aim both to elicit listeners’ recognition of the original aura(s) and to evoke listeners’ judgement that this is, nonetheless, something new – a new song (ibid.: 30).

Remixing recorded music (NB: music can, of course, be remixed in live performances that don’t involve pre-recorded samples) originally involved the use of multiple vinyl records and turntables and a ‘mixer’ (a machine that allowed the artist to alter the tempo, dynamics, pitch, and sequencing of songs), or access to the kind of equipment used in music studios to physically splice two-track tapes to create a single multi-track recording (Hawkins 2004). With the advent of digital audio editing capacity, however, the
possibilities for and ease of remixing recorded music were greatly amplified and within the reach of many more people than previously. Today, with the ready availability of computers and software like Audacity, Cakewalk and Garageband, ‘the tracks from any song, regardless of original tempo, can be digitally altered to work over a huge range of tempos and keys’ (ibid.: viii), and can be mixed and remixed in countless ways.

As various authors (e.g., Lessig 2004, 2008; Jenkins 2006b; Lankshear and Knobel 2006; Bruns 2008; Burgess and Green 2009; Jacobson 2010) observe, media remixing now occurs in bedrooms, family rooms, and basements around the world (as well as in more ‘professional’ settings). Moreover, diverse online music remix community spaces and more specialized support sites actively encourage and promote music remix activities. Some, like ccMixter (ccMixter.org), are general music remixing community sites offering a rich blend of enabling resources and support, including forums, free access to samples and music, hosting services and archives, user profiles and social networking capacity, links to kindred sites, tutorials, etc. Others, like Overclocked Remix (Ocremix.org) specialize in particular types and genres of remix, like video game music remix. Some support sites specialize in specific services, such as hosting remix competitions (e.g., Remixfight.org), providing sound effects (e.g., Freesound.org), or providing free access music for remixing (e.g., Opsound.org) – for more detail, see Jacobson (2010).

Practices and purposes associated with music remixing are diverse, spanning ‘projective’ activity – where the best-known example is probably Danger Mouse’s Grey Album – a mashup of the Beatles’ White Album and rapper Jay-Z’s Black Album – through to fan-based participatory cultural practices mediated by online spaces like Overclocked Remix and ccMixter. Some remixers prefer ‘mashing up’ two or more songs where all components are easily recognized, while others may remix music for ethical, political, motivational, or spiritual purposes by layering commentary or excerpts from speeches over music. The kinds of meanings exchanged and negotiated are likewise diverse: including sharing insider appreciations, signalling expertise or sophistication, making a joke or some kind of point, expressing a personal value or perspective, celebrating a fandom, and so on. Music remixing involves diverse kinds of literacy performances, which will vary in their mixes from person to person, depending on their kinds of involvements in music remixing communities and practices. They will range from using video editing software to splice together different elements as seamlessly as possible, to searching the web to find a receptive online space for sharing a remix with others (which includes such things as checking the most recent downloads to ensure the site is still sufficiently active),
posting comments on other people’s remixes, writing new lyrics or creating voice-overs for sections of the remix, seeking or offering advice on forums, and so on.

From the perspective we have adopted here, getting an academic sense of music remix in terms of new literacies may begin from going to a broad-based music remix community site and spending some time simply following links and seeing what is there, before exploring it in a more systematic way using frames and lenses like those we have suggested; e.g., in terms of purposes, tools, Discourse affiliations, tools, knowledge, projective/participatory orientation, types of member contributions, levels of meaning, forms and degrees of collaboration. This kind of exploration, however, will likely not convey much of a sense of the operational (technical, skill) aspects of the practice, or the experiential and ‘existential’ dimensions of remixing music, far less any approximation to an insider or fan perspective. This can only proceed from a personal focus or interest or passion and from ‘taking up the tools’ through supported hands-on involvement, and with a good introductory source to hand, such as Erik Jacobson’s (2010) how-to account of music remix.

Creating serviceware mashups

The term ‘mashup’ (or ‘mash up’), originally used in the context of music remixing, is now widely applied to the process of merging two or more application programming interfaces (APIs) with each other and/or with available databases. This creates new software or online-interface serviceware applications out of services and data that already exist, leveraging them to perform (often highly) specific tasks, or to meet particular purposes that cannot otherwise be met via extant applications and services. Mashups create innovative and useful – purposeful – process tools out of existing tools, to which they add value by enabling them, in combination, to do what could not previously be done. This is a form of customizing and tailoring existing resources to meet niched purposes, perhaps most commonly understood at present by reference to the emergence of apps (from ‘applications’) for mobile phones and tablets (as well as on the internet).

Some typical examples of established serviceware mashups include Panoramio.com, Twittervision.com and Wikipediavision. Panoramio.com combines Flickr-style photo hosting with Google Maps, so that users can find photos taken in particular places, or discover where a particular photo was taken. Twittervision mashes together the Twitter micro blogging API with Google Maps to show where in the world ‘tweets’ are being made in close to real time. Wikipediavision (lk ozma.net/wpv) is similar. It shows,
in close to real time, from where in the world changes are being made on Wikipedia.org.

Mashing up has been made relatively easy for people at large to do by the growth of the Web 2.0 platform. Writing on the cusp of the current apps-creating explosion, David Berlind (2006) compares the ‘old’ paradigm of applications operating on a computer desktop with the ‘new’ paradigm of applications operating on the ‘webtop’ in terms of the relative difficulty/ease in programming such applications. He observed that the emergence of Web 2.0 services and resources meant that the technical requirements threshold for being a ‘developer’ have been greatly reduced, and that a mashup can now be created in a matter of minutes:

Before you had to be a pretty decent code jockey with languages like C++ or Visual Basic to turn your creativity into innovation. With mashups, much the same way blogging systems put Web publishing into the hands of millions of ordinary non-technical people, the barrier to developing applications and turning creativity into innovation is so low that there’s a vacuum into which an entire new class of developers will be sucked. It’s already [i.e., in 2006] happening.

(Berlind 2006, n.p.)

Sites like Programmable Web (Programmableweb.com) provide a quick entree to current mashup culture. It provides how-to guides, serves as a portal to other sites providing information and tools, showcases a ‘mashup of the day’, maintains a categorized archive of mashups, and lists mashups most recently written for the site or otherwise submitted to it. At the time of writing (29 October 2010), Programmable Web’s mashup of the day was a French innovation called ‘Where is My Train?’ It mixed a Mappy map with a database for French regional trains, so that by accessing the site – at Wimt.fr – users can check where their train is in close-to-real-time.

At the level of mashing up internet serviceware as a new literacy and, correspondingly, using mashups to meet one’s purposes, many variables come into play. Developers may, for example, be innovating with a view to making money by creating a successful application. This will involve identifying potential user groups with which they may or may not share purposes and affinities. Alternatively, developers may create a mashup in the first instance to meet a need they themselves have and, secondarily, make it available to others who share their need or interest. This may be the case with many mashups created by fans and enthusiasts, who have no commercial interests and, instead, simply aim to develop an application that enhances the pleasures or satisfactions of people who share their interest or affinity. A typical example here is MyFavBands (Myfavbands.com), which
merges iTunes, Last.fm, and Spotify meta data APIs to provide information about the latest releases and any upcoming concerts in your city for the bands whose names you enter into the service. From the standpoint of users, finding mashups is straightforward. A basic online search quickly leads to portals like Programmable Web, and from there it is simply a matter of entering a search on the site or searching by category links.

In terms of knowledge and skills, this kind of remix requires such things as identifying the need or purpose to be served by a mashup, the kinds of APIs and programming tools that will be needed, where any required data will come from – the kind of database to be added to the mix in cases where data are needed – determining the level of coding skills presupposed for building the mashup and, in the event of not having the required coding knowledge, finding out where and how to get it or, alternatively, whether there are tools that can create a component without the need for coding. In addition, developers have to ensure they have the necessary application server capacity, know what programming language is compatible with the APIs to be used, know how to get an API ID and sign up for an API where necessary, and know where to go for help where needed (e.g., Programmableweb.com; Openmashup.org).

In the remainder of this chapter we provide more detailed discussions of fanfiction and anime/manga fan practices, as two particularly popular contexts of new literacies practices among young people.

**Reflection and discussion**

Go to Programmableweb.com and locate a range of mashups. For each mashup, address the following questions:

- What can it be used for? What does it do?
- What might have motivated the developer to create it?
- What kinds of people are likely to use it?
- Does it ‘add value’ to its original components? If so, how?
- Would you use it? If so, when, why, and how often? If not, why not?
- How would you rate the significance of this mashup? On what grounds? Relative to what values?
Fanfiction: remixing words and content

Fanfiction – or ‘fanfic’ to its aficionados – is where devotees of some media or literary phenomenon write narratives using ‘pre-existing plots, characters, and/or settings from their favorite media’ (Black 2009: 10; see also Jenkins 2006b; Thomas 2007b). Most fanfic is written as narrative, although songfic and poetryfic also are popular forms and some fictions are carried as manga drawings and comics. Some fics incorporate (remixed) song lyrics, to underscore themes. ‘Costume play’ or cosplay – e.g., dressing up as favourite manga and anime characters – and live action role plays based on a favourite popular culture text are also gaining in popularity (for still more categories, see Wikipedia 2010f). Some commentators recognize forebears to contemporary fanfiction dating far back into the past; for example, to the 1400s with Robert Henryson’s sequels to some of Geoffrey Chaucer’s poetry (Pugh 2004). The phenomenon as we know it today, however, is usually related to the advent of serialized television shows. The *Star Trek* television series, which first aired in 1966 and rapidly gained a cult following, is credited with helping establish fanfiction as a distinct genre and social practice (Jenkins 1988, 1992). From the first episode, fans began writing their own stories set within the *Star Trek* universe and using key *Star Trek* characters. These fanfic writers mimeographed and bound their stories into handmade books or magazines and distributed them at *Star Trek* fan conventions, fan club meetings, or via mail. Since then, fanfic has become an established genre and, increasingly, a subject for academic study (see, for example, Jenkins 1992; Somogyi 2002; Black 2006; Thomas 2007b).

The most popular media inspiring fanfiction readers and writers, in order of contributions on the pre-eminent fanfiction affinity space, Fanfiction.net, are books, anime/manga, (video) games, TV shows, cartoons, movies, comics, plays/musicals. At time of writing (November 2010), books and anime/manga far outstripped the other media as popular catalysts for creation, measured by counts of fanfictions uploaded to Fanfiction.net. The *Harry Potter* books had generated around 482,000 fanfics at the time, followed by the top anime/manga item, *Naruto*, which had inspired around 255,000 fics. The most popular game stimulus, *Kingdom Hearts*, had generated 57,000 fics, and 42,500 fics were based on the most-favoured TV show, *Supernatural*. The *Teen Titans* cartoon had generated around 27,500 fics; the *Star Wars* movie, 25,500; the *X-Men* comic, 10,000; the US musical *Rent*, 7,000 fics. In the miscellaneous category, Wrestling had inspired over 24,000 fanfics. Interestingly, canonical works do not fare as well as one might expect. The Bible has generated almost 3,000 fics on
Fanfiction.net, but canonical books that are read in schools fare relatively poorly by comparison (e.g., *Pride and Prejudice* has generated fewer than 1,450 fics; *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 355; *Jane Eyre*, 220; *Catcher in the Rye*, 116; and *Moby Dick*, 3).

Early TV show catalysts, like *Doctor Who* (1963–89; 2005–present) and *Star Trek*, remain popular, but are now dwarfed in terms of popularity as fic generators by other shows, including *Supernatural, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, CSI* (all versions), *Stargate SG-1, House, M.D., Hanna Montana, Law & Order*, and *X-Files*. Besides *Naruto*, the most popular anime/manga catalysts include *Inuyasha, Yu-Gi-Oh!,* and *Card Captor Sakura*. Among cartoons, *Avatar, The Last Airbender, X-Men Evolution,* and *South Park* span high to mid-range popularity. Besides *Star Wars*, the most popular movie generators of fanfiction include *Pirates of the Caribbean* (all titles), *High School Musical*, and *X-Men* (all titles). After these, the *Harry Potter* movie series, the *Twilight* series, and *Lord of the Rings* trilogy are among the most popular.

Fanfic writing can be classified into a number of different types, constituting different kinds and degrees of content remixing. The most common of these include ‘in-canon writing’, ‘alternative universe stories’, ‘cross-overs’, ‘relationshipper (or shipper) narratives’, and ‘self-insert’ fanfic:

- **In-canon writing** maintains the settings, characters, and types of plotlines found in the original media text as far as is possible, and simply adds new ‘episodes’ or events to the original text (e.g., a new ‘episode’ of the television show *Eureka* that maintains the characters and setting as faithfully as possible and that builds directly on the narratives and character histories and adventures already developed within the series itself). Pre-sequels and sequels are popular versions of in-canon writing.

- **In alternative universe stories** elements – characterization, setting – from an original media text are altered in some way to explore a ‘what if’ scenario within an otherwise in-canon fic (e.g., a sympathetic characterization of an evil character, changing the group of friends surrounding the main character).

- **Cross-overs** bring characters from two different original media texts together in a new story (e.g., characters from *Star Wars* brought together with the world of *Harry Potter*).

- **Relationshipper (or ‘shipper’) narratives** focus on establishing an intimate relationship between two (often minor) characters where none existed or was downplayed in the original text. These texts can focus on heterosexual relations (e.g., between *Star Trek*’s Admiral Kathryn
Janeway and Chakotay characters), or homoerotic/homosexual relations between characters (e.g., between Star Trek’s Captain Kirk and Mr Spock). The latter kind of fanfics are also referred to as ‘slash fiction’.

- In self-insert fanfic, writers insert themselves as recognizable characters directly into a narrative (e.g., many young female fanfic writers write themselves into the Harry Potter series in place of Hermione, one of Harry’s closest friends; many writers invent a character that is a mix of themselves and attributes from popular culture characters and insert this hybrid character into their text).

This classification of fanfic types provides an indication of the kinds of ‘mixings’ that go on within fanfiction as remix. There are almost no limits to hybridity here. The character of fanfic as remix is often most richly apparent in the writing of younger authors as they move across an array of media and cultural genres to combine their own stories and characters with existing ones in new narratives that may be complex and require the reader to have read widely and/or viewed or played a range of anime-related shows or games in order to fully appreciate the warp and weft of each story. One of our research informants, Silver Excel Fox (S.E.F.), talked about some of the direct influences on her own story writing, which include Greek mythology, the Harry Potter stories, the Bible, romance stories, hacker culture, thriller/adventure movies, and a range of anime and manga texts like Inuyasha, Yu Yu Hakusho, and Sailor Moon, among others:

S.E.F: Like in Greek mythology. They have the River Styx and they have the ferry man who will take you down to the underworld, or wherever you’re going. And–

Michele: Have you done that at school?
S.E.F: I don’t know. I just like Greek mythology. She [points to her mother] got me into it, and I kind of stuck with it.

Michele: It sounds like it’s helped you out in terms of–
S.E.F: It has, because the girl in my story – in the original myth it would be a guy – it’s a girl, and she’s pretty. It’s like the person who is taking you to your death is a girl, and she’s ((laughs)) – like, I’m dying and you’re taking me ((laughs)) And she rides an oar, which kind of makes sense because she’s on the River Styx. You’re gonna need something to get up that river! ((laughs)) And Yusuke [a character from Yu Yu Hakusho] goes and he meets kind of the Japanese version of Jesus.

(interview, 2005 by Knobel and Lankshear)
The kinds of remixing practices engaged in by fanfic writers produce unmistakably creative texts that draw on a range of content and resources. They support O’Reilly’s claim that cultural ‘creativity is rooted in re-use’ and reinvention (in interview with McManus 2004: n.p.). Ian McDonald, himself a celebrated science fiction writer, discusses how remixing practices are very much in keeping with current times, and argues that the strong trend toward using material from a range of literary and non-literary sources is ‘a product of our technological ability to surf, sample and mix’ (in interview with Gevers 2001: n.p.). He goes so far as to claim that, ‘[a]nyone with an eye on the zeitgeist would agree that the art of the edit will be the cultural skill of the new century’ (ibid.).

Fan fiction was a well-established practice before the development of the internet and a lot of fanfic activity still goes on outside of online environments (Jenkins 1992). Nonetheless, the explosion of the internet has had a massive impact on the scale and culture of fanfic. It has enabled almost infinitely more people to actively participate in contributing and critiquing fanfic than was previously possible. Prior to the internet becoming a mass medium, fanfic was circulated person to person among relatively small circles of aficionados and subjected to sustained critique. Authors received peer comments and suggestions for improving their stories usually in face-to-face encounters or, perhaps, via snail mail. Today, however, fanfic narratives in the tens of thousands are posted in open public forums on the internet, to be read and reviewed online by anyone who cares to do so. A Google.com search early in November 2010 for the term ‘fan fiction’ returned 17,300,000 hits, while a search using ‘fanfic’ as a keyword returned 5,610,000 hits, indicating a strong online presence.

The internet ‘geography’ of fanfic is complex. A good place to start is with Fanfiction.net, a pre-eminent online fan fiction site founded in 1998. This website has a searchable archive-plus-discussion board format and a link to open source writing software. Fanfiction.net hosts hundreds of thousands of fanfics, organized by categories. The front page provides an ‘at a glance’ sense of the site. Most of the page is taken up with news about recent developments on the site (e.g., forums can now have moderators, or a software glitch has been fixed). There is a simple menu bar across the top of the page. This menu can be used to find newly uploaded works, to access different fanfic communities, to search the site (by author pen name, story title, or summary), to go to discussion forums associated with each category of fanfic (in November 2010 there were almost 1800 forums for Harry Potter alone on Fanfiction.net), to access the site directory (organized by pen names and categories of fanfic and communities), and to open the
site’s online dictionary and thesaurus. Individual fanfic titles have links to their reviews.

Fanfiction reflects *par excellence* participatory culture as conceived by Jenkins and colleagues in terms of environments and social practices where there are relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another.

(Jenkins et al. 2006: 3)

Anyone with an interest they want to read or write fanfiction about can sign up to sites like Fanfiction.net and begin writing, reviewing, discussing, and so on. The ‘long tail of the web’ is alive and well here, to the extent that it is easy – indeed, common – to find fans with strictly minority interests contributing the sole fic on a topic and nonetheless drawing support and encouragement. For example, one of just two authors remixing *Moby Dick* on Fanfiction.net posted a short (ten single lines, 112 words) opening chapter to a proposed fic titled *Mutiny*. The author notes accompanying the work included confessions that ‘my summaries kind of suck’ and ‘I didn’t know what genre to put it in either.’ The opening chapter narrative has a crew member, Starbuck, in Ahab’s cabin, while Ahab was asleep. Starbuck finds Ahab’s gun and is wondering whether or not to shoot him. Among the four reviews is one from an obviously erudite contributor, ‘Bleeding Heart Conservative’ (3 June 2010), who offers beautifully understated constructive critique and strong encouragement to go on, saying:

SERIOUSLY? No! Ahab’s such a great character ... and if Starbuck gets him early, Moby Dick will never get his chance!

All the same, I do wish to say that I am delighted that you chose to write about Ahab at all. It seems so few do. Thank you very much for sharing (and I second the idea of taking ‘I suck at summaries’ out of your summary. Even if you’re absolutely convinced that something sucks, NEVER admit it!)

(at Fanfiction.net/r/5603274/)

This exemplifies the overwhelmingly ‘friendly’ and supportive culture of reviewing within online fanfiction, previously discussed in some detail in Chapter 3 (see pp. 76–9). One of our research informants expresses, from
the standpoint of a novice author, what reviews mean to her and do for her work.

_Michele:_ The reviews that you get. Do you pay attention to them?
_S.E.F:_ Oh, yes, I always read my reviews. I have 24 and most are for one story. And I was so happy ‘cause the first time I posted it, I got two.

_Michele:_ Perfect.
_S.E.F:_ That was the thing. These were the people that I knew and they were complimenting my story, and I was sitting there ((her eyes widen in an expression of delighted surprise)). I actually bounced down the stairs! ‘Oh my God, I got reviews! Oh my God! Oh my God! Oh my God!’ And then I got even more reviews. ‘Oh my God, this is cool! They’re reading what I wrote. They read my stuff. Yes!’

_Michele:_ I know reviewers sometimes make suggestions about what you should do. Do you make any changes based on what they say?
_S.E.F:_ Yes, because there was one person who kind of commented on my spelling of somebody’s name.

_Michele:_ Ahhh.
_S.E.F:_ Because there are two different types of Rikus in video games. There’s the Riku from _Kingdom Hearts_, and that’s r-i-k-u. And there’s the girl Rikku from _Final Fantasy_. Now, _Kingdom Hearts_ is kind of like a merge between Disney and _Final Fantasy_ all by itself. That’s how they kind of distinguish the material; Rikku as a girl is r-i-k-k-u, and a guy is r-i-k-u.

(interview, 2005 by Knobel and Lankshear).

Fanfiction.net’s forums provide aficionados of particular works and/or authors with a space to raise topics for discussion with other users sharing similar interests. The forums are often moderated by volunteers and have specific participation rules, including the requirement that all discussion, content, and language be suitable for teens. Forums are text-specific – organized around the popular text that fan writers are remixing. So, for example, within Fanfiction.net’s category of movie-focused forums, there were 146 separate discussion forums associated with the _Pirates of the Caribbean_ movies in November 2010. Topics and purposes addressed within these forums are wide-ranging, including discussion of the original movie and its sequels; speculations on the development of romantic relationships.
between different key characters; interest in pirate lore in general; ideas for role playing *Pirates of the Caribbean* fanfic; plot bunny topics (e.g., speculations on storylines should Jack Sparrow – the pirate at the heart of the movie – have a son or daughter); discussion of historical accuracy within the movie itself, as well as within relevant fanfics; listings of people willing to act as ‘beta’ readers, who provide feedback on narratives prior to them being posted publicly for review, and so on. Similar discussion thread purposes and uses can be found across all the forums hosted by Fanfiction.net and similar sites like Fictionalley.org, Fanfics.org, Fictionesque.com and Myfandoms.com.

Online spaces that help resource fanfic writers abound on the web. Between large-scale general showcasing sites like Fanfiction.net, these include more specific sites like *The Force* (Fanfic.theforce.net, see p. 77–8 above), *Plot Bunny 101* (Plotbunny101.tvheaven.com) and *How to Write Almost Readable Fan Fiction* (Littlecalamity.tripod.com/HowTo2.html). As we saw in Chapter 3, *The Force* provides guidelines for beta readings of works prior to final publication. It also offers writing tips posted by members, random writing contest-type events that specify story parameters to which fanfic authors must adhere, a fanfic lexicon, a submissions style guide for members, and links to email-based discussion lists, among other services. *Plot Bunny 101* is a site for fanfic writers to use to share ‘plot bunnies’: ideas for narratives that someone makes freely available to others for developing into their own stories. Plot bunnies can range from a ‘story-starter’ idea through to a full-blown plot line and set of characters for a story. Like *Plot Bunny 101*, *Plot Bunny Adoption Center* (Sg1hc.com/pbac) is an online repository of story starters and plotline sketches. *How to Write Almost Readable Fan Fiction* offers a guide to writing that includes advice on character development, guides to grammar and punctuation conventions, and general advice concerning spell-checking and proof-reading, how to avoid repetition and redundancy in stories, and so on.

Of particular relevance to language and literacy education, Rebecca Black (2008) provides a compelling account of fanfaction in relation to second-language acquisition. At age 11, Tanaka Nanako migrated to Canada as a non-English-speaking native speaker of Mandarin Chinese. When she had been learning English for just two and a half years she began writing fanfiction and posting it online. Her work became popular and attracted large amounts of feedback and, over time, thousands of reviews. Nanako’s experience is a good example of how engaging in fanfiction writing practices – which includes drafting stories and posting them online for feedback, polishing them in light of readers’ comments and suggestions, reviewing others’ work, discussing narrative elements with
others (e.g., plot development, setting details, character development), borrowing characters from existing texts and movies and creating original stories with them, to name only a few – can, over time, contribute to becoming an accomplished narrative writer. Her case also shows how social networks of interested others can serve to improve a learner’s written mastery of a new language.

Reviewers provide Nanako with constructive criticism of various kinds, almost invariably in respectful, sympathetic, and appreciative ways. They generally focus on errata that undermine their enjoyment of the fiction, and introduce their criticisms in humble, disclaiming, even self-effacing, ways; for example, ‘This is just an idea’. Nanako explicitly and repeatedly incorporates reviewer feedback into subsequent chapter revisions (cf., Black 2005a: 123). Black argues that while Nanako’s English-language development was supported in school, reviewer feedback on the technical and literary dimensions of Nanako’s fanfiction also contributes directly to enhancing Nanako’s English writing proficiency (Black 2008). Nanako’s spelling improved demonstrably over time, as did her subject–verb agreement within sentences and use of tenses, as reviewers pointed out these errors and modelled how to fix them.

A key dimension of fanfiction writing is staying ‘true enough’ to the original source narrative – in Nanako’s case, to the Card Captor Sakura anime series for the most part – for the new narrative to be recognizable as ‘fanfiction’. This requires good fanfiction writers to have a close, detailed knowledge of the texts from which they’re drawing their ideas and resources. Reviewers comment, for example, on how Nanako is developing characters taken from an anime series, and the extent to which she is plausibly showing sides of them not necessarily explored in the original anime (Black 2007: 130). Nanako’s use of Japanese terms (she is learning Japanese at school), along with Chinese Mandarin terms, in her English-language narratives generates special admiration from her readers. Reviewers regularly reference Nanako’s expert anime knowledge, and in so doing, have the opportunity to display their own social and pop culture knowledge. This, in turn, becomes an exchange based in solidarity and affiliation that constructs a well-defined social network around Nanako’s online fanfiction texts.

Multimediated anime fan practice: the case of Maguma

Matt Lewis (aka ‘Maguma’) is a 21-year-old African American college student, from a Jewish middle-class family, living in California. He participates in a range of anime fan practices, and is active on sites like
AnimeMusicVideos.org, DeviantArt.com, Cosplay.com, Youtube.com, and Livejournal.com. Matt contributes online under multiple aliases, including ‘Maguma’, ‘Dynamite Breakdown’, and ‘Tsugasa’ (and can be searched for online under these names). ‘Maguma’ (a giant monster character appearing in the Japanese scifi movie Gorath) is his favourite online alias. We will use ‘Maguma’ as the name for our case study of anime fan practices and new literacies, and hereafter refer to Matt as Maguma.

When we first interviewed Maguma, he was a high school student. At that time he had been formally diagnosed as having ADHD, and described himself in an email interview as ‘an average student, Cs, Bs and a couple of Ds in Statistics and Economics (tricky stuff >w<)’. In his current (November 2010) profile description on Cosplay.com he describes himself as ‘a college student aspiring to become a famous artist and Mangaka’. A ‘mangaka’ is a prominent manga artist and writer, and the term typically refers to Japanese manga artists. Maguma is currently enrolled in an art programme at a local community college.

At 15, Maguma was introduced to anime music video (AMV) remixing by a friend, who showed him a classic AMV on the internet. As noted earlier (p. 66), AMV is a popular form of remix that combines and syncs clips of anime (Japanese cartoon animations) with a chosen song. Maguma hadn’t paid much attention to manga or anime before his friend showed him ‘Narutrix’, an AMV faux movie trailer parodying the Matrix movies.

He told us

The first AMV I officially saw was ‘Narutrix’ which is what got me into Naruto [the anime series] and downloading anime in general. After that I saw an AMV for Azumanga Daioh [another anime series] and decided to give it a shot.

Before beginning to remix his own AMVs, Maguma watched hundreds of AMVs online – accessing them via YouTube and the premium online archive and AMV network, AnimeMusicVideos.org (or AMV.org). Through watching these music videos Maguma became a fan of anime in general. He spent hundreds more hours watching series like Naruto, Street Fighter Alpha, Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann, Digimon, Fullmetal Alchemist, Tenjou Tenge, and Azumanga Daioh.

When Maguma began making his own AMV remixes, early in 2005, he was initially most interested in understanding how to put them together at a technical level; ‘I would produce like 1 a night, but they weren’t amazing.’ As he spent more time watching anime series and movies, and watching AMVs, he began to develop a stronger sense of what was valued and why in ‘good’ AMVs. These days Maguma will typically spend hundreds of hours
remixing an AVM, particularly if he plans to submit it to a competition. He will have spent hundreds more watching anime online, downloading resource files, searching for appropriate scenes, and so on, before starting his production phase and subsequent editing iterations.

To create his AMVs, Maguma originally used the free video editing software that ships with Windows: *Windows Movie Maker*. He was aware that this software was looked down upon by many seasoned AMV remixers, but explained that by tinkering with the software and seeing what it could be pushed to do, he’d been able to ‘create effects in *Movie Maker* that programs like *Adobe Premier* can do’. At the same time as he was exploring the functionality of *Movie Maker*, Maguma paid attention to how others were making their AMVs. He explains,

I get a lot of inspiration from other videos on technical stuff and effects by watching others. Just because someone uses an effect doesn’t mean you can’t. Monkey See, Monkey do, or Make AMV, haha!

Key skills he developed included learning how to overlay moving images, superimpose still images over moving images, and the like. Other skills including being able to sync the clips both literally and symbolically to the music and the lyrics of the song soundtrack by manipulating clip length and transitions within *Movie Maker*. He learned early on how to rip DVDs of an anime movie or series, how to locate and download anime series episodes from file-sharing networks, and how to find, download, and convert anime clips from YouTube and other sites. He also makes use of his online networks and sometimes emails other AMV remixers and asks for copies of a particular clip they’ve used if he can’t find it by any other means.

As time went on, Maguma was able to upgrade his software: ‘I started to use Sony Vegas to get added effects. Now I export the clips I want to use and upload them into Vegas and edit there.’ Maguma likes to push himself and the software with respect to the effects he’s able to achieve in his video editing, and is prepared to spend large amounts of time mastering new effects. In his video ‘Frontlines’ (Youtube.com/user/maguma#p/u/30/FHZj7nxSygg), Maguma talks about ‘finally’ getting the chance to ‘experiment with masking’. He translated this masking effect into lay terms as ‘that big chomp that happens about two-thirds of the way into the video and transfers to the more heavy instrumental section’. The ‘chomp’ comprises an overlaid animation of a large mecha or robot mouth closing around the viewing area; the effect appears for less than a second in the video. According to Maguma, this masking effect alone ‘took 2 hours to edit @_@’.
Maguma began creating and posting AMVs as a member of AnimeMusicVideos.org under the alias ‘Dynamite Breakdown’ (and can be looked for there under that name). His account currently contains 45 AMVs. Each comprises hundreds of short video clips taken from across an entire season of an animation series on television, or from across an anime movie and its sequels. These clips are painstakingly reassembled into a sequence that may summarize an entire season, explore under-developed or absent relationships within a series or movie, examine a range of concepts like ‘belonging’ or ‘triumph of the underdog’, and so on. Transitions between certain clips and video effects applied to clips also play an important role in AMV, and decisions about which options to use are made carefully. The overall sequence is synced with an appropriate song. Upon finding that many of his AMVs had been posted by others to YouTube without acknowledgement that he was the original remixer, Maguma opened a YouTube account. He did this reluctantly, because at the time YouTube didn’t support high-resolution videos (unlike AnimeMusicVideos.org). Despite his initial reluctance, Maguma has become an active and engaged user of YouTube – uploading his AMVs, along with videos from cosplay events and video soliloquies, and subscribing to other users’ accounts. Maguma’s AMVs are widely viewed and he responds to most people who leave comments, by advising how he achieved a certain effect, providing information about a given series or movie, and suchlike. He likewise offers supportive and constructive criticism on other people’s uploaded AMVs.

For Maguma, creating a new AMV is a recursive process. Sometimes a song he hears strikes him as eminently ‘AVM-able’. Other times, he has an idea that has grown out of an anime series he would like to explore, and which he keeps on the backburner until he hears a suitable song. The match between the selected song and the anime used in conjunction with the song is very important to Maguma: ‘If you use a Linkin Park song with shows like Azumanga Daioh, it’s totally pointless.’ (Linkin Park is a hard rock band, while Azumanga Daioh is a light-hearted, humorous anime.) He explains:

Once I get the song I listen to it over and over again so I can get a sense of the song and am able to work with the clips without having to play the song at the same time, which makes it very hectic [i.e., listening to the song and editing clips simultaneously can be hectic].

Maguma mostly makes in-canon fan videos – fully situated within a single anime universe like Naruto rather than built from clips taken from different series. He typically uses the Naruto series and movies as the anime source for video clips, although he also makes in-canon AMVs using Tengen
Toppa Gurren Lagann, Digimon, Fullmetal Alchemist, Tenjou Tenge, and Azumanga Daioh. He classifies most of his AMVs as ‘action’ genre, categorizing the others as comedy, sentimental, or drama (with some overlaps occurring). About his preference for creating action AMV, Maguma says:

‘I really enjoy making action AMVs due to the rush one can get from it; I like that feeling in the back of my head that just goes “Woah...”’ He also enjoys making drama AMVs ‘cus with it you can try to express a storyline or bring out a trait of a character that not many notice or get to see’.

Maguma’s best-known AMV, ‘Konoha Memory Book’, is set to Nickelback’s song, ‘Photograph’. It features video clips taken from across the first season of Naruto. The lyrics speak of someone looking through a photograph album and how the photos jog long-forgotten memories about growing up poor, skipping out on school, getting into trouble with the law, hanging out with friends, first love, and the like. The narrator is leaving his hometown. Despite all that’s happened, he’s leaving reluctantly and with fond memories. Maguma uses this basic thread to follow Naruto – the principal protagonist in the series – through a range of adventures.

The first verse of the song is accompanied by clips presenting the main characters – Naruto Uzumaki, Sasuke Uchiha, Sakura Haruno, and their ninja sensei, Kakashi Hatake – and conveys a sense of some of the mischief and danger Naruto and his fellow ninjas-in-training enact and encounter while developing their skills and characters, e.g., playing truant from school (synchronized clips show students escaping through a school window and running outside), and getting in trouble with the law (clips show someone holding up a record sheet to a sheepish Naruto). The initial segue to the chorus moves from bright yellow and red colours – matching the singer’s comment that life is better now than it was back then – to darker, more muted images emphasizing bittersweet memories recounted in the song. At this point the video includes many close-ups that show an individual standing at a remove from others, often with text (e.g., ‘Time to say it’ and ‘Good-bye’) superimposed over images and aligning with the lyrics as they’re sung. The initial chorus closes with scenes from a beloved elder’s funeral. ‘Good-bye’ does double work here, syncing with the song and farewelling the master sensei.

The remainder of the song follows a similar pattern. At times there is a literal syncing between lyrics and images (e.g., mention of cops in the lyrics is matched with images of law keepers in Naruto). At other times the ‘sync’ between lyrics and images has a kind of frisson to it, like the image of Naruto kissing Sasuke (a boy) as the singer recalls his first kiss. This particular ‘move’ references the corpus of Naruto/Sasuke relationship fiction and music videos made by anime fans. Sometimes, the sync between
lyrics and images in this remix is more conceptual – as when the lyrics speak of missing the sound and faces of childhood friends, while the clip sequence emphasizes how Naruto, Sasuke, Sakura, and their sensei, Kakashi, have formed a close bond over the course of living and training together. Second time around the chorus ups the visual tempo with a bricolage of images that suggests time passing. This bricolage includes pages of the original print-based Naruto manga series superimposed over images from the Naruto anime series. This speaks directly to Naruto having both manga and anime forms, and links to the concept of the photo album at the heart of the song. An image of Naruto running away from the reader is superimposed over other clips, again emphasizing the sense of time passing. This same animation of Naruto is repeated in the closing bars of the song as the singer explains that it’s time to leave his hometown and move on.

Maguma first uploaded ‘Konoha Memory Book’ to AnimeMusicVideos.org (see Tsugasa 2005) in late 2005. AMV fans found it and subsequently uploaded it to YouTube for others to view. ‘Konoha Memory Book’ attracted close to two million views across these accounts until it was removed by YouTube for infringing the song’s copyright. Before its removal, many fans on YouTube identified it as their ‘all-time favorite AMV’, with some even revealing it moved them to tears while watching it. Maguma worked especially hard on this particular AMV for submission to the 2007 Anime Expo in Los Angeles where it won all sections, although contest rules permitted just one official prize: the Popular Vote Award. It has spawned numerous copy-cat videos using the same song and Naruto video clips. An anime fan saw it at the expo and declared on a cosplay discussion board: ‘I loved it! My little sister loved it! Our friend loved it and she’s not even a fan! It really brought out the highlights of the beginning of the series and reminded us of why we first got into it…..’. Possibly, though, the stand-out fan tribute of this remix was a karaoke version of ‘Konoha Memory Book’ that also was uploaded to YouTube for a while. As a mark of its enduring popularity, at the time of writing, copies of his video are currently hosted on websites whose interface is in Belgian, Russian, and French, as well as English, and on many different file downloading service and mirror sites (e.g., Megaupload.com, Accuratefiles.com) located on servers around the world.

Maguma has pursued a deep understanding of what needs to be done to create what other AMV remixers consider a ‘good’ AMV. This includes avoiding as far as possible using clips with subtitles or series end-credits (because the printed text in these clips rarely matches what’s happening in the song), ensuring high-quality clip resolution across the entire video (e.g., clips downloaded from YouTube can have a much fuzzier resolution than
clips taken from a DVD), ensuring a seamless ‘sync’ between the video and the music/song, and paying attention to the mood and meaning of a song, and matching this with the colours and action in the accompanying video clips. That said, Maguma accepts that he has to work with what he has available, and often includes clips with subtitles, downloaded clips, and title and credit sequences.

Non-fans of anime can enjoy and appreciate the stories Maguma tells, but anime fans see many additional layers of meaning actively built into his videos that non-fans inevitably miss. If the viewer doesn’t understand the tense relationship between Naruto and Sasuke in the original anime they will only interpret the closing scene in ‘Before We Were Men’ as two youths fighting in the rain, rather than Maguma’s intended exploration of a possible deep connection between the two.

Maguma is sensitive to anime fans watching his videos and regularly posts ‘spoiler’ alerts alongside his AMVs to warn viewers that key plot points will be given away. He uses alphabetic text in other interesting ways, like superimposing text or other devices within the AMV to help viewers interpret his work. He identifies this as a ‘fan service’ (e.g., in one video, words like ‘passion’ and ‘angst’ appear at specific points in the video to help convey his meaning).

His notes for each video uploaded to AMV.org specify the genre, identify the song and band used, provide some additional background details on each, and invite users to leave comments and to rate his videos. These requests for comments bespeak Maguma’s investment in his AMV making and his interest in being recognized for his work. Requests for comments include statements such as, ‘Please leave a comment if you watch this! I love hearing what you all have to say’ and ‘Well I hope you all enjoy it. Please please PLEASE leave an opinion.’ Part of the motivation behind requests for comments is that this kind of feedback is highly valued on AMV.org as a marker of influence. Maguma also recognizes his friends who are interested in anime and/or AMV. His ‘liner notes’ for his AMV on AMV.org sometimes include ‘shout outs’ to specific friends and a dedication to a teacher who gave him an anime DVD. Maguma also uses terms familiar to anime and Japanese pop culture in his contextual notes, too. For example, the information text Maguma wrote for one AMV concludes with the full-caps text: ‘WARNING YAOI-ESQUE ENDING!!!’ ‘Yaoi’ is a term used outside Japan by fans of Japanese manga and anime to describe a genre of manga and anime that focuses on male/male love (Wikipedia 2010g). Yaoi texts are not necessarily sexual in nature, nor are they considered to be gay texts per se. Maguma explains that he described this particular
AMV as yaoi because ‘[t]he AMV overall has that kind of passionate feeling of the two [Naruto and Sasuke] longing for each other kind of sense. And in the end they’re just practically face to face in the rain, and with the lack of a visual and the rain still running it leaves you to think what might happen.’

Maguma is an avid artist and his profile page on DeviantArt.com shows how he draws on many of the characters from his favourite anime series, remixing them in various ways (e.g., making shorter, more childlike ‘chibi’ versions of characters). He also focuses on drawing original takes on established manga characters, like Naruto and Ryuuko. DeviantArt.com is a site for serious artists – with many professional artists showcasing their work here and providing important insights into their own creative process, not to mention important feedback on new artists’ work. This is not a network for the faint-hearted or easily intimidated. Feedback can be brutally honest and searingly evaluative. A good deal of his uploaded work is in-process, and Maguma regularly invites viewer feedback on this work and seeks advice on directions to take his drawings in. He also writes and draws original manga comics and posts these for feedback. A review of a recent first page for a new manga comic includes:

panel 1: nicely done i can see the stance perfectly as it was supposed to be depicted though i didn’t notice the monkey or what he was doing. (i suppose you can blame the scanner for that)

panel 2: The tail has to have a little more wiggle motion if there is any, it must be the scanner.

panels 3, 4, 5: I can scarcely tell what is going on, focus on it using concentration lines.

The review ends on a positive note, and Maguma responds to each suggestion, agreeing with some of the critique and elaborating on what he was trying to achieve. This pattern is repeated elsewhere throughout his online gallery.

Maguma’s AMV remixing has led to an avid interest in anime cosplaying, and he devotes considerable spare time to designing costumes, making accessories and other costume bits and pieces, role playing narratives with others on weekends, attending anime and manga conventions in character, organizing events such as weekend meet-ups and convention competitions. He also posts reviews of recently read manga novels. He mostly documents his cosplay in photographs uploaded to his Cosplay.com and Flickr.com profiles, as well as to his Livejournal blog – which is especially active.
Maguma uses it to alert his network to upcoming conventions and events, to organize groups of cosplayers to get together, and to seek help with creating particular costumes. He’s currently creating his first costume entirely from scratch, and a recent blog post sought advice on what kind of material would be best for a Pokémon Ranger cape. In an extended conversation between Maguma and five others, cotton twill emerged as the favoured option. He attended Anime Expo 2010 as Charlie Nash, a character from the Streetfighter Alpha 3 video game. On his Cosplay.com profile, Maguma lists owning 23 different costumes, and has posted several hundred photos of himself in character. His characters are drawn from a wide range of anime and manga resources, including video and card games (e.g., Pokémon), manga (e.g., One Piece, Dragon Ball Z), and anime movies and television series (e.g., Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann).

Maguma is a good example of someone who set out from what we have called a ‘projective’ orientation to AMV creation and has progressively morphed into a full-fledged fan deeply immersed in a participatory culture of anime/manga fan practices. Jacobson (2010: 31) notes that for many people ‘creative remix is one way to see what they can achieve with the technology they have’. This was a key motif in Maguma’s early interest and activity in AMV, along with seeing how AMVs are put together. Several

Reflection and discussion

To what extent and in what ways does the case of Maguma convey a sense of engaging in new literacies, with respect to the following?

- new technical aspects
- a new ethos
- Discourse memberships
- making, communicating, and negotiating meanings
- contexts of social practice
- encoded texts

To what extent and in what ways is the account enriched by visiting Maguma’s online spaces: AnimeMusicVideos.org; Dynamite breakdown.DeviantArt.com; Youtube.com/user/maguma; Cosplay.com/member/48130; Maguma-sama.livejournal.com?
years later he remains proud of what he was able to do using Windows Movie Maker to edit his remixes. These days his fan involvement is diverse, rich, and highly dedicated to helping build and resource, in the company of others, the fan practices and communities he is passionate about.

This chapter has focused on writing as media remix. Chapter 5 focuses more centrally on conventional alphabetic texts, as we turn our attention to participating in blogs, wikis, and other online collaborative writing spaces and practices.
## Appendix: Some popular everyday remix practices

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of remixes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Making machinima videos</td>
<td>Expressing a fan identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Expressing enjoyment of a game, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exploring new ways of conveying narratives or social commentaries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Experimenting with becoming a short film director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To maintain social relationships with friends and others</td>
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<tr>
<th>Some literacy dimensions</th>
<th>Some online spaces, sites, and examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative development skills using a set</td>
<td>• Halomachinima.wikia.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>range of pre-established resources (e.g.,</td>
<td>• Warcraftmovies.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting, the ‘look’ of characters)</td>
<td>• Wiki.secondlife.com/wiki/Machinima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video editing skills – being able to use</td>
<td>• Machinimart.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>editing software to splice together differ-</td>
<td>• Machinimafordummies.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>ent stretches of recorded action to create</td>
<td>• Koinup.com/on-videos</td>
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<tr>
<td>a cohesive whole</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how to use video clip tran-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sitions and video effects in ways valued</td>
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<tr>
<td>by other machinimists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using audio recording and editing software</td>
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<tr>
<td>to create a soundtrack; including voices</td>
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<tr>
<td>for dialogue and music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how to create a soundtrack</td>
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<td>that doesn’t sound ‘tinny’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how to manipulate game</td>
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<td>resources to suit narrative purposes (e.g.,</td>
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<tr>
<td>changing character point of view by</td>
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<tr>
<td>changing ‘camera angles’)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Player character manipulation skills –</td>
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<tr>
<td>how to move player-controlled characters,</td>
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<tr>
<td>how to have characters look like they’re</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>interacting with one another</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinds of remixes</td>
<td>Kinds of involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing programming scripts that ‘run’ inside the game and manage character movements in real-time (not a necessary skill)</td>
<td>Understanding how non-player characters work within a game and within a machinima movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring the medium as artistic, social commentary and/or political expression</td>
<td>Understanding how to leverage the original game story for maximizing the machinima narrative (this narrative may have very little to do with the original game storyline or characters, as in <em>Red vs. Blue</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May be a ‘bragging’ video about a clan’s online game playing strategy</td>
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</table>
For commercial entertainment purposes

As with making machinima in general, but with close attention paid to television-quality production values

Understanding of the culture of machinima making when tied to a popular multiplayer game (like World of Warcraft)

For commercial marketing purposes

As with making machinima in general, along with a strong sense of how to create a 30-sec. video that has a marketing spin

• Season 10, Episode 8 of the television show, South Park (titled: Make Love not Warcraft)
• Red Dead Redemption machinima movie short (30 mins.) directed by John Hillcoat. Aired 26 May 2010, on the Fox network in the USA
• Volvo’s ‘Game On’ commercial, which mixes ‘real life’ video with Grand Theft Auto-like machinima footage
• Coca-Cola’s Grand Theft Auto-style ‘Coke Side of Life’ commercial

Making movie trailers

Expressing a fan identity
Expressing enjoyment of a movie, series, book, etc.
Translating an enjoyed narrative from one medium to another
Expressing a movie director or movie maker identity

Knowing how to access original movie footage to use in the remixed trailer (e.g., downloading relevant clips; ripping a DVD)

Knowing how to convert video files if needed (not all file types are compatible with all video editing software)

Paying attention to original movie storylines and leveraging them where possible in creating a new movie storyline

• Fanfiction movie trailers that remix, for example, Harry Potter and Star Wars video clips to ‘map out’ a ‘new’ movie (see Thomas 2007b). Or – alt-universe-style – Harry Potter mixed with Pride and Prejudice
• See, for example, Twilight/New Moon/Eclipse fanfiction movie trailers on YouTube.com
• See Harry Potter fanfiction movie trailers on YouTube.com

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<tr>
<td>For humorous, entertainment and/or spoofing purposes (e.g., creating a ‘new’ trailer for an existing movie that shows it to be the exact opposite of what it really is, or something else altogether). Sometimes referred to as a ‘recut’</td>
<td>May involve knowing how to include written text in the remixed video to help convey the new storyline</td>
<td>Using video and audio editing techniques to create a sense of ‘wholeness’ out of disparate clips</td>
<td>• See Batman fan films on YouTube.com</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paying attention to spoken language in the clips and using this to full effect, or muting it to make the visual clip ‘work’ within the new trailer</td>
<td>Can include shooting live action footage and setting it to the movie soundtrack (e.g., Twilight trilogy movies set to live action scenes that spoof the vampires and werewolves). This involves understanding the importance of multiple camera angles, shooting distances, framing, etc.</td>
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<td>Selecting clips judiciously, based on the spoof to be achieved</td>
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</table>
Selecting relevant music for the new soundtrack to help convey the new intended movie genre

Using video editing techniques (e.g., cutting, splicing, transitioning) to create a seamless whole

Locating/creating and importing suitable soundtrack into video editing software, and syncing movie trailer and music appropriately

Fanfiction short movies

Expressing a fan identity

Expressing enjoyment of a book, series, movie, etc.

Experimenting with becoming a short film director

For artistic purposes; it may involve a retelling or original interpretation of a favourite book or other non-movie narrative

May involve using machinima techniques and editable resources, such as Second Life, to provide settings and characters for new storylines

May involve taking clips from an original movie and re-editing them to create a new movie narrative that extends or adds to the original movie(s)

Including ‘opening credits’, such as a clip from a real movie production company credit (e.g., the Dreamworks company credit sequence), or a faux company credit sequence created especially for the fan film to give it a stamp of authenticity

- Thehuntforgollum.com
- Buffy vs. Edward: Twilight Remixed by Jonathan McIntosh
- Transformers fanfiction movies
- Dracula’s Guest by Alessandro Cima
- Theforce.net/fanfilms

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making music videos</td>
<td>Expressing a fan identity (e.g., of a band, of anime, of rap music)</td>
<td>Locating the target song file and ensuring it’s in a file-type compatible with the video editing software to be used. This might include understanding digital rights management codes added to songs that limit the ways in which they can be used.</td>
<td>• AnimeMusicVideos.org (see, for example, Konoha Memory Book, Narutrix, Euphoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A music video in this sense centralizes the song, rather than uses songs to simply accompany a series of slides or clips, such as those created to celebrate someone’s birthday or wedding anniversary</td>
<td>Expressing enjoyment of a particular song or music track</td>
<td>Locating or generating (e.g., via machinima, via stop-motion animation) video clips to splice together to create the video portion of the music video. Understanding that there needs to be some logical connection between the song and the visual images – this doesn’t mean a literal match, but that there’s at least something being told that’s ‘understandable’</td>
<td>• Search YouTube.com for ‘machinima music video’ or for Still Seeing Breen)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing support for indie music, or for music that is controversial in certain circles</td>
<td>Understanding how to sync video and audio and how to fine-tune this using digital video editing software. Understanding that the meaning of songs operates on a number of levels, and how this can be leveraged within a video in terms of dominant colours used, the pacing of action within or across clips, etc.</td>
<td>• The Grey Video (by Laurent Fauchere and Antoine Tinguely to support Danger Mouse’s ‘Encore’ song from his Grey Album music remix)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Creating fanfiction

Expressing a fan identity

Expressing enjoyment of a book, series, movie, etc.

Expressing or developing a writer’s identity

To become a proficient fiction writer

To maintain social relationships with friends and others

Promoting the fan space

Understanding the structure and purpose of narratives and using this to guide writing

Paying attention to the source narratives and characters

Crafting an engaging plotline that remains ‘believable’ despite the new twists given to characters and extant storylines

May include writing contextualizing notes to known and unknown readers about the story

May include understanding how chapters ‘work’ in fanfiction writing and making use of them

May include knowing how to post narratives online – which includes deciding on the best forum, and how to categorize one’s story within the forum

May include writing reviews and providing feedback on others’ narratives

Using good grammar and spelling; or using bad grammar and bad spelling for developing characters, etc.

Responding to feedback either in ‘author notes’ (see Black 2009) or by incorporating feedback into revisions

• FanFiction.net
• Thequidditchpitch.org
• Patronuscharm.net
• Fanfiction.mugglenet.com
• Harripotterfanfiction.com
• Trekfanfiction.net
• Fanfiction.wikia.com
• Halo.bungie.org/fanfic
• Theforce.net/fanfiction
• Starwars.wikia.com/wiki/Fan_fiction
• Twilighted.net
• http://www.free-ebooks.net/?category=Fan+Fiction (examples)
• Fictionalley.org
• Wikihow.com/Write-a-Fanfiction
• Halcyon-shift.net/gift-shop/squeebook
• Expressions.populli.net/dictionary.html

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<tr>
<td>Photoshopping</td>
<td>Humorous purposes – to make others laugh, or simply to entertain oneself or close friends</td>
<td>Knowing how to import an image into an image editor, Understanding how to use a range of tools within the image editing software to crop, blur, smudge, erase, colour match, etc, Being able to match camera angle, colours and resolution, etc. when adding cropped photographic elements to a base image, May include knowing how to upload final photoshopped photos to an online space, Understanding how to create a recognizably meaningful juxtaposition of images</td>
<td>Fanfiction.net/s/5298455/1/A_TenStep_Guide_to_Writing_Twilight_Fan_Fiction, Booksie.com/editorial_and_opinion/article/pocketxfullxfdxdreamsxa-writers-guide:-writing-ocs-and-original-characters-in-fanfiction, KnowYourMeme.com, Worth1000.com, Fark.com/contests, Somethingawful.com/d/photoshop-phriday, Propagandaremix.com, Adbusters.org, Photoshopfacelift.com, Photoshopz.com, PSdisasters.com, Photoshopdisasters.com</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Creating fan art
Expressing an identity
as an artist
Expressing a fan identity
Developing drawing/ artistic skills

Being able to draw/paint, etc.
Understanding how perspective, shadows and shading, etc. work in 2D drawings
Knowing that simply tracing images is not valued as fan art
Developing a personal ‘style’ that is nonetheless in keeping with the original texts/images
Knowing how far to modify/tweak/remix original images while having them remain recognizable

May involve asking for or sharing drawing tips with others in forums (e.g., how to draw shine on hair)
May include constructively reviewing others’ fan art
May include responding to and incorporating feedback from others into one’s own artwork
May involve knowing how to draw using a digital tablet and stylus
May include knowing how to scan an image for uploading to an online space

• TheOtaku.com/fanart
• Artisticalley.org
• Fanart.lionking.org
• Blizzard Entertainment fan art (us.blizzard.com/en-us/community/fanart/index.html)
• Search DeviantArt.com for ‘anime’ or ‘manga’

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</table>
| Political remix (video, images, etc.) | Expressing a political or social commentary or critique | Requires being up to date with current news events, or familiar with significant social issues | • Knowyourmeme.com  
• Politicalremixvideo.com  
• Feministfrequency.com/2010/08/remixing-pop-culture-event-videos/  
• Rebelliouspixels.com  
• Video24-7.org/video/political_remix.html  
xing@Www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk /cultbort/ chapter.php?id=8 |
|                  | Expressing a journalistic identity | Having something to say that appeals to others  
Identifying how to convey a lot of meaning in a limited amount of space or time  
Knowing how to edit digital video or photoshop or create audio tracks  
Being skilful with juxtaposition – of images, text and images, soundtrack and video clips, voicetrack and video clips, etc.  
 Knowing how to tap into spaces where the remix is likely to attract widespread attention  
Perhaps understanding how to anonymise the origin of the upload of the political remix | |
Remixing music

Expressing being a fan of particular songs/musicians or of a particular TV show or movie’s soundtrack

Exploring new music creation possibilities without necessarily being a singer or musician

Remixing original lyrics as a response to a popular song for personal or friends’ entertainment purposes. May celebrate the original song, or may be a social commentary on the song itself

Remixing news and other events as songs

For commercial artistic or entertainment purposes

Identifying music, songs, or samples that can be remixed to form a coherent new song or music track

Paying attention to rhythm and music genres

Understanding the importance of seamless transitions between music samples

Knowing how multiple tracks within a remixed music project work when using music editing software

Identifying a receptive online space for sharing remix with others

Knowing how to use audio editing software to splice together different music elements into a cohesive whole

May include writing new lyrics or generating voice-overs for certain sections of the remix

May include a public performance dimension

Identifying music, songs, or samples that can be remixed to form a new song or music track

May pay close attention to dance rhythms

Includes a public performance dimension

• The Grey Album (DJ Danger Mouse), which remixes Jay-Z’s Black Album and the Beatles’ White Album

• Bed Intruder Song by Autotune the News

• Doctor Who theme song remixes at whomix.trilete.net

• Harry Potter movie soundtrack remixes

• Overclocked Remix (remixed video game soundtracks; Ocremix.org)

• ccMixter.org

• Remixfight.org

• See live remixes by popular DJs like: Armin van Buuren, DJ Rap, Lisa Lashes, Tiësto, David Guetta

• The album, The Score (The Fugees), which remixes folk and rap music

• The song, ‘Tengo un Sentimiento’ by Calor Norteño (remix of Black Eyed Peas’ ‘I Gotta Feeling’ and traditional narcocorrido themes and lyrics)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mashing up web applications</td>
<td>To facilitate some activity, interest, or pursuit</td>
<td>Involves knowing about APIs</td>
<td>• Twittervision.com (combines Twitter with Google Maps)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To inform others for personal or professional use</td>
<td>Knowing what databases to access and how (e.g., indexed, cartographic, aggregated)</td>
<td>• Wikipediavision (combines Wikipedia’s recent changes feed with Google Maps; lkozma.net/wpv/index.html)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To reuse/repurpose existing content for specific purposes</td>
<td>Knowing what existing service or database will mash up successfully with which other(s)</td>
<td>• Causeworld.com</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May serve commercial purposes (e.g., selling items, encouraging consumption of a service, a single up-front user fee)</td>
<td>Having access to how-to guides</td>
<td>• Myfavbands.com</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing created services with others, and knowing how to do so</td>
<td>• Google.com/enterprise/marketplace</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding the difference between desktop/webtop and apps-based mashups</td>
<td>• PandaApp.com</td>
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<td>In some cases, be able to put together a user interface for the mashup (e.g., using HTML, CSS, Javascript)</td>
<td>• Programmableweb.com</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have access to server space for hosting the mashup application, and knowing how to load it to the server and make it available to others</td>
<td>• Apigee.com</td>
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<td>• Openmashup.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosplaying/Live action role playing</td>
<td>To express a fan identity</td>
<td>Knowing the character being played very closely – including the larger storyline of the series or movie from which the character comes</td>
<td>• Cosplay.com</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To express solidarity and friendship</td>
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<td>• Cosspace.com</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Acparadise.com</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Enjoying developing ad-libbed narratives during cosplay

- Designing a costume that recognizably ‘belongs’ to the character being played
- Coordinating with other people and their characters within a cosplay session
- Knowing how to sew, fashion realistic-looking accessories (from cloth, wood, even metal, etc.), or knowing someone willing to do it for you
- Accessing costume patterns, how-tos and ideas online
- Knowing how to locate and purchase difficult to make items (e.g., wigs, shoes)
- Being able to ad lib and enact a collaborative storyline during cosplay
- May include attending conventions in character
- May including blogging about costumes and cosplay sessions
- May include establishing an active profile on a cosplay website and posting photos and videos of cosplay, along with commenting on others’ posted items

Modding video games

- To express a fan identity
- Understanding the logic of a game’s system (how different objects typically work within the game, how characters interact, how the storyline plays out, etc.)
- Counter Strike, originally a mod of Half Life

(continued)
### Appendix (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of remixes</th>
<th>Kinds of involvement</th>
<th>Some literacy dimensions</th>
<th>Some online spaces, sites, and examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To extend the enjoyment of a game for self and others</td>
<td>Deciding whether to extend the original game in some way, or simply using the game as a resource to create an entirely new game</td>
<td>Likely to involve lots of trial and error and retrial, etc.</td>
<td>• Wikihow.com/Make-a-Simple-Mod-of-a-Game</td>
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<tr>
<td>To hone skills as a video game developer</td>
<td>Paying attention to design, layout, what can and cannot be done within the terms of the original game to make the mod workable or user friendly, etc.</td>
<td>Using online tutorials and help spaces to assist with a mod</td>
<td>• Thепrohack.com/2010/05/gamemodding-tools-collection.html</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Using tool sets or level editors for modifying games (these often ship with PC games now)</td>
<td>Deciding to what degree to modify the game (e.g., adding a new weapon through to adding an entire new level or map to a game)</td>
<td>• Psx-scene.com/forums/ps3-gamemodding/</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May involve sharing tips and problem-solving advice on forums</td>
<td>Can include identifying ways of sharing mods with others. This, in turn, includes finding space to host the mod for download, etc.</td>
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