What is an Edit Jam?

By EdLab’s Design Center at the Gottesman Libraries, Teachers College, Columbia University

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2007 EdLab
Above: Edit Jam Promotional Poster

FRIDAY 11.17.06
4:00 - 9:00 pm | Library 5th Floor

CONFLUENCE OF IMAGINATIVE MINDS
Graphic Designers, Video Artists, DJs, VJs, and the Japanese Textile Artist Ai Kijima
CREATING ANALOG AND DIGITAL ART COLLABORATIVELY | LIVE
What is an Edit Jam

Introduction

The first Edit Jam was held in EdLab’s Atelier on November 17th, 2006. As an experimental event, Edit Jam was a confluence of imaginative minds exploring both analog and digital production tools – such as computers, a turntable, oil sticks, digital video cameras, and a sewing machine – to create visual materials collectively, simultaneously, live and uncut. The simultaneous use of tools was intended to spark new modes of expression, interactivity, and creation.¹ This book, based on a collection of graphics and images from the first Edit Jam, is a source book for future Edit Jams and other educational events. With images and text, EdLab staff have captured underlying aesthetic themes that describe the multi-modal and multi-sensorial experience that serve as the foundation of this kind of event.

Edit Jam was an event about media. Media surrounds us, and beckons us to use our senses. It excites us and it soothes us. It charms us with its color, atmosphere, and feeling. It appeals to our intellect and intrigues us. Sometimes it seduces us, and sometimes we ignore it, but in whatever form it takes, it has the potential to guide human thought and action. Advancements in media production lead to innovative new possibilities in cultural life. We see this everyday on television, on the internet, and in print. In the news, we hear about the difference it makes. Everyone can be an artist. Everyone can tell his or her story. So what are educators to make of this?

Edit Jam was an outgrowth of the work of EdLab and its atelier workspace, and a response to the educational possibilities of new media. EdLab – a research, design, and development unit at Teachers College, Columbia University – engages in work that contributes to the improvement of educational institutions and the broader evolution and reconfiguration of the education sector. The mission of EdLab is to engage in conceptual development, demonstration projects, and new educational research to explore and document diverse possibilities for the future of education. EdLab pursues this mission by involving scholars and educators at Teachers College and around the world in a continuing conversation about the future.

Edit Jam was hosted by EdLab’s team of designers, whose regular work involves the creation of multimedia projects and exhibitions. The team is comprised of educators and educational researchers who are also talented artists, designers, and multimedia producers. Guided by the team’s desire to develop a new kind of learning environment for this production work, Edit Jam explored new territories of collaborative production, where participants are not solitary artists, but rather components of a creative circle.

¹The original concept of the event was created by Joachim Castellano, and this description is his.
Teachers, students, and educational researchers were invited to participate in the creation of artistic materials alongside EdLab’s designers and other invited artists. At the heart of the event were the artists’ workstations – both analog and digital. These workstations represented technologies that are available to artists, but also blended new technologies alongside more traditional tools. For example, cameras and computers were used to capture analog products and processes, accelerate the reproduction of images, and enable a live broadcast of the event over the web.

Artists working with analog tools created diverse kinds of artistic output. An illustrator developed a wall-sized mural of narrative images with charcoal and pastels, while a painter worked on a series of smaller motifs with oil sticks and brushes. Another artist used a sewing machine to create textured, sculptural mosaic out of scraps of fabric, paper, and plastic. Participants were encouraged to work alongside these artists using the same materials.

Artists working with digital tools created hybrid media that blended digital effects with images of analog products. The event was captured by several videographers, who also helped participants use their professional camera equipment. A VJ (video jockey) mixed video inputs from several workstations, and broadcast them on large screens. A DJ (disc jockey) sampled music and mixed tracks to keep the beat loud and engaging. Designers photographed the event, manipulated these photographs using software, and printed the resulting images on large-format printers. All these artists coached participants on the use of digital tools.

On a conceptual level, Edit Jam was about meaning-making and transforming values through engagement in artistic processes. Artists and designers were asked to develop prior and ongoing artistic and philosophical inquires at the event. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the meaning of the event through different channels of observations (e.g., audio and video recording) and feedback (e.g., interviews). Endowed with a context by an institution of educational research, Edit Jam was also conceived as an event to immerse educators and researchers in a media-rich learning environment. Researchable outcomes have been located around several disciplinary interests, such as art education, technology education, and instructional design.

An exciting outcome of the first Edit Jam has been the emergence of similar events in locations beyond the College. The event’s methods and energies were brought back to classrooms in New York City, where teachers and students experimented and innovated with art and technology in new ways. Only days after the event, a mural project was implemented in a Brooklyn classroom, and another teacher was inspired to create a video podcast with students as part of a history lesson.

These outcomes are all in line with EdLab’s mission to explore new trends in learning technologies. At Edit Jam, EdLab staff brought these interests to bear on the structure and content of artistic processes. In the future, Edit Jams will be designed around themes to help researchers and educators push their ideas and projects further, while also serving as hands-on workshops for learning about new developments in art, media, and technology.

B. Hughes
May 2007
The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience.
The salient quality of Edit Jam as an educational environment is its density. Participants find themselves enveloped by a myriad of symbolically charged stimuli storming down at their senses. Edit Jam poses the question:

“What to do with all of this?”

The intensity and pervasiveness of stimulation is probably not conducive to certain cognitive processes. Aesthetic density is noisy and distracting. But Edit Jam is at its best when it comes to engaging intuitively with media – its form and content. In its own way, noise allows participants to engage in learning creatively and meaningfully. Perhaps Edit Jam can serve as a good model for inviting students to conceive of new ways of approaching a problem, to allow them to welcome previously unimagined possibilities with excitement.
ideas
inevitably
So far as ideas are concerned, meditation on any theme inevitably separates who does the meditating from the opinion prevailing around him.
DJ Breezy facilitates ethical inquiry in collaborative environments. He began life as a small boy in a Nordic village, befriended by indigenous fauna (mainly squirrels). In this landscape, he specialized in fort building with large sticks until, traveling eastward as a young man, he graduated to a metaphysical architecture.

Surrounded now by Red Brick Buildings, he basked in the warm glow of heat lamps (designed for French fries) and charted his future as a media artist and educator. While living in California in 2000, he sold a novel to Quentin Tarantino, and began work on his masterwork (then titled: "Paradigms for Breezy." He currently lives in New York City with his cat Steve.


Self-taught/homeschooled-ish. Likes to press buttons. Likes to make music, write, make things look pretty. Started at BMCC and undergrads at GS.

Pusqualie SOF: Dubbed "spoiler of fun" for unwittingly ruining a haggis-laden party at a Scottish pub during the early nineties.

Since then he has laid low on the Maine coast as a lobsterman and jazz clarinetist, with a few international ventures every once in a while. This is his first NYC appearance.

Due in large part to the dualistically, hybridized nature of his ontogeny and the vastitude of his intellectual prism, Pedantic specializes in making the simplest task extremely complex by systematically pursuing versatility as a guiding practice and seeking to apply snark and pith, where applicable. Within the context of his interest in atavistic virtues, the pursuit of the aesthetic principles of dialectical primitivism and the ideals of verismo, Pedantic frequently displays a fervent appreciation for the fidelity relevant to the music of Tupac Shakur, as described in Joseph (2006).

It is quite natural, therefore, that in phylogenetical terms, Pedantic is a rather rare species that approaches his role as neophytian VJ quite parsimoniously, albeit, in that regard, the aforementioned biographical details and the subsequent demonstrative nature of the relative virility of his cosmology, further sustain the fact that Pedantic views the notion of cladistics with an eager disdain, as he would also any other taxonomical, bio-social construction, as one might solely anticipate.


Golo (1978-2001) pursued the graphic arts seriously for four years. Historians agree on the historical insignificance of his artistic legacy.

However, there is a controversy about the existence of a secret legacy of design principles and techniques putatively in orally transmitted amongst artists at University of Buenos Aires and possibly other South American centers of higher learning. He disappeared mysteriously in May 2001.
DJ Breezy facilitates ethical inquiry in collaborative environments. He began life as a small boy in a Nordic village, befriended by indigenous fauna (mainly squirrels). In the village, he enjoyed making things, starting with building fortresses using large sticks. As he grew older, he graduated to metaphysical architecture. Surrounded now by Red Brick Buildings, he basked in the warm glow of heat lamps (designed for French fries) and charted his future as a media artist and educator. While living in Harlem, he worked on his masterwork (then titled: "Paradigms for Breezy." He currently lives in New York City with his cat Steve.

D.Amica is originally from the backwoods of Connecticut, but has lived in Richmond, London, and now, Harlem. Her likes include art (creating it, archiving it, visiting it in museums), sushi, roasting marshmallows, Breakfast at Tiffany's, her Scandinavian ancestry, the color pink, Haribo gummies, the history of TC, gangster rap and designer sunglasses. She enjoys creating large oil paintings, but also favors marker, charcoal, oil-stick, and other mediums that allow for creative messiness. Her dislikes include clowns, nyc tap water, scratchy fabrics, large crowds of people, clutter and waking up early.

Orca specializes in arctic beats. He developed an interest in DJ'ing after first hearing Underworld's Born Slippy being played at a club in Scotland during the summer of 1996. Initially enamored with the progressive house movement popularized by Sasha and Digweed, Orca evolved from deep Chicago House, to Underground Resistance - Richie Hawtin style Detroit Techno Minimal Techno, while always maintaining a love for Drum & Bass and Jungle, and more left-field electronica ala Aphex Twin, Autechre, and anything Massive Attack-ish. Orca prefers to DJ cinematically, telling stories through sonic soundscapes. When Orca finds rare free moments, he likes to chill just like in this picture here.

Stitch is a textile artist who recently moved to New York City from Chicago. Originally hailing from Tokyo, Stitch has a self-professed passion for the color, images and pattern that are inherent to fabric. In her spare time, she enjoys perusing flea markets and thrift stores in search of cast off fabrics to produce her machine quilted fabric collages which are a blend of Japanese and American popular iconography.

TalongTuta is an oxymoron in Filipino. "Tuta" means puppy, but in Tagalog slang it means "blind follower". "Talon" means "sudden movement or jump", but in Tagalog slang it means escaped prisoner. The character is based on a sea lion and the Bakunawa, a Filipino dragon with bat wings and whiskers. TalongTuta is an escape artist who at night treads the suspended animation thaw (working on his graphic novel), and is a psychomotor vigilante by day (student teaches in art).
in a world of materials

explorations

in a world of materials
EDIT JAM, AS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE,

is founded on the premise that there is an educational dimension to physical environments. An objective of the first Edit Jam was for participants to explore the expressive possibilities of different digital and analog media in creative interaction with their environment and, through the sharing of that environment, an exploration of dialogue with each other. No specific assignment, guidance, or direction was provided.

To experience the environment, however, is to engage its inherent structures. The DJs play a pulsating beat; images appear in succession on screens, walls, and the ceiling; people weave around workstations and find a place to observe; web cameras connect to workstations; pieces of colored fabric slide under a sewing machine; walls covered with butcher paper wait for someone, anyone, to do something. The physical environment, at once both passive and dynamic, demands a response.

When we think about thinking we usually do it through spatial metaphors: “inside” one’s mind, “I was following your argument but then I got lost,” adopting a “point of view,” taking a “side” on a controversial issue, etc. When combined with the prevailing epistemological individualism of our time, the educational implication of this way of thinking about thinking is evident: when we change our thinking, we change our world. Education in this sense aims at fostering the capacity to critically conceive unrealized possible worlds. The ideal, then, is the intellectual, the artist, the leader who explores uncharted terrains of knowledge and action: One who successfully finds a different way of looking at things and affects change in the world.

Edit Jam is an exploration of the opposite effect. It begins with a transformed environment that invites us to think differently and lends itself to be further transformed by means of the very media it makes available.
EVERY INTELLECTUAL EFFORT SETS US APART FROM THE COMMONPLACE, AND LEADS US BY HIDDEN AND DIFFICULT PATHS TO SECLUDED SPOTS WHERE WE FIND OURSELVES AMID UNACCUSTOMED THOUGHTS.

- José Ortega y Gasset
jam [jam]

verb (jammed, jam•ming)
1 [trans.] squeeze or pack (someone or something) tightly into a specified space • push (something) roughly and forcibly into position or a space • [trans.] crowd onto (a road) so as to block it • [trans.] cause (telephone lines) to be continuously busy with larger number of calls • [intrans.] push or crowd into an area or space
2 become or make unable to move or work due to a part seizing or becoming stuck • [trans.] make (radio transmission) unintelligible by causing interference
3 [intrans.] informal improvise with other musicians, esp. in jazz or blues

noun
1 an instance of a machine or thing seizing or becoming stuck • informal an awkward situation or predicament • short for TRAFFIC JAM. • [often with adj.] Climbing a handhold obtained by stuffing a part of the body such as a hand or foot into a crack in the rock.
2 (also jam ses•sion) an informal gathering of musicians improvising together, esp. in jazz or blues.
At the same time, purpose implicates in the most organic way an individual self. It is in the purposes he entertains and acts upon that an individual most completely exhibits and realizes his intimate selfhood. Control of material by a self is control by more than just “mind”; it is control by the personality that has mind incorporate within it. All interest is an identification of a self with some material aspect of the objective world, of the nature that includes man. Purpose is this identification in action.

JOHN DEWEY, ART AS EXPERIENCE
Ident identification in Action.
I hope Edit Jam can be a place of experimentation and learning without becoming overly loaded with the baggage of *expectation*. The reason for modifying art education in this way is not because something is wrong with the current models, but rather that there is room for experimenting with formats to fit learners’ needs.
Two central features of art education are 1) the transmission of curiosity about the world, and 2) a process by which individuals sharpen their ability to investigate the world. The arts comprise rich traditions by which investigations take shape and culminate in communication about experience. A book about Edit Jam will document what happened and what it looked like. It will not leap to conclusions about the effectiveness or meaning of the event.

Art education is in service of an educational ideal. Every person, at any moment during his or her life, should explore the physicality and mutability of the sensory landscape.
Analog and Digital

Each media has, if you will, a particular temperament. Paint, charcoal and ink are fond of expressiveness and texture; video lends itself to movement and the integration of images and sound; computer graphics are apt for work of precision and intensity of color; photography works with light and represents the visual world. Experimentation with a particular medium is, indirectly, an education in the modes of expression that, either technically or conventionally, accompany that particular medium.

From the point of view of media’s expressive qualities, the question implicit in Edit Jam is: what happens when people work in different media simultaneously at the same location? Some participants performed music, others recorded video or simply projected live images on large screens. Others opted for drawing and painting, and while some took photographs of all that was going on and downloaded them and manipulated them with software. Through these collaborations, sometimes intentionally and most of the time accidentally, media revealed a fuller extent of its possibilities and notions of what was expressively conceivable expanded for the participants.
graphic design

visual arts

on a computer screen.

the digital

and about a dozen other ways to find a means of expression
The world is not so organized so that one can be certain that hard work will make the world a better place. One cannot be sure that working makes a difference at all, except perhaps in its smaller regions: the places we live, the relationships we have, and the human heart. This event is not meant to demonstrate that changes have been made in any of those places. It is an event of uncertainty.
1. stating the problem in a way that will allow a solution. The greatest challenge to any thinker
"the dialogue... of

The Dialogue of Analog is a run on sentence....

where minute movements in a flick of the wrist or the pivot on the ball of the foot can spark inspiration that accelerates beyond hesitation or at times takes advantage of its incorporation either way making visceral movements into marks of the most of epic proportion that can tread the line yet stays on the side of deliberation rather than extortion

in the throes of this falling concentration, purpose is born which executes a tic tac back and forth on the wave between brain, nerve, muscle, skin, chalk and then back pausing in that movement on Jude’s shoulder is an oscillation akin to pong which seems to be turning beauty into the beholder grace turns savage not fugazing at the finger and not genteel subscribing to that Lee scenario of don’t think but feel, but wait it gets worse than Onyx, this isn’t turning out the way I want it, I lost the way, what a waste of time, Like some hot shot killing that transformation Prime,

For some reason I keep going, holding back a sea of whining, is it because I subconsciously see a silver lining... why do I go through the motions despite getting more blue or does this process know something more than I do...

Oh hold up, what’s going on... This is turning out better than before, This close physicality has brought about a liberty that emits from every pore How did I to get to what I am now liking I am glad that muscle memory got me past my out-psyching Had my purpose included these obstacles to shake... And here I am thinking I had made a mistake...
...So now the movement shows me perspectives that give berth to a widening range
Uncovering cloaks of darkness and despair that now reveals that lovely change
Tricky thing is how to teach and say this, for trying to make this simple is hard
Gotta plan and be prepared and not always count on that river card

Yeah I know, it's not nice to gamble with a child's education
But I'm quite new to this art of coherent elaboration
For me it is going to take time...management needs class for this fella
And be merciful like 7th grade English teacher Mr. Cannemela
who forgave and enjoyed my incomplete sentence structure dialogue
Genius that he is, possibly predicting the language of the ever consuming blog,
Sporadic thoughts percolating into a collective truth that digital can turn analog...
Tangential thoughts come back around as the brown paper starts to grow a community
Butchering invisible captors that manipulate our fears thus building an immunity
To their fault-finding leers while we swim in our oceans of impunity
All this freedom coming from a bunch of marks
Is this a new temple with new types of harks
to escape routes to getting us closer to the honest and genuine and not the con
so 'til then let's relish our movements, and like this sentence let's run on and on...

I E Toledo 2007
"Yes" by Gonzalo Obelleiro (digital art created during Edit Jam from photographs of original artworks created during Edit Jam)
confluence of imaginative minds
You see something in your subject, of course, before you begin to paint it (though how much, even of that, you would see if you weren’t already a painter is a difficult question); and that, no doubt, is what induces you to begin painting; but only a person with experience of painting, and of painting well, can realize how little that is, compared with what you come to see in it as your painting progresses. If you paint badly, of course, that doesn’t happen. Your own daub comes between you and the subject, and you can only see the mess you are making. But a good painter – any good painter will tell you the same – paints things because until he has painted them he doesn’t know what they are like.

A Mass Media

In the near future, local media will supercede mass media. What counts as local will be similar as now, but unbounded by physical context. Unlike today, the majority of human interaction on the internet will not be spread out, but concentrated. Individuals, not spheres of culture, will create *locales*. The people we enter into dialogue with will be only slightly more or less rhetorically capable than us.

We will learn, and teach.
acknowledgments

event production

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