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Virtual Ethnography

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LAST MODIFIED: 25 JUNE 2013
DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199766567-0107

Introduction

In the early 1990s, there was a small group of anthropologists calling for the discipline to take seriously the impact of mass media on cultural beliefs and practices and to see the Internet itself as a rich fieldsite for analysis. By the early 2000s, the discipline responded with several anthropological studies of mass media and theorizations of new ethnographic approaches for studying virtual spaces. Since this time, there has been an explosion of virtual ethnographies from a variety of fields, including sociology, media studies, and information studies, as the popularity and utility of digital tools such as the Internet, smartphones, and tablets continues to increase. While ethnographic research, methods, and writing have long been staples within the discipline of anthropology, virtual ethnography continues to expand and problematize notions of what ethnography is. Traditionally, ethnography has been commonly understood as (a) a long-term, face-to-face, social scientific approach to fieldwork that includes researching and analyzing social formations, people, and cultural practices through participant observation in a central geographic site and (b) a genre of writing generated from this process of qualitative data collection that uses field notes, interview excerpts, and life narratives to explain and represent cultural beliefs and practices (see Ethnography). Building on these methodological and analytic approaches, virtual ethnography examines how computer-mediated-communications and digital technologies are used to shape, transform, and produce culture. As economic, social, and political processes have become more deterritorialized and transnational (because of processes like migration and technological innovation), researchers have created new ethnographic methods and theories to analyze these transformations. While traditional ethnography and virtual ethnography share an anthropological past, virtual ethnography challenges the discipline's long-held expectations of embedded, grounded research in one geographic site. Researchers are now engaging in a more mobile, multisited or "unsited" form of research that may cross spatial and temporal boundaries online, off-line, or a combination of the two. As fieldsites increasingly become networks, virtual worlds, and websites, ethnographers question key anthropological concepts and terms. Notions of what constitutes a community, how to engage in participant observation, and how to choose a fieldsite become increasingly complex as researchers attempt to complete ethnography in virtual spaces. The sections in this article address the quandary of issues and questions related to defining, engaging, and producing virtual ethnography.

General Overviews

As a precursor to thinking critically about virtual ethnography, researchers from multiple disciplines published annual reviews, edited collections, and journal articles examining the impact new forms of media and technology were having on the world. These discussions laid the groundwork for those engaging in ethnographic research in virtual spaces. Castells 2009 provides an expansive analysis of how the rise of the network society has generated a shift from the industrial age to the information age. Noting how innovations in technology mediated this shift, Castells argues that the resulting flows of information and power have transformed people's relationships to time and space. While Castells 2009 is a tome full of theoretical conclusions about these massive economic and social

transformations, Lister, et al. 2009 is an introductory textbook that makes many of Castells' insights about new media, technology, and networks accessible to undergraduates. This multidisciplinary textbook provides an overview of the theories and methods various disciplines have engaged in order to study the effects new media and technology are having on people and culture. Silver and Massanari 2006 is also a useful volume on new media for undergraduates, focusing on key theories within Internet studies. While engaging in their own virtual ethnographic studies, graduate students Robin Hamman and Jacqueline Warrell created websites that act as resource centers for researchers interested in virtual ethnography. Hamman's online magazine, Cybersociology, covers a variety of interesting topics including research on cybersex, cyber-romance, digital third worlds, and techno-spiritualism. Warrell's site, Virtual Ethnography Research Pathfinder, is an excellent source for graduate students, as she provides key research terms, information about conferences related to virtual ethnography, and short synopses on prominent books and journal articles. Focusing specifically on the discipline of anthropology, Spitulnik 1993 is one of the earliest comprehensive reviews of anthropological literature on the study of mass media, demanding that anthropologists turn their analytical lens toward the influences these media have on cultural practices and representations. Almost a decade later, Ginsburg, et al. 2002 seems to answer this call as one of the most prominent collections on new media in the discipline. Ginsburg, et al. 2002 and the annual review Wilson and Peterson 2002 encourage anthropologists to focus attention on the ways new communities are forming online and off-line through their utilization of the Internet and other forms of media.

Castells, Manuel. 2009. *The rise of the network society*. Vol. 1. 2d ed. The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture 1. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

The first of three volumes, this book highlights the economic and social dynamics of the information age and explains the workings of the network society on a global scale. Of most significance to those doing virtual ethnography may be the section titled "The Culture of Real Virtuality."

Cybersociology. 1997–1999.

An online magazine for social science researchers of cyberspace, edited by Robin Hamman, a former sociology graduate student at the University of Essex. Updated through September 1999, the magazine is full of useful articles discussing some of the challenges facing digital ethnographers.

Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds. 2002. *Media worlds: Anthropology on new terrain*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

One of the most prominent and oft-cited volumes on media studies in anthropology. The volume's editors and authors push the boundaries of what "counts" as ethnography by examining exciting topics such as the transnational circuits of media and the use of technology in cultural activism.

Lister, Martin, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, and Kieran Kelly, eds. 2009. *New media: A critical introduction*. 2d ed. London: Routledge.

With editors in the fields of visual culture, screen media, digital media, philosophy, and cultural studies, this introductory text provides a comprehensive look at the field of new media, its methodologies, and its impact on everyday life.

Silver, David, and Adrienne Massanari, eds. 2006. *Critical cyberculture studies*. New York: New York Univ. Press.

Provides a multidisciplinary overview of theories within Internet studies and the diversity of approaches used to study cybercultures.

Spitulnik, Debra. 1993. Anthropology and mass media. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **22:293–315.**

This review acts as an early call for anthropologists to engage in critical analyses of new mass media. Spitulnik discusses the relationship between anthropology and mainstream media's representations of various groups, while delineating some of the problematic uses of the term "indigenous media." Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Virtual Ethnography Research Pathfinder.

Jacqueline G. Warrell, a PhD student at the University of Calgary, organizes this online archive of key research resources for virtual ethnographers, including an overview of pertinent books, journal articles, podcasts, and webinars.

Wilson, Samuel M., and Leighton C. Peterson. 2002. The anthropology of online communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **31:449–467.**

While reviewing literature within anthropology that addresses questions related to community, identity, and power within online communities, Wilson and Peterson argue that the text, media, and technologies that comprise the Internet are not only part of the cultural sphere but are cultural products themselves. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Bibliographies and Archives

This section lists an online index, archive, and bibliography that will be useful for students and scholars alike. The Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies offers Book Reviews and a Courses in Cyberculture syllabus archive for ethnographers interested in reviewing textual resources on digital media and mass media or teaching courses on virtual ethnographic practice. Howard Rheingold presents his extensive bibliography on virtual ethnography on his website, the Virtual Community 2nd Edition Bibliography. Last, the Programme in Comparative Media Law & Policy (PCLMP) at the University of Oxford's Centre for Socio-Legal Studies has a great video archive on media and governance in countries around the world (Media and Governance in Developing Countries). The interdisciplinary program, founded by Monroe E. Price and Stefaan Verhulst in 1996, brings together scholars, policy makers, and practitioners interested in studying contemporary issues in global media law and policy.

Book Reviews. Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies.

The center provides a free, open-access index of reviews published from July 1997 through December 2009 on a variety of scholarly books related to digital media, mass media, and virtual ethnography.

Courses in Cyberculture. Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies.

The center provides a list of courses taught on topics such as digital anthropology, cyberspace ethnography, and ethnographic practice in virtual communities. Syllabi available.

Media and Governance in Developing Countries. Programme in Comparative Media Law & Policy, Univ. of Oxford.

This online video archive provides more than sixteen videos of seminars by researchers studying media and governance in developing countries.

Rheingold, Howard, and Moya K. Mason. The Virtual Community 2nd Edition: Bibliography.

This is the online version of the extensive bibliography available in Rheingold 2000 (cited under Virtual Communities). This resource is valuable to both students and researchers.

Journals

At the moment, there is no journal wholly dedicated to virtual ethnography. However, there are numerous academic journals that publish virtual ethnographic research and interdisciplinary journals focused on theorizing various digital technologies and qualitative research. American Anthropologist publishes a wide variety of anthropological texts from each of the discipline's subfields, including articles based on virtual ethnographic research. In fact, the editor-in chief of the journal from 2007 to 2012 was Tom Boellstorff, one of the leading anthropologists theorizing ethnography in virtual worlds. American Ethnologist and Cultural Anthropology cater toward audiences interested in social and cultural anthropology. American Ethnologist is committed to theorizing ethnographic methods and expanding notions of ethnographic research, while Cultural Anthropology has endeavored to democratize anthropological research in order to reach public audiences and those in the academy. The journals Qualitative Research and Forum: Qualitative Social Research are both dedicated to theorizing a diversity of qualitative methods and publishing the resulting research. Qualitative Research is a peer-reviewed journal that promotes multidisciplinary discussion about qualitative research. Forum is a completely free, international journal that is published in English, Spanish, and German; it published a special issue on virtual ethnography in 2007. The Journal of Contemporary Ethnography focuses specifically on ethnographic research and writing from multiple disciplines and has published quite a few examples of cutting-edge virtual ethnography. The Journal of Virtual Worlds Research is an open-access, academic journal comprised of research from some of the top gaming and virtual worlds scholars. The journal includes work on the history of virtual worlds, virtual ethnography, gaming, digital discourse, and strategies for using virtual worlds in education. New Media & Society is an interdisciplinary, international journal committed to understanding the connections between media, practice, and policy. While the journal is dedicated to the theorization of a broad variety of digital technologies and media, it has published numerous articles that would pique the interest of researchers interested in virtual ethnography specifically.

American Anthropologist. 1888–.

This journal is the flagship publication of the American Anthropological Association. Publishing research from all four disciplinary subfields, this peer-reviewed journal is one of the discipline's largest platforms for anthropological knowledge.

American Ethnologist. 1974–.

This peer-reviewed journal is one of the most prominent publications of social and cultural anthropology. It is committed to demonstrating the continued significance of ethnographic methods and writing and expanding how ethnography is defined.

Cultural Anthropology. 2007–.

This peer-reviewed journal, devoted to cutting-edge, ethnography-informed cultural analysis for academic and public audiences, published on its website several virtual issues that imagine anthropology's digital futures. These virtual issues combine photographs, videos, and access to online forums to encourage discussion on a variety of topics ranging from media studies to subaltern studies.

Forum: Qualitative Social Research. 1999–.

A peer-reviewed, multilingual online journal established in 1999, which is open access and free of charge. The journal's special issue on virtual ethnography was published in 2007.

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography. 1972–.

Published by SAGE, this international and interdisciplinary journal includes a diversity of research that uses ethnographic methods, including work from anthropology, sociology, and market research.

Journal of Virtual Worlds Research. 2008–.

This online, open-access, peer-reviewed academic journal is dedicated to the study of virtual worlds and society. The journal has published numerous articles relevant to those engaging in virtual ethnography, including a special issue in 2010 titled The Researcher's Toolbox, which offers assistance for researchers attempting to study virtual experiences.

New Media & Society. 1999–.

An international, peer-reviewed journal focused on research that investigates the relationship between theory, policy, and practice. The journal publishes research from multiple disciplines, including communication, media and cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, economics, and geography.

Qualitative Research. 2001–.

Published by SAGE, this peer-reviewed journal is dedicated to research on the methodological diversity and multidisciplinary perspectives of those completing qualitative research.

Alternative Terms

"Virtual ethnography" is a useful phrase for discussing methods, approaches, and technologies connected to doing research online in public and academic discourses. However, in the last decade or so, more terms have been created to shed light on the diversity of methods researchers are using and the various aspects of the Internet they are exploring. Within the discipline of anthropology, the term "virtual ethnography" has been somewhat interchangeable with the term "online ethnography." In 1993, at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting, a subspeciality called "cyborg anthropology" was established to study "how humans and nonhuman objects interact." Amber Case, a prominent cyborg anthropologist, organizes the website CyborgAnthropology. Identifying

Haraway 1991 as a foundational text for the subfield, Case claims that Haraway's celebration of the cyborg as a boundary-defying entity influences anthropologists studying how cyborgs disrupt dichotomous notions of life/death, space/place, and virtual/real. Case has also discussed cyborg anthropology in an interview on PBS, Amber Case on Cyborg Anthropology. In sociology, communications, and information and technological studies, "network ethnography" is commonly used to describe virtual ethnographic research based on networks, communities of practice, or other organizational forms that are built around new media. Digital tools are central to the relationships formed within these entities. Howard 2002 details some of the spatial and temporal issues network ethnographers encounter while studying these organizations that may be located throughout the globe and offers suggestions for overcoming some of these methodological challenges. "Digital ethnography" is a label for research that uses or examines digital technologies but may or may not be conducted online. Under this heading could be ethnographic research completed in a variety of "mediaspaces" (Couldry and McCarthy 2004) with digital cameras, televisions, inflight entertainment technologies, online questionnaires, or social networking sites, or the term could be applied to the product of ethnographic research. For example, Coover 2004 uses a mixture of texts, videos, photos, and audio to document, analyze, and present ethnographic research on digital technologies and Ghanaian visual culture. Mason and Dicks 1999 discusses the integration of audio, visual, and written sources in their online article, while delineating the challenges digital ethnographers may face. One of the largest explosions in virtual ethnographic research has taken place in the area of market research, which uses the terms "webnography" and "netnography" to describe these explorations. Combining the word "Internet" with "ethnography," Robert Kozinets coined the term "netnography" and describes how this approach is useful for completing market research in Kozinets 2010.

Amber Case on Cyborg Anthropology. *PBS NewsHour*, **8 December 2010.**

A brief interview with Amber Case, premier cyborg anthropologist, who explains what cyborg anthropology is.

Coover, Roderick. 2004. Using digital media tools and cross-cultural research, analysis and representation. *Visual Studies* **19.1: 6–25.**

In this essay, Coover uses excerpts from his multimedia CD-ROM *Cultures in Webs* (Coover 2003, cited under the Future of Virtual Ethnography) to discuss how he used hypermedia approaches to produce this cross-cultural, multimedia digital ethnography. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Couldry, Nick, and Anna McCarthy, eds. 2004. *MediaSpace: Place, scale, and culture in a media age.* **London: Routledge.**

A volume of case studies that collectively explore the importance of space and place in people's experience of digital technologies. The editors use the term "mediaspace" to describe their sites of ethnographic inquiry.

CyborgAnthropology.

Website organized by cyborg anthropologist Amber Case that introduces the field and provides a reading list for digital ethnography. The Defining Cyborg Anthropology page is most useful for researchers who need a clear delineation of the subfield's history, approaches, and philosophies.

Haraway, Donna J. 1991. A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth-century. In *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature.* **By Donna J. Haraway, 149–181. New York: Routledge.**

In this seminal feminist text, Haraway argues that all human beings have become cyborgs—a hybrid of human and machine—in this postmodern moment. Haraway describes how this disrupts dichotomous understandings of identities, particularly that of gender and sex, and leads to the formation of new technologies and transformed labor arrangements.

Howard, Philip N. 2002. Network ethnography and the hypermedia organization: New media, new organizations, new methods. *New Media & Society* **4.4: 550–574.**

Recognizing the challenges social scientists studying networks or online organizations experience because of the great distances these networks cover, Howard offers "network ethnography" as a useful research design that allows for social network analysis and the collection of qualitative data. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Kozinets, Robert V. 2010. *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online***. London: SAGE.**

This very detailed, step-by-step guide to completing online ethnographic research includes useful summaries and a list of key readings at the end of each chapter. Kozinets describes a variety of approaches to engaging in this research, including how to conduct e-mail interviews and incorporate blogging, tweeting, and podcasting.

Mason, Bruce, and Bella Dicks. 1999. The Digital Ethnographer. *Cybersociology* **6.**

Discusses the challenges facing digital ethnographers and their use of hypermedia in digital ethnography to link together visual, written, and aural materials.

Methods and Approaches

Ethnographers engaging in virtual ethnography quickly realized that applying traditional ethnographic methods to the Internet was challenging. In fact, conceptualizing "the field" or "communities" in the same ways as their ethnographic foreparents could result in overlooking significant insights about how computer-mediated communications transform cultural practices and representations or processes of identity and community formation. Moreover, the shift to ethnographic work in virtual spaces not only problematized how one understood the object(s) of study but also troubled old-school notions of "the researcher" and the ethnographic project. Weston 1997 argues that the virtual anthropologist might be the best located to reevaluate the purpose behind the anthropological project, as the "us" and "them" that traditionally anchors ethnography is blurred in virtual spaces. Virtual researchers from multiple disciplines have reimagined the theoretical and methodological impetus behind the ethnographic project, creating new methods for engaging in cultural analysis and representation. This is exhibited in journals such as Field Methods, where researchers discuss specific field techniques for gathering quantitative and qualitative data both on- and off-line. O'Reilly 2012 provides a comprehensive introduction to ethnography for students and researchers, integrating a brief discussion about virtual ethnographic methods. Although there is increasing discussion about new ethnographic approaches within anthropology, much of the dialogue about expanding definitions of "the ethnographic" and its methods is taking place outside of the discipline. Researchers, such as communications professor Steve Jones and sociologist Christine Hine, are at the forefront of this discussion. Jones 1999 and Hine 2005 are case studies that quintessentially display the diversity of approaches researchers are using to study the Internet and cybercultures.

Field Methods. 1989–.

This journal publishes articles describing a variety of field methods for researchers and professionals interested in utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods in their fieldwork.

Hine, Christine, ed. 2005. *Virtual methods: Issues in social research on the Internet*. Oxford: Berg.

In this edited volume, Hine and the contributing authors offer suggestions for how to manage some of the obstacles researchers may encounter while engaging in virtual ethnographic research.

Jones, Steve G., ed. 1999. *Doing Internet research: Critical issues and methods for examining the Net*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

An early contribution to the critical study of the Internet, Jones pulls together a diverse group of ethnographers to discuss the challenges of doing research on networks and cybercommunities.

O'Reilly, Karen. 2012. *Ethnographic methods*. 2d ed. New York: Routledge.

An excellent resource for students seeking to understand key terms and theories for engaging in different types of ethnographic work, O'Reilly offers a brief discussion of virtual ethnography in this instructional book.

Weston, Kath. 1997. The virtual anthropologist. In *Anthropological locations: Boundaries and grounds of a field science*. Edited by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 163–184. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Weston explores how the authenticity of virtual ethnographers may be questioned as they engage in fieldwork in virtual spaces. She argues that the virtual anthropologist may be the best located to reevaluate the purpose and practice of the anthropological project.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is viewed as an essential aspect of virtual ethnography, particularly for anthropologists. An anthropologist's credibility is often intimately connected to how one chooses to participate in the culture or community one is observing. New forms of participant observation are created as ethnographers attempt immersion in virtual cultures and communities by actively participating and/or lurking in online forums, listserves, social networking websites, and gaming. Markham 1998 describes this process of immersion, writing explicitly about the challenges of figuring out the expectations of online interactions, learning the social hierarchies and cliques within a community, becoming socialized into cultural roles and discourses, deciphering who or what to pay attention to in virtual landscapes, and deciding how to archive information that may eventually disappear. As online ethnographers focus on connections between virtual sites, networks, and discourses, they begin to theorize how the Internet enables an experiential form of travel and mobility that differs from the physical travel traditional ethnography most often required. Furthermore, they must contend with the ways virtual interactions differ from face-to-face interactions. Virtual ethnographers are met with a series of questions during their research: Is lurking a form of participant observation? How is virtual ethnography different from analyzing data downloaded from a website? Is the ethnographer part of the community? Anthropologists are not the only ethnographers thinking through these questions. Information and technological studies, cultural studies, and media studies have also contributed greatly to theorizing ethnographic research and techniques for participant observation, particularly as researchers complete fieldwork in virtual spaces where text and/or audio may be the only forms of communication. Garcia, et al. 2009 discusses this shift in ethnographic practice from face-to-face interactions to computer-mediated communication. Through an analysis of three case studies, Crichton and Kinash 2003 investigates the utility of

online, interactive interviewing as a method for virtual ethnographic research. WebSM provides an online bibliography and reviews of web programs available for researchers desiring to administer web surveys as part of their virtual work. Ruhleder 2000 describes a multimedia ethnography in which video and online chat logs are used to analyze distance-learning courses.

Crichton, Susan, and Shelley Kinash. 2003. Virtual ethnography: Interactive interviewing online as method. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology* **29.2.**

This article examines the strengths and limitations of using online, textual interactive interviewing as a technique for virtual ethnographic research.

Garcia, Angela C., Alecea I. Standlee, Jennifer Bechkoff, and Yan Cui. 2009. Ethnographic approaches to the Internet and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* **38.1: 52–84.**

This article specifically focuses on how computer-mediated communication differs from face-to-face interactions and the implications for conducting ethnographic research in a virtual environment. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Markham, Annette. 1998. *Life online: Researching real experience in virtual space.* **Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.**

This is an anthropologist's autoethnographic narrative of studying life online. Markham provides one of the early arguments against the notion that cyberspace is a cultural site where physical reality can be left behind or transcended.

Ruhleder, Karen. 2000. The virtual ethnographer: Fieldwork in distributed electronic environments. *Field Methods* **12.1: 3–17.**

Ruhleder analyzes video and online chat logs to engage in a multimedia examination of a distance-teaching technology. This article enables ethnographers to gain a sense of how a project works in a hybrid environment—one that is not completely virtual or physical. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

WebSM.

An extensive online bibliography of articles and reviews about web survey methodology, supported by a university in Slovenia.

Research Ethics

Theorizations of responsible ethical measures for virtual ethnography grow as increasing numbers of researchers use ethnographic methods to investigate the effects the Internet has on society. Much of the literature focuses on the controversy surrounding covert electronic research, lurking, or virtual deception, and the impact these forms of participation may have on relationships and virtual communities. Ebo 1998 offers the term "cyberstealth" to describe the type of activities ethnographers and others may engage in order to protect their identities while participating in cyber interactions. Schrum 1995 encourages researchers to make their presence known in virtual spaces, urging them to be as transparent as possible and to move away from lurking while conducting research. Buchanan 2004 presents a useful collection of essays that discuss a variety of areas where ethical dilemmas arise online, including informant selection and recruitment, obtaining and defining informed consent, notions of privacy, and ownership of data. Bruckman 2002 and Bruckman 2006 focus on how to disguise and protect the data collected from virtual ethnography, while Jacobson 1999 discusses how

laws and policies created off-line affect the collection of data and the privacy of potential subjects. While there has been quite a bit of dialogue about ethical measures in virtual ethnography, anthropologists are somewhat absent from this discussion. The American Anthropological Association has not released a code of ethics for specifically completing ethnography in virtual spaces. However, groups like the Association for Internet Researchers have released a list of recommendations and guidelines for virtual ethnographers (Ess and the Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Committee 2002). Additionally, the journal Ethics and Information Technology focuses exclusively on the ethical, social, and political questions associated with the use and development of a variety of information and communication technologies.

Bruckman, Amy. 2002. Studying the amateur artist: A perspective on disguising data collected in human subjects research on the Internet. *Ethics and Information Technology* **4.3: 217–231.**

Bruckman discusses the ethical dilemma virtual researchers face as they attempt to protect the identities of their subjects while giving credit to subjects for material published online. She suggests the framework of viewing Internet users as "amateur artists," in order to help ethnographers decipher when and how they should disguise their collected data. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Bruckman, Amy. 2006. Teaching students to study online communities ethically. *Journal of Information Ethics* **15.2: 82–98.**

In this article, Bruckman describes her experiences in teaching a course designed to help graduate students create a research strategy for studying online communities ethically. This article is useful for students, as Bruckman provides an informative perspective on the challenges of practicing ethical virtual ethnography.

Buchanan, Elizabeth, ed. 2004. *Readings in virtual research ethics: Issues and controversies.* **Hershey, PA: Idea Group.**

This edited collection comprised of international researchers from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Italy provides an overview of the ethical dilemmas connected to completing online research.

Ebo, Bosah. 1998. Internet or outernet? In *Cyberghetto or cybertopia? Race, class and gender on the Internet.* **Edited by Bosah L. Ebo, 1–14. Westport, CT: Praeger.**

In the introduction to this edited volume, Ebo discusses the Internet's potential to transcend and reinforce off-line social hierarchies and identities. Ebo offers "cyberstealth" as a term to describe the physical invisibility Internet users can attempt to maintain in virtual spaces.

Ess, C. and the Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Committee. 2002. Ethical decision making and Internet research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee. Association of Internet Researchers.

This document from the Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Committee provides a detailed yet concise discussion of the ethical and legal considerations of completing Internet research. It includes an extensive annotated bibliography, useful for students and scholars alike.

Ethics and Information Technology. 1999–.

This peer-reviewed journal inserts discussions about moral philosophy into the field of information and communication technology and

advances conversations about how to complete ethical Internet research. The journal published a special issue on the similarities and differences between virtual research and traditional human subjects research in September 2002.

Jacobson, David. 1999. Doing research in cyberspace. *Field Methods* **11.2: 127–145.**

Jacobson writes about the challenges virtual ethnographers must overcome while keeping in line with copyright and privacy laws that protect the identities and communications of human subjects both on- and off-line. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schrum, Lynne. 1995. Framing the debate: Ethical research in the information age. *Qualitative Inquiry* **1.3: 311–326.**

Although this article needs to be updated to contend with research completed in virtual spaces such as social networking sites, Schrum provides useful guidelines for dealing with issues related to privacy online, protecting virtual identities, and acquiring informed consent. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Virtual Fieldsites

As ethnography has moved from material or geographic locales to virtual worlds and cyberspace, many have begun to ask, "What constitutes a fieldsite?" This is not a simple inquiry, as the selection of a fieldsite is a crucial aspect of the ethnographic project (Amit 2000). Traditionally, "being in the field," and the length of time one spends in the field, have been critical to an ethnographer's credibility and claims of authenticity. Doing fieldwork in deterritorialized, network-based, virtual spaces complicates notions of temporality and spatiality and challenges the idea that ethnography must be completed in a single, geographic fieldsite. Some works, such as Wittel 2000, argue that research conducted only in online spaces may not constitute "ethnography" at all, instead suggesting that this research be labeled as text or discourse analysis. Hakken 1999 presents a different view, reasoning that virtual ethnography is a valuable form of analysis as humans have always been cultural and technological beings. Beaulieu 2004 provides a detailed exploration of the challenges faced while shifting from traditional ethnography to virtual ethnography, noting that new technologies can generate new kinds of knowledge. Contrasting long-held notions of what ethnography should be, virtual ethnography mediates research in multiple sites or may be seen by some as "unsited." However, Miller and Slater 2000 does not want to throw out locality completely, stating that the Internet is not a "placeless place" and may be used to reinforce nationalized places and identities. Hine 2000 claims that the Internet is a place, culture, and thing. The Internet can be seen as a cultural site—where people engage in practices, have beliefs, and become socialized. Hine writes it is also a cultural artifact—a product influenced by social, political, and economic forces that are both on- and off-line. In this way, ethnographers understand that online and off-line spaces are not separate spheres but are worlds that influence one another as humans and technologies move across space and time. Instead of thinking of a fieldsite as a location, Burell 2009 suggests that ethnographers begin to analyze the fieldsite as a network. This approach enables the virtual researcher to follow ideas, discourses, texts, and identities as they flow through physical, virtual, and imagined spaces. In order to engage in fieldwork that takes online and off-line factors into account, some ethnographers, such as Murthy (Murthy 2008), have engaged mixed methodologies, completing fieldwork in material locations and virtual spaces.

Amit, Vered. 2000. Introduction: Constructing the field. In *Constructing the field: Ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world*. **Edited by Vered Amit, 1–18. New York: Routledge.**

Amit provides a clear discussion of some of the issues related to travel, mobility, and immersion ethnographers should think through as they determine how to construct their fieldsites and form ethnographic methods.

Beaulieu, Anne. 2004. Mediating ethnography: Objectivity and the making of ethnographies of the Internet. *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* **18.2–3: 139–163.**

In this valuable examination of the intellectual history of "objectivity" within anthropology, Beaulieu discusses the kinds of knowledge ethnographers are able to acquire while using new technologies to complete virtual ethnography. This article is useful for ethnographers desiring a detailed discussion of the theories behind virtual methodologies. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Burell, Jenna. 2009. The field site as a network: A strategy for locating ethnographic research. *Field Methods* **21.2: 181–199.**

Burrell discusses the utility and limitation of conceptualizing the fieldsite as a network. She explores the possibilities of incorporating physical, virtual, and imagined spaces through virtual ethnography in a network by presenting a case study from a project in Accra, Ghana. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Hakken, David. 1999. *Cyborgs@cyberspace? An ethnographer looks to the future***. New York: Routledge.**

As both an early researcher of the Internet and a skeptic of the "computer revolution," Hakken suggests that researchers connect anthropology and digital studies. Here, the anthropologist explores important subjects, such as the political economy of cyberspace, while arguing that humans have always been technological and cultural beings.

Hine, Christine. 2000. *Virtual ethnography***. London: SAGE.**

In one of the most frequently cited texts on virtual research, Hine defines "virtual ethnography" and explores the implications of this form of ethnographic research. Hine uses the case study of a trial to discuss how she constructed her fieldsite and immersed herself as a researcher in an online space.

Miller, Daniel, and Don Slater. 2000. *The Internet: An ethnographic approach***. Oxford: Berg.**

In one of the earliest studies of Internet use in a region, an anthropologist (Miller) and a sociologist (Slater) engage in a mixed-method analysis of Trinidadian access and consumption of the Internet and its influence on nationalized culture and identity.

Murthy, Dhiraj. 2008. Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research. *Sociology* **42.5: 837–855.**

Murthy demands that social researchers (sociologists in particular) stop overlooking digital methods and incorporate a balance of physical and digital ethnography into their research. The author looks at the potential of online questionnaires, digital video, social networking sites, and blogs as rich sites for conducting ethnographic research.

Wittel, Andreas. 2000. Ethnography on the move: From field to Net to Internet. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* **1.1.**

Wittel provides a brief overview of anthropology's shift from studying fields, to the Internet, to networks and the implications of these varied sites of research. Hesitant to embrace research in virtual spaces as "ethnographic," Wittel argues that virtual "fieldwork" should require research in multiple sites, including a physical fieldsite.

Virtual Communities

At the core of most ethnographic projects is a fascination with community. Ethnographers are frequently trying to figure out how a community was formed, how members become part of the community, and which practices or beliefs signify membership. As researchers participate in ethnographic research that is multisited or virtual and move further away from thinking of cultures and fieldsites as bounded entities, notions of what constitutes community are problematized. In fact, some scholars question whether the relationships formed on the Internet can be called "communities" at all. Calhoun 1991 argues that computer-mediated communication acts as a catalyst for "para-social" relationships that are not real. Calhoun notes that in these social interactions individuals may feel a sense of belonging. Calhoun argues, however, that these Internet-mediated connections are not enough to sustain meaningful bonds like the ones people usually experience through direct contact. Adams and Smith 2008 agrees with Calhoun that "community" may not be the best term to describe Internet users, suggesting that researchers think of online groups with shared interests as "electronic tribes." Adams and Smith explain that "communities" are frequently linked to geographic locales and are sometimes viewed as utopian entities, whereas the term "tribe" allows for a discussion of dystopia within a group. Diverging from Calhoun's conclusions about the "realness" of cyber interactions, Adams and Smith suggest that electronic tribes engage in some of the same processes as tribes off-line, which have real social ramifications. Rheingold 2000, Ward 1999, Smith and Kollock 1999, and Boellstorff 2008 argue that meaningful relationships (and communities) do exist in virtual spaces and that ethnographic methods are some of the best tools for analyzing these new kinds of communities. Rheingold 2000, on computer-mediated communication and the WELL community, documents how relationships changed as individuals gained more access to the early version of the World Wide Web. Boellstorff 2008 on Second Life expands on this early research on transforming relationships, pointing to the new (virtual) worlds, identities, and technologies people are creating with increased access to computers and the web. McLelland 2002 points to the new opportunities for connectivity the Internet provides, enabling Japanese gay men and foreign gay men to virtually transcend geographic boundaries to form community. Constable 2003 also points to these new types of global communities, noting that these relationships often reinforce nationalized, gendered, and racialized boundaries while crossing them.

Adams, Tyrone L., and Stephen A. Smith, eds. 2008. *Electronic tribes: The virtual worlds of geeks, gamers, shamans, and scammers*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

Adams and Smith gather researchers from a diversity of online social networking, gaming, and music downloading fieldsites in this volume. Arguing that online groups formed around shared interests and ideas should be seen as "electronic tribes," the contributors suggest that these online tribes impact the world in similar ways to off-line "tribalism."

Boellstorff, Tom. 2008. *Coming of age in Second Life: An anthropologist explores the virtually human*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

In this book, Boellstorff offers the first anthropological study of the Second Life virtual world, where residents create avatars and use the Internet to engage in a range of activities, including buying property, making money, and falling in love.

Calhoun, C. 1991. Indirect relationships and imagined communities: Large-scale social integration and the transformation of everyday life. In *Social theory for a changing society*. Edited by Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Colemen, 95–120. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Calhoun argues that "indirect social relationships" created online are different from relationships formed off-line. He states that

relationships created in virtual spaces often provide the illusion of a community, whereas those formed in the noncyber world are more interpersonal and complex.

Constable, Nicole. 2003. *Romance on a global stage: Pen pals, virtual ethnography and "mail order" marriages*. **Berkeley: Univ. of California.**

Constable investigates the intimate relationships between US men and Filipina and Chinese women who use international introduction agencies. Using ethnographic methods, Constable interacts with these women over the Internet while participating in male-dominated listserves for those interested in these relationships.

McLelland, Mark J. 2002. Virtual ethnography: Using the Internet to study gay culture in Japan. *Sexualities* **5.4: 387–406.**

McLelland examines how Japanese and foreign gay men use the Internet to arrange off-line meetings, form (intimate) relationships, and build community, which might otherwise be difficult for individuals living in a transnational world.

Rheingold, Howard. 2000. *The virtual community: Homesteading on the electronic frontier*. **Rev. ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.**

Originally published in 1993, Rheingold investigates the relationships people create within the WELL community, a San Francisco–based network he has participated in since 1985. The updated edition includes an additional chapter where Rheingold discusses changes in computer mediated-communication since the World Wide Web exploded and more people started using the computer.

Smith, Marc A., and Peter Kollock, eds. 1999. *Communities in cyberspace*. **New York: Routledge.**

This introductory volume examines identity work in cyberspace and how communities use the Internet to engage in collective action. Using examples from an international context, the contributors investigate race, gender, and power in cyberspace, arguing that these communities are real but sometimes operate differently than communities off-line.

Ward, Katie J. 1999. Cyber-ethnography and the emergence of the virtually new community. *Journal of Information Technology* **14.1: 95–105.**

Ward uses research from an ethnographic study of two virtual communities to argue that cyber-ethnography is the most appropriate tool for exploring and defining virtual communities. Available online by subscription.

Identity Work and Play in Virtual Spaces

With the advent of the World Wide Web, and the numerous opportunities for cultural exchange, transnational communication, and boundary crossing that accompanied it, scholars and Internet users alike celebrated the notion that cyberspace enabled humans to enjoy a placeless and raceless site full of unlimited possibilities. It was assumed that the anonymity of the Internet could enable users to escape visual cues embedded in face-to-face interaction and experience the pleasure of identity play rarely available in off-line racialized and gendered spaces. The presumption was that the ability to pick an avatar to represent oneself in any way desired

provided a freedom from bodies and ascribed identities that often limited self-representation and constrained community building. As researchers began to complete ethnographic studies of cyberspace and cybercultures, it became clear that identity work and the potential for disembodiment in virtual spaces was much more complex than initially imagined. Campbell 2004 offers a particularly interesting perspective on the discussion of embodiment in cyberspace, as the author investigates how gay men talk about beauty and bodies in virtual communities. Campbell's work directly contrasts early ideas that bodies do not matter in cyberspace. Cherny and Weise 1996 and Turkle 1997 provide some of the earliest research analyzing the connections between identity formation and the Internet, particularly the possibility (or lack thereof) to play with gender in cyberspace. Both Kendall 2002 and Taylor 2009 look at gender in the world of gaming, with Kendall focusing specifically on masculinities created in the "virtual pub" and Taylor using some of her own experiences to discuss femininity in online and off-line gaming spaces. Hughey 2008; Kolko, et al. 2000; and Nakamura 2002 all investigate the oft-elusive ways race operates in cyberspace. Nakamura offers the phrases "identity tourism" and "racial passing" to discuss how Internet users play with race in virtual spaces while also reinforcing racialized hierarchies and racist discourses.

Campbell, John Edward. 2004. *Getting it on online: Cyberspace, gay male sexuality and embodied identity*. New York: Harrington Park.

Campbell uses his experiences, and those of his informants, during a three-year ethnographic study to discuss gay men, beauty, and the politics of embodiment in virtual communities.

Cherny, Lynn, and Elizabeth Reba Weise, eds. 1996. *Wired women: Gender and new realities in cyberspace*. Seattle, WA: Seal.

This collection of essays by researchers and writers of the Internet provides an early read of how women experience cyberspace. The contributors cover a variety of topics, including censorship in cyberspace, experiences of harassment, and the culture of masculinity prevalent on the Internet, including in the world of hackers.

Hughey, Matthew W. 2008. Virtual (br)others and (re)sisters: Authentic black fraternity and sorority identity on the Internet. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37.5: 528–560.

Hughey investigates how members of African American fraternities and sororities discuss and establish racial and cultural authenticity in a virtual community. This article contributes to the small collection of literature studying African American communities and cyberspace. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Kendall, Lori. 2002. *Hanging out in the virtual pub: Masculinities and relationships online*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Kendall provides an interesting analysis of the ways gender, class, and race operate in the online gaming forum she calls BlueSky. Appendix B is useful for virtual ethnographers, as Kendall offers a more personal account about her experiences as a researcher in this virtual space.

Kolko, Beth, Lisa Nakamura, and Gilbert Rodman, eds. 2000. *Race in cyberspace*. New York: Routledge.

One of the most prominent scholarly collections on race and cyberspace, the editors present a series of essays that examine how race (and sometimes racism) operate online, including a rare examination of whiteness in cyberspace.

Nakamura, Lisa. 2002. *Cybertypes: Race, ethnicity, and identity on the Internet*. New York: Routledge.

A classic text on why race matters and how it operates in cyberspace, Nakamura argues against the notion that virtual spaces are raceless utopias. Of particular interest to virtual ethnographers is Nakamura's theorization of identity tourism and racial passing and the ramifications of these practices.

Taylor, T. L. 2009. *Play between worlds: Exploring online game culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

In this book about gaming and notions of "play," Taylor pays particular attention to the experiences of women gamers (including her own) and problematizes preconceived notions of femininity both on- and off-line.

Turkle, Sherry. 1997. *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

In this early sociological text on the relationship between humans and computers, Turkle investigates how Internet use affects identity formation and relationship building. Turkle notes that as more people spend more time living life on the screen, they create a decentered and multiple sense of identity.

Power and Marginality

As more people have gained access to computers and the Internet, it has become a fact of life that these technologies have transformed social and political realities throughout the globe (Howard and Jones 2004). Early on, there was an initial excitement prevalent both inside and outside the academy that these new technological tools would transform social realities and bring "power to the powerless." Early virtual ethnographers studied the ways people attempted to use the Internet to create complex identities and alternative realities, hoping that this could trouble racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualized hierarchies that were present off-line. Some hoped that the Internet would be a counterculture space, where individuals and various cybercultures could gain a sense of empowerment. While some virtual ethnographers' works, like Ebo 1998, Jones 1997, and Mitra 2001, observed virtual sites and communities where marginalized groups created new forms of cultural representation, production, and social and political change, many ethnographers (the aforementioned included) discovered that all Internet users bring historical stereotypes to the table as they use the Internet. This frequently reinforces traditional hierarchies of power. Dicks, et al. 2005 argues that the Internet should never be assumed to be a neutral space, as the researcher, the researcher's data, and the informants are always influenced by social norms and personal histories, just like any other fieldsite. Escobar 1994 pushes this notion further, arguing that technological products are always cultural products, influenced by social and political factors. Furthermore, racialized, classed, and gendered hierarchies affect who has access to computers and the Internet in the first place. Ameripour, et al. 2010 describes how off-line forces, like the Iranian government and network accessibility, influence the creation of Internet-based social networks and may inhibit the potential for social change. Additionally, Harp and Tremayne 2006 demonstrates the connection between off-line hierarchies and online activities, as the authors discuss the lack of women bloggers in the top blogs focusing on politics.

Ameripour, Aghil, Brian Nicholson, and Michael Newman. 2010. Conviviality of Internet social networks: An exploratory study of Internet campaigns in Iran. *Journal of Information Technology* 25:244–257.

In this article, the authors use data from two Internet-based campaigns in Iran to examine the relationship between Internet social networks and the potential impact for social change. Arguing that ever-changing economic and political forces (both on- and off-line)

influence the construction of Internet social networks, the researchers demonstrate how Internet users and discussions are affected by surveillance and censorship.

Dicks, Bella, Bruce Mason, Amanda Coffey, and Paul Atkinson, eds. 2005. *Qualitative research and hypermedia: Ethnography for the digital age***. London: SAGE.**

One of the more up-to-date book-length texts on how to complete virtual ethnography in this contemporary moment of digital technology and hypermedia, the editors provide a detailed analysis of some of the ways ethnography has changed with recent technological advances.

Ebo, Bosah L., ed. 1998. *Cyberghetto or cybertopia? Race, class, and gender on the Internet***. Westport, CT: Praeger.**

In this volume, Ebo gathers a group of diverse researchers to offer early observations on how race, class, and gender operate in cyberspace and how some marginalized groups are using new technologies to promote notions of social justice.

Escobar, Arturo. 1994. Welcome to Cyberia: Notes on the anthropology of cyberculture. *Current Anthropology* **35.3: 211–231.**

Discussing how technological innovations transform social realities, Escobar provides an overview of the anthropological literature available on cybercultures in the early 1990s. He offers numerous arguments for why ethnographic study of these advances is essential for understanding scientific, (bio)technological, and global economic transformations and their political significance. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Harp, Dustin, and Mark Tremayne. 2006. The gendered blogosphere: Examining inequality using network and feminist theory. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* **83.2: 247–264.**

In this article, the authors discuss the predominance of men blogging about politics, connecting their conclusions about gender and inequality to feminist theorizations of public/private spheres. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Howard, Philip N., and Steve Jones, eds. 2004. *Society online: The Internet in context***. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.**

Using data from a variety of large-scale research projects, the contributors to this volume investigate the social impact of people's use of digital technologies, including the Internet. Instead of organizing the book by the technology studied, the sections are organized by the area of impact the technologies affect, enabling a cross-technology analysis.

Jones, Steve, ed. 1997. *Virtual culture: Identity and communication in cybersociety***. London: SAGE.**

Here, researchers from anthropology, sociology, and communication studies present essays about the ways marginalized groups are using digital technologies for social and political change.

Mitra, Ananda. 2001. Marginal voices in cyberspace. *New Media & Society* **3.1: 29–48.**

Using the metaphor of "voice" to analyze self-expressions in cyberspace, Mitra investigates how participants in an Indian diasporic

website use the virtual space to tell their stories. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

The Future of Virtual Ethnography

Ethnographic researchers continue to push the boundaries of "ethnography" and "ethnographic methods," grappling with the challenges of doing this work in virtual spaces. In recent years, researchers interested in issues related to power, mobility, globalization, identity, and nationalism have begun to turn their analytical lenses on the ways transnational and diasporic subjects use the Internet and digital technologies to create communities and identities that cross spatial and temporal boundaries. Alonso and Oiarzabal 2010 and Panagakos and Horst 2006 expand theorizations of early virtual ethnographers in order to demonstrate how digital technologies are changing the transnational experiences of those such as migrants and refugees throughout the globe. Alinejad 2010 offers the concept of "transnational embodiment" in order to draw attention to the significance of physical travel and bodily presence in the creation of transnational virtual spaces. Bernal 2005 examines the experiences of Eritreans, members of a diasporic community whose online discussions about community, political engagement, and displacement from their homeland provide insight into the new forms of public spheres and notions of citizenship this contemporary moment of globalization and transnationalism may enable. Additionally, as the Internet and other digital technologies have transformed conceptualizations of ethnographic projects, methods, and researchers, these tools have also changed what the final products of the research process look like. Instead of, or in addition to, producing book-length monographs based on their ethnographic data collection, some ethnographers are now bringing the fruits of their virtual ethnographic research to academic and mainstream audiences in a variety of forms. This section briefly describes some of the ways researchers are using digital technologies such as video (Case 2011, Wesch 2007), blogs, virtual archives (Fabian 2008), social networking sites, and CD-ROM (Coover 2003) to teach the masses about virtual ethnography, new media, and their influences on society. Case 2011, a TedTalk video that provides an introduction to cyborg anthropology, and Wesch 2007, a video explaining how Web 2.0 and digital technologies have evolved, are significantly popular educational tools with over 68,000 and 11.6 million views, respectively. Researchers of virtual spaces, digital technology users, and Internet participants continue to utilize digital technologies both on- and off-line to reimagine and influence future realities.

Alinejad, Donya. 2010. Mapping homelands through virtual spaces: Transnational embodiment and Iranian diaspora bloggers. *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* **11.1: 43–62.**

Focusing on Iranian bloggers living outside of Iran, Alinejad investigates how these US- and Canada-based English-language bloggers maintain interesting ties to a diasporic home through their online interactions and expressions. Available online by subscription.

Alonso, Andoni, and Pedro J. Oiarzabal eds. 2010. *Diasporas in the new media age: Identity, politics, and community.* **Reno: Univ. of Nevada Press.**

In this edited collection, twenty-one researchers from diverse virtual and geographic sites present snapshots of a range of transnational experiences. Oft-overlooked communities, such as the Arab diaspora in Germany or the Cape Verdean diaspora online, are highlighted to display the many ways these groups are using information and communication technologies.

Bernal, Victoria. 2005. Eritrea on-line: Diaspora, cyberspace, and the public sphere. *American Ethnologist* **32.4: 660–675.**

Centering her analysis on the period from 1992 to 2000, Bernal examines how Eritreans in diaspora created a national space in cyberspace where they could discuss notions of community and political participation in a distant homeland. Bernal provides insight into how conflict (on the web) and violence are significant to understandings of diaspora. Available online by subscription.

Case, Amber. 2011. We are all cyborgs now. TedWomen.

In this eight-and-a-half-minute TedTalk, cyborg anthropologist Amber Case introduces the concept of cyborg anthropology to the audience and the virtual world.

Coover, Roderick. 2003. Cultures in webs: Working in hypermedia with the documentary image. CD-ROM. Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems.

Combining photographs, text, interview excerpts, and Ghanaian proverbs, Coover produces a provocative, multimedia ethnography based on his research on aesthetics and politics in Ghanaian culture.

Fabian, Johannes. 2008. *Ethnography as commentary: Writing from the virtual archive*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.

In this book, Fabian describes the Language and Popular Culture in Africa Archives (LPCA), an online resource he created that makes his ethnographic notes available to the World Wide Web (and, potentially, his informants). Fabian argues that this open-access, virtual archive enables a form of "late ethnographic" writing he calls "commentary."

Panagakos, Anastasia N., and Heather A. Horst. 2006. Return to Cyberia: Technology and the social worlds of transnational migrants. *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 6.2: 109–124.

In this special issue of the journal, researchers return to Escobar's Cyberia to present five case studies that demonstrate the diverse ways transnational communities use communication technologies (such as e-mail, teleconferencing, and mobile phones) and how these practices are influenced by histories of settlement and dispersal, cultural values, and accessibility. Available online by subscription.

Wesch, Michael. 2007. Web 2.0. . . The machine is us/ing us.

Wesch, a cultural anthropologist, presents a four-and-a-half-minute video demonstrating one approach to engaging ethnographic practice in the contemporary moment. This resource is useful for ethnographers thinking about including a video component in their final ethnographic product.

back to top