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Spreadable Media: Creating Meaning and Value in a Networked Culture

Abstract
Of all of the changes in the new media environment over the past two decades, perhaps the biggest has been a shift in how media content circulates -- away from top-down corporate controlled distribution and into a still emerging hybrid system where everyday people play an increasingly central role in how media spreads. Cultural Studies has historically been centered around issues of production and reception and has had much less to say about circulation. What issues emerge when we put the process of grassroots (often unauthorized) circulation at the center of our focus? How does it change our accounts of the relationships between mass media and participatory culture? How might it shake up existing models of viral media and web 2.0? This far-reaching talk based on a forthcoming book authored with Sam Ford and Joshua Green offers snapshots of a culture-in-process, a media ecology that is still taking shape, suggesting what it means for the futures of entertainment and civic life.

Biographical Sketch
Henry Jenkins is the Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, and Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. He arrived at USC in Fall 2009 after spending the past decade as the Director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program and the Peter de Florez Professor of Humanities. He is author and/or editor of twelve books on various aspects of media and popular culture, including Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture, Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture and From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games. His newest books include Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide and Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture. He is currently co-authoring a book on "spreadable media" with Sam Ford and Joshua Green. He has written for Technology Review, Computer Games, Salon, and The Huffington Post.