

MediaThread

<http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/mediathread>

What is MediaThread?

MediaThread is a collaborative multimedia analysis environment where you can:

1. Collect videos and images from pages and collections across the web,
2. Create clips or segments of videos and images, write notes, assign tags, and save to a personal collection,
3. Compose "multimedia essays" and participate in discussions in which your selected materials can be embedded to support an analysis or argument, and
4. Collaborate with others on all of the above.

Overview

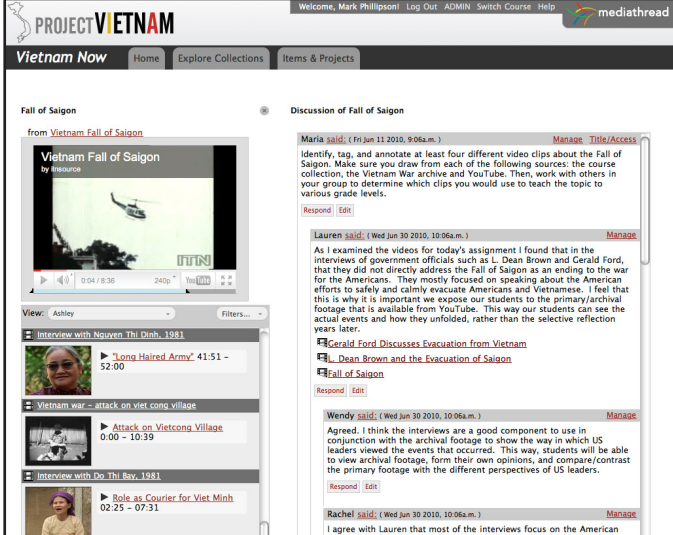
MediaThread is CCNMTL's innovative, open-source platform for exploration, analysis, and organization of web-based multimedia content. MediaThread connects to a variety of image and video collections (such as YouTube, Flickr, library databases, and course libraries), enabling users to lift items out of these collections and into an analysis environment. In MediaThread, items can then be clipped, annotated, organized, and embedded into essays and other written analysis.

Educational Objectives

For thousands of years, critical and scholarly discourse about text has revolved around citation and reference. What might this kind of discourse look like for multimedia—web-based text, images, audio, and video?

MediaThread encourages students to engage critically with the materials they are studying. Its seamless clipping and annotation tools "bring the laser pointer to the essay." In other words, rather than simply referencing an image or video and describing the content in an essay, students can embed the source directly in their essay and let the reader view evidence immediately, without disturbing the flow of analysis. With MediaThread, students can embed assets from publicly available or, in some cases, protected collections and sources into a single project, without requiring advanced technical skills.

Students' annotations and analyses can also be shared with classmates or larger audiences, spurring formalized thinking, clarified interpretation, and arguments improved with cited evidence. A customized feed alerts students to the latest activity on analyzed items and updates on group projects. Instructors can also publish announcements, assignments, and model projects to the class home page.



The screenshot shows the 'Project Vietnam' interface on MediaThread. It features a video player for 'Vietnam Fall of Saigon' and a discussion thread. The discussion includes student comments and annotations, such as 'Maria said: (Fri Jun 11 2010, 9:06a.m.)' and 'Lauren said: (Wed Jun 30 2010, 10:06a.m.)'. The interface also shows navigation options like 'Home', 'Explore Collections', and 'Items & Projects'.

Students in the course Vietnam Now! use MediaThread to analyze video and images from Youtube and the landmark 1983 documentary Vietnam: A Television History hosted in the WGBH Open Vault archive.

How MediaThread Works

MediaThread requires the simple installation of a web browser "bookmarklet," which, when clicked, tells the browser to import an image or video from the current page into the MediaThread analysis space. Assets imported into MediaThread are served from their original source. These assets are referenced (not copied) by MediaThread, enabling flexible interoperability and avoiding complications with access and licensing.

Explore Collections: Members of a course, once logged into MediaThread, have access to collections and materials designated by their instructor. These collections can range from library databases to course-specific media to web resources such as YouTube and Flickr. Students browse designated collections, identify items for analysis, and import items into MediaThread using the bookmarklet.

Analyze and Share: Students can clip, tag, and annotate videos and images in a personal analysis space in MediaThread. These analyzed items can then be added to 'multimedia projects' created by students in a text editing space. When building projects, students have easy access to their saved items as well as items saved by classmates. Projects may be created individually or by groups, and published to the instructor, the whole class, or to the public.

Learn more about MediaThread

MediaThread provides back-end support for multiple classes and configurations. Access the MediaThread code at <http://github.com/ccnmtl/mediathread>.

To find out if MediaThread is the right tool for your course, contact us at ccnmtl-mediathread@columbia.edu. Follow MediaThread updates and announcements at <http://twitter.com/CUmediathread>.

For more information about CCNMTL please visit <http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu> or email ccnmtl@columbia.edu