

# XIAOCHANG LI: PROJECT SUMMARY

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## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

I specialize in locating the deep, enduring cultural underpinnings of contemporary trends in order to develop both tactical responses and long-term strategic provisions. My previous work focused on the relationship between consumer cultures and content, advertising, and branding across platforms. I employ a blend of qualitative methods, textual analysis, and cultural theory.

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## RECENT BRANDING/MARKETING PROJECTS

### **Reappraising the Residual (co-authored with Henry Jenkins) • NYU Press (Forthcoming)**

Chapter in Henry Jenkins' forthcoming book on new developments in new media, focusing on changing models of consumer relationships in the digital/social media landscape:

- Examines how commercial interests intersect and interact with communities online
- Maps the social structure and logic that shapes digital communities.
- Outlines best (and worst) practices for bringing together commercial interests and consumer communities

### **Platform Analysis and Niche Content Development • COMCAST VOD (2009)**

Created research to direct content development and user-interface organization for VOD:

- Mapped information flow structures in leading video platforms online.
- Identified popular content forms amongst active niche communities for new content development
- Assessed whether popular forms translate across different platforms
- Oversaw ethnographic research into consumption patterns amongst specific content groups
- Identified audience segments that are more useful than basic demographic categories

### **CUBA: The Alternative Energy • MIT with Jing Wang author of *Brand New China* (2008)**

Course project for *Advertising: East Asian Perspectives* to develop a campaign for an existing product (energy drink) from research to creative to media buys for both US and Chinese markets, focusing on strategies for experiential and digital consumer-driven campaigns.

### **PBS brand repositioning • MIT w/ Grant McCracken author of *Chief Culture Officer* and PBS (2008)**

Intensive qualitative methods project in which my team conducted in-depth ethnographic research on young, urban viewers of PBS to provide recommendations for digital brand strategies.

### **Come Together, Go Forward (2007)**

Developed brand positioning and copy for NBC-sponsored coursework to design, program, and market a niche television network with a strong social-media and digital presence.

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## RECENT RESEARCH

### **Dis/Locating Audiences: transnational media flows • MIT Comp. Media Studies Masters Thesis (2009)**

Combined ethnographic, historical, and textual analysis in examining the flourishing online community around the circulation of East Asian TV dramas.

- Explained the impact of the shift towards a post-network, post-broadcast model of distribution.
- Documented a previously unexplored, but socially significant, cultural phenomenon, mapping the community structures and behaviors
- Analyzed the effect of networked media technology on diasporic/transnational subjectivities

- Interrogated the relationship between media audiences political publics
- Posed new theoretical framework for understanding cultural citizenship and media change

**Locating Value in Spreadable Media • MIT Convergence Culture Consortium (2009)**

C3 White Paper expanding on the principles explored in “If it Doesn’t Spread, it’s Dead” that seeks to examine how we can operate within “hybrid” economies online. Questions addressed:

- When exchanging or accepting “free” content, what are the social value transactions?
- What are key structural differences between socially-motivated profit-driven “commodity” exchanges?
- How do these differences impact interactions between companies and their consumers?
- What can we learn from failures and controversies of community management?

**If it Doesn’t Spread, it’s Dead • MIT Convergence Culture Consortium (2008)**

C3 White Paper co-written with **Henry Jenkins** mapping the “viral” media landscape, addressing:

- What technological advances, social conditions and cultural practices enable media spread
- What compels people to pass along particular forms of content
- What happens to the communicative function of advertising campaigns in this process
- What the ultimate value of viral media might be to corporations.

**Uses of YouTube • MIT Convergence Culture Consortium (2007) & Polity Press (2009)**

Research assistance on the book by Joshua Green that takes a qualitative and quantitative examination of popular forms of “User-Generated Content” and how videos circulate within the Youtube community.

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**RECENT PRESENTATIONS**

**Dis/Locating Audience: Transnational Media Flows • National Comm. Assoc. (2010 forthcoming)**

Speaking on how the global flow of media in online communities is changing the audience landscape.

**International Media Flows: Global Media and Culture • MIT (2010 forthcoming)**

Speaking at the CMS 10-year symposium, on how globalization’s impact on media culture.

**ROFLcon: Running the Tubes • MIT/Harvard Free Culture (2008, 2010 forthcoming)**

In 2008, moderated a panel on how “viral” media advertising campaigns work, featuring speakers from The Barbarian Group and Creative Commons. This year, I’ll be moderating a panel on how to transform internet culture into an industry, featuring the founder of UrbanDictionary.com.

**Media On the Loose • Turner Networks (2009)**

Presented on how media is now “loose” across different platforms, technologies, national borders, audience markets, and business models. Outlined audience participation and practices in the new media landscape and where media companies fit.

**C3 Partners Retreat • MIT (2008, 2009)**

Presented *Locating Value* and *Spreadable Media* research to an audience of sponsors and affiliates including IDEO, Campfire, the Alchemists, MIT Media Lab, and Harvard Business School.

**Convergence Culture and Transmedia in Global Context • Petrobras Brazil (2009)**

Presented on key C3 concepts, including Spreadable Media and Transmedia Advertising, within a global framework for the Multimedia Communications division of Petrobras.

**Organizer and Moderator at MIT Futures of Entertainment • MIT (2007, 2008, 2009)**

Convergence Culture Consortium’s Annual conference focusing on current issues in media and commerce including Television Metrics, Mobile, Social Media, Fan Culture, and Advertising.