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 Institute for Alternative Futures

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Forward Perspectives

A Rebuttal from the Post-Pop Art Generation

By [Craig Bettles](#), IAF Futurist and [Kati Wilkins](#), IAF Project Manager

The Millennial Generation is butting heads with the law and issues surrounding originality. Many of these young people have played around, or spent a significant amount of time, with the idea of co-opting content to create their own. To this generation, originality will be enforced in the 21st century by the court of public opinion rather than by court of law.

A recent video confirms this view, but also points out the tricky questions about the Millennials' penchant for appropriating, co-opting and repurposing the work of others. The YouTube video, '[Lost Generation](#),' which won second-prize in AARP's "U@50" video competition and has been widely circulated on the internet, conveys this optimism. The format for the video - lines of text that have different meanings when read in different sequences - was co-opted from an Argentinian political advertisement, titled '[Truth](#),' for the presidential candidate Lopez Murphy in the 2006 election cycle. 'Truth' was acknowledged by the author of 'Lost Generation,' but quickly became a source of debate in the comment forums of YouTube.

The idea of co-option forms an important part of the digital culture which has grown up around social networking sites such as YouTube. Many of the videos posted on these sites build on the storylines and worlds of other works. Through the sharing of these edited and repurposed videos, communities of fans have sprung up all across the globe, uniting people in a group of like-minded individuals who would not have met otherwise. Sharing and repurposing has become cultural currency, where creating new work out of existing work invites others to

comment and join in on discussions.

This could be seen as a backlash, or natural evolution from, Andy Warhol and the Pop Art movement which emerged in the 1950's. Andy Warhol is responsible for the phrase "15 minutes of fame," which is actually a paraphrase of his 1968 response to a reporter who asked what he thought the future would look like: "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." Perhaps Warhol's most famous work, *100 Soup Cans* - a series of silk screen prints which depict the same image of a Campbell's soup can - highlights the question of originality. Both the image and the nature of how the image was created (using the commercial process of silk screening), created controversy, as many believed it could not be labeled as art, nor was it original, as Campbell's owns the copyright. Much of Warhol's work was co-opted from popular culture, repurposed, and placed on the gallery wall, asking the viewer to look at the same thing they see in the supermarket or on billboards in a different light.

Having grown up post-Warhol, we begin to see the merging of the Pop Art movement with Warhol's statement that everyone will be famous for 15 minutes in the Millennial generation. It is not surprising that the Millennials have differing ideas of originality than their parents, as technology has allowed them to appropriate media and post it to popular websites, creating their own 15 minutes of fame.

The Millennial Generation are much more open to the sharing and building on other's ideas. Underground organizations, such as the League of Noble Peers and Pirate Bay, actively promote and facilitate the ethos of peer to peer sharing. Unlike their predecessors, the Millennials are less likely to refer to copyright or intellectual property in disputes on originality (or lack thereof). Rather, they hash out their disagreements on message boards and in chat rooms, or create their own appropriated work which mocks the offending piece or author.

This system of co-option, appropriation, and the surrounding conversation around originality in the online creative commons may lead to drastically different ideas around copyright laws. If the public is monitoring itself, it may even lead to the obsolescence of copyright laws, as the ability to quickly find source material and post it next to the offending work will create an environment where authors are more conscience of their creation, not for fear of being sued, but for fear of their peers' reaction.

Millennials view the world through a post-Pop Art lens, in which anything is up for grabs, and can be re-appropriated into their own work. However, unlike the Pop artists of the 50's and 60's who left the question of originality for others to decide, Millennials actively engage in the debate, and hold each other accountable for their own work. To be too unoriginal brings the risk of being flamed and ostracized by their peers, which is far worse than the threat of being taken to court.

For more information on IAF's work on originality, innovation and the Millennial Generation, please contact Craig Bettles at cbettles@altfutures.com or Kati Wilkins at kwilkins@altfutures.com.

News & Events

Spotlight on the WFS Wiser Futures Workshop

Every year, at the [WorldFuture Conference](#), IAF holds a one day workshop on its world-class approach to aspirational futures. The WorldFuture Conference is the annual convention held

by the World Future Society. IAF believes futures tools are vital for leaders and the basics are easy to learn. The Wiser Futures Workshop is designed as an entry level course for leaders in a range of industries and organizations.

At the Wiser Futures Workshop, IAF Futurists Clem Bezold, Craig Bettles and Eric Meade will lead the participants through future tools from scenario development to designing a vision and mission statements. IAF will provide an array of examples from our work as consulting futurists.

This year's WorldFuture 2009 Conference will be held in Chicago, IL. The Wiser Futures Workshop will be held as a pre-conference course on July 17th, 2009. This year's program will also feature prominent futurists from IAF speaking on a range of issues. You can see the other IAF events at this year's WorldFuture Conference in the Upcoming Events section. Click [here](#) to go to the WFS site for event registration.

IAF Partners with Ventura Team, LLC for Study on Future of mHealth

Click [Here](#) for Full Article

No other consumer electronics technology rivals the mobile phone in touching so many aspects of business and consumer life. Four billion people worldwide now use mobile phones. Even for an industry as old as farming, the mobile phone provides the platform for a farmer to see what prices his crops might fetch on markets hundreds of miles away, thus eliminating an enormous information asymmetry. The mobile phone alters the business model of the middle-man who carries the goods to market.

In every sector where mobile communications have been introduced, major behavioral and structural changes follow. The health care sector will be no exception. Contrast our newly empowered farmer with a patient sitting in a doctor's office in the U.S. at the turn of the 21st century. The patient likely has little or no information about the physician's track record, the effectiveness of the treatments the physician recommends, and even which treatments would be covered by insurance. The patient does not have complete information about their own health situation, since much of the data is held in various paper medical records kept by doctors seen in the past.

Essentially, the business model of health care in the U.S. relies on consumers who have little or no understanding of the product, its value, their own ability to pay, or even their own needs. Once prices have been set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or by private insurers, patients wander aimlessly amongst health care suppliers who drive their own demand.

Mobile phones can empower healthcare consumers just as it has farmers. Competitive service delivery and affordability models are two critical elements enabling the mobile communications industry to attain massive reach and impressive economies of scale. At the same time, the Internet sector has spawned new business models that foster unprecedented information sharing and collaboration.

The opportunities to apply these same achievements to empower consumers - and to alter the balance of power for entire swaths of the health care system in the process - are tremendous. Companies in both health care and telecommunications need to consider their own vulnerabilities as well as the paths of opportunity that are likely to open before them.

Thinking proactively about the future of mHealth will inform the decisions being made today and lay the groundwork for a competitive advantage tomorrow. To help companies approach this uncertain but promising future, IAF and Ventura Team, LLC, a telecommunications industry consultancy, will conduct a syndicated study on opportunities and challenges at the intersection of the mobile telecommunications and health care industries.

You can read the full article [here](#) at the IAF website. For more information, contact Eric Meade at emeade@altfutures.com.

Aspirational Futures Highlighted in the Journal of Futures Studies

An article on Aspirational Futures by IAF Founder and Chairman of the Board, Clem Bezold, will be published in the May issue of the *Journal of Futures Studies*. The Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) is the developer and leader in "aspirational futures" - an approach that combines learning about the future and its uncertainty with vision and creating preferred futures. The article in the *Journal of Futures Studies* defines aspirational futures and differentiates it from other approaches and then gives examples of its application to scenario use across corporate, government, association and community settings. For more information on the article or aspirational futures, contact Clem Bezold at cbezold@altfutures.com.

IAF Welcomes New Interns

IAF is continuing its internship program with two very talented interns joining IAF in May. Daniel Branscome and Kyle Gildea are joining the IAF team for the summer before continuing their academic studies. During that time, they will learn about futures tools and contribute their unique skills and knowledge to the success of IAF.

Daniel Branscome brings his previous experience in business consulting as a Futurist/Research Intern for IAF. Over the course of the next three months, he will be conducting a futurist research project analyzing the emerging issues and developments within the Chinese automotive industry. Daniel Branscome is a graduate of Vanderbilt University where he studied political science, history and business. Branscome was previously involved with business consulting in the areas of Government Efficiency and Innovation. He has also worked with the National Journal group and was an organizing fellow for the Obama for America Presidential Campaign. He will be attending the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland in the Fall.

Kyle Gildea will utilize his media and video skills as the new IAF Video/Media intern. Gildea will be working in development of the new IAF website, shooting and composing short promotional videos. The videos will feature presentations and sit-down interviews with speakers such as Eric Meade and Jonathan Peck. A short documentary style video is also being developed for the home page.

Kyle Gildea received his Bachelor of Arts at the Pennsylvania State University where he studied Film and Video Production. Previously he has worked for the Fox Sports Network and Discovery Channel. Kyle is also an accomplished artist working in oil, acrylic and watercolor paints. He will eventually be returning to school to study animation.

Upcoming Events

Wiser Futures Workshop, [WorldFuture 2009: Innovation and Creativity in a Complex World](#), IAF Futurists Clem Bezold, Craig Bettles and Eric Meade, July 17th, Chicago, IL.

Health For All and a Health Care System Worth Creating, [WorldFuture 2009: Innovation and Creativity in a Complex World](#), IAF Futurists Clem Bezold and Craig Bettles, July 18th-19th, Chicago, IL.

The Futures of China, [WorldFuture 2009: Innovation and Creativity in a Complex World](#), IAF Futurist Eric Meade and Social Technologies Futurist John Cashman, July 18th-19th, Chicago, IL.

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