HENRY JENKINS (Fandom)

Henry Jenkins is interested in **fandom** and the idea of **participatory** culture. Like Shirky, Jenkins believes that audience are now part of the production, distribution and exhibition of media. His views on Fandom can be summarised in the phrase:

“**If it doesn’t spread it’s dead**”

Films have been hugely influential in stimulating fans to interact with the product and to produce their own related content. The social media buzz around a product helps its success and fans participate in a constant dialogues with the shows producers and actors to ensure that it circulates and gains audience ‘reach’. (= influence among audiences).

Jenkins calls fans **‘textual poachers’** – they steal & remix bits of original products. This is all made possible by social media platforms such as YouTube which serve a global audience.

Cosplay and fan conventions are part of this participatory experience. Media has always involved interactions between products, stars and audiences.

Online communities form a **collective intelligence**. This helps to extend the life of a **media product**. (You may be interested in looking at Anderson’s Long Tail theory – the idea that platforms such as Amazon, fed by social media, help to sustain interest in a product long after its release, ensuring sales continue over a longer period of time.)
More generally, Jenkins believes that media involves a basic human need for social interaction. Fans are active and media is participatory. Fans create online communities.

**Convergence**
Media is also **digitally convergent** – i.e. different media platforms and forms are merging; fans and producers create related products across a range of platforms – so films are converted into games, games into films, Minecraft is used to recreate other narratives, comics become films. Jenkins calls process of media products existing across multiple platforms ‘**transmedia**’ – immersive, cross-media experiences

Close connections with Clay Shirky’s ideas on audience as producers


In what ways might gamers e.g. Minecraft fans be textual poachers?