

## **FRAMED #02: VIDEO ONLINE**

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### **How video got online – A preamble by Andrew Garton**

In a tiny New York hotel room sometime in the mid-80s three youthful and hopeful gentlemen sat together dreaming up ways and means to bring information about environmental degradation, climate change, human rights abuses, including stories of hope and words of wisdom to international communities, and to do so in a manner that would allow every day people to voice their own opinions, that would give them access to the tools scientists, academics and the military already had at their disposal. It would form the basis of a new wave of community publishing, bringing the local to the global, and creating what many of us hoped for - a democratised citizen's media, an informed public that could make informed decisions, at both the supermarket and the ballot box!

Mark Graham, a former IBM computer engineer, had already founded PeaceNet. He and his English colleague, Mitra Adron, already developing communications software that he wanted to make publicly available, wanted something on more of an international scale. Both Graham and Mitra, along with Peter Gabriel conjured up above the streets of New York, the idea of an association of networks that would span the globe and provide low cost networking to community groups, artists and cultural communicators... this was the genesis of the Association for Progressive Communications, who, by 1992, had more countries online than the internet.

At that time, visionary poets, engineers, architects, writers, musicians, filmmakers and activists from Europe, Latin America and Australasia literally trekked from country to country with a swag of modems and laptops, helping estranged communities get online, to bring their stories to a global, rapidly emerging net connected population, often side by side public broadcasting efforts in radio and television.

By the end of 1994, a combination of improved networking technologies, the invention of hypertext and the World Wide Web, saw this movement expand at an astonishing rate which we are all, no doubt aware. The concept of a digital harbour would not have existed had we not embraced the modem and enthusiastically poured our money into the coffers of telecommunications companies (some even venturing forth to purchase shares in them).

From those early days when modems were unknown to customs officials, when laptops were yet to be screened at airports, we have arrived at 2007 with fairly affordable broadband (although Australia still has some of the dearest telecommunications charges of any developed country in the world), we now

have wireless, social networking, tags and Google, Technorati, delicious and Wikipedia... we have many many more means by which to tell our stories and millions do, every day, despite longer working hours, sore wrists and backs, anyone with a few bucks to spend on a net connection, a video camera and a lot of spare time is being seen, heard and read... but by whom and how many really? As filmmakers or artists, do we really have to make films about our wayward cats or stoned lecturers to find new audiences?

For filmmakers, or digital media makers as our government prefers to call us, wrapping all cultural content producers into a complex array of 1's and zeros, we too have more choice in terms of what we produce, for whom and where we may make this work available. As in the mid-80s when there were limits to what could be said, where and how, we are now moving into a more regulated internet where we once again are faced with the same questions... If we know what we want to say, how can we make the most of what the new online technologies afford and where do we concentrate our efforts? According to deathclock.com I've a good 43 years left, much of which I don't want to spend mucking around with dozens of websites and even more with a plethora of portable media devices.

Hence this fine day, where we enquire into just what is going on in Melbourne, or Australia for that matter, that gives us a clearer understanding of the choices, the technologies and the techniques available to getting your video online, found and seen by those with whom you wish to share your stories with.

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Presentations were given by the following:

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