

Software, Source Code, and Skills Migration



January 20, 2017

The Digital Workshops of the World: Software, Source Code, and Skills Migration in the Global VFX Industry

January 20 at 2:00pm in Bass Library, L01

Over the last few decades, a large and globally distributed digital visual effects (VFX) industry has arisen from the periphery of Hollywood's traditional base in Los Angeles. As Hollywood visual effects production began to adopt computational processes, practices, and technologies, what started out as a branch of the IT and computer sciences industry hybridized. Neither 'inside' the Hollywood studios traditional financial structures, nor entirely outside the value chains attached to Hollywood's film output, the VFX industries have functioned as networks of precarious creative industries, offering work for hire on a film by film, contract by contract basis. All of this has led to an industry defined by the migration of labor to an extent that has dwarfed even traditional Hollywood production. In his talk, Leon Gurevitch will consider the effects and migration of precarious labor, as well as the ensuing implications for the future of a Global Hollywood increasingly governed by computational production pipelines. Central to this research are both quantitative and qualitative research approaches that mix interviews with Movie, Games, and Animation professionals (Pixar, Dreamworks, ILM, Weta Digital, Blizzard, Square Enix) with a big data migration visualization tool. The tool details the migration pathways of 80,000 digital image professionals — animators, coders, engineers and artists — across industry and the world over the past 30 years in order to tease out the networked relationships between software, source code, skills migration, and precarious labor in the global VFX industry.

All are invited to attend! The event is co-sponsored by the Yale Digital Humanities Lab and Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library.

Dr. Leon Gurevitch is an Associate Professor at Victoria University of Wellington's School of Design and a Royal Society of New Zealand Research Scholar. Leon is an Associate Editor of *Animation: A Disciplinary Journal* and has published his work in *Continuum*, *The Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, *The Journal of Television and New Media*, *Senses of Cinema*, and others. Leon currently lectures graduate and postgraduate courses in photographics, computational cultures, and the politics of systems design.

External link: <http://web.library.yale.edu/dhlab/gurevitch> [1]

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