

## Annotated bibliography

1. Hito Steyerl (2012). *Hito Steyerl : the Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press.

Steyerl defines the “poor image” as a degraded image that circulates through processes of compression, copying, and redistribution. While dismissed within traditional hierarchies of image quality and value, the poor image gains significance through its accessibility and capacity for circulation. Rather than being fixed, it is continually re-edited, recontextualised, and reinterpreted, with each image carrying traces of its previous forms. In this sense, the poor image exists in reality, sustained by its movement rather than its accuracy.

A key aspect of Steyerl’s argument is that circulation transforms authorship. Users become “editors, critics, translators, and (co)authors.” This decentralisation of control challenges traditional notions of originality and ownership, suggesting that meaning is not preserved but reshaped through distribution.

This text informs my project by shifting focus from visual degradation alone to the broader implications of circulation. While Steyerl discusses images, I extend her framework to typography, asking how text behaves when subjected to similar processes of repetition, rewriting, and sharing.

2. Drucker, J. (2014). *Graphesis : visual forms of knowledge production*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Drucker examines how knowledge is produced and interpreted through visual forms, particularly within digital environments. She argues that interpretation has historically been text-based, but contemporary electronic spaces require new modes of representation that can accommodate collective forms of authorship. As information circulates through social media and digital platforms, it is constantly mediated, reshaped, and recontextualised. Drucker raises the question of how fragmented yet connected perspectives can be visualised in ways that make their relationships legible.

This text informs my project by framing circulation as a dynamic and multi-directional process rather than a linear one. In response, I explore how iterative versions of a sentence can be presented in a way that reflects their interconnected transformations. Rather than producing a fixed, static outcome, I use animation as a medium to visualise the mutation of the text, allowing multiple states to coexist, overlap, and evolve over time.

This approach reinforces the idea that meaning is not singular or stable, but produced through shifting relationships between versions, viewers, and contexts.

3. Letterform Archive (n.d.) *Emigre #15: Do You Read Me?* (1990). Created by Emigre; Zuzana Licko and Rudy VanderLans.

This issue features an interview on type design for early computer screens, where Zuzana Licko discusses the relationship between technology and legibility. She argues that typefaces are not inherently legible, but rather that legibility is shaped by familiarity and reading habits. The statement “you read best what you read most” suggests that repeated exposure establishes what is perceived as normal and comfortable to read. This challenges the idea of a fixed standard of legibility, positioning it instead as something learned. Licko’s approach to her

low-resolution typeface further reinforces this idea, as her designs respond directly to the limitations of screen technology. Despite their pixelated appearance, these typefaces remain readable because users adapt to them over time and they remain legible, scaled up or down.

This text informs my project by framing legibility as a product of repetition and exposure rather than clarity alone. Using the sentence “You read best what you read most,” I test this idea through iterative acts of reading and rewriting. By subjecting the text to processes of compression and redistribution, the project examines how familiarity, memory, and context reshape both the text and meaning over time.

4. Maurer, L., Edo Paulus, Puckey, J. and Roel Wouters (2013). *Conditional design workbook*. Amsterdam: Valiz.

The manifesto outlines a methodology in which the process becomes the product. The outcome is not predetermined, but through the use of process, logic, and input, the design will follow. Central to this approach is the idea that each iteration informs the next, creating a chain of decisions where “difference should have a reason.” While structured by parameters, the system also allows for unpredictability through external input. This system reflects a model of circulation, where each transformation builds on a previous state.

It is relevant to my project, which is based on iterative acts of reading, rewriting, and resharing. Rather than designing fixed outcomes, I establish approaches that allow text to transform through circulation. Constraints such as tracking, leading, scale, and composition act as controlled variables, while human actions such as memory, misreading, and reinterpretation introduce variation.

By adopting a conditional design approach, the project positions transformation as a result of intention, reinforcing the idea that meaning is not fixed but continuously reshaped through use.

5. issue1.shiftspace.pub. (n.d.). *On Gathering - Mindy Seu*. [online] Available at: <https://issue1.shiftspace.pub/on-gathering-mindy-seu>.

In *On Gathering*, Mindy Seu redefines authorship as a collective and evolving process, where knowledge is produced through shared acts of selection, interpretation, and retelling. Drawing on storytelling traditions, she describes how stories are not passed down as they are, but adapted by each storyteller in response to the context and audience. This positions gathering as a collaborative practice, where meaning is shaped through personal interpretation and communal exchange rather than fixed transmission.

This perspective informs my project by framing circulation as an act of collective authorship. By introducing a delay and asking participants to recall and rewrite a sentence from memory, I create conditions where reproduction is replaced by interpretation. Each participant reshapes the text based on what they perceive as meaningful, allowing subjective differences to emerge through the process. This reinforces the idea that authorship is distributed rather than singular.

6. Wikipedia Contributors (2024). *Telephone game*. [online] Wikipedia. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone\\_game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone_game).

The telephone game is a method of passing a message sequentially from one person to another, where the content gradually changes due to either mishearing, memory, reinterpretation, or a collective of all three. Although it is often presented as a simple children’s

game, it demonstrates how information transforms through human transmission, with each participant unintentionally altering the message. This process highlights the instability of communication and the role of individual perception in shaping meaning.

This concept informs my project as a model of analogue circulation, contrasting with digital forms of distribution. I apply this structure by sending a recorded sentence to multiple participants, who are asked to recall and rewrite it under controlled conditions. In one iteration, responses are collected from ten different individuals, producing multiple variations from a single source. In another, the sentence is passed sequentially from one participant to the next, allowing changes to accumulate over time.

These experiments demonstrate how meaning is selectively preserved, altered, or lost based on individual interpretation, reinforcing the idea that circulation does not transmit information neutrally, but actively reshapes it.

7. Queneau, R. (1998) *Exercises in style*. Translated by B. Wright. London: John Calder, pp. 9–16, 19–26.

*Exercises in Style* retells the same story 99 times, each version in a completely different register: metaphorical, retrograde, litotes, and so on. The content is fixed, but what changes is the frame. This makes me think about my log circulation that operates on a similar logic. The same reference gets re-encountered repeatedly, but each click leaves a different trace. Queneau's project made me question what exactly varies between entries in my log. Is it just a timestamp, or does each trace carry something of the person and moment that produced it? The preface also argues that the banality of the fixed content is what makes the variations legible in the first place, which challenges me to think about whether my references need to remain deliberately stable for the accumulating log to carry meaning. Where Queneau multiplies interpretations of one event across 99 versions, my log multiplies instances of encounter around one reference. The difference being that his variations are authored, and mine are left by users.

8. "Upcycle This Book." *Eastside Projects*, 2017, [eastsideprojects.org/product/pre-order-upcycle-this-book/](https://eastsideprojects.org/product/pre-order-upcycle-this-book/).

Gavin Wade's concept of "upcycling" reframes authorship as something collective and ongoing rather than fixed. Through processes of copying, recycling, and responding to existing texts, he shifts attention away from originality and toward reuse. Rather than presenting a finished body of work, the book functions as an open system that invites further use and transformation. This resonates with Mindy Seu's *On Gathering*, but Wade's approach feels more grounded in accumulation and reuse over time.

This reference challenges my project by expanding how I think about transmission. I had been focusing on the "whisper game" as a model for translation and reinterpretation shaped by individual perception, but Wade suggests that transmission can also be productive, generating new meaning through reuse. It pushes me to reconsider whether my project should only track shifts in meaning or actively encourage them. His approach also raises questions about authorship in my work. If I want my texts to circulate and evolve beyond the project's timeframe, I need to design a format that supports continued participation.

9. Borchard, G.A. (ed.) (2022) 'Circulation', *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Journalism*. 2nd edn. Sage Publications. Available at:

<https://access.infobase.com/article/1674818-circulation?aid=275139> (Accessed: 7 May 2026).

This entry reframes circulation from a quantitative measure of printed distribution into a complex post-publication process shaped by digital dissemination, sharing, and recontextualisation. It reveals circulation as a system entangled with technological infrastructures, economic models, and social behaviour where meaning is produced through movement rather than fixed output. This directly confirmed that circulation was the right term for my project, but it also sharpened how I use it.

Before this reference, I was treating circulation as a relatively neutral descriptor of movement between platforms. This text pushed me to recognise that circulation is never neutral, it is always shaped by the systems that carry it. That distinction is central to what this project investigates. The platforms are not just the path content travels through. They are the conditions that determine what survives the journey and what gets left behind.

It also raised a productive question: is what I am simulating truly circulation, or is it transformation and reconfiguration? I decided that circulation remains the right term precisely because it carries both meanings, movement and change. Circulation, in this project, is defined as the process by which textual meaning is reconfigured through changing contexts of mediation.

10. Rock, Michael. "Fuck Content — 2x4." *2x4*, 5 Aug. 2009, [2x4.org/ideas/2009/fuck-content/](http://2x4.org/ideas/2009/fuck-content/).

Rock's argument that meaning in design comes not from content but from how that content is shaped through form sits in direct tension with my project. Invisible Systems is built on the premise that platforms transform content, that the system doing the carrying is where the meaning-making actually happens. Rock makes the same claim from a design perspective: form is not a secondary carrier of information, it is the generative act.

This challenged me to reconsider what I mean when I talk about transformation in my simulation. Rather than treating each platform pass as a degraded copy of what came before, it becomes a new condition in which different meanings become possible. No platform version is more authoritative than another. Each is a different formal system producing different effects on the same content.

What this reference most directly changed is how I think about the Filtered Out page. I had been treating discarded words as evidence of loss. Rock's argument suggests they are evidence of form asserting itself, the platform's grammar overwriting the content's grammar. That is not loss, but the invisible system doing exactly what it was designed to do.

11. McLuhan, M., Agel, J. and Fiore, Q. (1967). *The Medium Is the Message*. Penguin.

McLuhan argues that the medium shapes perception, behaviour, and meaning more profoundly than the content it carries. This idea became the theoretical foundation of this project. It shifted my focus away from what is being circulated and toward the platforms conditioning its movement. Each platform creates the conditions through which content is understood, not just delivered.

The concept of "allatonceness" is particularly relevant. McLuhan argues that electric media produce meaning through simultaneity and participation rather than fixed linear transmission. This directly challenged me to avoid treating circulation as a stable sequential process. In my website simulation, meaning does not move from point A to point B intact, it is reconfigured at each pass through a different system. The drift is not loss in a linear sense, but the trace of multiple environments acting on the same content simultaneously.

What this reference opened up most is the question my project is built around: if the medium is the message, what happens when the same content passes through four different media in sequence? McLuhan observed the phenomenon at a cultural scale. This project attempts to simulate it at the level of a single text.

12. Seu, Mindy. "Cyberfeminism Index." *Cyberfeminismindex.com*, [cyberfeminismindex.com/](http://cyberfeminismindex.com/).

What I take from Seu's practice is not its feminist politics but its structural logic. The Cyberfeminism Index is a form that grows through use. Entries accumulate continuously, every trace remains visible, and the incompleteness is not a flaw but the argument. This directly informed the circulation log in this project. I wanted to build something that works the same way: a structure where each platform pass leaves a visible trace, layering over time as people continue to circulate the text.

Seu's point that technology is not just the subject of the work but its means of transmission resonates with what my website aims to achieve. The platforms are both what I am investigating and the system through which the investigation runs. The medium is not just carrying the inquiry, it produces it.

What her practice fundamentally changed is how I think about the log. Before encountering the Cyberfeminism Index, I treated the circulation log as a functional feature. Seu reframed it as a record that accumulates and keeps every trace visible. It is not just documentation, but it becomes evidence. Every row in the In Circulation page is proof that a platform conditioned content. The accumulation is the work.