

What is New Media?

Lev Manovich

- **About Lev Manovich**
- **Five Principles of New Media**

Lev Manovich



- **The Language of New Media (MIT Press, 2000)**
 - Professor at U of California, San Diego
 - Born in Moscow
 - Studied fine arts, architecture, & computer science
 - Moved to US in 1981
 - Working with digital media as visual artist & programmer since 1984
 - Numerous books, articles, and exhibitions

Five Principles of New Media

- **numerical representation** all digital media can be described as bits/bytes,
 - **mathematical function & manipulation**
- **modularity** made of discrete samples which can be copied and pasted between media objects
 - **the individual objects are frequently independently editable**
- **automation** numerous aspects of digital media production are automated
- **variability** can exist in different, potentially infinite versions
- **cultural transcoding** translate one format into another
 - **proposes new “computer culture,” a blend of human and computer**

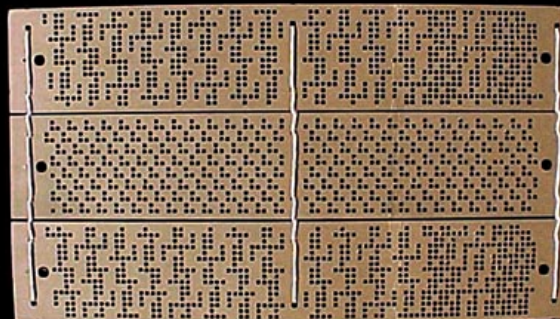


numerical representation

all digital media can be described as
bits/bytes, 1 or zero, on or off

1801: Jacquard Loom

- controls woven patterns with boards with punched holes
 - Anticipates binary yes/no function basis of computer languages
 - The system of punched cards inspired Charles Babbage, who incorporated them into his design for a computer.



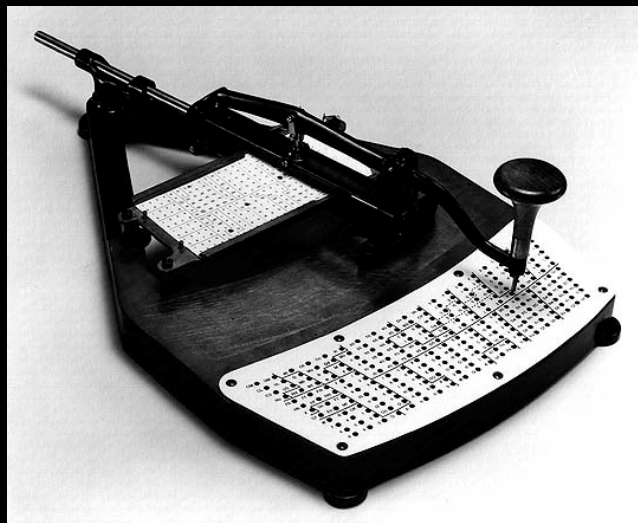


numerical representation

all digital media can be described as bits/bytes, 1 or zero, on or off

Herman Hollerith

- 1890: US census tabulation
- Uses punch cards which were scanned mechanically and tallied in the bank of dials
- Hollerith later sells company to Thomas J. Watson, who renames it International Business Machines (IBM)



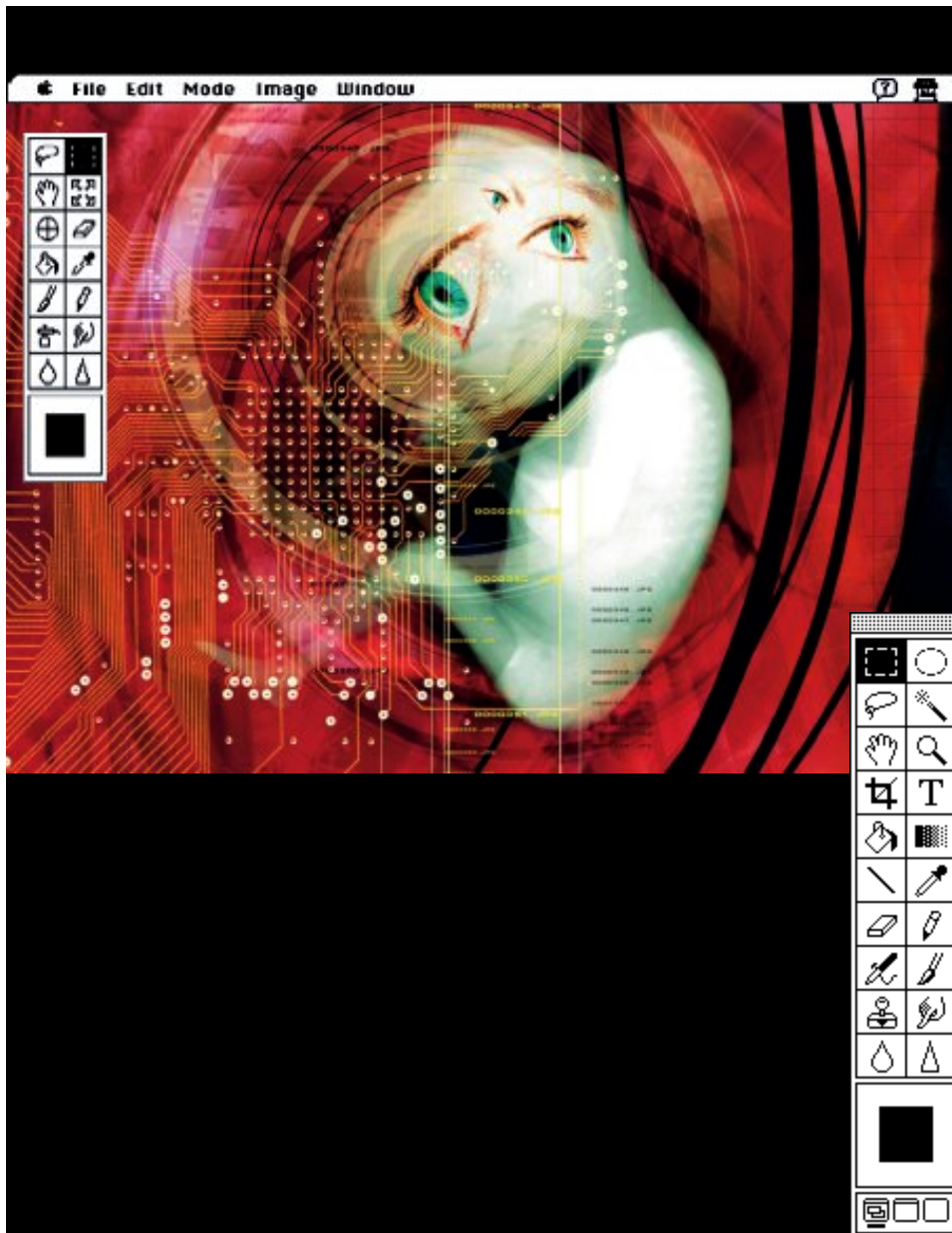


modularity

made of discrete samples which can be copied and pasted between media objects

these individual objects are frequently independently editable

- Mosaic web browser
- 1997
- First program to provide GUI for web
- Could display graphics, colors, play audio & video files
- digital environment = images, texts, sound files, movies, etc. that can be copied & pasted between each other

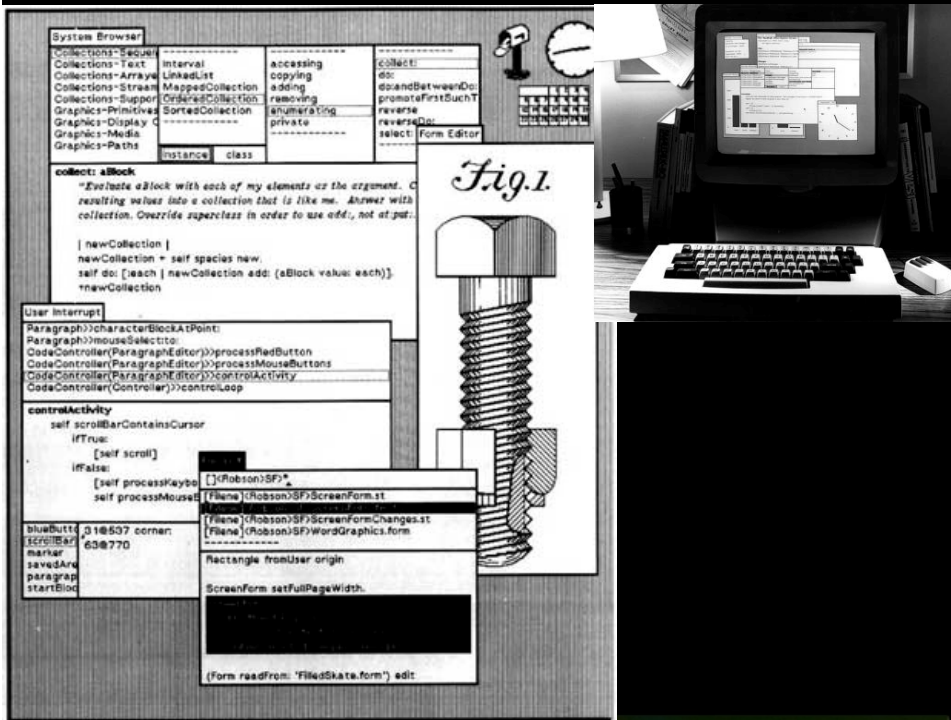


modularity

made of discrete samples which can be copied and pasted between media objects

these individual objects are frequently independently editable

- Photoshop
- 1990: Thomas & John Knoll
- Primary raster image editing program
- Layers are independently editable & can be copied & pasted between images

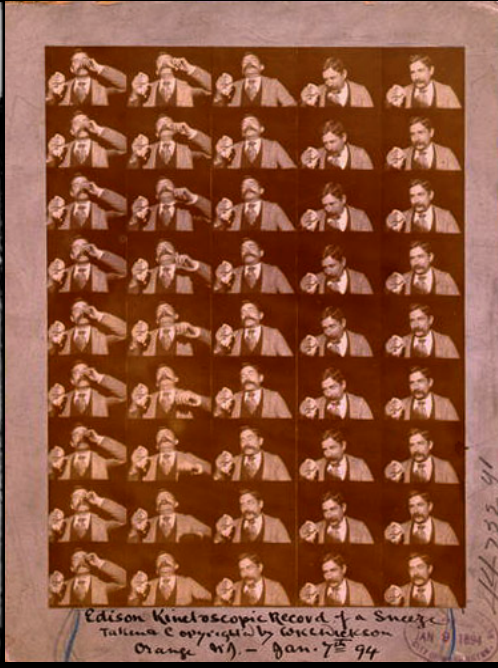


automation
 numerous aspects of digital media
 production are automated

Things happen with the click of a button or
 mouse

- **Mouse**
 - 1963: Doug Engelbart
- **Graphic User Interface or GUI**
 - 1973: Alan Kay

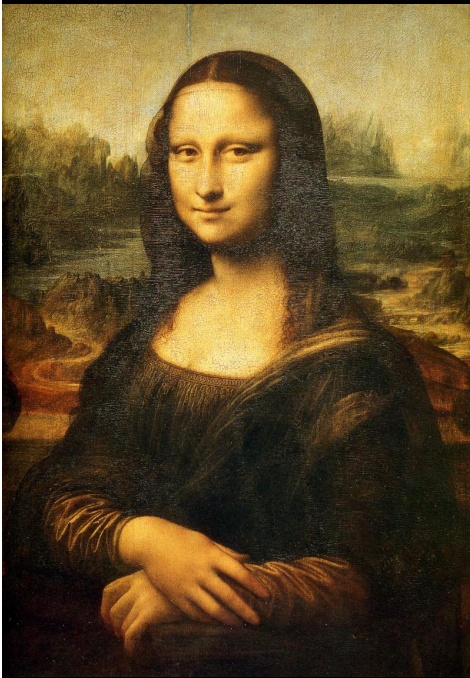




variability

media objects can exist in different, potentially infinite versions

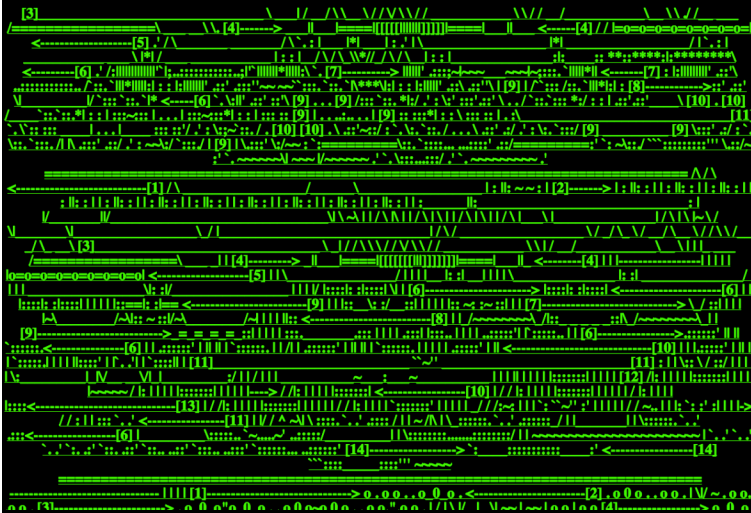
- 1893: Thomas Edison – Kinetoscope
- Silent films shown in special “Kinetoscope parlors”
 - Wildly popular across the world
 - The first film ever copyrighted, “Edison Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze”



variability

media objects can exist in different, potentially infinite versions

- Mona Lisa = single object: we can view many images of it, but we do so knowing there is an actual painting which is the source of the images
- www.jodi.org = media object: different electronic devices will interpret its visual representation in different ways - none of them are “correct” or “incorrect” as there is no single object as a reference



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Today's featured article

Sir Thomas Playford (1886–1981) was a prominent South Australian politician and farmer. He served continuously as Premier of South Australia from 5 November 1938 to 10 March 1965, the longest term of any democratically elected leader in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations. His tenure as premier was marked by a period of population and economic growth unmatched by any other Australian state. Playford took a unique, strong and direct approach to the premiership and personally oversee his industrial initiatives. His string of election wins were assisted by a system of electoral manipulation that bore his name, the 'Playmender'. Although a liberal conservative, his approach to economics was pragmatic, and he was derisively by his colleagues for his "socialism" as he nationalised electricity companies and used state enterprises to drive economic growth. However, Playford and his party failed to adapt to changing social mores and eventually lost office in the 1965 election. He relinquished the LCL leadership to Steele Hall and retired at the next election, serving on various South Australian company boards until his death in 1981. (more...)

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- ... that the first Texian to be seriously wounded during the Texas Revolution was Samuel McCulloch, a freed slave who was shot during the *Battle of Goddard* (location unknown)?
- ... that Walter Jackson Bates called Samuel Johnson's *Life of Mr. Richard Savage*, included in *Lines of the Most Eminent English Poets*, "one of the innovative works in the history of biography"?
- ... that when constructed in 1926, the *Baku-Batumi* pipeline was the world's longest kerosene pipeline?
- ... that American journalist Alan Cabell was one of the luminaries of New York City's occult movement during the "bohemian era" started in the 1920s?
- ... that for many years, kibbutz *Mitza's* store was the only place in Israel that sold non-kosher meat?
- ... that the 1953 film *Shogunama* features the only color footage of pin-up model Bettie Page in a motion picture?

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Cultural transcoding proposes new “computer culture,” a blend of human and computer

- Computers are very good at
- Storing info
- Retrieving info
- Saving info
- Electronic communication
- Recent innovations that have exploited what computers are good at in order to become cultural touchstones