Mobile phones are now well advanced in their global diffusion. Many aspects of mobile telephony are firmly and unremarkably ensconced in everyday life. Many other facets of the mobile phone still attract much public fascination. One of these is the phenomenon of mobiles *becoming* media.

The idea of mobiles as media is no idle conceit, and it can be substantiated in a number of senses. Cellular mobile phones, devices, and networks can still be usefully conceptualized as telecommunications. And although telecommunications has been a minor and often overlooked part of media systems, it is actually vitally important. The mobile phone quite obviously presented itself as something that followed in the trajectory of the telephone, and then telecommunications. Quickly, though, mobiles have amounted to something quite different. As the substantial scholarship on text messaging shows, this extension of portable mobile phones built upon predecessor messaging technologies (notably the pager and wireless telegraphy, but also the fixed-network technology of the telex). Text messaging took on a life of its own—spawning a career in technology that quickly moved beyond mere signal or data to direct suturing into youth culture, interactive television, mobile commerce, and so on.

What text messaging underscores is that the consumption of mobile phones is an important part of contemporary media around the world, in ways that we still only dimly understand. The importance of mobiles to media is especially pronounced not only in many Western countries but also in the new geopolitical forces represented by countries such as India and China, as well as significant groups in developing countries. For instance, the mobile has been vital for conveying news, whether via voice calls or text messaging, in various countries where political conditions have been inimical to free and diverse press, and where mainstream media, or even new Internet-based media, such as Web sites, lists, or blogs, have been subject to censorship and repression. Hence, the use of the mobile for reporting and circulating news in countries such as Burma, the much-publicized role the mobile plays in activism and organizing in many countries, or the inventive way that satire and jokes with clear social and political valence have been circulated via mobiles in a number of countries.
What is now also evident is the incorporation of mobiles into mainstream, minority, alternative and citizen’s media alike as a vital channel in a convergent, cross-platform approach to media. Obvious examples are the use of mobiles to provide interactivity and allied platforms and capacity to refresh and extend television—evident in the much-publicized use of mobiles in international-format programs such as Idol, Big Brother, and many others. With mobiles in the pocket of the citizen and denizen, and key to new architectures of popular culture, television producers and broadcasters internationally have responded accordingly. The rise of user-created content (UCC) has become synonymous with the deployment of mobile media as a foray into Web 2.0 and social networking systems (SNS). The case of news, already introduced, is also a good case in point. With mobiles come the affordances of alerts, mobile Internet, and the ability to watch and forward video, among other attributes. Unsurprisingly, many mainstream news outlets, especially in their online forms, offer a range of news especially repurposed, customized, or designed for mobiles.

An earlier and much more pervasive example is the case of mobile music. Music is another area of media, often overlooked, but vital to culture generally. Popular music has been avidly consumed by users through mobiles, with the invention of ring-tones, but also through accompanying micropayment systems (notably pioneered in Japan with the i-Mode system). Mobile technologies are now intersecting and interacting with other recent developments in music, including online music, digital formats, and portable music players. With their increased storage capabilities, and the possibilities for exchanging music either freely (via protocols such as Bluetooth) or via mobiles or Internet, mobiles have a dual function as digital music organizer, players, and sharing device—thus figuring in the media and music ecologies inhabited by technologies such as the MP3 player, iPod, or peer-to-peer file sharing.

Mobiles, then, are a strategically important site of innovation, change, and re-invention of older, existing media. However, mobiles are being reimagined as media in far bolder guises still, with the advent of forms such as mobile books, mobile television, mobile Internet, and mobile games.

**AFTER TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

In the growing field of scholarship and critical examination of mobile technologies, then, this collection focuses on the transition from telecommunications to media. The warrant for the collection lies in the distinct sense we have of much public fascination with the mobile’s media turn, many design, corporate, and service offerings that position the cell phone front and centre in media spaces, and considerable consumer and user response, though often from unexpected angles. We have keenly felt the lack of a resource that brings together critical accounts, case studies, and analyses
of what is unfolding here. There are other treatments that address facets of the topic—such as the useful 2005 collection *Mobile Media: Content and Services for Wireless Communications*—and also works that investigate what the trajectories come after the classic period of the cell phone. However, our focus is neither solely on the framing of this new epoch, and its forms, as “mobile content,” nor as primarily about “mobile communication.” Rather, we are interested in focusing upon, and promoting inquiry into, the changes in mobiles that the shift into media brings; and the related changes in the nature of contemporary media that mobiles catalyze.

To approach the question of the media transformation of mobiles, the volume is organized into five parts. The first part, “Reprising Mobile Theory,” offers two important new papers on key topics that provide a bridge from current mobile studies. In their “Intimate Connections: The Impact of the Mobile Phone on Work/Life Boundaries,” Judy Wajcman, Michael Bittman, and Jude Brown provide a fresh perspective on an recurrent and still vitally important theme in the social shaping of mobile technology. This is followed by a contribution from the profound and ceaseless theorist of mobiles, Leopoldina Fortunati, inquiring into the concept of gender. The second part, “Youth, Families, and the Politics of Generations,” also deals with a keenly studied and debated area of mobiles—toaking stock of where the mobile and its coproduction of the social is at, but also gauging the changes evolving with new patterns of consumption and user innovation, interacting with the affordances of mobile media devices. Leslie Haddon and Jane Vincent’s “Children’s Broadening Use of Mobile Phones” acquaints us with adroitly conducted, closely observed, and carefully drawn research about the new things that British children are doing with mobiles, and what this means. In a vintage paper, Rich Ling, another leading figure in mobile studies, thoughtfully and tellingly takes up the theme of teenagers, and looks at what we now know about how mobiles fit into the process, politics, and temporality of becoming (and unbecoming) a teen. Misa Matsuda’s insightful “Mobile Media and the Transformation of Family” delves behind the “aura-of-crime” phenomenon to expose how this is orchestrated within parental and sibling micropolitics—such technics are particularly apparent in children’s deploying the *keitai* (Japanese abbreviation for mobile phone) as “mom in the pocket.” In their “*Purikura* as a Social Management Tool,” Daisuke Okabe, Mizuko Ito, Aico Shimizu, and Jan Chipchase start with an established media form, the Japanese *purikura*, or photo sticker booth or collecting book. They then give us a fascinating study in how the *keitai* becomes part of this wider media ecology.

From the reconsideration of well-established themes in mobile studies and the review and recasting of these in grappling with mobile’s posttelecommunications environment, we move to two sets of detailed studies that explicitly take up the problematics of what are mobile media and how might we define them (Part III, “Mobiles in the Field of Media”), and the concomitant issues of what are their relationships and position in regard
to predecessor and continuing media forms (Part IV, “Renewing Media Forms”).

Opening Part III, Jonathan Donner extends his invaluable work in his “Mobile Media on Low-Cost Handsets: The Resiliency of Text Messaging among Small Enterprises in India (and Beyond)—making an important argument for the everyday yet powerful framing of mobiles by users in developing countries. The original and noted thinker on technology, Harmeet Sawhney, contributes an important paper that disentangles the entwining of the two great contemporary media in his “Innovations at the Edge: The Impact of Mobile Technologies on the Character of the Internet.” Virpi Oksman analyzes the interplay of multimedia in her “Media Contents in Mobiles: Comparing Video, Audio, and Text.” Stuart Cunningham and Jason Potts’s “New Economics for the New Media” draws on groundbreaking work in evolutionary economics in an effort to rethink the markets, industries, structure, and relations of creativity, consumption, and production, and concepts of the social, in which mobile media are set. Larissa Hjorth draws upon the domestication and new media traditions, as a fertile and revealing frame for situating mobile media, in her paper “Domesticating New Media: A Discussion on Locating Mobile Media.” In Part IV, we commence with a fascinating, historically grounded study of mobile television in Italy, with Gabriele Balbi and Benedetta Prario’s “Back to the Future: The Past and Present of Mobile TV.” In their “Net_Dérive: Conceiving and Producing a Locative Media Artwork,” Atau Tanaka and Petra Gemeinboeck offer a rich provocation and model for thinking about advances in music, location technologies, and art as they meld as mobile media. While there is a rich literature on Internet and online news, this staple of media has not been given the attention it deserves in relation to mobiles, and this is redressed by Liu Cheng and Axel Bruns’s “Mobile News in Chinese Newspaper Groups: A Case Study of Yunnan Daily Press Group.” This paper is nicely complemented by Wendy Van den Broeck, Bram Lievens, and Jo Pierson’s discussion of electronic reader and paper technologies and nascent reader responses and practices in their “Re-inventing Newspapers in a Digital Era: The Mobile E-Paper.”

The concluding part of the book is titled “Mobile Imaginings,” as the four papers to be found there raise an ensemble of cross-cutting issues and try to trace and speculate upon their deep cultural significances. Kathy Cleland’s “Face to Face: Avatars and Mobile Identities” is one of the first accounts we know of that seek to theorize the abiding issue of avatars for mobile platforms. Dong-Hoo Lee’s marvelous “Re-imagining Urban Space: Mobility, Connectivity, and a Sense of Place” discusses space and place through the geomorphologies, experiences, and relations of mobile social media, such as Cyworld. Kate Crawford contributes a pioneering essay on the microblogging of the Twitter technology, and its poetics, in her “These Foolish Things: On Intimacy and Insignificance in Mobile Media.” Finally, Nicola Green looks at the implications of new mediated mobilities for the
much-discussed and strategically important thematics of memory in her chapter “Mobility, Memory and Identity.”

CHALLENGES FOR FRAMING MOBILES AS MEDIA

As these contributions underline, when mobile phone transforms into mobile media there are resistances, contestations, and challenges that arise. In the epoch of user-created content and Web 2.0 in which social labor and capital become the precepts for global media vernaculars, it is through the rubric of mobile media that one can begin to understand these new forms of material and immaterial labor and attendant intimacies. One of the first challenges is to recast ways of conceptualizing forms of communication and expression across both material and symbolic dimensions. It is important not to see “mobile media” as “new” but rather a recontextualization of older media, ideologies, and practices.

Another challenge is to rethink what constitutes creativity—such as the distinctions between amateur and professional categories—and what that entails within the context of the “Swiss army knife” of mobile media. On the one hand, mobile media has symbolized a democratization of media, affording the everyday user with the ability to become a photojournalist or micromovie filmmaker. Within this line of thinking, we can see new forms of creativity and artistic labor evolving—akin to the webcam revolution. The particular characteristics of mobile media—portability, ubiquity, miniaturization, and personal media, to name but a few—provide new forms of visuality, textuality, aurality, and haptic vernaculars. These emerging aesthetic trajectories offer a lens for rethinking media practice in which new forms of Web 2.0 distribution, such as YouTube, create new contexts and modes of audience participation. On the other hand, it is important to look beyond the smoke-and-mirrors rhetoric of the “produser” paradigm and see the persistence, and even amplifications, of inequalities across various social groups. In particular, it is important to recognize that much of the emerging forms of mobile media creativity are coming from developed contexts.

Thirdly, it is pivotal to recognize the dialectic between users and non-users, and how this dynamic informs the scope and discourse of mobile media today. It is easy to look towards the early-adopters—to fetishize the technological savvy—without acknowledging the role they play as part of broader social, cultural, and economic shifts. Moreover, within the user and non-user paradigm lie some broader issues about the emerging forms of mobility and immobility that greet the twenty-first century. These mobilities—and immobilities—can take various forms such as capital, people, ideas, and objects. Through the lens of mobile media, as a global phenomenon that is marked by localization, we can begin to reconceptualize the symbolic and material ways in which inequalities are played out within postmodernity.
Fourthly, as mobile phones depart from the rubric of telecommunication and into the realm of mobile media, so too do we need new models for equating and analyzing the phenomenon. Whilst mobile phones have long attracted—and necessitated—interdisciplinary approaches drawing from media and communication, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology, it is the migration into mobile media that urges us to consider more sophisticated and complex apparatus for analysis. This is when such traditions as new media can provide insight into the convergence and divergence of old and new media in the form of mobile media. So too mobile media can offer innovative ways to reconfigure these disciplines as well as a reconceptualization of interdisciplinary practice within the twenty-first century.

Often, youth has been conflated with the prerogative of being the subjects for new technologies. However, as mobile phones unevenly transform into mobile media, issues about demographies are contested. Just as the rise of mobile phones was one marked by surprising adaptations—such as the phenomenal spread and impact of Short Message Service (SMS) to the localized forms of digital storytelling and emerging new creative forms of expression in the form of camera phone imagery—so too the nascent rise of mobile media must be conceptualized in terms of localized contingencies, disruptions, connections, and disconnection. Thus, the challenges for research agendas for mobile media are the need to grapple with both new and revised media practices, labor, and politics. In order to do so, more cross-generational, transnational, and longitudinal studies need to be conducted to further contextualize the phenomenon for its full complexities.

NOTES


2. For instance, see *After the Mobile Phone? Social Changes and the Development of Mobile Communication*, edited by Maren Hartmann, Patrick Rössler, and Joachim Höflich (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2008).
In this article, we'll provide you with important mobile statistics on key aspects of mobile usage such as the number of people who own smartphones, digital ad spend on mobile devices, and more. To get even more ideas about how to use mobile commerce, check out our mobile commerce guide today. If you're ready, let's get straight to it! That means keeping your copy to the point and targeting question keywords such as who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Conclusion. To reframe the question of mobile effectiveness: Can mobile elicit the same emotion as other mediums? The growth in mobile has primarily been around mobile video being the format that will see the largest increase in digital media spend in 2016. One of the biggest limitations with mobile video, however, is that users are watching these videos in silence. Digiday has reported that 85% of video on Facebook is watched without sound.

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The notion of making media mobile can be traced back to the first time someone thought to write on a tablet that could be lifted and hauled rather than on a cave wall, a cliff face, a monument that usually was stuck in place, more or less forever. In his book Cellphone, Paul Levinson refers to mobile media as the media-in-motion business. Since their incarnation, mobile phones as a means of communication have been a focus of great fascination as well as debate. In the book, Studying Mobile Media.