

The Media Studies Department Welcomes New Faculty for Fall 2016



Kevin Driscoll

Assistant Professor

Kevin Driscoll is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Studies. His research explores popular culture, political communication, and networked personal computing, with special attention to mythology, folklore, and infrastructure. Some of his previous work explores everyday and emerging uses of social media such as live-tweeting, joking about politics, and spreading rumors. His dissertation traced the pre-history of social media through the dial-up bulletin board systems of the 1980s and 1990s. Currently, he is writing a technical and cultural history of the French Minitel system in collaboration with Julien Mailland from Indiana University. Kevin joined the Department in the fall of 2016 after working as a postdoctoral researcher at Microsoft Research. He holds a PhD from the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California and an M.S. from Comparative Media Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Previously, he taught mathematics and computer science for grades 6-12 at Prospect Hill Academy Charter School in Cambridge, MA.



Lana Swartz

Assistant Professor

Most of my research is about money and other communication technologies. Right now, I am writing a book on money as communication, both in terms of information transmission and as a vector of relations, memory, and culture. It looks at topics like: the history of public and private visions of payment in the United States; bitcoin, frequent flyer miles and other "alternative" currencies; and transactional data and privacy. I am also co-editing for MIT Press collection of essays on money objects and other "transactional things" by anthropologists, historians, and other scholars. From 2015-2016, I was a post-doctoral researcher in the Social Media Collective of Microsoft Research New England in Cambridge, MA. Prior to that, I completed a PhD in communication at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, where I was the Wallis Annenberg Chair in Communication, and a masters in Comparative Media Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. My thesis was on regimes of ownership and authorship in fashion-- that is, fake bags.

