

23rd SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE ACTIVITY AND SOCIETY (E5)
Space as an Artistic Medium (4)

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SYMPOSIUM KEYNOTE: CREATIVE CULTURAL CONVERGENCE: INSPIRING AND INFORMING
SPACE EXPLORATION**Abstract**

The discrete domains among the space exploration sciences, the arts and engineering develop, function by and continuously renew their own distinct cultures. And yet, it is the everyday interlacing of these domains, by a process I refer to as creative cultural convergence, which supports space industry practitioners along with citizen participants everywhere in their abilities to learn and discover in synchrony with one another. This blended interdisciplinary progression fuels my current work as the organizer and leader of a NASA Media Innovation Team. In indigenous Silicon Valley style, our team works in lean, agile, entrepreneurial start-up mode on focused projects to increase public connection with NASA. In our first 9 months of operation our 3 person team designed, developed and launched NASA's first mobile application, subtly named, the "NASA App." More than 8 million downloads later it's won awards and is still highly ranked worldwide among free educational apps. By collecting, customizing and delivering an extensive selection of dynamically updated content from a wide range of NASA online sources in a convenient, user-centered mobile package, our kick-start project made a healthy contribution to NASA's mandate to widely disseminate its knowledge. Now we're developing a new media node we call "NASA ArtSpace," and plan to launch it off the NASA portal to celebrate, chronicle and invite active public participation in the convergence of art, science and technology as it serves to inform and inspire space exploration. Through our work, I have come to respect the powerful pulse of global media migration from 'old to new,' from constricted to open, from controlled to collective, and from passive to participatory as content flows across multiple media platforms in a world of 24/7/365 connectedness. I'm pleased with NASA's commitment to connecting with the millions of space enthusiasts who are engaged in social networking, blogging, and multimedia content production as they spread their interpretations of exploration events and outcomes in real-time communications. My team is also researching what cultural historians and media scholars are revealing about the rise and transmedia metamorphosis of fandom and geekdom. For I believe that it is among these diverse, cross-cultural, cross-platform, media-savvy participants that we are witnessing the creative interweaving of countless threads containing the digital DNA which will ultimately re-chronicle and curate the history of space exploration and shape its future. Now that's a tapestry worth examining.