

## ***Techno Viking*: artist strategies for Web 2.0**

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### **The Context**

The *Techno Viking* project is an example of the reordering, re-editing and remaking of an 'original' video on the internet. The original video is in analogy with genes called a meme. As such, the original and its first clones, start to circulate within social networks, where the original mutates, competes with other originals and inherits. Becoming multiplied in this way, the original video becomes successful by reproducing itself, through various recycling techniques.

In this way the Techno Viking project questions the creation's origin of such an Internet hype. The popular result is not the beginning, but the original + n, after being altered and filtered several times through a chain of actions and reactions.

The potential of public attention that such clips raise, brings attention also to the role of such major companies as Google. Google, as the owner of YouTube, provides the basic technological structure not only to enable and control, but also to profit from such creations. If the creation is based on 'free' social information networks, the product is commercialized through a monopoly company. In this way the Techno Viking is a perfect example to illustrate such new ways of production and distribution within user generated networks.

### **The Techno Viking**

The Techno Viking is a tall, muscular, charismatic, intimidating German man in his thirties, that danced in front of the camera at the Fuckparade in Berlin in 2000. The Fuckparade emerged as a reaction to the music restriction (e.g. the exclusion of other techno styles as Gabber, Speedcore, Hardcore Techno or Punk music) of the

Berlin Love Parade and its increasing commercialization, as well as a public demonstration against the shut down of the famous techno club 'Bunker', (which serves as a home for a private art collection today.)

The Techno Viking became famous firstly through the 'Kneecam' video. A girl with heavily blue dyed hair is dancing to the rough techno beats, while a rather unruly looking guy, crashes, unfriendly into her. That accident causes the Techno Viking to demonstrate his physical power. He snatches the guy's arms and pushes him back from where he came dancing from.

Pointing straight at another man, and dominating him with his fierce glance, the Techno Viking produces an aura of fear, which makes the man leave the situation. This incident enables the Techno Viking, finally, enough space to start dancing freely. His dance moves are wild and expressive but perfect in form. Soon he seems like the king of the street, even having fans serving as 'pop servants', supplying him with water bottles.

At YouTube the fascination with the Techno Viking is expressed in several statements. One of the most famous lines started to reappear with the countless remakes of the 'original' footage itself: 'The Techno Viking doesn't dance to the music, but the music dances to the Techno Viking'.

After a definition published by Mister Neutral on Feb 16, 2008, it rated 1151 up (love it), 24 down (hate it)

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Techno%20Viking%20>

(Date: June 21st 2009)

### **The archive**

The original 4 minute video 'Kneecam No.1' was discovered in 2007 by the YouTube community and posted by users in various other platforms. After being linked and discussed in different web sites and Internet forums, the footage got uploaded onto [www.break.com](http://www.break.com), a big American media portal. On this website, with a clear male audience, the video had it's peak on September 28th 2007, when more than a million viewers looked at it in only one day. Yet, within the following 6 months, more than 10 million people were watching the video under its new name 'Techno Viking'. The new

name appeared together with the hundreds of remix versions and responses to the original video, when the fans of the original, started to imitate the video's dramaturgy, re-enacting it in their homes, at clubs or on the streets.

I was following these developments with great interest and researched the Internet history of the video. In this way I documented it's trajectory from it's original production until it became a popular Internet video multiplied by countless users. The archive of the Techno Viking now contains images, emails, blog and forum discussions, merchandising products and a selection of more than 100 categorized video responses. To give an inside view on the development of the video and to show recycling strategies at Web 2.0 I am presenting the archive in the form of installations and lectures.

Following is a selection of the most interesting video responses:

Shortly after the main hype, moderated clips like the one from 'Rocket Boom' were created to provide information about the new meme. A mixture of statistics, quotes and jokes make it easy to consume the semi documentation:



Know Your Meme: Technoviking

Results 1 - 30 of about 440,000 for [techno v](#)

1:26 / 1:50

★★★★★ 560 ratings 153,524 views

Know Your Meme: Technoviking

**SUCKS** OR **RULES** BETA

Popular Tags: Battles, Sports, Music, Other Stuff

Technoviking Vs The Whole Chinese Army

who is the most powerful force on the face of planet earth...

Technoviking VS The Chinese Army

Created By: [User]

Date Created: 11.02.07

Technoviking doesn't dance to the music, the Chinese Army are billions of Chinese people and some of

1:21 / 1:50

★★★★★ 560 ratings 153,524 views

Another moderated clip from the Internet television channel 'Revision3' introduces 'rawcores' video response to the Techno Viking as a new cult video itself:

Lil' Internet Superstar - Episode 7 - TechnoViking

internet SUPERSTAR

0:01 / 2:48

★★★★★ 5 ratings 667 views



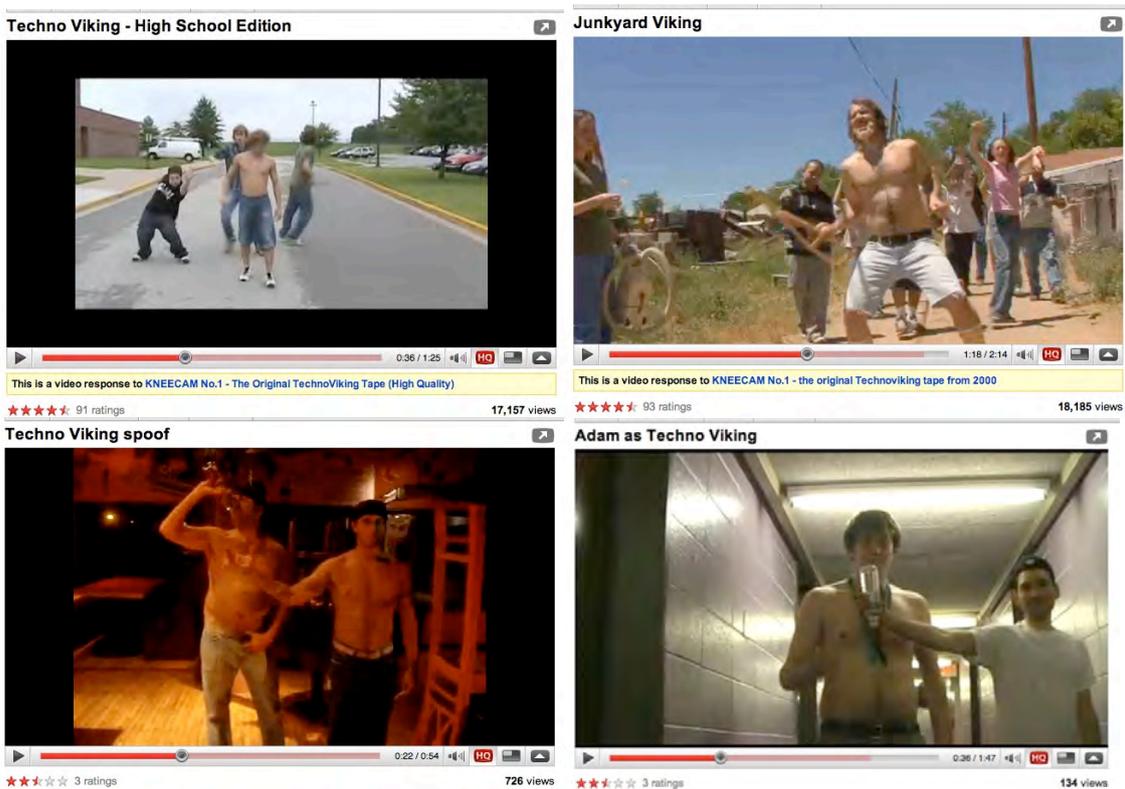
The captured version of Techno Viking from YouTube user 'rawcore' reached more than 4 million viewers on YouTube, www.break.com and other platforms

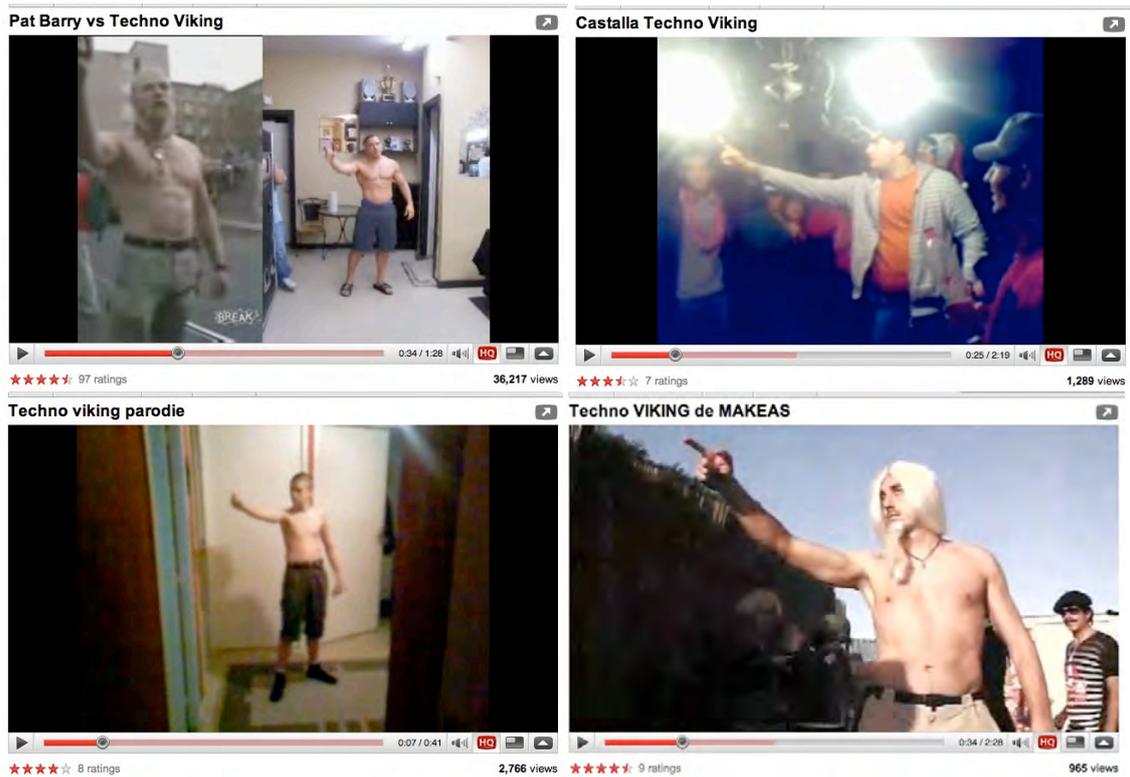


People's fascination with Techno Viking's dancing skills creates clips - as in the example from the 'AE Thesis Lab', where a group of students exercise the dancing technique.



But the most interesting genre of recycling memes is the recreation of the clip's dramaturgy by being re-enacted in private and public space all over the world.





Techno Viking even finds his way into the 3D worlds - like here - where the Techno Viking like character 'Mattias' from the shooter 'Mercenaries' was animated to the exact dance moves of the Meme.



The combination of one meme with another can raise the attention within the fan community and creates an overlapping mass to other Internet hypes. Here it is

throughout the use of Vernon Koekemoer and Chuck Norris in a 'Streetfighter' look-a-like clip...



... or in the collages with 'Little Indian Boy', or the main character of the cult movie '300'



From my experience with the Techno Viking phenomenon I developed the work 'Music from the Masses'. I started to publish silent movies on the Internet along with an open call for composers, musicians, sound designers and everybody else to create soundtracks accompanying the silent clip. The submitted contributions I published on the Internet in combination with the video as music clips. While the work is an open edition, it will not have an calculated end. It is possible to continue to add new compositions and variations. This generic model of recycling and resembling is producing a situation I call 'Youtube-Reality'. It is a reality where the setting of an original identity is in constant and uncontrollable aesthetic modification.

More information can be found on the artist's website

<http://subrealic.net>

*All images are taken from the Technoviking Archive by Matthias Fritsch 2009*

*The clips can be found by name search on the website <http://www.youtube.com>*