

TECHNO VIKING - A CASE STUDY FROM THE WEB 2.0

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For the last years Media Artist Matthias Fritsch was researching the Internet career of his widely known Internet Meme Techno Viking. In 2011 around 40 million clicks in various platforms and more than 3000 direct video responses can be counted. Technoviking is a entertaining and bizarre example of todays web-culture that represents the many form of user's approached to appropriate and recycle material at the web.



The Techno Viking Archive by Matthias Fritsch

THE CONTEXT

The Techno Viking project is an example for the reordering, reediting and remaking of an „original“ video in the internet. The original video is in analogy to 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 the original + n, after being altered and filtered several times through a chain of actions and reactions.

The potential of public attention such clips raise, brings also attention 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 monopole 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 30ies, 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 heavy blue dyed hair is dancing to the rough techno beats, while a rather unruly looking guy, crashes unfriendly into her. That accident is causing 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 fiercely glance the Techno Viking produces an aura of fear, which brings the man to leave the situation. Only that incident enables the Techno Viking finally enough space to start dancing freely. His dance moves are wild and expressively but perfect in form. Soon he seems like the king of the street, having even fans, serving as “pop servants,” supplying him with water bottles.

At You Tube 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 the most popular definition of Techno Viking [published by Mister Neutral on the Urban Dictionary](#) that 3041 people liked and 55 hated in November 2011 [1].

THE TECHNO VIKING ARCHIVE

The original 4 min 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 sides and internet forums, the footage got uploaded on www.break.com, a big american media portal. On this web side with a clear focus on a male audience – the video had it's peak on September 28th, 2007. Almost two million viewers were looking at it in only one day. Within the following 6 months more than 10 Million people were watching the video under it's new name "Techno Viking." In 2011 the clips overall attention counts around 40 million clicks in various platforms and more than 3000 video responses that directly connect to the original clip.

I was following those developments with great interest and researched the internet history of the video. In this way I documented its trajectory from its original production until it became a popular internet video multiplied by countless memes. The archive of the Techno Viking contains of emails, blog and

forum discussions, merchandising products and a selection of some hundreds of categorized image and video responses. To give an inside view on the career of the video and to show recycling strategies at Web 2.0 the archive is presented in form of installations and lectures. The archive contains around 8 GB of data and can be shared on request for further research and recycling ([contact](#)).

USER EXAMPLES

Following a selection of the most interesting and popular video responses:

Shortly after the main hype moderated clips were created to provide information about the new meme. A mixture of statistics, quotes and jokes make it easy to consume the semi documentations as the one from „Rocket Boom“ [Know Your Meme - Technoviking](#)[2].

Another moderated clip from the internet television channel „Revision3“ introduces a video response to the Techno Viking with subtitles as a new cult video itself: [Technoviking on Revision3](#) [3]. The clip refers to the [captured version of Techno Viking](#) [4] from YouTube user „rawcore“ that reached more than 5 million viewers on YouTube, [www.break.com](#) and other platforms.

But the most interesting genre of recycling memes is the re-enactment of the clip’s dramaturgy by being recreated in private and public space all over the world. A remix of more than 50 re-enactment Videos is published under the name “[We TechnoViking](#)” [5].

The peoples fascination with Techno Viking’s dancing skills create group choreographies as the [PSU Techno Viking](#) [6] or the one from the [AE Thesis Lab](#) [7] where a group of students is exercising the dancing technique.

The Techno Viking character even finds his way into the 3D worlds like [here](#) [8], where the Techno Viking like character „Mattias“ from the shooter „Mercenaries“ was animated to the exact dance moves of the meme or a [virtual re-enactment in “World of Warcraft”](#) [9].

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“ lookalike clip “[Technovikiung vs. Vernon Koecemoer](#)” [10] ...or the collages with „[Little Indian Boy](#)“[11] or [the main character of the cult movie „300“](#) [12].

The users by far biggest recycling strategy is the simple change of the soundtrack without doing much with the videolayers. There the Techno Viking clip was combined with all kinds of music genres like [metal](#) [13], [folk music](#) [14], [80ies classics](#) [15] etc.

AFTER TECHNO VIKING

From my experience with the TechnoViking phenomenon and by using the user's most popular recycling strategy I developed the Work „[Music from the Masses.](#)“ [16] Following a five year schedule I started to publish silent movies in the internet along with an open call for composers, musicians, sound designers and everybody else to create soundtracks accompanying the silent clips. The submitted contributions are published in the web in combination with the video as music clips. The work is an open edition and

will not have a calculated end. It will be furthermore possible to always add new compositions and variations. This generic model of recycling and resembling is producing a situation that can be called "Youtube-Reality." It is a reality where the setting of an original identity is in constant and uncontrollable aesthetic modification.

For more information visit the artist's website

subrealic.net

References and Notes:

1. *Mister Neutral, Techno Viking, Urban Dictionary*
<http://urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Techno%20Viking>
2. *Jamie Dubs, Technoviking, Know Your Meme*
<http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/technoviking>
3. *Revision3, Lil' Internet Superstar*
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=xu-A8DV4seA>
4. *TECHNOVIKING! (Captioned)*
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=FwsntHcWiy4>
5. *We TechnoViking*
<http://vimeo.com/20786994>
6. *PSU Techno Viking*
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=FBcjlliC-g>
7. *AE Thesis Lab Techno Viking*
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=SGqTqr3IKaM>
8. *Mattias Techno Viking*
http://youtube.com/watch?v=yiiI4Ri_0XQ
9. *Techno Viking Warcraft*
http://youtube.com/watch?v=kNtBRu_Ebaw
10. *Techno Viking vs. Vernon Koekemoer*
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=LEdqd5xvjUg>
11. *little techno viking*
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12. *300 TECHNO VIKING*
http://youtube.com/watch?v=67riI_A_pCA
13. <http://youtube.com/watch?v=5CbMXBhPRaM>
14. <http://youtube.com/watch?v=0DqMcUfEPsA>
15. http://youtube.com/watch?v=C_gHD7Gw6tg
16. <http://subrealic.net/mftm>

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