



**digital  
ethnography  
research  
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# Newsletter

JUNE 2015

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## Work Hard, Dream Big: May with Crystal Abidin

Crystal—a fourth-year PhD Candidate in Anthropology & Sociology, Communication & Media Studies at the University of Western Australia (UWA)—has been “dropping by” DERC for various seminars and masterclasses since 2013, including her latest stay as a Visiting Doctoral Researcher throughout May 2015. Crystal’s visit was fresh on the heels of a Visiting Fellow appointment at the Media Management and Transformation Centre (MMTC) at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS).

Crystal is currently finishing up her thesis on social media influencers in Singapore, specifically looking at how everyday users brand themselves into Internet icons and utilize the portrayals of their daily lives as a canvas for advertorials. Crystal has published on the monetizing of platforms such as blogs and Instagram, young users’ anxiety in the absence of cellphones, strategies for up-keeping battery life, and the sustenance of continued access to WiFi on-the-go. When her PhD has been “filed away” in July the plan is to wrap up a few smaller side-projects including self-made ‘power couples’ and ‘branded babies’ on the Internet.



For more on Crystal's work (and dreams) head to [wishcrs.com](http://wishcrs.com)

Crystal has a second research portfolio looking at the experiences of mixed-race youth in Australia and Singapore. A young, mixed-race person herself, Crystal has thus far investigated mixed-race peoples’ strategic enactments of racial symbols for homophily, and the process of ‘outing’ or ‘marking’ their more ambivalent ethnicities to others. In the future, Crystal would love to produce an in-depth ethnography on the materiality of homemaking in mixed-race households—that is if she’s not too busy investigating ‘grotesque intimacies’, such as the hyper-visibility of plastic surgery rituals and injury selfies on social media.

Crystal's month at DERC was an amazing experience, especially for a postgrad navigating the very early stages of academia. “I have not yet known of any other space where extremely prolific and impactful researchers are not only humble and accessible, but also invested in grooming and mentoring young researchers. I have been inspired to dream big and work hard, and can’t wait to be back in the future.” We here at DERC are looking forward to seeing Crystal again soon!

### EVENTS @ RMIT Europe

#### June 16th/17th

*DERC Europe Symposium (DERC and RMIT Europe)*

#### June 19th

*Ethics of Circulation Symposium (DERC and AHRC Future of the Book Project)*

#### June 20th

*Ambient Play: Digital creativity, play and labour in everyday life (DERC and COST IS 1202)*

#### June 25th/26th

*Intervening Media: Power, politics, practices (DERC and RMIT Europe)*

### NEWS AND LINKS

DERC co-founders **Heather Horst** and **Larissa Hjorth** are on the editorial board of the new journal [Social Media + Society](#). The journal's inaugural issue also features an article by Larissa Hjorth and DERC HDR Student **Natalie Hendry** entitled “A Snapshot of Social Media: Camera Phone Practices”.

DERC Director **Heather Horst** recently published a new article on [Cultivating the Cosmopolitan Child in Silicon Valley](#) in the journal *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*.

### NEWS AND LINKS

RMIT Europe has advertised [two three-year postdoctoral research associate positions available](#) - one in digital and social change and one in urban research. For further information email DERC's **Jo Tacchi** at [jo.tacchi@rmit.edu.au](mailto:jo.tacchi@rmit.edu.au). Applications close June 22nd, 2015.

DERC Advisory Board member **Gerard Goggin** and DERC Co-founder and Core Member **Larissa Hjorth** discuss mobile media, Asian media cultures, mobile gaming and e-sports on [Brett Hutchins' MediaSport Podcast Series](#). Attention also turns to disability, the Paralympics and Oscar Pistorius.