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# iMEDIA

The Gendering of  
Objects, Environments  
and Smart Materials

**Sarah Kember**





**iMedia**

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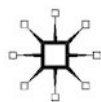


# **iMedia: The Gendering of Objects, Environments and Smart Materials**

**Sarah Kember**

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palgrave  
macmillan



IMEDIA

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# Preface: A Tale of Smoke and Mirrors or Where is the *i* in *iMedia* ?



**Abstract:** *internet, interactive, intelligent, individual...? On the one hand, there is no definitive i in imedia. Its presence may even be an illusion, a magician's trick in which branded objects are made to appear when they don't actually exist (yet) or when they are made to appear in the form of smartphones and tablets that then, with the move to transparent devices, miraculously disappear. The imedia magicians' tale is predicated on an apparently unmediated iworld that just is – that is always already transparent, filled with invisible things everywhere, at all scales and for all people, if not equally. Who sees, or who is claiming to see at scales of imperceptibility and what is at stake in this claim? While there is no definitive i in imedia, there is, on the other hand, the resurgent absent-presence of the imedia theorist and of masculine disembodied knowledge practices that come to fill the void in the turn from structure to scale and from subjects to objects as things-in-themselves. This chapter questions the in/determinability of invisible information infrastructures as subjectless objects and considers the play of critique and consensus that enables or precludes intervention. At stake is a politics of imedia predicated on a return of structure to scale as a necessary tension and figured here in the unsatisfactory and inconclusive fragments of a definition, a debate and a diagram.*

**Keywords:** information; infrastructures; intelligent; invisible

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Smoke and mirrors is a metaphor for a deceptive, fraudulent or insubstantial explanation or description. The source of the name is based on magicians' illusions, where magicians make objects appear and disappear by extending or retracting mirrors amid a distracting burst of smoke. The expression may have a connotation of virtuosity or cleverness in carrying out such a deception.

In the field of computer programming, it is used to describe a program or functionality that does not yet exist, but appears as though it does. This is often done to demonstrate what a resulting project will function/look like after the code is complete – at a trade show, for example.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoke\\_and\\_mirrors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoke_and_mirrors))

## DEFINITION

A

Oct 31, 2010 5:15 AM

first of all

i need to know what does "i" stand for in many apple products such ipad, ipod, itunes...etc

is it true it is stand for "internet" or other

Thnak you

Like (0)

B

Oct 31, 2010, 12:13 PM

in response to A

Back in the day when the very first iMac was introduced, it was stated that the "i" was for "internet". Back then, it was hard to set computers up for an internet connection and the iMac was supposed make it very easy ("there's no step 3", to quote the ad from way back then).

But these days, I don't think it really stands for anything any more. People have come to associate an "iAnything" with Apple.

Why is that so important?

Like (0)

A

Oct 31, 2010 10:11 PM

in response to B

\*thank you for reply\*

\*but apple did not announce officaly if "i" stand for "internet" maybe another word such "intelligence"?\*

Like (0)

C

Oct 31, 2010, 12:21 PM

in response to A

Hi and welcome....

I was told when I bought my first iMac (1998) the "i" stood for internet

Like (0)

D

Nov 1, 2010 3: 56 AM  
in response to A

but apple did not announce officaly if “i” stand for “internet”

Read the 2nd paragraph here:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iMac#History>

or here:

<http://my.safaribooksonline.com/o-201-70446-3/parto3>

or read this interview with the person who came up with the name “iMac”:

<http://www.cultofmac.com/20172/20172>

maybe another word such “intelligence”?

Probably not. You can continue guessing other words starting with “i” that it may be, or you can just accept what you’ve been told.

Like (1)

E

Jan 8, 2011 4:41 PM  
in response to A

Of course you can always go for the “official” side of things like the others have posted, but a more informative approach would be that it stands for:

individual  
intelligent  
intuitive  
inspirational  
and so forth

After all, it turns out to be all of those things to those using iMachines.

Like (0)

F

Oct 8, 2011 2:57 PM  
in response to A

Maybe if you look back to 1996 after Steve Jobs sold his OS “next” to apple for something like 400 million dollars, I believe. He came back as what he referred to as “iCEO” at a keynote address the “i” meaning interim CEO. Its only speculation but I would have to say it was a clever little inside joke on his behalf, seeing how since his return he took the company from the brink of falling apart to one of the most valuable tech companies in the world. so now maybe thats his way of never letting certain people forget it. Thats my guess anyways.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iCEO>

Like (0)

G  
Nov 29, 2011 11:10 AM  
in response to A

if you recall in the 1998 Apple Back on Track Keynote, while introducing the iMac, Steve showed a slide of what the “i” stood for; and it was,

internet  
individual  
instruct  
inform  
inspire

Like (0)

H  
Jun 21, 2012 6:54 AM  
in response to A

I myself am 18 now and have been around Apple products: ipod, imac, iphone etc, ever since I was 8. and honestly for the last 10 years I thought the “i” stood for interactive. It makes since, “interactive phone” , “interactive macintosh” “interactive portable audio device” (I know a is not in ipod but i don’t know what the o stands for) I may be right but im probably not im just throwing my oppinion out there.

Like (1)

E  
Jun 21, 2012 6:58 AM  
in response to H

How about enjoyable

Like (1)

I  
Jun 22, 2012 10:30 PM  
in response to A

The answer is “internet” ... Steve Jobs declared that on May 6, 1998 Keynote.

Like (0)