MIT, the Media Lab, the Movies, and Creativity: A Snapshot

Since the earliest days of motion pictures and broadcasting, technology has been at the heart of the entertainment sector. Along the way, MIT and the Media Lab have been a source of innovation and creativity in movies, television, sound, and broadcasting. In addition, Media Lab researchers have been creating new tools to help people tell their stories in richer ways.

FROM TECHNICOLOR...
- Herbert Kalmus (BS 1903) developed Technicolor—yes, it was named after MIT—in conjunction with Daniel Comstock, an MIT physics professor. They used a railroad car (initially parked on campus but later moved to California) as a portable lab.

TO WEB STREAMING...
- Timothy Tuttle (BS ’90, SM ’92, PhD ’97), currently VP of AOL Video, pioneered streaming technology for real-time Web applications.

IMPROVING TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATIVITY
- Media Lab Professor Barry Vercoe’s music synthesis language, Csound, was the source for the underlying language for the MPEG-4 structured audio standard.

- Many advances in holography were made by the late Professor Stephen Benton and his Spatial Imaging research group at the Media Lab, including the development of synthetic holography—the marriage of holography and computing graphics.

- Guitar Hero and Rock Band were developed by Media Lab alumni Alex Rigopulos (BS ’92, MS ’94) and Eran Egozy (BS ’95, MS ’95). While at the Lab, Egozy and Rigopulos developed the technology that would become Guitar Hero.

Other achievements in film and television by Media Lab faculty and students:

- **2001: A Space Odyssey**
  Emeritus Professor Marvin Minsky advised the film and was mentioned in both the film and the book.

- **Minority Report, Hulk (2003), Æon Flux**
  John Underkoffler (BS ’88, MS ’91, PhD ’99) was science and technology advisor.

- **Waking Life, A Scanner Darkly**
  Bob Sabiston (BS ’89, MS ’91) developed “interpolated rotoscoping” used in both films, and also in Charles Schwab’s “Talk to Chuck” television commercials.

- **A.I.**
  LG Career Development Professor Cynthia Breazeal was an advisor on this Steven Spielberg film.