



**pivot**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

**NAMLE**

PRESENTS

# THIS IS MEDIA

FILM • DISCUSSION GUIDE

## about the collaboration

## ALLIANCE

**pivot** Pivot ([www.pivot.tv](http://www.pivot.tv)) is a television network from **Participant Media** with a diverse slate of original series, acquired programming, films and documentaries. Pivot focuses on entertainment that sparks conversation, inspires change and illuminates issues through engaging content and, through its website [www.takepart.com](http://www.takepart.com), connects audiences to a wealth of content and customizable actions. Pivot is available in over 47 million homes nationally via major cable providers and offers subscribers a live and on-demand streaming option via its interactive, downloadable Pivot app. Follow Pivot on Twitter at @pivot\_tv and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pivottelevision](http://www.facebook.com/pivottelevision). Participant Media ([www.participantmedia.com](http://www.participantmedia.com)) is a global entertainment company founded in 2004 by Jeff Skoll to focus on feature film, television, publishing, and digital content that inspires social change. Through its films, social action campaigns, digital network, and its television network, Participant seeks to entertain, encourage and empower every individual to take action.

**NAMLE** The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) is a professional association for educators, academics, activists, and students with a passion for understanding how the media we use and create affect our lives and the lives of others in our communities and in the world. The NAMLE vision is to help individuals of all ages develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today's world. The NAMLE mission is "to expand and improve the practice of media literacy education in the United States." To learn more about NAMLE, please visit us at [www.namle.net](http://www.namle.net).

## this is media

## INTRODUCTION

*This Is Media* is a short documentary that explores new and emerging issues in the ways that we produce, use, and share media. The film outlines shifts in the way that media is created and consumed that changes our relationship to media, credibility, and privacy.

The film is part of the *Eyes Wide Open* digital and media literacy campaign by **Pivot TV**. Screenings and educational materials have been produced in collaboration with the **National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE)**. This discussion guide will offer several ways to engage learners in asking critical questions about the film. These questions will draw from the personal experiences and opinions that viewers have about their own media worlds, and will reinforce key concepts in the film.

We hope you enjoy the movie, to stay involved in the campaign, take action here: <http://bit.ly/1kZ4Fyl>



You can find other interactive resources to extend the conversation online at: [www.pivot.tv/campaigns/eyes-wide-open](http://www.pivot.tv/campaigns/eyes-wide-open).

## sparking dialogue

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This discussion guide is structured for public and classroom screenings of the film *This is Media*. Screening facilitators will show the film, then spark dialogue about some of the big ideas that the film explores. Viewers will likely have strong opinions and lots of questions about the issues that the film raises. The screening is an ideal space to document and explore the ideas, opinions, connections, and questions that viewers make to their own lives.

1. First, this guide will give you questions to spark small group and “share out” conversations among participants.
2. Then it will provide some structured discussion questions based on key themes in the film. (This step may not be ideal for large auditorium-style screenings.)
3. Finally, it will provide an “action step” activity where participants synthesize information from the screening and discussion to take with them and share on- or off-line.



### Screening Survey

Pivot TV has prepared a pre-screening and post-screening survey to help better understand how this film encourages its audiences to think critically about media.

For the pre-screening survey, go to: <http://svy.mk/1kFwLhW>

For the post-screening survey, go to: <http://svy.mk/1bQblGK>

Any questions? Email: [thisismedia@namle.net](mailto:thisismedia@namle.net)

## in the classroom

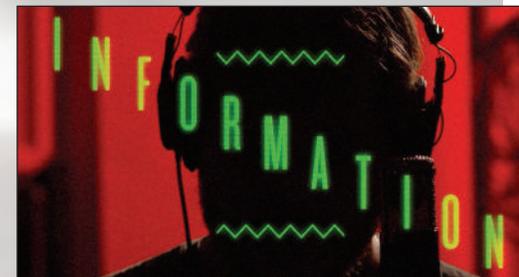
### FRAMING THE FILM

For educators showing this film in a classroom, there are two extension activities that students can complete after the screening.

Before the screening begins, introduce the film as a short documentary designed to spark a conversation about digital and media literacy—the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in all of its various forms. What skills and knowledge do we need to read, filter, curate, and use all of the media available on our screens and at our fingertips?

Remind participants that there will be a discussion after the film that will require them to reflect on their own media use and to make connections to ideas, opinions, and quotes that they find in the film.

NAMLE’s outreach coordinator is available to answer questions and consult on the use of this film in your classroom. Please feel free to reach out to [thisismedia@namle.net](mailto:thisismedia@namle.net) if you have questions, comments, or want to discuss the film with a fellow educator.



### Want more resources?

Pivot TV has created a set of dynamic resources, including videos and infographics, to support the thoughtful creation and distribution of content online. The resources at Hit Record ([www.takepart.com/hitrecord-on-tv](http://www.takepart.com/hitrecord-on-tv)) provide information about creating media for social change, understanding copyright and fair use, and participating in a creative community.

## step one, two, and three

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Step One: Have Audience Members Share with Each Other**

First, ask audience members to share with each other in small groups of two to four before opening the floor to comments. In pairs or small groups, audience members can engage with some of the following questions:

- *What was one quote or idea that resonated with you in the film and why did it resonate?*
- *What was one quote or idea that you questioned or disagreed with, and why did you feel this way?*
- *Are there any aspects of your life online or offline that you would reflect on or change based on what you learned in the film? Why or why not?*

**Step Two: Share Out**

Ask several participants to share out to the larger group with some of the responses they gave or heard. To engage the whole audience in this exercise, tell participants to make connections when they agree with others' responses with a hand gesture, like a "peace sign" or a "hang loose" hand sign with the thumb and pinky—this is American Sign Language for "same as you."

**Step Three: Introducing the Big Ideas**

To frame the conversation, you may want to read these short summaries of the big ideas aloud. For smaller screenings, you can copy this summary of ideas beforehand and pass out to audience members.



## big ideas

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Summary of the Big Ideas**

- **Constructedness: All Media Are Constructed by Authors with a POV**

All media are constructed by authors, often for specific purposes and with particular audiences (target audiences) in mind. Often we can only guess at these purposes, and at the assumptions authors have about their audiences. But we have lots of evidence in the ways that the media was created, arranged, presented, and distributed. This evidence helps us ask and answer questions about who made a particular media text, how it was funded, and why it was made.

- **Credibility: What Do We Know About the Sources?**

Credibility—the trustworthiness of a particular source of information—depends on our background knowledge of who created media and the information that is included or omitted from media. In the digital age, credibility is not just synonymous with a single “trusted source.” Instead, we depend on a range of associations between the quality of evidence, the point of view of the author, and the information that is included or omitted to determine whether or not a source is credible.

- **Sharing: Everyone Is an Author—YOU Are a Source**

As more people share and publish their own information and opinions online, they take on the same responsibilities as authors to understand, select, and share ideas and information. That means that audiences don't just passively consume media, but have an active role in how information is spread, read, and used in the world. Audiences can choose to be authors and producers, and can create and share media not only for fun, but as a way to contribute to social change.

- **Privacy: Connected Living Comes with Great Responsibilities and Concerns**

The act of living our lives connected and online makes us responsible for the information that we share, and may make us vulnerable to losing aspects of our privacy that we take for granted. When information is shared and stored, it can be used by third parties -- including private companies and even government agencies -- to document our online activity for their own purposes. We might not think about how our data is being used when we're going about what we believe is “business as usual.”

## step four

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Step Four: Have a Structured Dialogue About Big Ideas**

In screenings where more structured dialogue is possible, the following are thematic discussion questions that address some of the key ideas and quotes in the film. These questions are ideal in a space where participants can share more information and ask on-topic questions to spark dialogue. You may want to preselect a few of these questions or use them as a jumping-off point to ask your own questions.

**■ CONSTRUCTEDNESS**

1. *What do we know about who creates the media we use, watch—how is it made, and how is it paid for? What don't we know, and how might we find out more?*
2. *At the beginning of the film, the narrator tells us a bit about how his film was made. Who do we think paid for the film, and what was their purpose? Were they acting for public good, private gain, or both (or neither)?*
3. *How are web platforms like Facebook and Reddit constructed and paid for? How do the choices that the creators of these platforms make affect how we interact with each other online?*

**■ CREDIBILITY**

1. *At one point in the film, a subject says she believes information that shares her point of view. Should we try to find media that does not align with our own beliefs? Why or why not?*
2. *Is media that presents a point of view with which you agree more credible than one that does not share your point of view?*
3. *Can media have a “neutral” point of view? Provide an example of “neutral media,” or alternatively, give an example of media that claims to be neutral but is not.*



## step four continued

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**■ SHARING**

1. *Have you ever shared something that you suspected may contain misinformation? Why did you, or didn't you, share it? How did you respond when or if you found more accurate information?*
2. *What would you tell a younger person to think about or do when considering the accuracy of a source? What questions should she ask prior to “passing along” the information? Now think about the advice you just gave—have you ever ignored that advice? If so, why?*
3. *Do authors of original content have different responsibilities from sharers of content? Are there any times when we can trust some authors more than others, or trust some information more than others?*

**■ PRIVACY**

1. *Do you give up your right to privacy when you sign up for websites, social networking sites, and other online services?*
2. *What responsibilities should companies have with your data? Should they disclose what they do with it? Should they be limited by government policies in how they can use it? Should they not collect it at all?*
3. *Are there any data that you care more about revealing or sharing than others? What differences are there in the kinds of data that are collected from you when you live a connected life?*
4. *How do you feel about the government having access to your personal information? What restrictions should government agencies have in collecting or using personal data? Should you be notified when a company or government agency wants to use your data?*



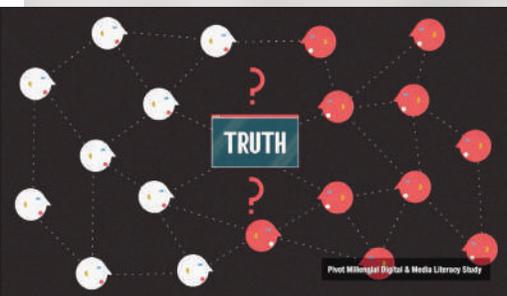
## step five

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Step Five: Take-Aways**

To end on an “action step,” take the final remaining minutes to allow audience members to reflect on the ideas that they will bring with them out into the world. Ask participants to share the one idea from the screening or discussion that they would share with someone when they leave the screening.

Encourage all audience members—even ones who did not share with the group—to formulate their takeaway into a post, tweet, or status update with the hashtag [#eyeswideopen](#) so that the online community can learn how they responded to their screening experience.

**We Want To Hear From You!**

This guide is designed for a classroom, screening, and discussion, but viewers and facilitators can also share their opinions online by using the hashtag [#eyeswideopen](#). Using this hashtag in blog posts, Facebook status updates, and tweets will connect them to a whole community of audience members with different ideas and points of view. During your screening, display the hashtag prominently so that bloggers and tweeters among you can share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions!

## extension activities

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

■ *Keep a media diary.*

Ask students to keep a log of all of the media they read, see, play, or use until your next class period. What did they notice about the amount of media they interacted with? What did they notice about the quality of media they interacted with? How did some of the big ideas from *This Is Media*—about constructiveness, credibility, responsibility, and privacy—inform how they thought about their media use during this period?

■ *Create a “media talk back.”*

Ask students to choose a media text or platform that they experience regularly—this might be a television show, film, music artist, social networking platform, website, or video game. Students should fashion a response to the authors of this media. That might mean the corporate authors—the people who represent the business (including CEOs, companies, and founders)—or the content authors—the people who construct the media itself (including writers, directors, and creators).

Students might prepare a written response to be shared online through email to authors, posts on a blogging platform or website, or posts on a social media platform like Facebook. Or they might use the technique of screencasting—simultaneous capture of a computer screen and voiceover—to share their analysis and opinion with clips or screenshots from the media they chose.





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**EYES WIDE OPEN: THIS IS MEDIA** is a fresh look at our role in today's media landscape as consumers and makers. Including compelling interviews with digital pioneers, this doc reveals the balancing act between being connected, responsible and private.

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