

Whoever is linking to this file, please note that I have taken the "real" version offline. When teaching a course on cultural studies & video games, this was a fundamental chapter in our discussions. But I haven't taught that class in ages.

If you really need a scanned copy of this piece, it shouldn't be too difficult to find my contact info. And, honestly, it's not that difficult to scan yourself.

But *do* read this chapter. Forensic approaches to digital media are absolutely essential.

"Every Contact Leaves a Trace": Storage, Inscription, and Computer Forensics

It should always be emphasized that physical facts are not less significant simply because the unaided eye cannot see them.

—ALBERT S. OSBORN, *QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS* (SECOND EDITION), 1929

Each diskette is a small (about 5-inch diameter) plastic disk coated so that information may be stored on and erased from its surface. The coating is similar to the magnetic coating on a recording tape. The diskette is permanently sealed in a square black plastic cover which protects it, helps keep it clean and allows it to spin freely. This package is never opened.

—*THE DOS MANUAL*, APPLE COMPUTER INC., 1980

Visibility itself is not a measure of inscription, modification of the substratum is.

—MARCOS NOVAK, "TRANSTERRAFORM" (UNDATED, ONLINE)

The most uncompromising statement on the materiality of digital media I know is a Department of Defense document labeled DoD 5220.22-M, the Operating Manual for the National Industrial Security Program.¹ Initially

1. Available at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html/522022m.htm> as well as many other locations online.