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Fan Productions Get Mainstream Exposure

Suddenly this week, it seems as if the rest of the world is catching on to what we in *Star Trek* fandom have been privy to for awhile: That in the absence of any new *Star Trek* productions out of Hollywood (for at least a couple of years), fans — refusing to let the vision lie fallow — are doing it themselves.

From Austin to New York to Scotland and Germany, from the *Farragut* to the *Intrepid* to the *Exeter*, *Star Trek* fans are taking advantage of cheaper and more accessible digital technology to breathe new life into the universe and characters that we all crave more of. And they're sharing their work with the world through the miracle of the World Wide Web.

The fan-produced *Star Trek* Web show has become such a phenomenon that the mainstream press has started picking up on it. On Sunday *The New York Times* published a feature article profiling some of the amateur productions, and Monday morning NBC's *Today* show ran a two-minute report doing the same.

The *Times* piece, written by Danny Hakim, states that up to two dozen fan-made *Star Trek* projects are in various stages of completion around the world. In particular the reporter cites "[Starship Farragut](#)" being made in Northern Virginia; "[Star Trek: Intrepid](#)" in Scotland; "[Star Trek: Hidden Frontier](#)" in Los Angeles; "[Starship Exeter](#)" in Austin, Texas; and perhaps the granddaddy of all of them, "Star Trek: New Voyages," produced in Ticonderoga, New York.

"Fan films have been around for years, particularly those related to the 'Star Wars' movies. But now they can be downloaded from the Web, and modern computer graphics technology has lent them surprising special effects," writes Hakim. He points out that Paramount has been tolerant of these productions so long as nobody profits from them. (For the record, since the Viacom/CBS corporate split in January, Paramount has retained the movie rights to *Star Trek* while the television and licensing rights have gone to CBS.)

Besides the printed article — which goes into a fair amount of detail about the low-budget productions — Hakim also produced a video report for NYTimes.com. In that report he also mentions "[Star Trek: U.S.S. Hathaway](#)" being made in Ohio, which furthers the premise of "[Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan](#)." Hakim concludes the video piece by saying, "I guess you could think of it as the same kind of thing that Civil War re-enactors do. Except on the Web. And with Klingons."

You can view that video at [this link](#), and from there you can link to the text article, though you will need to register with the site, for free, to see it.

On the *Today* show, a feature titled "Do-It-Yourself Star Treks" highlighted "Starship Farragut," "Hidden Frontiers" and "New Voyages." The report included brief comments from [George Takei](#), who will be starring in a "New Voyages" episode as "[Sulu](#)" later this year, and it also pointed out that "Hidden Frontier" features "the first openly gay characters in space." Like the *Times* article, *Today* reiterated that "because of copyright laws, they can only distribute the episodes for free."

Another fan production that didn't catch the radar of either of these outlets was a feature-length digital miniseries that starts shooting on July 12 called "Star Trek: Of Gods and Men." Produced in part by the team behind "New Voyages," this new movie — which will be distributed on the Internet in three parts — stars [Nichelle Nichols](#) and [Walter Koenig](#) reprising their roles as "[Uhura](#)" and "[Chekov](#)," but in the post-Kirk time of *Enterprise*-B captain "[John Harriman](#)," reprised by Alan Ruck. [Tim Russ](#) will direct, and will also appear as a younger "[Tuvok](#)." The film will include other performances by [Garrett Wang](#) ("[Harry Kim](#)"), [Chase Masterson](#) ("[Leeta](#)"), [Grace Lee Whitney](#) ("[Janice Rand](#)"), [Gary Graham](#) ("[Soval](#)") and [Crystal Allen](#) (from "[Bound](#)"), along with some special "surprise" guests.

"Of Gods and Men" is executive produced by Sky Douglas Conway, head of [PlanetXpo](#) and producer of "Lady Magdalene's" ([related story](#)) and the "Roddenberry on Patrol" short film, and the script was written by Conway along with Jack Trevino and Ethan H. Calk, both of whom contributed to *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* episodes. Other behind-the-scenes professionals from the actual show will be involved, such as Doug Knapp as director of photography.

The miniseries will be shot in part on the "New Voyages" set in New York State, but is expected to include locations in Los Angeles. The movie's Web site is www.startrekofgodsandmen.com.

Related Links:

[NYTimes.com video: "Star Trek" Fan Films on the Web](#)

[Starship Farragut independent film series](#)

[Star Trek: Intrepid](#)

[Star Trek: Hidden Frontier](#)

[Starship Exeter](#)

[Star Trek: U.S.S. Hathaway](#)

["Star Trek: Of Gods and Men" movie website](#)