The series 'Making Public' investigates 'the public', the civil domain where space, knowledge, values and commodities are shared. What does this notion of 'public' mean? How does this domain change under the influence of social, political and technological tendencies? Where are the boundaries of 'the public' and how are they determined? What interests are involved in this? What forms of responsibility and solidarity does 'the public' invoke? And how do artists and culture critics shape the debate on these issues?

Archives are collections of records that are preserved for historical, cultural and evidentiary purposes. As such, archives are considered as sites of a past, a place that contains traces of a collective memory of a nation, a people or a group. Digital archives have changed from stable entities into flexible systems, at times referred to with the term 'Living Archives'. In which ways has this change affected our relationship to the past? Will the erased, forgotten and neglected be redeemed, and new memories be allowed? Will the fictional versus factual mode of archiving offer the democracy that the public domain implies, or is it another way for public instruments of power to operate? *Lost and Living (in) Archives* shows that archives are not simply a recording, a reflection, or an image of an event, but that they shape the event itself and thus influence the past, present and future.

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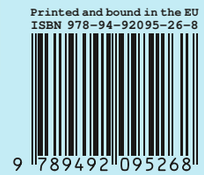

LOST AND LIVING (IN) ARCHIVES

Annet Dekker (ed.)

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LOST AND LIVING (IN) ARCHIVES
Collectively Shaping New Memories

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Making Public

Valiz

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
What it Means to Be Lost and Living (in) Archives

Annet Dekker

'What is archive?' is one of the standard questions when discussing archives and it solicits several answers, ranging from the physical building or location, to the gathering of documents in these spaces, or the more conceptual response of process-bound information that refers to the way documents (or records) are created, structured and recorded as part of working processes and by which they can be queried and probed (Horsman 2009). Other descriptions exist, but depending on the different purposes and functions of an institution, in general archives are defined in relation to their context. However, as Michel Foucault expressed, an archive cannot be described from within or in its totality, rather 'it emerges in fragments, regions and levels' (Foucault 2010, 130). It is from these different fragments, regions and levels that the authors in this publication describe archival practices.

Archives have always been subjected to fragmentation, even those that are regulated by law. A document in an archive can change location, be recontextualised and at times destroyed in preference of another document, thus fracturing a once neatly organized administrative working process. As such, no archive is entirely stable or fixed. However, digital documents have increased the fragmentary nature of archives. Whereas in the paper archive, documents and the archival administrative system are clearly divided, 'with digital archives, documents and contents are no longer separated from the

archival infrastructure: once the archive is based on networked data circulation, its emphatic form dissolves into the coding and protocol layer, into electronic circuits or data flow' (Blom 2016, 12). Inextricably intertwined with their archival system, documents are not merely created with the same material, thus making it difficult to distinguish between different or the same file names and extensions, but most digital documents (if one can still use the term 'document') are not single entities and often consist of various links that are distributed inside a single and/or various documents. These 'documents' exist and thrive in ecologies, or assemblages, and this interdependence makes it increasingly difficult to create meaningful relations between different layers of content.

This development recalls French philosopher Jacques Derrida's claim in his often-cited article 'Archive Fever' (1995) that mutations in technology not only alter the archival process, but also what is archivable: in other words, technology changes the content of what is archived.[1]

1
Playing off Derrida's Archive Fever, Katrina Sluis examines the material structures that support the sorting, searching, and filtering of digital memories, proclaiming a database fever. Accessible tools and cheap storage provide new opportunities to 'cache' one's life, and whole practices of editing and annotation are largely being replaced by passive accumulation, the problem of managing a snapshot collection, which might number in the thousands, has spawned the development of software interfaces in which the paradigm of the album has been reinvented as a database with a search field. Technologies such as automated image annotation and image retrieval promise to outsource the process of tagging, naming, and organising memories to the computer, using complex algorithms to approximate 'computer vision'. Sluis argues that far from representing the dematerialisation of the object, digitisation represents a significant shift in the way in which memory is constituted.

What this means is that not only the style of the content is different through new processes and production methods, but that its relation to time and space has changed too. The time spent searching and finding information is reduced to mere seconds, which affects the content of what is produced and how it is archived. Of course, knowing that information that could immediately influence a situation reaches someone within a certain time period also affects power relations, decision-making and accountability.[2] In other words, the shape of an archive constrains and enables the content it encloses, and the technical methods for building and supporting an archive produce the document for collection.[3]

In the last decades, the notion of archive has expanded, from various institutions trying to secure evidence, memory and history to a proliferation of ad hoc archives that are generated by everyone, many of which

2
Some of these power relations are scrutinised by Femke Snelting in her essay 'Not Dissimilar'. In 1944, the Belgian universalist and documentalist Paul Otlet died a disillusioned man. In his lifetime he only partially realized The Mundaneum, an encyclopaedic survey of human knowledge, which would 'progressively constitute a permanent and complete representation of the entire world'. Recently, Otlet has been rediscovered as 'a founding father of the Internet'. Unsurprisingly, Google adopted the remains of his archive in Mons, located in a former mining area in the south of Belgium. Mons is not only the hometown of Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo, but also conveniently located next to Google's largest datacentre in Europe. This essay explores messy entanglements of faltering local governments, dreams of accessible knowledge, and the desire for corporate patronage.

3
In a time when access to images is increasingly mediated by services such as Google Image Search, the Scandinavian Institute for Computational Vandalism, a pun on the Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism

circulate on the web. It could be stated that today everything is archive and everyone an archivist. People everywhere constantly create, collect, document, make lists, inventories, classify, store, retrieve, and reuse all kinds of information. Not surprisingly, Eric Ketelaar (Emeritus Professor of Archivistics at the University of Amsterdam) proclaimed 'Everyone an Archivist' (Ketelaar 2006, 14). In his eponymous essay he describes how the meaning of the term archive has gone 'feral', and how ordinary people have become archivists too, as evidenced by the popularity of uploading and using online archival platforms for photographs, videos, music, et cetera, as well as those supporting and helping to maintain large online archival facilities such as the Internet Archive (Ketelaar 2006). Ten years later, the creation of documents and their aggregation into all sorts of different—especially online—archives has become part of everyday life. Archives are now being created and preserved collectively.[4] A situation that according to Indian

(SICV) founded by Asger Jorn in 1961, describe some of the difficulties they encountered when digitising a photographic archive. Asked by the Museum Jorn to work with the SICV archive, upon arrival they were confronted with ideas and images stored in the complex relational and paper-based structure of the archive. In their essay 'Giving the Finger (Back) to the Digital' they analyse the consequences of the interchangeability of tools and techniques and how digital tools can lend themselves to promiscuous and constructive (mis)use and novel assemblage.

4
Aymeric Mansoux shows how in the realm of archiving and conservation, free and open licences are seen as a positive additional tool to make the preservation of digital works more feasible. It is undeniable that they have an overall positive effect; they do however have a problematic way of dealing with the definition of source code when it is applied to a broader cultural and artistic context. The lingo used in such licences stems from the world of software and despite its adaptation to cultural works; it still hasn't got rid of the binary nature of its origin. As a consequence, when

anthropologist Arjun Appadurai calls for a new way of thinking about archives:

> We should begin to see all documentation as intervention, and all archiving as part of some sort of collective project. Rather than being the tomb of the trace, the archive is more frequently the product of the anticipation of collective memory (Appadurai 2003,16).

Indeed, it could be argued that regardless of whether the archive is composed of print, photographs, film and/or digital media, the technologies used to organize, search and share documents have taken over the purview of the Foucauldian state, with the crowd acting as the control mechanism. The new digital archives are increasingly flexible systems in which content is constantly recontextualised.[5] So, even though the source may remain intact, as in the original archive, its existence is dynamic

a free or open source software licence requires the publication of sources, the source code of a work is defined as its modifiable textual representation. While this perfectly fits a particular use and production of art, for instance software art, it is questionable whether this helps the conservation of artworks for which the instrumentalization of software is articulated differently. Solely relying on the licence requirement is not enough. As Mansoux clearly outlines, each work requires a different understanding of what source code is in order to make it truly accessible in the context of conservation.

5
Putting theory to practice, Manu Luksch describes the forces and constraints that determined access to source material that was collected and used during the making of the film *Dreams Rewired*. She suggests that one might draw useful analogies between, on the one hand, the struggles depicted within the film or the struggles to obtain source material, and on the other, struggles over ownership and control of data in an user-generated archive.

and constantly changing. At times this is referred to with the popular term 'living archives', implying that archives are open, collaborative and creative (Lehner 2014, 77). Due to this transient quality of digital archives, it could be argued that these archives are not designed for long-term storage and memory, but for reproduction, for endless circulation between different levels, people, networks and locations. While the living archive, which is focused on access through systems of communication and social practices, is not necessarily a new concept, the digital has allowed many new voices that act and assert agency.[6] In which ways do these changes affect people's relationship to the past, the present, and the future? What are the implications for memories and for what is suppressed when the regulations and structure adhered to by the traditional archivist are lost? Will the erased, forgotten, and neglected be redeemed, and will new social memories be allowed?[7]

6
During a late afternoon session Stef Scagliola, Josien Pieterse and Annet Dekker gathered to discuss their mutual interest in oral history and the influence of digital technologies on the research in and of archives that consist of oral histories. Some of the running threads in the discussion were how to make oral cultures accessible through digital means, the consequences of missing documents, the role of politics in archives, and how to handle openness. After transcription, the discussion was re-edited for readability and its written version focuses on several topics that surfaced in the discussion: moving from methods of oral history to the influence of technology on doing interviews, access and accessibility to these sources, and the influence of big data research on oral history archives.

7
In the essay 'Autonomous Archiving', Özge Çelikaslan discusses the notion of 'autonomy' in the practice of 'living archives', based on the practice of bak.ma, a video archiving project of the social and political movements in Turkey. bak.ma does not only aim to contain Gezi upheaval's videos

Will the fictional versus factual mode of archiving offer the democracy that the public domain implies, or is it another way for public instruments of power to operate?

Whereas both Ketelaar and Appadurai still believed in the human influence in and over archives, in an era of bots and algorithms that structure content, search for information, and create new links and data, Ketelaar's assumption that 'creation, use, selection, and transfer are carried out by people within systems designed by people', and thus his conclusion that the challenges of the digital are 'people's challenges' are in need of revision (Ketelaar 2006, 9). Similarly, Appadurai's collective memory that is aimed at retrieving evidential, cultural or historical information needs to be reassessed, because what is the influence and impact of 'collective memories' when these are created by algorithms and bots? It is indeed generally accepted that archives construct a specific account of history; many things end up in an archive,

but also several other videograms that were stored in hidden parts of computers by media activists. Today, image making and moving image editing are not only accessible by any citizen by means of automated processes, but also have the potential to claim the future imagination regarding social and political co-existences. The term 'archiving' in digital video production and dissemination designates not only making an open source memory of hidden and disobedient practices but also an autonomous structure that leads to collective montage, uploading, leaking images and re-building a collective memory of political disobedience.

8
In an in-depth interview with Robert Sakrowski, Igor Štromajer discusses his project *Expunction*; a project that broaches the questions of temporality, duration, archiving, and accessibility of (net) art works that automatically change over time as the hardware and software change (browsers, players, applications etc.), slowly but inexorably losing their functionality and consequently also their content. Štromajer's basic premise in this project was that whoever creates, programs, and composes art is also entitled

but even more remain outside, to be forgotten. Rather than something negative, this loss, in the sense of forgetting, should be treasured, as it prepares for something new to emerge.[8] Generally, loss in an archival sense is seen as the undesirable antipode to memory. However, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche has argued that forgetting is also positive, active and essential to life and thinking. Immersing oneself passively in memories of the past would obstruct creative action in the present, and too much of a historical sense would destroy the concept of 'history' itself (Spinks 2003, 80). As concluded by Nietzsche, 'there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of 'historical sense', that injures and finally destroys the living thing, be it a man or a people or a system of culture' (Nietzsche 1957 [1874], 7). Whereas older archives were guided by collecting evidentiary processes in the form of physical objects (in media such as paper, microfiches, photographs or audio), current attitudes

to deprogram, deconstruct, and delete it. This is not an act of violence or destruction, but rather the observation of the natural rhythm of life. Štromajer has erased history, including his own personal history, since he believes our memory serves to deceive us, to misrepresent rather than paint and describe the past. His statement is that the deleted works or their remaining fragments (or, undeletable once they have been made publicly accessible since the World Wide Web is so widely spread and fragmentary), tell us much more about the original works than the originals themselves.

9
Geocities, founded in 1995, was one of the main free web hosting services in the 1990s. After its closing down in 2009, the Archive Team rescued almost a terabyte of Geocities pages. A year later, Olia Lialina and Dragan Espenschied bought a 2 TB disk and started downloading the biggest torrent of all times. They decided to redistribute the GeoCities homepages through the web, they used an automated Tumblr blog which uploads a new screengrab every twenty minutes, a research blog which shows the best liked and reposted images from the Tumblr, which again they

towards archiving are increasingly focused on ephemerality and require strategies of modulation, movement, and mutation.

Questions such as who makes the selection, who is in charge of an archive, and for whom the archive is intended have plagued archives from the outset. One could argue that the computational accelerates this process, and that the need to understand these processes becomes more urgent. Some claim that the World Wide Web has become the archive of archives, since digitization has led museums, organizations, libraries and national archives to open up their archives to the public, using the web as their interface. At times, information is made more accessible in ways that enable people to add their own information, tag existing documents, or identify relations between different documents—although the potential excitement of chance encounters or getting lost in an archive are barely explored.[9] At the same time, the web audience is uploading its own archives

distributed on Twitter. The Geocities archive became a spiral in which Olia and Dragan reflect on the Tumblr-archive of the torrent-archive of the Geocities-archive, people reblog, retweet, like and save it, and it just keeps going on. In the essay 'Still There. Ruins and Templates of Geocities', Lialina describes what 'living archiving' means by reflecting on their process and showing 'anew' some of the examples.

10
In 2012, Dušan Barok graduated from the Piet Zwart Institute with a project called Monoskop Library, a digital repository or media library on the web with the aim to distribute historical experimental audiovisual works primarily from Central and Eastern Europe. In an attempt to allow access to basic common knowledge, today Monoskop is one of the main online repositories to find copies of all kinds of publications devoted to media, art and humanities. In an interview, Barok explains his ideas behind the project and reflect on the importance of accessibility, digital libraries and keeping knowledge alive.

and posting their documents to peer-to-peer networks and/or large (commercial) databases. Derrida rightly assumed that technology has changed power relations; with the open structure of the web, ordinary people can be heard and have the ability to influence existing content by adding their own.[10] Such initiatives show multi-layered and multifaceted understandings of archiving. More than anything, they exemplify that an archive is not simply a recording, a reflection, or an image of an event, but that can also shape the event.[11]

Considering the accessibility, interfaces, networked platforms, and ways of collating data via semi-automated software, is there a need to redefine the meaning of the term 'archive', or should these systems and platforms be referred to as something else altogether?[12] At the same time, old questions remain important, for example, in what ways do organizational and technical structures influence the building and maintenance of an archive and

11
Having collaborated as Pages since 2004, Babak Afrassiabi and Nasrin Tabatabai have produced various joint projects and published the bilingual magazine *Pages*. Currently they are working on a digital archiving and publishing platform, *Permeable Archive*, which is based on a permeable structure. An approach that goes against the conventional way of archiving where people try as much as possible to preserve and maintain. At the same time it affects the way writers produce content and distribute it. Thus questioning what the historical consciousness of a porous archive is: what knowledge is let through and what remains? Emphasizing the impossibility of a coherent archive, in an interview, Afrassiabi and Tabatabai describe how such an archive can provide a means to counter the modernist heritage of archives, moving beyond historical purpose in favour of disjunction, retraction and deviation.

12
In the essay 'Autonomous Archiving', Özge Çelikaslan discusses the notion of 'autonomy' in the practice of 'living archives', based on the practice of

its content: how are decisions made, why are certain documents preserved, who is creating them, and to what end?[13]

This publication is divided in three sections, albeit overlapping. These three different sections combine a selection of new essays, interviews and visual material, as well as previously published essays that have been reviewed and at times slightly reworked by their authors to reflect new insights. Through recurring subjects, ideas start to bleed together to form new narratives. Uncharted voices are stimulated that provoke and unravel existing cultural and political structures that circle around the topic of what is still referred to as 'contemporary archives'.

The first section focuses on comparing and differentiating between analogue and digital archives. Besides discussing the implications of the characteristics of the materiality on the content of these different types of archives (Katrina Sluis), the

bak.ma, a video archiving project of the social and political movements in Turkey. bak.ma does not only aim to contain Gezi upheaval's videos but also several other videograms that were stored in hidden parts of computers by media activists. Today, image making and moving image editing are not only accessible by any citizen by means of automated processes, but also have the potential to claim the future imagination regarding social and political co-existences. The term 'archiving' in digital video production and dissemination designates not only making an open source memory of hidden and disobedient practices but also an autonomous structure that leads to collective montage, uploading, leaking images and re-building a collective memory of political disobedience.

13
After reading the essay *Autonomous Archiving by* Özge Çelikaslan, conferring with her sources, and through encountering the *bak.ma* database, Tina Bastajian wrote a response asking herself how might video out-takes, raw and unused footage from prior projects, with thematic and political affinities, intersect and comingle with the *bak.ma* archive? Could an artistic-research

relation between the utopian Mundaneum of Paul Otlet and the mega enterprise Google is scrutinized in order to identify the potential of the digital archive (Femke Snelting). In addition, strategies and translations are tested to analyse the application of digital tools and algorithms to a photographic archive (Scandinavian Institute for Computational Vandalism).

The concept of 'lost (in) archives' is analysed in the second section: from the accidental and unintended to the consciously performed. From the use and (non)value of open licences (Aymeric Mansoux) and issues that relate to copyright/left materials (Manu Luksch), to the consequences of missing documents, the role of politics in archives and how to handle openness with precarious content (Stef Scagliola, Josien Pieterse), the proposition of accepting and embracing gaps, traces and translations (Nanna Bonde Thylstrup), and the consequences once these omissions are forcefully imposed by deliberate deletion (Igor Štromajer).

The third section presents examples of 'living (in) archives'. Most traditional archives are organized around selection, inclusion and exclusion; in this section the authors address how modes of iteration—appropriations, copies, leaks, and

project which formed a *lieu de mémoire* be revisited within the context of a collective archival endeavour that offers a platform that extends a collective *milieu de mémoire?* In the essay she revisits the notion of the remnant, that which is left behind and subsequent archival afterlives, given the context of 'autonomous archiving' in relation to the collective activist voices which grew out of the Gezi Park resistance, as well as footage from a past project which transpired on the streets of Istanbul.

other permutations—and instability can short-circuit, defy, disrupt and subsume archival activities (Dušan Barok), transfer and translate the undocumentable and the ephemeral (Olia Lialina, Dragan Espenschied), and challenge the limits of historical representation (Babak Afrassiabi and Nasrin Tabatabai), while questioning the autonomy of such practices (Özge Çelikaslan, Tina Bastajian). These examples contest both the traditional construction of the archive and show the effects of newly formed 'un-stable' archives.

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ACCUMULATE, AGGREGATE, DESTROY
Database Fever and the Archival Web

Katrina Sluis

Digitization, it is commonly argued, has liberated our documents from the material limitations of physical media, producing a 'storage mania' in which it is easier to accumulate data than delete. The rhetoric of cloud computing has further emphasized the passive accumulation and 'dematerialization' of data, by promising to unshackle our documents from the limits of space and time in favour of universal accessibility. However, it would be a mistake to describe the expansion of networked storage, as simply a shift from 'material archive-systems' to 'immaterial information-banks', as argued by media theorists Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder (Brouwer and Mulder 2003, 4). In their work on archives, sociologists Richard Harvey Brown and Beth Davis-Brown state that activities such as acquisition, classification and preservation are 'technical' activities associated with the archive that may become explicitly 'political' as they determine visibility and access (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998, 18). Far from representing the dematerialisation of the object and the liberation from the archival gaze, digitization presents us with material structures, which raise new questions concerning how social and cultural memory is exploited and 'read' by both human and non-human actors. As Derrida's *archive fever* is supplanted by *database fever*, technologies of memory are increasingly linked to the industrial processing of information and the performativity of software.

Framing these shifts has been an ongoing consideration of how the archive might be understood in an age of ubiquitous networked media. In the early noughties, the rhetoric of Web 2.0 celebrated the possibility of shared media, which is both mobile and instant, hosted on storage that is limitless and 'free', requiring little technical mastery to publish and share. With the ability to organize content through user-generated tagging systems, the democratic promise of social media appeared to extend the web's potential to overcome hierarchies of knowledge. Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Flickr emerged not as 'guardians' of digital

preservation, but social interfaces which offered opportunities to archive one's life. By simplifying online publishing, these companies persuaded users to abandon their home pages and migrate to their services with promises of greater storage capacity and convenience, at zero or low cost. However, the economic and technical delivery of this new 'free', 'social' and 'archival' web to millions of concurrent users is far from transparent, and offers new possibilities for the observation and administration of such data. It is clear, then, that when considering the digital archives that characterize web culture today, it is no longer in the context of the ephemeral or 'virtual limitlessness of cyberspace', but rather the contingent and specific economies of the server farm or database schema.

Database Fever

The relational database was first proposed by computer scientist Edgar F. Codd in 1970, and has since become a central, yet largely invisible technology of memory, a container for the blobs of information called videos, documents and snapshots. Databases have colonized the back-end of the web: they are the skeletons of search engines; they lie behind social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Wordpress. However, it may not be immediately obvious that the pages that make up the web are increasingly being generated automatically from an underlying database. In the 1990s, establishing a web presence required an FTP program, a few HTML tags and a folder on a web server to store your 'home.html'. In a post-Web 2.0 environment, authoring has been reconfigured as a process of adding items to the [YouTube/Wordpress] database. The rhetoric of Web 2.0 frames this as a 'liberatory shift' in thinking about the web not so much as a set of hyperlinked documents but as a rich interactive platform in which 'SQL is the new HTML'.[1] Observing this 'database turn' in relation to YouTube, media theorist Geert Lovink observes: 'We don't watch TV any more, we watch databases' (Lovink 2008, 9).

1 SQL, or Structured Query Language is a language used to create, maintain and query relational databases. For more information see O'Reilly 2005.

A significant consequence of the database-driven web is its dependence on highly efficient and scalable computing platforms—Facebook's infrastructure alone must serve up to 600,000 images per second. The enterprise data centre or 'server farm' has emerged as the contemporary *arkheion* of Derrida's *Mal d'Archive*: a facility for housing tens of thousands of concatenated servers.[2] With each site the size of a football pitch and costing anywhere up to $2 billion, these vast air-conditioned bunkers must be strategically located near cheap, abundant electricity; their location is often shrouded with secrecy and access is highly restricted (Markoff and Hansell 2006). And as the paradigm of 'cloud computing' increasingly defines the archival web, these information warehouses are being re-branded as liberating 'clouds' in which users can relocate their data archives to the Google grid for ubiquitous access.

2 For more information see, for example, Hogen 2015 who discusses the impact and emplacement of data centres, and Dourish 2014 on the materialities of database technologies.

When the collection and distribution of *media* becomes the collection and distribution of *data*, our photographs, videos and texts become subject to the economics of information production and knowledge management. The database and its attendant technologies (SQL/XML) is also a product of what humanities scholar Alan Liu describes as 'the new discourse paradigm' which values 'the ability to say anything to anyone quickly' (Liu 2008, 211).[3] Liu's work is significant in identifying the ways in which the development of such standards is informed by the need to make communication as post-industrially efficient as possible to allow knowledge to move seamlessly from print, to web or mobile devices. As Liu observes, the demand that discourse becomes transformable, autonomously mobile and automated is necessary so that 'a proliferating population of machinic servers, databases, and client programs can participate as cyborgian agents and concatenated Web servers facilitating the processing and reprocessing of knowledge' (Liu 2008, 216).

3 XML is a set of rules for encoding documents electronically and provides a standard through which disparate data sources (especially from databases) can be structured and read Liu 2008, 211.

Another consequence of standards such as XML is the separation of data from its presentation, which contributes

to the mobility of contemporary media and its modularity. Digital media can be processed and circulated increasingly without human intervention; images and texts can be rapidly decontextualized and recontextualized onto different software and hardware. The GPS in your camera will encode each snapshot with the place of capture, your calendar will sync up and confirm the context of your location, a face recognition algorithm will identify and tag the people in the frame before uploading it to Flickr. From there it might be instantly syndicated into the sidebars of blogs or broadcast via RSS to the wireless photo frame sitting on your mother's mantelpiece seconds after capture.

With the post-industrial processing of social media, today's web is not only more 'real time' but also more enclosed, searchable and trackable. While there is concern over the control and long-term preservation of this user-generated multimedia archive—broken links, lost webpages, unsearchable content—there is also an increasing sense, that 'the Internet never forgets' (Turkle 2011, 260). The ubiquity of digital storage now means it requires more energy to delete rather than save—Google has removed the button to 'delete' mail in its mobile Gmail app in favour of an 'archive' button. However, the difference now is that data is not just archived: it is automatically (and opaquely) analyzed and shared.

The Archive as Commodity

Whilst database-driven websites are certainly not new, they have emerged as a critical component to the financial success of contemporary social media. In his 2004 article outlining the Web 2.0 paradigm, entrepreneur Tim O'Reilly observed that 'control over the database has led to market control and outsized financial returns' (O'Reilly 2005, 3). O'Reilly emphasizes this in his following advice to web developers:

> It's no longer enough to know how to build a data-

base-backed web site. If you want to succeed, you need to know how to mine the data that users are adding, both explicitly and as a side-effect of their activity on your site (O'Reilly 2007).

With greater centralization comes the need for greater computational power and an economic strategy to sustain it. The business model that has emerged and become fetishized by Silicon Valley relies on the extraction of value from ever greater volumes of data. By evaluating the comments, clickthroughs, tags, and other content in their databases, companies such as Yahoo, Facebook and Google are able to develop the intelligence of their algorithms and generate wealth from highly targeted advertising. Next to the impact of archives on collective memory and human identity, participation in the digital archive generates another kind of unintentional memory, a 'data shadow', which is collected in exchange for free access to these platforms.[4] The data mining of our digital selves not only contributes to the commodification of digital memory, but forms part of an economy of association in which transversing the database is mediated by recommender systems which lead us towards certain content above others.

Typically, the ontologies of these algorithms are withdrawn from discursive access in the interests of protecting a company's intellectual property. For example, in 2007 Yahoo filed a patent for 'interestingness', an algorithm that Flickr uses to evaluate the quality of photographs to draw attention towards exceptional images from its database. Here commenting, favouriting and tagging along with some 'secret sauce' contribute to the weighting of each image.[5] Like Google's PageRank algorithm, its exact nature is kept secret to prevent users from 'gaming' the system to rank higher in search results. Whilst the algorithm remains hidden, the user is not afforded the same treatment. The authentication of real names and identities is now enforced across platforms before a user can be

4 A data shadow is a slang term that refers to the small traces of information that someone leaves behind when working on a computer.

5 See, Butterfield 2005 and Yahoo Patent Application for 'interestingness ranking of media objects', http://appft1.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PG01&p=1&u=%2Fnetahtml%2FPTO%2Fsrchnum.html&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=%2220060242139%22.PGNR.&OS=DN/20060242139&RS=DN/20060242139. Accessed September 2016.

trusted to share their life, their tastes, and preferences. Because the archival web relies on user information being captured, saved and sold to marketers, or mined for statistical info, the user must be rendered visible and transparent. Paradoxically, even as the user is encouraged to upload, annotate, update and maintain their online profile to achieve visibility in these systems, the actual value or visibility of the individual tweet, photo or snap is diminished.

An interesting example of the financial shift that has commodified these new archives even further is a recent deal Pinterest made with Getty Images. In 2013, both parties agreed that Pinterest would pay Getty Images a fee for their images in return for their image metadata. As the second-biggest referrer of traffic on the internet after Facebook, Pinterest's choice makes sense from a commercial point of view; the extended metadata will boost their traffic, and hence advertising income. Getty Images on the other hand has little to gain from this traffic, but say they want to share the fee with the copyright holders of their image contributors.[6] Not only is this an interesting turn into licensing, but more importantly it signals the shift from an interest in content (images, videos, audio) to metadata. This shift is further emphasized by Getty Images' decision to make 30 million of their images available for 'free'—as long as users embed them using Getty's custom player. This ensures the automated crediting of the images and, more importantly, it provides accurate data about how people are using their images; enhancing the company's ability to track consumer behaviour and react quickly to trends.[7]

6 For more information see, http://press.gettyimages.com/getty-images-partners-with-pinterest/. Accessed September 2016.

7 For more information see, Cookson 2014.

The Algorithm, Computer Vision and Memory

> The problem with [Facebook's Graph search] is that aggregation says more about us than we consciously know we are making available. Tracking at all these

> levels demonstrates the extent to which the social network itself generates a parallel archive of movement recording the interactions of the networked itself, as a simultaneous—but exponentially bigger—living archive. This parallel archive may come to make correlations about ourselves about which we are not yet aware (Hogan 2015, 10).

As the archive expands beyond the limits of human attention, the way in which users annotate and share mnemonic media is a significant problem. Algorithms are being employed for tasks as varied as facial recognition in photo collections, aesthetic evaluation of snapshots, automated photo enhancement and the automated creation of digital family albums. Despite their goal to build intelligent machines for the management of images, the field of informatics has not yet developed a perfectly accurate algorithmic means for approximating human vision. The development of computer vision is currently mitigated by a 'semantic gap' caused by the lack of similarity in the way in which humans and machines interpret these binary blobs of data. As a result, popular search engines have historically relied on the ability of their software spiders to harvest *contextual text* (metadata) rather than *content* to index images and videos.

While user-generated tagging systems promise to bring some human order to material online, they cannot keep up with the expansion of the archive. As a result, the paradigm of 'browsing' or 'surfing' hyperlinks is slowly being replaced by the search box which retrieves information from the archive. Faith in the search algorithm persists as a means through which knowledge can be 'PageRanked', democratized and shared.[8] In her work on mediated memories, media theorist José van Dijck suggests that 'the networked computer is a performative agent in the act of remembering' in which the navigation of personal memory 'not only highlights the processes of remembering but also allows the user to make connections that would

8 See, for example, the 'Memories for Life' project, a Grand Challenge of Computing, www.memoriesforlife.org/. Accessed September 2016.

never have been discovered without the computer' (Van Dijck 2007, 166–67). As the archive is reconfigured as a database with a search field, it is significant to consider the way in which the search algorithm moderates these connections. For the archive, this shift means that there is a permanent emphasis on transfer, rather than storage (Ernst 2013, 202), in which memory is 'collectively (re)constructed (and recontextualized) in the present rather than collected and preserved from the past' (Hogan, 2015, 10).

New Practices: the Anti-Archive and the Erasable Web

Against this backdrop, apps such as Snapchat are at the vanguard of what is being called 'the erasable web'—a new attitude emerging from Silicon Valley that self-consciously rejects the public aggregation of personal media in favour of ephemerality, erasure and immediacy. The problem, as Snapchat's CEO Evan Spiegel describes it, is that 'technology companies view movies, music, and television as INFORMATION. Directors, producers, musicians, and actors view them as feelings, as expression. Not to be searched, sorted, and viewed—but EXPERIENCED' (Spiegel 2014).

For Spiegel, Snapchat offers a radical break with the archival paradigm of Web 2.0: since each message self-destructs on viewing, it cannot be instrumentalized as mere *data*—it can only be *experienced*. Additionally, because each video, image or text has a limited life-span on Snapchat, it intensifies the moment of viewing and its affective potential. The knowledge that an image disappears mimics real life: moments come and go, like memories, or like a ghost (Snapchat's icon). And imperfection rather than perfection can be embraced.

Or, Spiegel argues:

> Traditional social media required that we live experiences in the offline world, record those experiences, and then post them online to recreate the experience and talk about it. … This traditional social media view

> of identity is actually quite radical: you are the sum of your published experience. Otherwise known as: pics or it didn't happen. Or in the case of Instagram: beautiful pics or it didn't happen AND you're not cool.
>
> This notion of a profile made a lot of sense in the binary experience of online and offline. It was designed to recreate who I am online so that people could interact with me even if I wasn't logged on at that particular moment (Spiegel 2014).

With the relentless aggregation of images, videos and texts, which are publically shared and mined as your 'profile' there is an increasing desire to escape the archive. Snapchat offers the illusion of self-destruction, and represents a shift away from *archiving* yourself in real time to *expressing* yourself in real time. For Spiegel, the authenticity of the disappearing snap sits in direct contrast with the polished and contrived Instagram feed. Without an archive or profile to maintain, the user of Snapchat is (allegedly) free to be their 'authentic' self. As sociologist Nathan Jurgenson suggests, Snapchat's photos are

> not made to be collected or archived, they are elusive, resisting other museal gestures of systemization and taxonomization, the modern impulse to classify life according to rubrics. By leaving the present where you found it, temporary photographs feel more like life and less like its collection (Jurgenson 2013).

This does not diminish the value of memory, as Jurgenson argues, rather Snapchat 'inspires memory because it welcomes the possibility of forgetting'. Ten seconds or less, sharpens the focus on the message—in parallel, many live performers reject the possibility of any kind of documentation.[9]

In the age of surveillance and data mining, Snapchat

9 The discourse around documentation of live performances is strong; one of the main contesters of any form of documentation is Phelan 1993.

and its peers are heralded as being about 'taking control of your digital self' (Gillette 2013). Snapchat has built its audience and business by exploiting a desire for the anti-archival, the ephemeral. However, there is little to no economic model to support the anti-archival web in the server farm age. Initially, Snapchat was able to grow because of its low server load, but the emergence of new features such as 'memories' to archive the once ephemeral content, reflect a retreat into the older archival forms of social media more amenable to marketing and tracking. While there is a strong urge for 'forgetting' (Mayer-Schönberger 2009) and 'whitewalling' (boyd 2014), for now, economics rules over authenticity and ephemerality.

Remember to Forget Everything

Information scientist, Geoffrey Bowker suggests we live in an 'epoch of potential memory' in which 'narrative remembering is typically a post hoc reconstruction from an ordered, classified set of facts which have been scattered over multiple physical data collections' (Bowker 2005, 30). As narrative remembering becomes constituted through the performance of software it becomes linked to the discourse of informatics and knowledge management. The relational database has become a convenient site from which information can be stored, analysed and transmitted, feeding off the data it accumulates in order to develop new categories, relationships and knowledge. As the archive is re-invented as the 'cloud', it is important to consider 'digital memories' as not just vaporous, immaterial, streams of data—but as data which is embedded in the material structures of hardware and software.

In the process of outsourcing the function of 'seeing' and 'recalling' to machines, there emerges a desire for memory which is both automated and passive. The modularity and flexibility of media creates the possibility of an 'algorithmic memory': an increasingly intelligent self-organizing extensible memory which can circulate independently of human

intervention. The reliance on algorithms to process images and retrieve texts also presents a shift in focus from *storage* to *retrieval* in mnemonic labour.

This article is a revised and extended version of Sluis 2010.

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NOT DISSIMILAR

Femke Snelting

In 2013, the Mundaneum archive centre in Mons proudly announced that they were about to sign a collaboration agreement with Google. In the presence of Elio Di Rupo, then prime minister of Belgium, Paul Otlet was celebrated as 'the man who dreamt up the internet' and the Mundaneum website prominently featured an article that coined the historical project as 'Google on paper', this only months after the company had opened a data-centre in the same Mons region (Djian 2009).

The Mundaneum archive centre manages the heterogeneous collection of materials produced by the utopian documentalist Paul Otlet (1868–1944) and pacifist statesman Henri La Fontaine (1854–1943). Named after their ambitious project to construct a world city of knowledge, the Mundaneum archive contains many different types of documents: personal correspondence, posters, glass-negatives, pamphlets, postcards, drawings, exhibition materials and thousands of index-cards that are grouped into different sub-archives and collections such as Paul Otlet's personal papers, Archives and collection relating to anarchism, Archives and collection relating to pacifism, Archives and collection relating to feminism, the Iconographic collection and the International Newspaper Museum.[1] The walls of the exhibition spaces are decorated with hundreds of wooden index drawers that contain remains of the Universal Bibliographic Repertory (RBU), millions of index cards produced by the International Institute of Bibliography (IIB). In their attempt to cross-reference all existing bibliographic knowledge in the world, Otlet and La Fontaine developed the Universal Decimal Classification system (UDC), a multi-dimensional version of the Dewey decimal system (Van den Heuvel 2008). In this way, the Mundaneum archive centre actually functions as an archive of archives, overlaying already classified material with a contemporary classification scheme.

1 http://archives.mundaneum.org/en/collection. Accessed March 2017.

When news of a potential European forefather reached their headquarters in Mountain View (California), Google

responded with immediate enthusiasm; the posthumous discovery of French-speaking roots could not have arrived at a more convenient time. The company was struggling to get a foothold in France (Jarry 2009), and was at the same time facing antitrust allegations by the European Commission.[2] Google subsequently contributed to the construction of Paul Otlet as a 'founding father of the internet' by supporting exhibitions such as 'Renaissance 2.0: A journey through the origins of the Web',[3] sending its own founding father and chief evangelist Vint Cerf to Mons, and celebrating Paul Otlet's 147th birthday with a Doodle.[4] Due to this re-branding, the oeuvre of Otlet finally received international attention after years of relative obscurity. Meanwhile, the Mundaneum archive centre published hundreds of scanned photographs, documents and drawings on the website of The Google Cultural Institute (Juárez 2016).

There might be a superficial visual resemblance between rows of wooden index drawers and the blinking lights of servers lined up in a data centre, but to conflate the Utopian knowledge project with the capitalist mission of Alphabet Inc., the umbrella company that Google belongs to, is an altogether different matter. Triggered by that crude and repeatedly made comparison, a temporary alliance of artists, archivists and activists formed. We chose 'Mondotheque' as a moniker and set out to work through the many layers of this mesh.[5]

CULTURAL INSTITUTE may refer to:

* A CULTURAL INSTITUTE (ORGANIZATION), such as The Mundaneum Archive Centre in Mons
* CULTURAL INSTITUTE (PROJECT), a critical interrogation of cultural institutions in neo-liberal times, developed by amongst others Geraldine Juárez
* The GOOGLE CULTURAL INSTITUTE, a project offering 'Technologies that make the world's culture accessible to anyone, anywhere.'

2 See: 'Antitrust: Commission Probes Allegations of Antitrust Violations by Google', European Commission Press release database, 30 November 2010, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-1624_en.htm. Accessed March 2017.

3 'Renaissance 2.0: A Journey Through the Origins of the Web', *Mundaneum Mons*, 2012, http://expositions.mundaneum.org/en/exhibitions/renaissance2.0-en. Accessed March 2017.

4 See: www.google.com/doodles/mundaneum-co-founder-paul-otlets-147th-birthday.

5 Mondotheque operates under several constellations of 'we': contributors to *Mondotheque::a radiated book*, www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php/Colophon/Colofon; users of the MediaWiki at www.mondotheque.be: www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php?title=Special%3AListUsers&group=smwadministrator and historical, fictional and contemporary people tagged with [[property::person]], www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php/Property:Person. Accessed March 2017.

LA MÉGA-ENTREPRISE may refer to:

* GOOGLE INC., OR ALPHABET, SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS 'CRYSTAL COMPUTING', 'PROJECT02', 'SATURN' OR 'GREEN BOX COMPUTING'
* CARNEGIE STEEL COMPANY, supporter of the Mundaneum in Brussels and the Peace Palace in The Hague

LE POLITICIEN may refer to:

* ELIO DI RUPO, former prime minister of Belgium and mayor of Mons
* HENRI LA FONTAINE, Belgium lawyer and statesman, working with Paul Otlet to realise the Mundaneum
* NICOLAS SARKOZY, former president of France, negotiating deals with LA MÉGA-ENTREPRISE

(Dis)ambiguation

The first challenge in comparing the Mundaneum to or differentiating it from Google, is that it is often not clear what the term 'Mundaneum' refers to, a confusion of scales that Paul Otlet himself was certainly partial to.[6] Does Mundaneum refer to the project of building a world city of knowledge, or to its specific incarnation in the Parc du Cinquantenaire in Brussels? Does Mundaneum include its contemporary incarnation, the archive centre in Mons, or is it a broad term to gesture the vast constellation of Utopian proposals such as the UDC (a standard), the IIB (an organization) the RBU (a card index) and the Encyclopaedia Universalis Mundaneum (a mobile exhibition project)? In the context of Wikipedia, this type of problem is usually dealt with through 'disambiguation', a process routinely used for 'resolving the conflicts that arise when a potential article title is ambiguous':[7] it is the editorial work of separating out different interpretations over multiple web pages.

This text is written around the lists of terms generated by the ever expanding collection of disambiguation pages on mondotheque.be, a MediaWiki installation that

6 Otet mentioned: 'The Mundaneum is an Idea, an Institution, a Method, a Body of workmaterials and Collections, a Building, a Network' (Otlet 1935).

7 See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Disambiguation. Accessed March 2017.

was used to document the research and activities of the Mondotheque alliance. The project brought together people from a range of backgrounds and places, who joined out of overlapping but not the same motivations. Some of us were drawn in by the enchanting Otletian universe, others felt the need to give an account of its Brussels' roots, to re-insert the work of maintenance and care-taking into the his/story of founding fathers, or were mainly concerned with the future of cultural institutions and libraries in digital times.

In addition to the analogies drawn between the historical Mundaneum projects and the mission of the search giant, Mondotheque soon started to uncover many other comparisons, mirror images and look-alikes in the entanglement of faltering local governments, dreams of universal knowledge and hope for salvation through corporate patronage. As Dick Reckard explains in *Mondotheque::a radiated book*:

> With the intention of restoring a historical complexity, it might be more interesting to play the game of 'exactly the same' ourselves, rather than try to dispel the advertised continuum of Google on paper. Choosing to focus on other types of analogies in the story, we can maybe contribute a narrative that is more respectful to the complexity of the past, and more telling about the problems of the present (Reckard 2016).

The 'exactly the same game' here is the double play of de-emphasizing the impact of technological development with statements about how nothing has actually changed, while at the same time products of technological innovation are celebrated as novel and beyond comparison, and therefore beyond critique. We gradually understood that in addition to the work of clarifying what is not the same, we should find ways to re-weave those threads into new tales of similarity. To resist the flattening implied by repeated statements of sameness, Mondotheque started to tactically mix

'disambiguation' with its antonym 'ambiguation', to make something more ambiguous, to complicate a situation or to converge concepts into the same space.

Three ways of combining ambiguation and disambiguation are discussed in this text. It starts with the specific and generic qualities of locations crossing Mondotheque, followed by (dis)ambiguations in the choice of the project name itself, and ends with the documentation practices on mondotheque.be, an attempt to re-think the knowledge projects proposed by Otlet and La Fontaine in the context of MediaWiki and the Semantic Web.

MUNDANEUM may refer to:

* MUNDANEUM (UTOPIA), a project designed by Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine
* MUNDANEUM (ARCHIVE CENTRE), a cultural institution in Mons, housing the archives of Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine since 1993

Location, Location, Location

The projects and people converging in the historical Mundaneum are profoundly linked to the context of early twentieth century Brussels. King Leopold II, in an attempt to awaken his country's desire for greatness, let a steady stream of capital flow from his private colonies in Congo into the city. Located on the crossroad between France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the Belgium capital formed a fertile ground for aspiring institutional projects with international ambitions, such as the Mundaneum.[8]

8 See, for example, Ascherson 1999.

The Musée International, later known as the Palais Mondial or Mundaneum, finally opened in 1919. The project had been conceptualised by Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine ten years earlier, and was meant to be a mix between a documentation centre, conference venue and educational display. It occupied the left wing of the magnificent buildings in the Parc Cinquantenaire, originally erected to

house the Grand Concours International des Sciences et de l'industrie. Here, Otlet and La Fontaine started to work on their Encyclopaedia Universalis Mundaneum, an illustrated encyclopaedia in the form of a mobile exhibition. The grand museological project overlapped with the activities of the International Institute of Bibliography (IIB) which had its offices in the same building. The Mundaneum hosted many international conferences on, according to its founders, interrelated questions of knowledge exchange, world peace and the founding of international institutions.[9]

The tragic demise of the project seems unfortunately equally at home in Brussels; it is telling how the Capital of Europe failed to take care of its pertinent past. Already in Otlet's lifetime, the projects fell prey to the dis-interest of their former governmental and royal patrons, perhaps not surprisingly after World War I, that had shaken their confidence in the beneficial outcomes of a universal knowledge infrastructure (Wright 2014). The Mundaneum was closed in 1934 and in the 1940s, German occupiers moved the numerous boxes and folders containing the IIB, the Mundaneum and many other archives out of the Cinquantenaire and into the crumbling rooms of the former anatomical theatre nearby. After the death of both La Fontaine and Otlet, the remains of the still vast collection of documents commenced a long trajectory through garages and cellars across Brussels. In the mid-nineties, Elio Di Rupo intervened by moving the archives to 'his' Mons, the regional capital of Wallonia, located in a former mining area in the south of Belgium.[10] It was only fifteen years later, when the same Di Rupo negotiated the build of a Google data-centre in the Mons region, that local politicians saw an opportunity to make the (un-ambiguated) Mundaneum function in a tale about the bright future of the industrial heartland. With the help of this appropriated history, Mons became 'Home of The Internet Age',[11] a place 'where culture and technology meet'.[12]

9 For a detailed history of the Mundaneum and related institutions see Otlet's first BIOGRAPHE (Rayward 1975).

10 Di Rupo has been councillor, deputy and/or mayor of Mons from 1983 onwards. Trajectory compiled from many sources, for more information see: 'The Itinerant Archive', in *Mondotheque:: a radiated book* (Brussels: Constant, 2016).

11 As mentioned on Google blog: 'Both regions built their economies on big traditional industries that are fast disappearing—paper and pulp in Finland, coal and steel in Belgium. Both have big neighbors—Russia and France. And both have a willpower to work with us to help jump, as our partners put it, "from the Industrial Heartland to the Internet age".' https://googlepolicyeurope.blogspot.be/2013/12/joining-belgium-and-finland-around-data.html. Accessed March 2017.

12 The slogan of Mons Europe Capital 2015 mentions: 'Mons, où la technologie rencontre la'. See: www.mons2015.eu. Accessed March 2017.

The trajectory of this heritage has many elements specific to the Belgian and Wallonian context. The way the narrative was muddled to insist on specific qualities of a region to fuel the advent of a multi-national enterprise, though, resembles other cases elsewhere. Media coverage of data-centres opened in Groningen (the Netherlands) and Hamina (Finland) for example, shows how geographically and culturally situated histories are vulnerable to simplified tales of conflating history and future, culture and technology, local roots and global connectedness.[13] As ShinJoung Yeo points out in her article 'From Paper Mill to Google Data Center':

> To many struggling communities around the world, the building of Google's large-scale data centres has been presented by the company and by political elites as an opportunity to participate in the 'new economy'—as well as a veiled threat of being left behind from the 'new economy'–as if this would magically lead to the creation of prosperity and equality (Yeo 2016).

13 See, for example, www.gic.nl/nieuws/commentaar-google-vermorzelt-groningens-calimero-complex-maar-wat. Accessed March 2017.

Mondotheque tried to critically respond to the sloganification of nearby histories by insisting on specificity, while connecting those stories to similar processes elsewhere.

LA RÉGION may refer to:

* WALLONIA (BELGIUM), or La Wallonie. Former mining area, home-base of former prime minister Elio di Rupo, location of two Google data-centres and the Mundaneum Archive Centre
* GRONINGEN (THE NETHERLANDS), future location of a Google data centre in Eemshaven
* HAMINA (FINLAND), location of a Google data centre

LA CAPITALE may refer to:

* BRUSSELS, capital of Flanders and Europe
* GENEVA, world civic centre

* GRONINGEN, 'er gaat niets boven Groningen'

LE ROI may refer to:

* LEOPOLD II, reigned as King of the Belgians from 1865 until 1909. Exploited Congo as a private colonial venture. Patron of the Mundaneum project
* ALBERT II, reigned as King of the Belgians from 1993 until his abdication in 2013. Visited LA MÉGA-ENTREPRISE in 2008

URBANISME may refer to:

* URBAN PLANNING, a technical and political process concerned with the use of land, protection and use of the environment, public welfare, and the design of the urban environment, including air, water, and the infrastructure passing into and out of urban areas such as transportation, communications, and distribution networks
* URBANISME (PUBLICATION), a book by Le Corbusier (1925)

Mondotheque, Mondothèque, Mondotheek

Curiously missing from the pages on the mondotheque.be wiki that are labelled 'disambiguation' is the title we chose for the project itself. We appropriated La Mondothèque, a device that Paul Otlet imagined, but never built. The term Mondo-thèque (world-collection) that Otlet invented to name the fantastic apparatus, is only one of many iterations of the French 'monde' that one can find in the numerous systems, concepts and institutions he developed: Mundaneum, Palais Mondial, and even the term Mondialisation itself.[14]

For Otlet, the Mondothèque was to be an 'intellectual machine' operating at both macro and micro scale. On the few drawings and descriptions available, it functions at the same time as an archive, link generator, writing desk, mobile exhibition, catalogue and broadcast station. Imagining the museum, the library, the encyclopaedia, and classificatory language as a complex and

14 As mentioned by Otlet: 'Un droit nouveau doit remplacer alors le droit ancien pour préparer et organiser une nouvelle répartition. La "question sociale" a posé le problème à l'intérieur; "la question internationale" pose le même problème à l'extérieur entre peuples. Notre époque a poursuivi une certaine socialisation de biens. … Il s'agit, si l'on peut employer cette expression, de socialiser le droit international, comme on a socialisé le droit privé, et de prendre à l'égard des richesses naturelles des mesures de "mondialisation"' (Otlet 1916, 76. See also Roussel 2016).

interdependent web of relations, Otlet imagined each element as a point of entry to the other. He stressed that to respond to displays in a museum involves different intellectual and social processes than those needed for reading books in a library, but that one in a sense entailed the other (Van den Heuvel 2008). The dreamed capacity of his Mondothèque was to interface levels, perspectives and media at the intersection of all those different practices. Otlet's refusal to separate the document from the work of documentation and the archive from its dissemination might explain the at times hallucinatory effect of his deadly serious project. To maintain the interconnectedness of elements in different dimensions, Otlet moves from broad generalisations to science-fiction, from bone-dry detailed descriptions to esoteric musings. His awkward drawings of the Mondothèque make those different levels of intensity surprisingly tangible.

Mondotheque used the imaginary device as a metaphor, as a reference to Otlet but without the need to enact the totalising world-view he aspired to. By transporting the historical proposition into the present, the already speculative figure of Mondothèque became a kind of thinking machine through which we could understand how our different interventions might relate to each other. More importantly it suggested how our work had elements of articulation, but also of figuration.

MONDE may refer to:

* MONDE (UNIVERS) means WORLD in French and is used in many drawings and schemes by Paul Otlet. See for example: World + Brain and Mundaneum
* MONDE (PUBLICATION), *Essai d'universalisme*. Last book published by Paul Otlet (1935)
* MONDIALISATION, Term coined by Paul Otlet (1916)

LE MANAGER may refer to:

* DELPHINE JENART, assistant director at the Mundaneum Archive Centre in Mons.
* BILL ECHIKSON, former public relations officer at

Google, coordinating communications for the European Union, and for all of Southern, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa. Handled the company's high profile antitrust and other policy-related issues in Europe.

LE DIRECTEUR may refer to:

* HARM POST, director of Groningen Sea Ports, future location of a Google data centre
* ANDREW CARNEGIE, director of Carnegy Steel Company, sponsor of the Mundaneum
* ANDRÉ CANONNE, director of the Centre de Lecture publique de la Communauté française (CLP-CF) and guardian of the Mundaneum. See also: LE BIOGRAPHE
* JEAN-PAUL DEPLUS, president of the current Mundaneum association, but often referred to as LE DIRECTEUR
* AMID SOOD, director (later 'founder') of the Google Cultural Institute and Google Art Project
* STEVE CROSSAN, director (sometimes 'founder' or 'head') of the Google Cultural Institute

It's about Creating Things from Data

The wiki environment installed at mondotheque.be functioned as an organizing device and as a generative tool. It was set up as a collective online repository but quickly grew into a rich labyrinth of images, texts, maps and semantic links, tools and vocabularies. MediaWiki has a flat structure based on 'pages' that resembles the loose leaf approach of the index-catalogue. It automatically places texts, notes, categories, system messages and uploaded files on the same level and only because these pages exist in different namespaces ('special pages' for example), or have certain templates applied, they behave radically differently.

We decided to use MediaWiki software because we wanted to see what could happen if we projected the practices summoned by this tool developed alongside Wikipedia, onto the

concepts and systems proposed by Otlet and La Fontaine.[15] We suspected similarities between the way infrastructure and institutions are grown in parallel with an ideological project (UDC, Mundaneum and RBU versus MediaWiki, WikiMedia-foundation and Wikipedia). As a working environment tailored to an encyclopaedic project, the software has inherited some of the epistemological issues that one finds in The Mundanueum projects as well. It is not a coincidence that in both projects the *structure* of knowledge is prioritized.[16] Both MediaWiki and The Mundaneum projects tend to the dissection and flattening out of knowledge-bits, motivated by a positivist belief in their recombinatory potential. Once separated into distinct pages or units and liberated from their context, new forms of understanding can and will emerge.

To confront concepts such as hypertext, linked databases and other forms of writerly information technology with the documentation systems that Otlet and La Fontaine realised at the turn of the twentieth century, we extended the already rather convoluted structure with several Semantic extensions. Concepts such as 'The Semantic Web' and 'linked open data' echo Otlet's Universal Decimal Classification system in interesting ways. For instance, Tim Berners-Lee, yet another founding father, compares the function of a Google search engine with the way data can be made reusable through linking:

> Some people have said, 'Why do I need the Semantic Web? I have Google!' Google is great for helping people find things, yes! But finding things more easily is not the same thing as using the Semantic Web. It's about creating things from data you've complied yourself, or combining it with volumes (think databases, not so much individual documents) of data from other sources to make new discoveries. … We're looking at applications that enable transformations, by being able to take large amounts of data and be able to

15 'A historical appraisal of Otlet's utopian visions must also go inside the utopian theory itself, search for its intent, unravel its toolbox of concepts, reveal the provocative realist behind the megalomaniac, and analyse what he repudiated in the present and what he sensed to have potential for the future' (Van Acker 2012, 63).

16 First principle of MediaWiki: 'wiki software [is] organized, allowing a sophisticated structurization of content', www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Principles. Accessed March 2017.

17 As mentioned by Alexia De Visscher: 'Otlet distinguishes the material unit (substance or materiality of the document), the intellectual unity (the idea) which he tends to abstract and divide up into its smallest expression, and the documentary unit, that is akin to unity (oneness) or entity, a documentary treatment of a particular substance composed of multiple units. In between these units, he imagines a scale on which a slider could be moved from "non-existant" to "totality"' (De Visscher 2016).

> run models on the fly—whether these are financial models for oil futures, discovering the synergies between biology and chemistry researchers in the Life Sciences, or getting the best price and service on a new pair of hiking boots (Updegrove 2005).

Finding the best price on a new pair of hiking boots would probably not have excited Otlet or La Fontaine, but the belief in the potential of creating 'things' from 'data' might have felt familiar.[17] The idea that information on the web, through labelling it with metadata, can become available as raw material for future knowledge, resembles the way Otlet and La Fontaine envisaged the outcomes of documentation projects such as the RBU. Their Universal Decimal Classification system offers a finely structured syntax for describing 'intellectual units', and to prepare them for potential re-use. While Google sometimes slips into similar grand narratives of knowledge production, at the end of the day the search engine company merely offers efficient technologies for information retrieval based on machinic keyword analysis.[18] This certainly contributes to knowledge generation but those results are obscured and centralised in the interest of the company itself.[19]

The comparison with both The Semantic Web and the Wikipedia/MediaWiki constellation brings out how much the knowledge infrastructures proposed by Otlet and La Fontaine differ from those of Google. You could consider both UDC and The Semantic Web as proposals for activated archiving, involving distributed practices such as indexing, linking and dissemination, with the mission to allow humanity better services, science, world peace or even to discover truth (Van den Heuvel 2009). Or, as Otlet writes:

> Before our eyes a huge machinery for intellectual work is being built. It is through the combination

18 '(T)he fact is that untold billions of Web users must rely on the judgment of a corporate oligarchy whose algorithms remain as closely guarded as state secrets. It is not for the consumer to know why a particular result appears at the top of a results page; such are the Delphic mysteries of the Google searchbot. Otlet's system, though similarly conscribed, at least aspired to an idealistic vision of revealing truth without serving a corporate profit margin' (Wright 2014).

19 'The ideas and practices to be discussed would today be rubricated as information technology, information retrieval, search strategies, information centers, fee-based information services, linked data bases, database management software, scholarly communication networks, multimedia and hypertext, even the modern, diffuse notion of "information" itself' (Boyd Rayward 1997).

> of various existing specialized machines that, despite the individualism and particularism of their inventors, the necessary links can be foreseen. This machinery is now almost exclusively in the service of industry, of trade and finance. Tomorrow we will put it at the service of the administration and the scientific work and its wonderful general results will be collected (Otlet 1934).

For Mondothèque, the combination of flat hierarchy and semantic tagging that the MediaWiki platform offered was attractive as a working environment which allowed us to re-combine and re-use a large amount of digital images, videos and documents. Some of them were meticulously tagged and sourced, others speculatively or even incorrectly described. We built image galleries through custom semantic queries, discovered and constructed correlations between historical and contemporary situations[20] and used the images to generate new narratives: Matthew Fuller's short story *The Indexalist* was written in response to the category page *Table de travail* (worktable)[21] and Sînziana Păltineanu used the collection of files as imaginary index cards in her text *An experimental transcript.*[22] In addition, we developed 'transclusionism', a beautifully brittle amalgamate of extensions that together made it possible to transversally write between texts. The term 'transclusion' was coined by Utopian systems humanist Ted Nelson and is currently used in MediaWiki to refer to inclusion of the same fragment in different pages. Our version works through the mirroring of fragments: two transcluded texts share two related fragments with each other.

20 'Les Pyramides', in *Mondothèque::a radiated book* (Brussels: Constant, 2016), www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php/Les_Pyramides.

21 See, Fuller (2016) in response to www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php?title=Table_de_travail. Accessed March 2017.

22 See Păltineanu 2016.

The transclusionism-enabled wiki turned into a malleable reading and writing space that allowed us to analyse and re-compose Otlet's 'book on the book' *Le Traité de documentation* (De Visscher 2016). The experimental publication *Mondothèque::a radiated book* that we collectively edited

and designed was laid out with the help of a multi-layer concoction of HTML-processing tools, PDF-generators and cascading style sheets, live generated from the Mondotheque wiki itself. Though the customised wiki offered ways to develop the research in public, the platform also resisted in surprising ways, such as when we experienced the deeply rooted favouring of writing over images. A file page should behave hierarchically similar to a text page, but many of the plug-ins and default interface options blocked the actual practice of this horizontality. The encyclopaedic genealogy of the tool was often hard to ignore and at several moments we were going down rabbit-holes of desiring completeness, endless categorisation and universal application. We were playing on the edges of becoming indexalists ourselves, while trying to comment on its limits.

BIBLION may refer to:

* BIBLION (CATEGORY), a subcategory of the category: Index Traité de documentation
* BIBLION (TRAITÉ DE DOCUMENTATION), term used by Paul Otlet to define all categories of books and documents in a section of Traité de documentation
* BIBLION (UNITY), the smallest document or intellectual unit

L'EVANGELISTE may refer to:

* VINT CERF, so-called 'internet evangelist', or 'father of the internet', working at LA MÉGA-ENTREPRISE
* JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI, priest at the 'Order of the Star', a theosophist splinter group that Paul Otlet related to
* Sir TIM BERNERS LEE, 'open data evangelist', heading the World Wide Web consortium (W3C)

L'UTOPISTE may refer to:

* PAUL OTLET, documentalist, universalist, internationalist, indexalist. At times considered as the 'father of information science', or 'visionary inventor of the internet on paper'

* LE CORBUSIER, architect, universalist, internationalist. Worked with Paul Otlet on plans for a City of Knowledge
* OTTO NEURATH, philosopher of science, sociologist, political economist. Hosted a branch of Mundaneum in The Hague
* TED NELSON, technologist, philosopher, sociologist. Coined the terms hypertext, hypermedia, transclusion, virtuality and intertwingularity

Articulation and Figuration

Through double negations, (dis)ambiguations and multi-scalar adventures, Mondothèque diffracts the all-encompassing Utopia that the Mundaneum stood for. Working with translation, transformation and transclusion we tried to rewrite statements of sameness into more interesting tales of similarity and dissimilarity. In response to the specific material entanglements that we encountered, we felt the need to make process and content play together on every level and devised multiple forms of poetic re-use that included the mixing of fact and fiction, text and image, document and catalogue.

The point of a project such as Mondotheque is to persist collectively in demanding access to actual digital documents but also to the intellectual and technological infrastructures that interface and mediate them. Throughout the Mondotheque project it has been evident how the position of public institutions has become eroded to the point that all forms of communication, including those produced through the archive, feed into neo-liberal agendas eventually. We urgently need to resist simplifications and find the patience to relate to these institutions, practices and their histories.

To make space for articulation as well as for figuration is where the multi-dimensional potential of the digital archive lies.[23] It invites us to simultaneously unravel and weave, clarify and trouble the complex presences we live

23 'The analyses of these themes are transmitted through narratives—mythologies or fictions, which I have renamed as "figurations" or cartographies of the present. A cartography is a politically informed map of one's historical and social locations, enabling the analysis of situated formations of power and hence the elaboration of adequate forms of resistance' (Braidotti 2011, 271).

through and provides us with some of the necessary tools for figuring out what situated formations of power we exist in, and for inventing possible forms of resistance.

LE BIOGRAPHE is used for persons that are instrumental in constructing the narrative of Paul Otlet. It may refer to:

* ANDRÉ CANONNE, librarian and director of the Centre de Lecture publique de la Communauté française (CLPCF). Discovers the Mundaneum in the 1960s. Publishes a facsimile edition of the *Traité de documentation* (1989) and prepares the opening of Espace Mundaneum in Brussels at Place Rogier (1990)
* WARDEN BOYD RAYWARD, librarian scientist, discovers the Mundaneum in the 1970s. Writes the first biography of Paul Otlet in English: *The Universe of Information: The Work of Paul Otlet for Documentation and international Organization* (1975)
* BENOÎT PEETERS and FRANÇOIS SCHUITEN, comics-writers and scenographers, discover the Mundaneum in the 1980s. The archivist in the graphic novel *Les Cités Obscures* (1983) is modelled on Paul Otlet
* FRANÇOISE LEVIE, filmmaker, discovers the Mundaneum in the 1990s. Author of the fictionalised biography *The man who wanted to classify the world* (2002)
* ALEX WRIGHT, writer and journalist, discovers the Mundaneum in 2003. Author of *Cataloging the World: Paul Otlet and the Birth of the Information Age* (2014)

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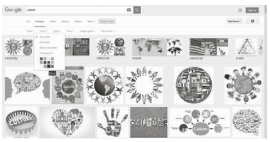
GIVING THE FINGER (BACK) TO THE DIGITAL
Considering 'Visual Vocabularies' in Relation to the Photographic Archive of Asger Jorn's SICV

Scandinavian Institute for Computational Vandalism (Nicolas Malevé, Michael Murtaugh, Ellef Prestsæter)

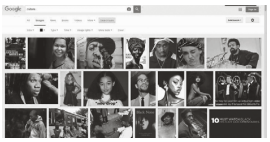
Black Culture

I open my web browser and type in 'google.com'. I am redirected to `google.nl` and the interface appears in Dutch. At the top corner of the screen I see my first name and the image I once set up to be my 'avatar' for a service called 'google plus'. I select 'log out', click 'Google.com gebruiken' and the interface changes into English. I click 'Images' at the top right. I begin to type the word 'culture' in the search box; as I type each letter, a stream of suggestions appears below my own text. C: cat, cricket score, cars, calendar 2016, couple sleeping positions and what they mean. CU: cute puppies, cute quotes, cute animals, cute baby, cuba. CUL: culottes, culture, culture club, cult, cul de sac. I click 'culture' and the page reloads with a grid of images.



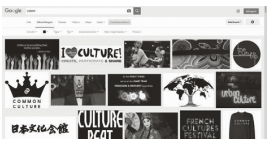
At the top of the results is a special row of images appearing together with texts below them: 'Diversity', 'The Word', 'Different', 'World', 'American', and 'Traits'. Below this, eleven images are shown in two rows, underneath which further results lie in wait of scrolling. Of the seventeen images on the screen, six have the word 'culture' legible within them. Five of the images contain a circular depiction of the globe showing North and South America and a slice of the African continent. In each of these images, the globe is surrounded by symbols representing people in a rainbow palette of colours. Six of the images contain multiple images of national flags. Nearly all the images appear on a white background.

Above the grid are a row of clickable links indicating different modes of search: *All*, *Images* (the mode now active), *News*, *Books*, *Videos*, *More*, and *Search tools*. Clicking on *Search tools* reveals a second row of options specific to images: *Size*, *Colour*, *Type*, *Time*, *Usage rights*, and *More tools*. Clicking *Type* reveals sub-items like *Photo*, *Clip art*, and *Line drawing*. Clicking on *Colour* opens a selection panel with options *Any colour* (active), *Full colour*, *Black and white*, *Transparent* and a 4:3 grid of colour swatches (red, orange, yellow, green, etc.). I select the swatch depicting the colour



black. The page reloads with twenty image results visible.

The first result is the only to contain the word 'culture', it appears to be the thumbnail of a poster with a grid of even smaller images and the text 'November 3rd-8th Black Culture Awareness Week 2013'. Four of the images visibly contain the word 'black': two images of publications: Negro Digest, a 1969 magazine cover with the text 'Black World', and the cover of a book 'Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America' by Tricia Rose. Seven of the images are black and white. Many are images of well-known African American musicians: the rapper Red Pill standing before a wall painting of the musician Biggie Smalls, Tupac Shakur, KRS-One, Thelonious Monk, as well as people associated with historical civil rights movements: Amiri Baraka, Malcolm X, Zora Neale Hurston. While the overall colouration of the presented images does appear to contain more black pixels than the previous set of results, the results shown clearly seem to be more the result of the adjacency of the textual content 'black culture' to the pictures than to the purely chromatic content of the image per se, as the operation of the colour swatch filter might suggest.



Repeating the search (images with the text 'culture' filtered by the black colour swatch) via the Dutch language interface of 'google.be' produces completely different results. The first fifteen results including a graphic with the text 'Culture is something that unites people.—Anastasiya O., Russia', an image of Miley Cyrus 'twerking' in concert, the logo of 'Common Culture' depicting the black silhouette of a crown, Shia LaBeouf wearing a paper bag with the text 'I am not famous anymore', a silhouette globe sprouting from a tree, black Japanese kanji characters against a white background, a vividly coloured geisha against a black background. In none of the results does the word 'black' or 'zwart' appear. In contrast to `google.com` results, the textuality of 'black' here seems to be less of influence than its chromatic pixel value.[1]

1 This example is by artist Artyom Kocharyan who described to the authors how Google Image Search works as 'his camera', the extended search tools a kind of equivalent to the camera's aperture and speed controls, `www.artyomkocharyan.com`. Accessed 20 June 2016.

The fact that Google Image Search (GIS) uses a mixture of textual cues and visual ones in performing an image search is not in and of itself problematic. However, it becomes a problem the 'secret sauce' of a product like GIS is by its nature inscrutable, imprecise, and subject to change without notice.[2] The particular recipe of the day may or may not 'bake in' an understanding of an image that subordinates pixels to the words detected in adjacent captions, thus reinforcing a sense of the image as simply an illustration of text. The apparent simplicity of the tool furthers a perception of 'digital tools' as black boxes which are somehow natural, inscrutable, inevitable.

In what follows, we will present the outcomes of a project that was initiated in 2014 to investigate what it might mean to apply digital tools and algorithms to the photographic archive of the Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism (SICV). SICV was founded by Danish artist Asger Jorn shortly after leaving the Situationist International in 1961. It was the name of an association combining the forces of certain artistic and political ideas. For a brief period (1961–1965), this unlikely assembly was held together and in motion by the sales of Jorn's paintings, which by then had started to fare well on the international market. The output of the institute was paginated rather than painted: for Jorn the codex was a site for the analysis, sequencing and presentation of large quantities of heterogeneous visual materials. What might the digitisation of this particular photographic archive mean in a time when access to images is increasingly mediated by services such as Google Image Search? What role can and should an institution such as the Jorn Museum play?

In 2014, the Jorn Museum invited us to work with the SICV archive. Upon arrival, we were confronted with ideas and images stored in a complex relational and paper-based structure: manuscripts, indexes, maps, negatives, contact sheets, photographic prints, folders, binders, boxes, books. We tried to understand how the archive works, to map its

2 Hal Varian describes the 'secret sauce' as follows, 'I would argue that Google really does have a better product than the competition—not because we have more or better ingredients, but because we have better recipes. And we are continuously improving those recipes precisely because we know the competition is only a click away. We can't fall back on economies of scale, or switching costs, or network effects, to isolate us from the competition. The only thing we can do is work as hard as we can to keep our search quality better than that of the other engines' (Varian 2008).

relations, conjunctions and affordances, and we spoke about what a prospective digitization of this material might open up. The work took the form of a research period to become familiar with the particularities of the archive, and was followed by a small installation which eventually became part of a collection of 'hands-on' exhibitions and workshops exploring Jorn's varied techniques. This article will analyse the consequences of the interchangeability of tools and techniques and how digital tools can lend themselves to promiscuous and constructive (mis)use and novel assemblage.

Green Tongues

La Langue verte et la cuite is a large-format photo-book produced by Asger Jorn and French writer Noël Arnaud in 1968. The book riffs off Lévi-Strauss's *Le Cru et le cuit* (1964), the first in a series on 'mythologies' comparing and contrasting recurring elements across different cultures via conceptual dualisms such as 'raw' versus 'cooked'.

Le Cru et le cuit comprises some 400 pages of primarily text and contains just four photographs in the main text, including a single portrait of a Bororo man, the culture that plays a central role in the work. Besides this, the book contains a special appendix, titled 'Bestiaire', containing sixteen pages of engravings of animals referenced by the myths found in the main text. Drawing on the photographic archive of the SICV, a project Jorn had started some years before, *La Langue verte, in contrast,* is driven by images. The vast majority of its pages contain black-and-white photographs, many printed full bleed, each of which have been overpainted by Jorn with a single colour to indicate their 'tongues'. Some of the tongues would be evident even without the colour, but many are rather more the suggestion of the overpainting, a playful gesture following the flourish of a decorative element or activating the negative space within an image. The colour of the overpainting changes over the course of the book in accordance with a range of themes, themselves often involving puns and wordplay. The title

itself *La Langue verte et la cuite* is multiple play on words: 'la langue verte', literally means 'the green tongue' and also means popular language, or slang. 'La cuite' or 'to be cooked' in French is slang for being drunk.

As art historian Steven Harris notes, 'Jorn insisted on the separation of text and image, so that images could function independently of text and be arranged according to an order intrinsic to the images themselves' (Harris 2012, 112–15). Beyond exhibiting simply a separation of text and image, a key feature in the book is the *primacy* of the image, with high-quality full-bleed photographs printed without captions. Each image is discretely labelled with a numerical reference which leads the interested reader to a corresponding caption found in appendix form later in the book. Jorn thus reversed the relationship of text to image typical of academic writing. In contrast to the reductive black-and-white engravings of animals found in Lévi-Strauss's *Bestiaire*, where each species is reduced to a single representative example, the photographs rewrite the conventions of 'objective' photographic representation of archaeological objects, employing dramatic lighting rather than flat, accentuating shadows and expressive details rather than repressing them.[3] Jorn's presentation of these 'portraits of stones'[4] is reflected in his efforts to print the books with multiple layers of ink to enhance the dynamic range of the blackness of the images (Henriksen 2014, 227).

Tracings

When we arrived in Silkeborg, Denmark, we were shown to the archive: seven heavy filing cabinets each with four drawers, temporarily moved into the main exhibition space. We were informed that the left-to-right order of the cabinets had been inverted as a result of the move up from the museum's basement depot. Placed behind a short black cable boundary, the cabinets had been staged as a kind of simulated workplace complete with an adjacent table and lamp. A number of the photographs

3 Teresa Østergaard Pedersen has developed the archaeological implications of this visual strategy in her article 'The Image as Agent: "Comparative Vandalism" as Visual Strategy', http://sicv.activearchives.org/w/The_Image_as_Agent. Accessed 20 June 2016.

4 Matthew Fuller, http://sicv.activearchives.org/w/Computational_Vandalism. Accessed 20 June 2016.

had been reproduced and lay strewn about in a pile on the floor with a scenographic flourish vaguely suggestive of a crime scene. We were given extension cables and additional lighting and got to work, the imagined workspace becoming actual as we unpacked a scanner, plugged in our laptops and began to take notes and photographs of the material.

In the cabinet, each image appears in several copies, first as a photographic negative, then on a contact sheet (itself a document often marked upon with grease pencil), and finally in multiple reproductions at varying sizes. In this way Jorn and others were free to work from the archive, cutting out copies of images for use in (possible) spreads for publications. This literal form of 'cut and paste' and the function of the 'copyability' of the photographic negative was a useful reminder of the many physical and manual gestures on which digital tools and workflows have been (metaphorically) based. As Jorn and Arnaud wanted to bring tongues back to 'la langue', we started to wonder what it might mean to give something of the 'finger' back to the digital.

Bag of (Visual) Words

'Holy shit, it's working…', Nomi exhaled and instinctively fanned her hands and bowed her head gravely to the monitor in a quasi-sincere gesture of adoration to the algorithm. Just an hour earlier, she was exasperated, slumped back in her chair at the computer in the corner of her bedroom. She had been working non-stop during the weekend trying to get her code to work and she'd hit a major snag. The textbook in front of her was open on chapter seven, 'Searching Images', about building a simple image-based search engine.

> Content-based image retrieval (CBIR) deals with the problem of retrieving visually similar images from a (large) database of images. This can be images with similar colour, similar textures or similar objects or scenes, basically any information contained in the images themselves.

> For high-level queries, like finding similar objects, it is not feasible to do a full comparison (for example using feature matching) between a query image and all images in the database. It would simply take too much time to return any results if the database is large. In the last couple of years, researchers have successfully introduced techniques from the world of text mining for CBIR problems making it possible to search millions of images for similar content. The most common weighting is tf-idf weighting (term frequency —inverse document frequency). But what form exactly does this 'information' take? (Solem 2012).

Working with Computer Vision techniques was a relatively new area of interest for Nomi. Two decades ago, when the application of such techniques still belonged to the relatively speculative field of robotics, she studied some of the techniques during her Computer Science studies. Today, however, it was the masses of smartphone users, rather than the hydraulics of robots, that mobilized these artificial eyes, first in the form of face-detection routines automatically adjusting cameras exposure settings and later in the sophisticated tagging and analyses performed by social media platforms once these images were 'shared'. The book is one of the 'animal books' from the technical publisher O'Reilly. On the cover is an old-style black-and-white depiction of a 'bullhead catfish', which according to the book's colophon is a 'bottom-feeder' that due to its high reproductive rate and destructive effect on aquatic ecosystems is considered a curse for fisheries (Solem 2012, 247). Nomi had wondered darkly if this was meant as a wry statement on the implications of computer vision techniques culturally. But these concerns were now far from her mind as she struggled with her code.

She was trying to match image fragments from a video where images had been projected in a slide show back to the original digital images. Initially she thought to do the

work 'by eye', but after a few minutes of flipping through just part of the 300 possible images searching for a match, she realized that the task demanded more visual patience than she could endure. So she was hoping 'visual bag of words' might do the trick.

> To apply text-mining techniques to images, we first need to create the visual equivalent of words. This is usually done using local descriptors like the SIFT descriptor in Section 2.2. The idea is to quantize the descriptor space into a number of typical examples and assign each descriptor in the image to one of those examples. These typical examples are determined by analyzing a training set of images and can be considered as visual words and the set of all words is then a visual vocabulary (sometimes called a visual codebook). This vocabulary can be created specifically for a given problem or type of images or just try to represent visual content in general (Solem 2012).

She dutifully went through all the steps. First she ran the SIFT program to detect and dump a 'description' of all the 'interesting' features of some 300 images. Next she ran a 'training step' to build the 'visual vocabulary' based on all of the features from all of the images. This step turned out to be quite 'computationally expensive': running the code initially on her laptop had left the computer struggling for half an hour or so before showing a dreaded 'segmentation fault'. Moving to a desktop computer with more memory and faster processors, after another half hour or so of computation, the algorithm had successfully dumped out the resulting 'vocabulary' in the form of a file. She then re-processed the same 300 images, creating an 'index' by recording the 'profile': the feature descriptions of each image made when 'projected' back onto the statistical average of the vocabulary. Finally, she attempted to 'search' the index: the search image was a still from a video in which a fragment of one of the original

images appeared in the background. She hoped that by searching the index, the original image would come back as a 'hit'. She ran the video frame through the same process, comparing its feature 'profile' to all those in the index and returning a list of hits ordered by similarity. But it didn't seem to be working at all. While the code all ran without errors, the results seemed random and didn't provide the match she was looking for.

Having come to a dead end with visual bag of words, Nomi decided to abandon the technique and focus solely on the SIFT features themselves. Instead of relying on a search index, she decided to apply a 'brute-force' matching algorithm to compare the features of one image to each feature of every other image one by one. Such a technique would never work for a collection of thousands of images, but for her small set it would suffice. She started the algorithm and waited for it to plod through the comparisons. After 15 minutes or so she checked the log file and saw that the algorithm worked surprisingly well: for a particular video frame, most comparisons yield no matches; in a few cases there are 1-10 matches, and one obvious match of over a hundred features! Nomi opened the corresponding image and visually confirmed that the fragment was contained within the photograph. In the rush of euphoric relief, she forgot all the work she had done to get to this point and was left marvelling at what she perceived as the mightiness of the algorithm at work.

Computational Vandalism

Visual bag of words is just one example of a 'layer cake' of methods and techniques that is typical of computer programming in general, and of computer vision in particular. Different methods and algorithms are often pulled out of the programmer's 'toolbox' and mixed and matched, the output of one strapped onto the input of another, to perform a task. This fact is not problematic. The very interchangeability of tools and techniques is an exciting part of how digital

tools can lend themselves to promiscuous and constructive (mis)use and novel assemblage. The difficulty, however, lies in understanding or considering how the assumptions and limitations of one layer influence the others and whether the assumptions of one part of the pipeline are still appropriate later on when one's attention has shifted 'up the stack' to another part of an application. 'Black boxing' as an engineering process is all about being able to 'let go' and forget the details of a particular part of a program to shift one's focus to another. The danger is when, in a process of abstraction where the inner details and context of particular routines' development are suppressed, one is tempted to start believing the often-exaggerated claims that effectively label the box.

Jorn may well have found the idea of creating 'language' based on purely visual aspects (albeit filtered through the techniques of mathematics) profoundly appealing.[5] But, whose language is it, and what do the words refer to? Are they the observations of the anthropologist aiming to trace cultural heritage through 'symbolic icons', or rather the cryptic mutterings of an obsessive-compulsive jigsaw player viewed through a loupe?

5 Jorn repeatedly referred to the Swedish architect Erik Lundberg's concept of a 'language of form' and suggested that the mathematical field of topology might contribute to a 'comprehensive codification' of visual art. See, for instance, Jorn 2012 (1968).

Jorn's offering of overpaintings as visual evidence in a new kind of academic discourse, makes the radical proposal to embrace the subjectivity of the image, asserting the image as something open to multiple interpretations. An algorithmic treatment such as contour tracing can usefully be seen as itself a kind of overpainting, a performative act contingent on the situated application of algorithm to image. Far from producing an essential reduction that 'consumes' its subject, the algorithmic overpainting suggests new ways to read and re-read the image.

How can one embrace the multiplicity of meaning in these new forms of algorithmically determined language, in line with Jorn's tactical deployment of the pun in *La Langue verte*? Jorn's response to a perceived reductive view of language evident in Lévi-Strauss's structuralism was to

embrace and display the full capacity of language, both visual and textual, to include multiple meanings, speculations, deliberate ambiguities, insults and offence, fiction, lies, insinuations, absurdities and contradiction. What are the equivalents in a visual vocabulary? What alternatives are there to the frequently used statistical reductions of techniques like k-means and principle component analysis and what are the impacts of using such techniques to create indexes to visual material? As the engineering world moves increasingly to ever more obscure and inscrutable methods such as deep learning, there is an increasing need for a sharpness in ensuring that such techniques actually promote an ever more diverse and expansive image-reading culture rather than an ever more banal and narrow one distorted by feedback loops of popularity.

At the end of Harris's reading of *La Langue verte* he describes the spread, occurring late in the book, where a well-known portrait of Albert Einstein, tongue playfully extended to the camera, has been overpainted in pink by Jorn. Opposite this page is a young woman taking part in the May 1968 protests in Paris, standing in the middle of a street defiantly showing her tongue, presumably to the police. Harris notes how the gesture clearly originates from a joyful position of self-empowerment (Harris 2012, 130). In early 2016, the authors created a small installation for the window of the Constant office in the Saint-Gilles neighbourhood of Brussels.[6] For forty days, a camera was set up to record short sequences of video frames, triggered by the presence of a 'face' as detectable by a standard 'face-detection' algorithm.[7] When a face was detected, a short sequence of frames would be recorded, and the regions of the image detected as 'faces' would be replaced by faces similarly detected in an archive of images, including images from the SICV. Many of the detected 'faces', both from the street and the archive, would be considered 'false positives'—images not of faces but of car hubcaps, the folds of a puffy jacket, the typography of a book page,

6 For more information, see, http://constantvzw.org/site/The-Scandinavian-Institute-of-Computational-Vandalism.html. Accessed 20 June 2016.

7 Based on the Haar-cascade face detection method, see http://docs.opencv.org/2.4/modules/objdetect/doc/cascade_classification.html. Accessed 20 June 2016.

or the play of light on the opposite building. A number of monitors were arranged facing the street in a reversal of the traditional surveillance setup, making the recording apparatus and processing pipeline as visible as possible, showing the transformation step by step to its subject. Once the recordings were complete, a short animation loop was produced and displayed on a central monitor. One Saturday evening, the image below was recorded.

While it may be tempting to interpret the gesture as a statement of disapproval of the installation, something else seems to be at play, suggesting a further meaning of the notion of giving the finger to the digital. The installation was not continuously recording but in fact only recorded fifteen frames before entering into the processing loop that took at least a full minute to complete. As a result, most of the recorded sequences are accidental, often showing passersby unaware of the camera and with the algorithm fleetingly finding faces, often involving false positives. In this recording however, the subjects stand with their faces fully forward, anticipating the operation of the machine and demonstrating a comprehension of the system and its mechanics. The pair fully address the algorithm, and in so doing they perform it. The gesture of the raised middle finger, then, is made from a position of positive subversion, feeding back a message of resistance to the captured gaze of artificial attention.

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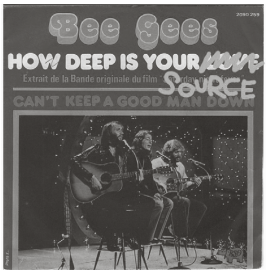
HOW DEEP IS YOUR SOURCE?

Aymeric Mansoux

Within the realm of archiving and conservation, free and open licences are a useful tool to make both the reuse and the conservation of digital art more feasible (Laforet 2010). Even though it is undeniable that such licences have an overall positive effect, they do however struggle when it comes to defining the components, materials, and assets that have been involved in the creation of a work. The lingo used in such licences stems from the world of software and despite its adaptation to cultural works, it still hasn't got rid of the binary nature of its origin. When a software licence requires the access to its source, it refers to the source code, a well-known object in the making of software that is easy to define and identify. While this perfectly fits a particular form of art, in particular art that involves computational processes, it is questionable whether this concept of source code can be literally ported to other cultural expressions, such as moving or still digital images, sounds, and by extension multimedia and rich media works. In this essay, I argue that such works require both a media-specific as well as a metaphorical understanding of what source code is in the context of art, music, and design in order to make free and open licences valuable for conservation, archiving, and of course in-depth study and appropriation of the former. Behind this challenge lie the issues of accessibility and control with free cultural expressions and open knowledge, and how these compare with their software-centric parent definitions.



A Brief History of Software Freedom

Source code is a collection of computer instructions written using a human-readable computer language.[1] The source code can then be either compiled in machine code and executed manually to perform some tasks as a standalone program or as part of a larger software. It can also be interpreted, in which case the source is both translated and executed on the fly. The role of source code in the production and manipulation of software is essential.

1 Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 'Source code', http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_code. Accessed 15 August 2012.

Its access allows virtually any modification of the latter, whether it is about adding new features or fixing bugs. This importance is best exemplified with the free software movement, and the creation of the Free Software Foundation (FSF) in 1985. Since its very beginning, the goal of the FSF has been to provide an alternative to the proprietary software model that relies specifically on controlling the access to and distribution of source code and compiled software:

> The word 'free' in our name does not refer to price; it refers to freedom. First, the freedom to copy a program and redistribute it to your neighbors, so that they can use it as well as you. Second, the freedom to change a program, so that you can control it instead of it controlling you; for this, the source code must be made available to you (Stallman 1989, 8).

The foundation, as well as its early attempts to define software freedom, has been an inspiration for many, including Ian Murdock, the founder of the Debian operating system (Murdock 1994). This influence was further demonstrated as this project grew and published its own free software guidelines, in which crucial importance was given to source code (Perens 1997). Eventually, this guideline was modified a few years later to serve as the Open Source definition (Perens 1999) of the newly founded Open Source Initiative (OSI) which resulted from the 1998 call to embrace the term 'open source' (Raymond 1998). Yet, probably the most important text written on free software is about the four essential freedoms of program users:

> The freedom to run the program, for any purpose (freedom 0).
>
> The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs (freedom 1). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

> The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).
>
> The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits. (freedom 3). Access to the source code is a precondition for this (Stallman 2000).

According to Bruce Perens, these freedoms established by Richard M. Stallman were only published on the Free Software Foundation website after the creation of the OSI, 'as an alternative to the Open Source Definition' (Perens 2009). He suggests, however, that they probably existed prior to their online release. As a matter of fact they even existed as three freedoms, which are now numbered 1, 2 and 3. The freedom 0 was added at a later stage (Stallman 1999).

These parallel efforts from the FSF, Debian, and the OSI work as both a guideline for new, and a filter for existing contracts specific to intellectual property: the licences. Indeed, good will, manifestos, and announcements are clearly not enough to consistently enforce these visions and definitions. To enable the latter, the licence works as a contract between the copyright holder of the source code (for licences relying on copyright) and its user. It makes sure that software freedom and openness are ensured once the software is published, and at the same time it provides legal mechanisms in case of non-respect of the licence.

In practice, the relationship between source code, licence, and accessibility is clearly visible in the way the Debian operating system is put together. With a standard installation, Debian provides the usual graphical user interface desktop metaphor similar to MacOS or Windows, and a collection of several free and open source software both for general and specialized tasks. What is interesting is how this operating system is connected to several repositories of software and their respective source code. The latter is distributed as packages, collections of files that can be

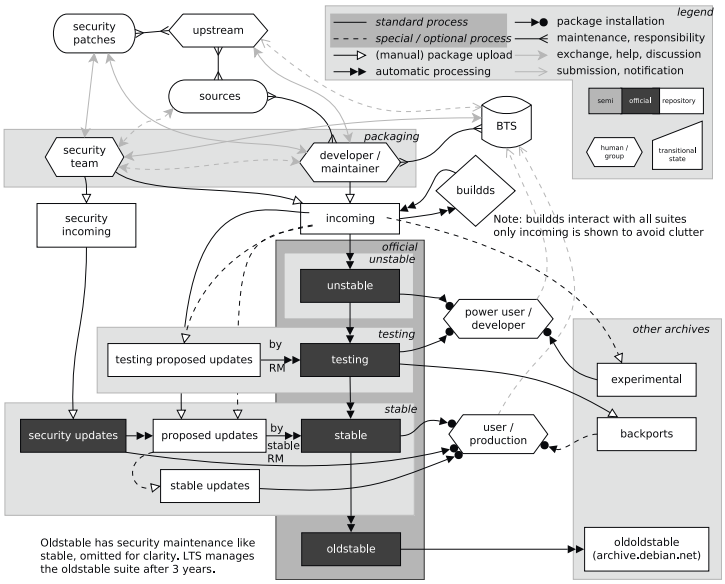
copied or downloaded from offline and online data storage and installed on one's computer. More specifically, source packages provide several items:

* the original source code written by the author(s) of the original software, as well as optional patches to apply on top of it and the licence(s) under which these files are published;
* the metadata of the distributed software, that is its description, category, list of author(s) and maintainer(s), etc;
* the conditions of its access in the means of technical dependencies.

Finally, any changes in these files are logged and stored in the packages themselves. These changes combined with the storage of previous versions of the software, and its source code, as well as the ability to access these at any time literally turn the Debian operating system into a software archaeological excavation site.

In addition, these packages can be mirrored by anyone with enough space and bandwidth, and are currently available on nearly five hundred officially registered servers across the world (Debian Project 2011). From a user perspective, package managers, or an administrative software, can then be used to install, remove, or upgrade software, and as a consequence maintain one's operating system to one's liking. This process is not unidirectional; users are given the possibility to help and give feedback by writing documentation, submitting bug reports, writing patches for their favourite software, even maintaining such a software themselves by becoming official maintainers and, why not, official Debian developers as well. Most importantly the whole infrastructure can be appropriated and derived into new projects, new Debian-based operating systems, and software collections.[2] In that sense the Debian infrastructure is not a classic form of dedicated archiving system: instead, here archiving, conservation, distribution, and access are merged into one replicable structure.

2 The Ubuntu operating system is probably the most popular example of such a fork.



Such a participatory living archive is possible because of the access and distribution of the source code by the means of a techno-legal framework that allows for a certain fluidity and manipulation of information from the public lists where software maintenance is discussed to the private computers where it is effectively manipulated and executed. It is a great example of how source code can become an invitation:

> for creative practice encouraging collaboration and further development of existing work on the level of contribution, manipulation and recombination, and its further release under the same conditions in the public domain (Krysa and Sedek 2008).[3]

Now, whether a work would be code itself, its manifestation through the execution of the compiled code, or a combination of both, it's not a big stretch to see how Debian can be an inspiration to support art that fits within this form (Candeira 2005). Ultimately, both public and private collectors, venues, and libraries could benefit in a cooperative and distributed resource for free and

3 In this quote, the public domain should probably be understood in the sense of a resource commonly put together and publicly accessible, as most free and open source software is not in the public domain. They are copyrighted material and made available through the licence mechanism as mentioned. However, it might be worth noting that Creative Commons CC0 licence, which aims at simplifying the waiving of copyrights and related or neighbouring rights, is currently compatible with the FSF General Public License (GPL).

open source code poetry, generative art, and software art. Generally speaking, the same would apply for art where software elements could also be released under free and open source licences and integrated in distributed infrastructures. In the end, regardless of how one wants to frame software—as art, tool or magical information—the technical and legal benefits of free and open source software are the same, because this is still software that we are dealing with.

This is not a fantasy or wishful thinking: in practice a free and open source GNU/Linux distribution such as Puredyne[4] has been distributing works from artists such as Alex McLean and Martin Howse (Laforet 2011, 137). Next to works that are already distributed by Debian, such as *Electric Sheep* (1999) a popular screensaver by Scott Draves,[5] it is possible for artists releasing their work as free and open source software to be approached by distribution maintainers to help integrate their project within free and open source operating systems (Laforet 2010). It goes without saying that such software must comply with the distribution's guideline and understanding of user-friendly applications. While there is no trouble for a work like *Electric Sheep* that effectively runs as a screensaver, the same cannot be said, thankfully, for all software art.[6]

But what about works that are neither code nor software based? While software is undeniably a cultural expression (Fuller 2003), all cultural expressions are obviously not software. How would that practically work?

Enter free culture…

Free and Open Content for the Masses

The 2000s saw the birth of several projects and movements that found their inspiration in free and open source software. The transition from software to culture and knowledge is, for instance, clearly visible in the *Manifiesto de Hipatia*, which connects free software to activism through the value of knowledge access (Teza et al. 2001). Yet,

4 Puredyne is a USB-bootable GNU/Linux operating system for creative multimedia based on Ubuntu and Debian Live. For more information see `http://puredyne.org/about.html`. Accessed 29 June 2012.

5 For more information see, Draves 2005.

6 In particular, this case was discussed during the *FLOSS+Art* panel during the 2007 edition of the *make art* festival, taking as example whether or not a 'user friendly' program exit mechanism should be implemented in a work from Martin Howse, now that the software was distributed in Puredyne.

being driven by different understandings of what freedom and openness mean in the context of culture and knowledge, in practice the more explicit definitions that follow can differ greatly from one to another. These differences are also made visible in their selection of licences that match their respective intentions and agendas. First of all, possibly the closest adaptation of software freedom to a broader cultural context are the 'four kinds of free knowledge':

> The freedom to use the knowledge, for any purpose (freedom 0).
>
> The freedom to study how the knowledge applies, and adapt it to your needs (freedom 1). Access to the source information is a precondition for this.
>
> The freedom to redistribute knowledge so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).
>
> The freedom to improve the knowledge, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits (freedom 3). Access to the source information is a precondition for this (Peña-López 2003).

Another one is the Free/Libre Knowledge definition, from the Free Knowledge Foundation (FKF) that has been created to describe what users should be free to do with cultural expressions:

> (0) use the work for any purpose
> (1) study its mechanisms, to be able to modify and adapt it to their own needs
> (2) make and distribute copies, in whole or in part
> (3) enhance and/or extend the work and share the result[7]

7 http://web.archive.org/web/20081120001221/www.libre.org/communities/philosophy/libre-declaration. Accessed 7 September 2012.

Yet another are the 'essential freedoms', written as a guide to decide whether or not a licence can qualify to a free culture licence:

> The freedom to use and perform the work …
>
> The freedom to study the work and apply the information …
>
> The freedom to redistribute copies …
>
> The freedom to distribute derivative works … (Definition of Free Cultural Works 2007).

A further approach is the open content definition, which is an attempt to make a stronger distinction between rework and remix. It is also a twist on the four freedoms, and in this case it has been renamed the '4Rs Framework':

> Reuse – Use the work verbatim, just exactly as you found it
>
> Revise – Alter or transform the work so that it better meets your needs
>
> Remix – Combine the (verbatim or altered) work with other works to better meet your needs
>
> Redistribute – Share the verbatim work, the reworked work, or the remixed work with others (Willey 2007).

Finally, another notable effort is the Open Definition, or Open Knowledge Definition, that 'sets out principles to define "openness" in relation to content and data' (Open Knowledge Foundation 2012). The definition, too long to reproduce here, has been directly derived from Perens' Open Source definition, which, as mentioned previously, was itself

derived from Perens' own work on the Debian's free software guideline.

With such a strong affiliation both in style and content, the link to their parent software-centric definitions is blatant. In spite of that, and taking a closer look, even though the first attempt in porting the software freedom to knowledge did mention the idea of source in its definition, the efforts that followed stopped mentioning it.

The reason for this is simple: while computer software is a cultural expression, not all cultural expressions are computer software. Therefore, the computer-specific issue of source code can be seen as not so relevant in a broader approach to free culture and open knowledge.

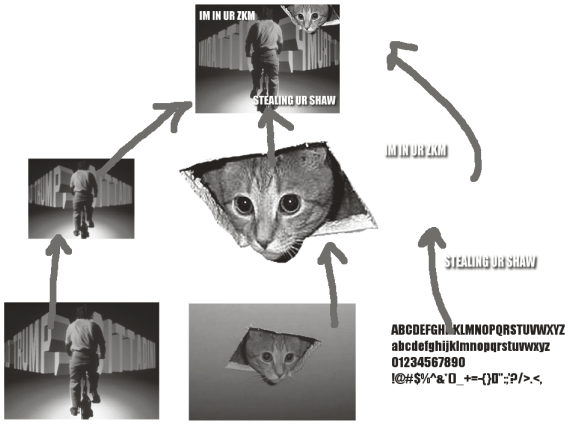
Towards the Borges Public Licence

Seeing now that the free culture licence definition, the open knowledge definition, and other approaches are not a perfect transposition of free and open source software due to the lack of or incomplete approach to defining what is a source, the question needs to be asked how this can impact free/libre/open content/knowledge/expression/work (FLOCKEW)?

First of all from a simple qualitative perspective, it means that any content is fine to publish and distribute. For instance, a low-resolution, highly compressed photo or video can be distributed freely under these licences. While this work perfectly qualifies as FLOCKEW, its value becomes questionable when the high-resolution, raw, or less destructively compressed original still remains under monopolistic exclusive rights. Another aspect is what the freedom defined project calls the 'practical modifiability' of a work that is licensed with certain free culture licences: how in practice a work can be appropriated and modified by someone else. For instance, if the licensed work is an image composed of several elements, its practical modifiability is affected if the author decides to publish such an image as a flatten-down work, or if instead, she or he also provides the layers used to make this final image.

Highly compressed, yet free, thumbnail

Furthermore, there is an unavoidable recursion triggered by the existence of such external 'source' files. Indeed, and still using the example of a digital collage, what would happen if the layers provided were themselves derived from other 'originals'? Shouldn't they be included as well? What about the font used for a caption or logo, what would be the practical modifiability of a rasterized text layer? Would it make sense to provide the font file? If someone wants to practically modify the file, beyond the one-dimensional mash-up or remix, such elements are very much needed.



A last problem arises with the licensing of these media assets. If an author would distribute the 'source' of his or her work, this source being a distinct cultural expression itself, the author is free to distribute the material under separate licences. Is it acceptable then for free content to have its assets under non-free culture licences? What about licence compatibility? Is it acceptable if these external cultural expressions are freely licensed, yet using closed standards from proprietary software?

To address such issues, Rob Myers (2007) imagines what an ideal cultural source would be. He suggests considering five attributes:

* transparent, in an easily editable text-based format;
* full quality, in a standard that permits the recreation of the final format;
* complete, so that all the materials to produce the distributed work are provided;
* unencumbered, that is, free of patents and DRM (Digital rights management);
* structured, as provided in a descriptive format, such as vector graphics.

Even though the open definition excludes explicitly software from its definition of knowledge, therefore avoiding the question of source in the distribution of open works, the question of the source is actually covered by the freedom defined project. In fact, to be a truly free cultural work, a work must respect four more conditions, one of them is being specific about the concept of source data:

> Availability of source data: Where a final work has been obtained through the compilation or processing of a source file or multiple source files, all underlying source data should be available alongside the work itself under the same conditions. This can be the score of a musical composition, the models used in a 3D scene, the data of a scientific publication, the source code of a computer application, or any

other such information (Definition of Free Cultural Works 2007).

However, unlike with free software licences, this condition is not contractual. It is simply part of a guideline to decide whether or not a work can be called a free cultural work. Put differently, an author does not have to respect this condition when using a free culture licence. In practice it is thus possible to distribute non-free works with free culture licences, literally turning the popular understanding of free culture into a messy mix of both free and non-free cultural expressions.

At this point things can start to get fairly confusing. What started as a simple exploration into the transposition of free software to free culture, is now ending up in a maze of concurrent definitions. Each of them pointing to a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' labyrinth of licences, where every step seems to further obfuscate the source of the problem, literally. Creative Commons even use the misleading term 'approved for free cultural works'[8] for its licences that respect the free culture licence definition, whereas it really should say that such or such licences are free culture licences; no less, no more.

8 The affiliation is made visible with a graphical badge in the human-readable summaries of their licences.

No matter how annoyingly picky it may seem, the question of cultural sources must be raised. It is essential to understand the value and the limits of a FLOCKEW in the context of archiving and conservation. Without source information and in the case of conservation and reappropriation, the advantage of such practice is limited. In effect, if there is such a thing as an artwork 'source code', it must contain much more information than remixable elements. Such a source is made of everything that a work contains, from the dirt that feeds its roots to the canopy. A radical approach like this one should not to be understood solely from a paratextual or paramedial perspective, but instead in a very practical way as best exemplified with the *PrayStation Hardrive* published in 2001.[9] *PrayStation*

9 For more information see, Davis 2011.

Hardrive is a CD-ROM that contains 'raw data' from the hard drive of new media artist Joshua Davis; data that is meant to be explored, studied, and reused. While the content is far from being a bitstream copy of his drive, it is nonetheless quite an impressive collection of 3637 files, including many Macromedia Flash 'source' files, making the intention behind the project close to the free and open source ethos.[10] In practice this parallel is more of a misunderstanding of how free software and open source operate as the files have been released without any licences,[11] making the drive fall into the gooey swamp that is unspecified public domain and default copyright laws. Yet its immense positive impact on the Flash community at that time, both as an educational and cultural artefact, is a very direct illustration that without a dump of an artist's storage device no complete works or biography can be written (Cramer 2003).

10 For more information see, for example, Kirschenbaum 2008, 54, and Čučković, and Stančić 2009, 157–67.

11 Email from Joshua Davis to the author, 8 June 2012.

In the end, a thorough publication of properly licensed source materials for works of art is rare and is limited to artists and collectives already close to free and open source software communities. Exposed to such practices in the software they use, some of them eventually apply the same philosophy to their own work, and make many elements of the latter publicly available in repositories, using different software licences (Lee 2008). However, such an attitude towards the meticulous sharing of source material is unlikely to become popular due to the complete or partial disappearance of an articulated concept of source in the licensing of FLOCKEW. This is the reason why some free culture licences, more specifically from Creative Commons, should not be used for software. By cleaning up the computer jargon when software freedom was transposed to culture, the moral justification of free software, which was embedded in this idea of source code availability, disappeared as well. In spite of the idea of defined deliberative free culture presented as an ethical counterpart of the aggregative market driven CC licensing approach, the ethics of free culture have no

means to materialize. The result of this, and in a strange twist, the imperfect transposition of software freedom to cultural freedom also has a negative impact on free and open source software itself:

> Can I apply a Creative Commons license to software? We recommend against using Creative Commons licenses for software. … Unlike software-specific licenses, CC licenses do not contain specific terms about the distribution of source code, which is often important to ensuring the free reuse and modifiability of software'.[12]

12 http://artlibre.org/licence/lal/en. Accessed 7 September 2012.

Indeed CC licensed software, even though as culturally free as free and open source software, is in fact a pseudo form of free and open source software. For instance, an obfuscated and compressed JavaScript library can easily be distributed with a CC BY-SA licence, or simply a CC BY licence, therefore encouraging the wide distribution of that library, yet making it clear that its inner mechanisms are not the concerns of anyone but its original authors. In this case, free culture in practice seems closer to a gratis sharing consumer culture rather than a liberated and empowered productive apparatus.

The problem of source in FLOCKEW has yet to be solved at the time of writing, but some efforts are worth mentioning. In fact, as early as 2004, the Open Art Network started to work on the Open Art license (OAL), also known as the View Source license, or simply the Source License.[13] Even though this licence would be considered today as non-free because it prohibited commercial use, it requested that 'source file/s for the work must remain accessible to the public'. Unfortunately, there was no consideration on the nature of the standard used for such source files. It could have been a proprietary format using proprietary software, and would still be considered, not without problems, as a valid source for the OAL.

13 https://wiki.creativecommons.org/index.php/Frequently_Asked_Questions. Accessed May 2016.

Another take on the question can be found in the ongoing work from French composer and pianist Valentin Villenave, on a licence that would solve some of the source issues discussed so far, yet unpublished to this date. Villenave is an active member of the Copyleft Attitude community from which the free culture Free Art[14] (FAL) was born. His idea is to modify the FAL, in a way that it would be required for the artist to provide all intermediary source materials, which were used during the creation of a work of art. This would include sketches, research and all versions of these. If at any given time a source element is involved, it must be provided, so as to avoid a situation, according to Villenave, where what is given access to, is in fact a summary of the work and not the work as a whole (Villenave 2011).

14 http://three.org/openart/license/. Accessed May 2016.

According to the musician, this approach would be a concrete way to resist the passive and commodified consumption of free cultural expressions, and connect back with the free software engineering freedom, where reusability and modularity is necessary for any progress and innovation, and at the same time to prevent free culture to turn into gratis sharing consumer culture or a shareware culture, to use the analogies mentioned before. However, with this extra step, it seems that our problem is expanding further and further more, beyond the recursive vertigo triggered by diving into the cultural sources of cultural sources: it is also reaching the context in which these very sources are created.

After all, if someone aims to provide the source code of an artwork, the capture of the creative process is completely relevant (Dekker 2010). And so without noticing it, the frustration deriving from the lack of definition of artistic sources makes us drift into the analysis and recording of the artistic practice itself. Defining an artistic source is as problematic as defining art, yet access to increasingly sophisticated legal and technological tools, which can enforce a fine-grained versioned capture of the artistic creation, directly feeds into a desire to sample and make tangible the 'participation mystique' of the poet (Jung 2001). Indeed,

if there is more to these sources than just a flatten-down object, nothing is preventing us from also providing electroencephalographic data, DNA samples, cosmological models, and more, thus transforming the capture of pretty much any phenomenon into the source of a work of art becoming noumenon. If anything at all it might be better to rename our speculative 'bitstream' licence the *Borges Public Licence*, a real treat for the Babel librarians and their lawyers, but very likely a nightmare for artists agreeing to sign with their blood such a devilish contract in exchange for a speculative and immortal openness.

Conclusion

Until a serious copyright reform, or why not complete abolition, takes place, it is undeniable that projects that promote FLOCKEW are very much welcome and needed. Practically speaking the usage of licences that fit the free culture licence definition or the open knowledge definition simplifies a lot and unifies the process of archiving, distribution, and access to culture and knowledge; that is, of course, in the very specific context of works respectful of existing copyright laws (Mansoux 2011).

However, the ability to modify practically, therefore appropriate or maintain such expressions, should not be taken for granted. This situation puts free culture and open knowledge in a completely different camp to the one of free and open source software. By not taking into account the articulation of sources, free culture and open knowledge can only provide an ersatz of the freedom found in free software. In the end, what software freedom achieved for the user is disappearing in its cultural transposition as the author is brought back into a position of complete control over the reusability of his or her work by others. This is possible because the author is the sole judge to decide whether or not to provide sources, and what constitutes them.

So even if FLOCKEW licences are very effective to fluidify information, they have no effect on its actual usability. In

that sense, Creative Commons licences can give a false sense of security. All the issues covered in this essay represent as many potential backdoors waiting to be exploited, as well as many opportunities to misunderstand how this whole legal infrastructure operates. The very use of the cumbersome and tongue-in-cheek FLOCKEW acronym in this text is to show the tip of the iceberg, but it also shows the potential for diversity in a discourse that is often oversimplified. At the same time, it is clear that no solutions can be satisfying when it comes to trying to define sources both within a free culture and artistic context. There can only be specific workarounds. Any rational attempt to define artistic sources is simply not working because a general 'one size fits all' definition of such sources will always tend to exclude practices rather than include them. Besides this, there is a risk with trying to find a compromise by simplifying and limiting the scope for valid sources of cultural expressions. Doing so would only benefit certain forms of practices by turning art into the by-product of rationalized transformations—as can be seen with mainstream remix culture. Similarly, if the proto-free culture era with its concurrent and messy attempts to define artistic freedom and cultural freedom were signs of a healthy cultural diversity and rich counter-hegemonic dynamics, this is not the case anymore. Nowadays free culture is essentially dominated by a very few licences, that are blindly accepted by cultural institutions who help disseminate them further into the cultural field, inadvertently running the risk to encourage the creation of a very mono-cultural commons.

The strength of free culture and open knowledge is not so much of being a universal solution to solve copyright problems. Instead, it should really be appreciated here as a device that makes suddenly tangible the obfuscation and secrecy found in art practices and art conservation. The most important aspects are the dynamics and intentions that are found in communities involved in sharing cultural expressions, and how these can or cannot be materialised

into new, or be supported by existing techno-legal frameworks. The organization of such communities can effectively help rethink and reinvent the access to culture in the age of distributed infrastructures by opening up the institutional walled gardens of conservation. Museums, art institutions, and archives urgently need to look closer at the different models of sharing in which the conservation of content can be globally scaled and accessed publicly while still benefiting from the love and care of a network of dedicated collectors, instead of building a business model around zombified works, exploiting their every possible permutation, and thus replicating at a different scale the exploitative cultural dead-end found in the relationship between media industries and copyright.

The question still remains, how deep is your source?

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FROM THE CELLAR TO THE CLOUD
The Network-Archive as Locus of Power

Manu Luksch

> Our dream rewired. Telephone switchboards, radio valves, television tubes integrated. Their logical culmination: the computer. The device of our times, a magic mirror that reveals what is to come. Our powers of prediction grow with every new circuit crammed in. Leap into tomorrow—one trillion calculations a second.
>
> And it grows more powerful, becomes smaller. Smart, mobile, personal. Today—in our pockets. Tomorrow—woven into our bodies.
> —*Dreams Rewired*, narration

You read this article, as I write it, very probably with a 'smart' device within reach—a general-purpose machine that bestows a natural extension of ourselves into networks of communication and information, which are perhaps soon to be networks of cognition. This enhancement is not just limited to our becoming users of the internet, nor to us becoming users at all. For these information networks also track our travelling, web-browsing and purchasing habits, for example, as gleaned from the metadata that we unconsciously, but continuously, write; thus the power of third parties (such as corporations) is also enhanced. The data sequestered in these networks (sometimes called 'Big Data')

Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): *Hände: Das Leben und die Liebe eines zärtlichen Geschlechts* (Miklós Bándy, Stella Simon 1927-28)

constitutes a user-generated archive. Conversely, as I will show, the archive absorbs the communication networks connected to it—just as it absorbs the standalone devices needed to read its contents. This assimilation of the network, I argue, emphasizes the function of the archive in controlling knowledge, over its traditional role of being 'neutral ' storage.

The film essay *Dreams Rewired* (2015), directed by Manu Luksch, Martin Reinhart and Thomas Tode, is an assemblage of more than 200 films from the 1880s to the 1930s, many rare, some previously unscreened; they range from the earliest dramatic works to music hall slapstick, newsreels, marketing materials, recordings of scientific experiments, and artistic explorations of film as medium. One major trajectory through *Dreams Rewired* traces contemporary (network-induced) appetites and anxieties back to the birth of the electric age, illustrating how the psychological and social convulsions of today's hyper-mediated world were prefigured in the electric media boom of the late nineteenth century. Not only is *Dreams Rewired* itself an archive, of depictions of the hopes and fears for a connected electric future, the central process in its making was the consultation of over fifty public and private media archives around the world.

Even the idea of making the film *per se* stems from the accidental discovery in an archive cellar of shellac discs, which upon inspection turned out to hold the (presumed lost) soundtrack to Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* by Edmund Meisel.

Battleship Potemkin, and the disc that started it all Nadeltonschallplatte/ sound-on-disc (number 3 of a set of 5 discs) of *Bronenossez Potjomkin* (Sergei Eisenstein,1925) with soundtrack by Edmund Meisel, recorded in 1930, and rediscovered in 2002; restored and published as 'Wiener Fassung', 2014. Technisches Museum Wien.

> 'Track, record, freeze the trace—then tune, control, accelerate.'
> —*Dreams Rewired*, narration

In *Dreams Rewired,* the archive is not only a bridge to the past, but also a bridge to the future—to the future as foretold through early science fiction film, and also to a future scientifically predicted by the high-speed serial photography and time-and-motion studies of Étienne-Jules Marey.

Marey developed high-speed cameras to arrest flow—in particular, animal locomotion—for analysis. Applied to human actions, the technique turns into a tool for optimization. Marey's work occupies a fork in media history, contributing equally to pre-cinema and the pre-algorithmic. His analyses turned on a geometric abstraction of motion, tracing the trajectories of points and lines attached to the subject of study. In a study of Marey as 'artist-scientist of space-time', media and film scholar Stephen Mamber describes other pioneering techniques,

> methods to graph a wide range of phenomena, from train schedules to weather, to sounds, to periods of war and peace. … Marey was concerned with how to represent change. … The brilliant Marey chart was a database made strikingly visual through a recognition of pattern repetition (Mamber 2004, 84).

Traversing this bridge into the future, *Dreams Rewired* projects us into a world where the ability to quantify, analyze, and predict is refined, automated, and applied to all areas of human action, behaviour and endeavour—from the daily gym workout to traffic control and crowd management, from energy consumption to the academic achievements of schoolchildren, from spring colour trends in teen fashion

Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): *Marche jambes seules d'une homme* (Étienne-Jules Marey, 1893) Étienne-Jules Marey's chronophotographic films have been restored digitally and transferred onto 35mm film by the Cinémathèque française, who owns these scores. Archive: La Cinémathèque française.

to the habits of potential terrorists. In a world increasingly managed by algorithm, power lies with those who have knowledge of the algorithms and the data—particularly of the input data (since categorization and measurement are far from assumption-free or neutral).

Interrogating the Archive

Research to identify possible source materials for *Dreams Rewired* spanned ten years, and involved visits to archives around the world, discussions with historians and theoreticians, and consulting indexes and other literature. But the sifting through hundreds of hours of material to discover key scenes, and the hunt for films known to have once existed, were relatively straightforward compared to the work of seeking out the appropriate rights-holders and negotiating a licence. Once the archive that held a particular source was identified—not always an easy task—and a viewing copy obtained (or a visit undertaken), it was necessary to identify the holder of exploitation rights in the material. On occasion, this would be the owner of the physical media, often it was another party unrelated to the archive, some works were in the public domain, and some works were 'orphans'—without any known claimants.[1] When a work existed in several versions or in several different media, the issues were further complicated.

In what follows, I describe the forces and constraints that determined access to source material during the making of *Dreams Rewired*, and suggest that useful analogies can be drawn between the struggles depicted within the film or the struggles to obtain source material, and the struggles over ownership and control of data in our user-generated archive.[2]

1. The Cost of Search

The US Library of Congress has, since 1942, collected prints of motion pictures, as part of its stated mission

1 Orphan works can be quoted provided that an adequate effort has been made to locate any claimants, and that a potential future claim by a rights-holder who emerges subsequently is insured against.

2 The examples below were collated through discussion with Martin Repka, post-production manager, Carla Zamora, one of the team's archival rights researchers, and Mukul Patel, UK co-producer.

to 'further the progress of knowledge and creativity for the benefit of the American people'.[3]

3 www.loc.gov/legal. Accessed June 2015.

Upon request, the Library will determine whether a particular film is available, in which format, and who holds the copyright. But even a simple search through the records (in the associated Copyright Office) can have substantial costs:

> Searches of the records of the Copyright Office are provided at the statutory fee of $165.00 per hour with a minimum of two hours. The search that you requested would consume more than two hours. If you desire a written estimate for a search, a flat estimate fee of $115.00 is required. If you prefer, an initial payment of $330.00 can be made and one to two hours of search service provided. Fees for any additional monies necessary for the completion of the search and report would be communicated with the patron, and if the additional records search time is desired, payment rendered at that time. (by email)

Upon commissioning a 'written estimate for a search', the following response was received (after two months):

> The written estimate for the copyright status … has been assigned and is in process. The Records Research & Certification Section of the Copyright Office is experiencing backlogs of work due to severe staff shortages related to efforts of the Office to comply with the federal government's efforts to reduce spending. This situation has impacted our workload and turnaround times. We regret

> any inconvenience that this may cause. (by email)

Given that the requested items were not in the public domain, further information was necessary, which could be obtained via one of three options:

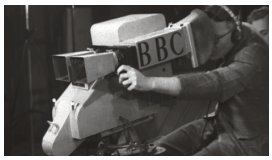
> 1 'registrations and possible renewals' of the three titles, additional remittance of $215
> 2 a 'complete history on the possible transfers of assignment for these works', additional remittance of $495 for about 3 hours of search
> 3 a 'complete history of the copyright status for these works', additional remittance of $710. (by email)

On further inquiry, it turned out that only the last option would indicate the 'current copyright holder', and moreover, that the contact details given would not be guaranteed to be correct. Despite the high costs of enquiry, comparable to commercial services, the Library was clearly running on a typically stretched governmental budget:

> Unfortunately, our datacine is currently inoperable due to technical issues. We are working closely with our maintenance contractors to figure out the problem and bring it back online. It's caused some unforeseen delays and your order is one of them. (by email)

2. The Commodification of Public Media

At the core of *Dreams Rewired* is the claim that to understand the nature of the contemporary networked-computational mode of being, it is necessary to understand its roots in the



Imagine...—and then there was Television
Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015)
Archive: BBC Motion Gallery/Getty Images

televisual utopias imagined at the turn of the twentieth century. Where better to search for documentation of early televisual experiments than in the archives of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)? After all, it was in Britain that television technology gathered significant momentum, culminating in the first high-definition (for the time) public broadcasting programme.

Despite the BBC being a public service broadcaster whose operations have been, and still are, funded by taxpayers and viewers, the archive of early broadcasts is not exhaustive,[4] and distribution of historical material is currently handled mainly by third parties. While I was in dialogue with the Motion Gallery (a BBC archive) in 2013, the BBC was negotiating an exclusive distribution deal with Getty Images. As a result of this outsourcing, the cost of licensing increased significantly compared to when the archive was still administered in-house. In many cases of historical productions, the BBC is not (or not any longer) the rights-holder, and is often not even aware of who the rights-holders are. Even the copyright in the film of Adele Dixon's song 'Magic Rays of Light/Television Song', commissioned for the inaugural broadcast of the BBC Television Service using the Marconi–EMI system in 1936 (and of obvious significance for corporation and country), is not held by the BBC.

However, there are strong initiatives, not least from within the BBC, for positive change in archive management. Controller of Archive Development Tony Ageh envisions a Digital Public Space that is

> equally accessible by everyone … dialogic, open and protective of the rights of all participants and contributors … available at all times and in all locations. … Every person in this country, whether adult or schoolchild, should be able to use the Digital Public Space … for research or for amusement, for discovery or for debate, for creative endeavour or simply for the

4
There are few recordings extant from early television broadcasts, because programmes were produced as live events for transmission, and their preservation was never intended. Moreover, video recording technology developed only later, and recordings could only be made using a separate film camera. The BBC began to prerecord programmes onto videotape only in the late 1950s, but once a programme was transmitted the tape would be reused.

pleasure of watching, listening or reading … they should be able to access the priceless treasures that have recorded, reflected and shaped our shared national heritage.[5]

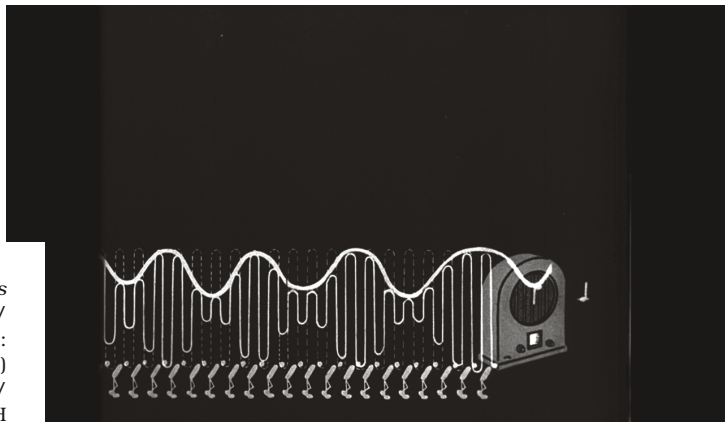
5 From a speech given at Royal Holloway University of London, 10 February 2015. Edited version at: www.opendemocracy.net/ourbeeb/tony-ageh/bbc-licence-fee-and-digital-public-space. Accessed July 2016.

3. Licence to Thrill—Representing Jazz

Before the broadcast spectrum had been apportioned between public service and commercial stations, amateur radio transmissions met and drove popular demand for music. Radio played a key role in the promotion of African-American music in the US of the 1930s. Jazz, or 'hot music', was associated with unrest—race riots, labour activism—and lasciviousness, stoking white parents' fears for their children's 'purity'. Broadcasts could pass invisibly through walls, granting jazz music an audience in suburban homes. There arose a fear that black voices could use radio to lead the nation by its ears, sabotaging the solemn project of homogenizing culture.

This controversy was reflected in films such as the live-action/animated musical short, *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You*,[6] starring the glamorous cartoon character Betty Boop. Effectively a 'music video' for the song by Louis Armstrong, it depicts Armstrong first as performer, and later as 'savage' protagonist of the song's story.

6 Produced by Max Fleischer (1932). https://archive.org/details/bb_ill_be_glad_when_youre_dead. Accessed July 2016.



Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): *Unsichtbare Brücken* (1932) Archive: Bundesarchiv/Transit Film GmbH

The Library of Congress confirmed that the animation was in the public domain, but not the music rights. The song was published by EMI, and Okeh Records (now part of Sony) had pressed records. However, this recording differed from the version used on film. In his discography of Armstrong, Jos Willems deduces that the music recording was probably carried out during the shoot at Paramount's Eastern Service Studios (Willems 2006).

> Paramount confirmed they could grant a licence for use of the sound recording, at the rate of $3,500 per minute. Although high, the fee could be met from the budget. However, it '[would only cover] the rights Paramount controls–third party rights (which include music) clearances and applicable payments remain your responsibility' (email, 28 February 2014). Further searches revealed that the underlying musical rights were held by the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, Inc., which also 'owns all the intellectual rights for the use of Louis Armstrong's voice, likeness, image and the personality attached thereto'.
> (email, 16 March 2014)

I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You (Dave Fleischer, 1932) Animated by Willard Bowsky, Ralph Somerville; recorded by Louis Armstrong and Orchestra Archive: Library of Congress

Prior to granting a licence, the Armstrong Foundation requested information on the context in which the soundtrack would be used. Eventually the path was cleared for a telephone conversation in which they submitted an offer: for the thirty-five second excerpt in question, the Foundation intended to charge a fee of $75,000!

It was beyond the available legal and financial capacity to pursue the acquisition any further; hence, the entire sequence on the impact of wireless on African-American music had to be regretfully cut. Paradoxically, the entire animation

remains free to view online at archive.org, where, over the years, a lively discussion has unfolded. Users converse in a public forum, with most comments referring to the bizarre juxtaposition of a legendary African-American musician as a force to be reckoned with, and racist caricatures populating the image.

4. Point Blank

Most archives were willing to negotiate fees and licence conditions, but in some instances, it became clear that no amount of money or reasoning would suffice to give access to material. In *Körkarlen* (1921), a film notable for its special effects, director Victor Sjöström uses double exposure to depict the departure of the soul from the body after death. In *Dreams Rewired*, the trope is reappropriated and transformed, with film itself standing in for the soul that survives the death of the actor. The holders of the copyright in *Körkarlen,* AB Svensk Filmindustri (part of the Bonnier Group, the media major in the Nordic region), were unconvinced by this interpretation. In a communication to the rights researcher, they explained that they

> never grant permission for such widely-spread use as you have asked for and never free of charge. There must also be a connection to the film you would like to use excerpts from, excerpts cannot be used as just an illustration.
> (email, 16 December 2013)

A flurry of emails later, and a final attempt elicited the rather righteous reply:

> Thank you for your e-mail.
>
> This is to confirm that we, AB Svensk Filmindustri, are the sole owner and

copyright holder for the film *Körkarlen/ The Phantom Carriage* from 1921 and that applies to all versions of the film.

We have informed you two (2) times earlier that we will not grant you the right to use excerpts from the above mentioned film in your documentary film and we will not change that decision.

Please respect this decision!

Regards,
AB Svensk Filmindustri
Rights Department
(email, 16 December 2013)

5. A Political Football

The International Olympics Committee (IOC) imposes many conditions on a hosting city, including the requirement to produce a feature-length film about the event. In 1936, the Olympics were hosted by Berlin, which was under National Socialist rule. Leni Riefenstahl, who had made her mark with the propaganda film *Triumph des Willens* (chronicling the 1934 Reichsparteitag/Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg), was commissioned to document the event. Her resulting *Olympia* (running to over four hours) continues, on the basis of its aesthetic vision, to be highly influential. Since a post-war edit to remove the most blatant propagandistic aspects, the film is permitted screenings even in Germany—unlike *Triumph des Willens*. (It was most recently broadcast in the UK on the occasion of the 2012 London Olympics.) However inconvenient the fact might be, *Olympia* has become a key part of German cultural heritage.

Riefenstahl claimed the rights to the film after the war, but the Bundesarchiv (state archive) disputed this claim, on the basis that her production company, in whose name

Tradition—designed for television
Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): *Schreibendes Licht* (1937)
Archive: Bundesarchiv/Transit Film GmbH

she made the claim, was merely a front for the Nazi Party (Rodek 2013). In 1964, the dispute was settled with a contract that gave all exploitation rights to Riefenstahl, with a 30% share of the profits to the Bundesarchiv. Crucially, and unusually for the time, Riefenstahl maintained the sole right to decide where the film could be shown—and did on at least one occasion refuse screening permission to an anti-Nazi group. Why the Bundesarchiv gave up control so willingly is a matter of speculation; according to Hanns-Georg Rodek, chief film critic of *Die Welt*, one possibility is that it was squeamishly avoiding the responsibility of determining where *Olympia* could be shown.

In 2002, when Riefenstahl was already 100, she attempted to sell her rights in *Olympia* to the IOC, which had set out to purchase its entire history on film. Given its cultural significance, the film should rightfully have been regarded as Kulturerbe (cultural heritage), which would place it under protective legislation[7] and prohibit such a sale[8]. In direct contravention of this legislation, and likely without due consultation, the then German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder agreed to let the sale take place. Rodek speculates that Schröder's motivation was two-fold—to rid the Republic of an inconvenient, ambiguous work that could be seen as 'Kulturerbe', and to enhance the prospects of Leipzig's bid for the 2012

7 Zum Schutz deutschen Kulturerbes gegen Abwanderung,

8 When a US company expressed interest in buying 3,000 films from the Nazi era controlled by the Bertelsmann group (for whom they had no commercial value), a foundation, the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Stiftung, was invested to keep the films in Germany.

Olympics. If the latter was his gambit, it failed—Leipzig lost the bid six months after the sale. The IOC now charges a licence fee of €30,000 per minute for the film.

6. Chasing the Tail

As the rights researcher for *Dreams Rewired* found, rights clearance often becomes particularly arduous after the death of the director, upon which the copyright for the subsequent seventy years is transferred via inheritance. How, in such cases, does one go about locating the rights-holder, who might have no interest in the director's estate?

Seeking the works of one particular avant-garde director of abstract films, the researcher obtained contact details of a remote relative from an archive, but received no response by phone or email. Subsequently, on consultation, several other archivists maintained that this relative had in fact died. After weeks of investigation, the woman in question was finally located—alive, well, and willing to issue a licence.

A similarly difficult situation arose in the case of the classic René Clair film *Paris qui dort* (1925). The likely rights-holder had been identified as Clair's son, but he had not responded to any emails. Around that time, the researcher was also awaiting response from the LightCone archive regarding the rights for Henri Chomette's *Jeux des reflets et de la vitesse* (1925). LightCone explained that the month-long delay was due to the current rights-holder being rather old and hard to reach. It was then that I recalled that 'René Clair' was the nom de plume of a certain René-Lucien Chomette—Henri Chomette's brother. Could it be that Clair's son and the rights-holder for Chomette's film were one and the same person?

Le 02/06/2014 01:55, manu luksch a écrit:

> Dear Emmanuel,
>
> Thank you again for all your efforts to

make it possible to use an excerpt of *Jeux des reflects et de la vitesse* in my film.

…

When you mentioned that the rights holder is an elderly person, difficult to reach, I wondered if it is Henri Chomette's nephew, Monsieur Jean-François Clair? I ask because I'm also trying to obtain permission to use the film *Paris qui dort* by René Clair, and I was given an email address for M. Jean-François Clair.

With best wishes,
Manu

On 3 Jun 2014, at 10:58, Emmanuel Lefrant wrote:

Dear Manu,

Yes indeed, we're talking about J.F. Clair.

My colleague Christophe usually reaches him by calling him directly, which is much more efficient I believe. Do you want us to send you his

phone number? Do you speak French?

Best,
Emmanuel

In this case, a mixture of luck, observation and deduction led to successful communication with the rights-holder, who licensed the works.

7. An Archive Hostage I: Economic Crisis

Occasionally, an archive became hostage to its own regulations and to the prevailing economic situation.

The Filmoteca de Catalunya holds the largest collection of films by Spanish director Segundo de Chomón (1871–1929).

The Filmoteca had provided screeners for several titles, all of which had been selected for *Dreams Rewired.* Although the archive was willing to agree to licences, it was unable 'for an unknown period of time' to provide any high-resolution copies. The Spanish economy was in a crisis brought on by the 2008 crash; cultural spending had been slashed, and the Filmoteca's laboratory was one of the victims. Offers to arrange for duplication at other trusted labs elsewhere were turned down since, understandably, they did not permit fragile negatives to be removed from the building.

It appeared as if de Chomón's highly original, poetic and technically refined films would remain locked out of circulation. Further research eventually turned up copies of some of the films in other archives, but a key work—*Le Miroir Magique* (1908)—could not be found elsewhere. Luckily, only a few days prior to finalizing the edit of *Dreams Rewired*, the transfer facility at the Filmoteca reopened, and this film made the cut.

Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): Paris qui dort (René Clair, 1924)

8. An Archive Hostage II: Use the Back Door

During a critical period of the making of *Dreams Rewired*, one significant public archive of historical photographs and film (which, for reasons that will become obvious, cannot be named…) undertook a major adjustment of the copyright status of its holdings—a process that would take many months. The good news was that at the end of this process, much of the material would enter the public domain; the bad news was that no sales would be permitted in the interim period—the archive would remain locked:

> Chère Manu,
>
> Merci pour votre message. Nous n'avons toujours pas de tarifs pour l'utilisation, en raison de la tombée dans le domaine public de certaines images de nos fonds, dont justement les films.
>
> C'est pour cette raison qu'il m'est difficile de répondre à votre question!
>
> Je vous remercie par avance de votre compréhension et de votre patience!
>
> Bien cordialement,…
> (by email, 4 March 2014)

As far as clearing usage for *Dreams Rewired* was concerned, the window of opportunity was closing—to rely on the material becoming available at some unspecified future date was too risky at this stage. A last attempt to obtain the licence was made:

> Gibt es etwas bestimmtes, dass ich tun kann, um dem Prozess zu helfen?

Würde es helfen, wenn ich das Archiv besuche, um den genauen Timecode der Ausschnitte zu recherchieren?

…

Das Material … ist natürlich für das Gelingen des Filmprojektes sehr wichtig, und ich hoffe, daß wir eine kreative Lösung finden können!

Vielen Dank nochmal, mit herzlichen Grüßen,

Manu Luksch

Regisseurin
(by email, 14 July 2016)

Following the above email and several telephone calls, a 'creative solution' was arrived at. The contracts would be pre-dated to before the archive's copyright transfer process, and the files would be made available for collection at the back door—literally. It was time to call in a secret agent:

Hi Bob,

It's such a crazy thing … for the film I'm working on (I remember vaguely mentioning it when we were in touch last time), we will have to pick up recordings discreetly …. We've been in dialogue with the researchers and sales since many years, but one year ago, they had to freeze all requests for footage licensing due to some administrative reorganisation.

Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): *Le miroir magique* (Segundo de Chomón, 1908)

> [redacted], whom you will meet (please pass on my regards and thanks to him) knows … that my film has become a victim of this frozen situation … [and] will hand over files to you, about which no-one else in the building should know. A real secret agent mission, I'm telling you! It's nothing improper/problematic/illegal though, since we ordered and paid for the footage a long time ago. …
>
> I'm really happy that you can go, because in the worst case I would have needed to jump on a train tonight, as this 10AM rendez-vous was offered at such short notice. This is my last chance to get the footage into my film! Thank you!!!
>
> Manu
> (by email, 16 July 2014)

The agent, duly unfazed, replied:

> Sounds like a clear plan. Will files be on USB? I assume [redacted] has my name.

Probably good if you are standing by your phone at 10AM in case I need guidance. Over and out.

Print this msg; burn it and eat the ashes.

Sent from my iPhone
(by email, 16 July 2014)

In such an intractable situation, it's worth remembering that while regulations govern institutions, it is people who actually run them. Here, a bureaucratic impasse yielded to the exercise of charm, perseverance, and (on the part of our agent) sheer courage.

The Network-Archive as Locus of Power

'Our time is a time of total connection. Distance is zero. The future is transparent. To be, is to be connected—the network seeks out everyone.' (*Dreams Rewired*, narration)

As illustrated by the above examples, the search for source materials for *Dreams Rewired* reveals how the archive, far from being a neutral repository, is an instrument for controlling knowledge and directing power—devolving it to the wider population, or concentrating it—as well as for simply making money. National collections, copyright libraries, and

The televisual
Still from *Dreams Rewired* (Luksch/Reinhart/Tode, 2015): *Dr. Ams Tram Grams Kikkert* (c. 1907)
Archive: Sveriges Television AB

open-access web-based archives arguably do maintain some semblance of neutrality or openness, but even in these cases, the cost of access to works can be prohibitive.

In 2001, the passing of the USA PATRIOT Act threatened the constitutional rights and privacy of all Americans, and in particular of library users. In response, librarians organized under the American Library Association, to defend readers' civil liberties against unwarranted state intrusion. Passing to the electronic online library provided by Google, or via a device such as an Amazon Kindle, a similar defence cannot so easily be mounted. In fact, unless readers take exceptional steps to anonymize themselves, their reading habits are being shared with interested parties, and in greater detail than they might imagine possible.

With the 'algorithmic turn'—towards a society under automatic management, with an urban fabric pervaded by computing—archive and network draw ever closer, and the role and identity of the archivist changes too. Traditionally, archivists acted as guardians and gatekeepers of a collection, cataloguing and managing the rights of third party creators as necessary. Today's automated network-archivists instead collect and trade in *user* behaviour.

Acts of reading, viewing, and so on create what is now considered the more profitable commodity: user metadata. The archive of interest to users (a repository of books or films, for example) is not the same as that of interest to the automated archivist. And the value of the archive *per se* has manifestly shifted from its being a bridge to the past, to its becoming a tool for predicting the future.

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THE HIDDEN VALUE OF ORAL HISTORY IN AN 'OPEN' SOCIETY
A Discussion

Annet Dekker, Josien Pieterse & Stef Scagliola

During the preparation of the thematic project Short Circuiting the Archive that I organized in 2015 for the PZI, I met Josien Pieterse (Framer Framed). In the past, Framer Framed had organized a number of projects on oral history and the practice of (online) archives, and seemed a good partner to involve in the programme. Josien proposed to discuss the role of oral history in the digital domain further with Stef Scagliola (who was a researcher at Erasmus University Rotterdam at the time). As our conversations progressed, we noticed similarities in our interests and decided to come together to further discuss the importance of oral history, its connection with living archives, and the influence of digital technologies on the practice and accessibility of its outcomes.

Besides her activities with Framer Framed, Josien Pieterse, trained in Political Science and Gender Studies, has been working on oral history projects for the Atria Knowledge Institute for Emancipation and Women's History for ten years. In 2007 she, Grietje Keller and the director at the time Saskia Wieringa started the oral history archive on video. She has done projects on numerous topics, including the women's health issues movement 'Vrouwenhulpverleningsbeweging', feminists in the Church, women in the Communist Party of the Netherlands, the history of Stay Away from my Body ('Blijf van mijn lijf', for victims of domestic violence), and abuse in the Roman Catholic Church.

Stef Scagliola was trained as a historian in the Netherlands at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, where she conducted her PhD research on the discourse about Dutch war crimes committed during the Indonesian War of Independence from 1945 to 1949. This theme made her conscious of the importance and complexity of oral history sources, and led to the creation of the *Dutch Veterans Interview Project* for the Dutch Ministry of Defence. This was the first large-scale born-digital interview collection in the Netherlands, consisting of thousands of audio interviews with a representative number of Dutch veterans of war and military missions.

Through the development of the infrastructure for generating and structuring the data and providing differentiated access to this collection, she became involved in various ICT projects and developed to become an intermediary between ICT researchers and scholars in the humanities/social sciences. As of 1 June 2016 she works as postdoc researcher at the University of Luxembourg, where she is leading the development of a digital platform for teaching digital source criticism. This environment aims to sensitize students and scholars to reflect on the epistemological and methodological challenges of digitization and of online accessibility of historical sources.

Oral History: A Method

ANNET DEKKER

I have always seen the practice of oral history as a way of 'giving voice to the voiceless' and filling the gaps in older historical archives. But is this really the case?

STEF SCAGLIOLA

I think that oral history is applied more broadly. There is now oral history about entrepreneurs too, not just about groups of homeless people and refugees. These are new groups that provide insight into how power structures are legitimized. It yields fine contrasts with the story of a self-employed person who feels exploited.

Oral history enables you to show how certain things affect one another, the complexity and combination of gender, sex, colour, ethnicity. These are themes that lend themselves for elaboration on the basis of personal experience. The best way to interpret the influence of your background on the role you are assigned in an institution it to get people to talk about it. What are their arguments, how do they see themselves, how do they see the others? These kinds of aspects automatically emerge once people start to talk about their functioning.

JOSIEN PIETERSE

Oral history was also often seen as a method that targets an event or phase in order to allow a different, often subversive

voice to be heard. Besides this, I see oral history as being about offering a context and making new connections. It is also about how you look back from a different context on certain choices or events and how you dealt with them. In the case of traumatic events, it is relevant to see how they influenced a person's later life and in which personal, social and institutional context that was able to take place. In the case of involvement in a social movement [ed. Pieterse carried out research on women members of the Communist Party of the Netherlands] you also examine how women now see the choices they made at the time.

SS

I think that Josien operates very much in terms of political consciousness, and very much within the perspective of agency and empowerment. I am more of a historian. Of course I see the importance of the subjective story, but it is characterized by a coherence that does not coincide with social reality. People want to tell their story but are not really receptive to a different version of what happened, because it might call their identity and position into question. By the way, you see that age plays a role in that. Sometimes you need time, and something has to become history before free reflection on it becomes possible. There is more mental space when reputations are no longer at stake. It is only where there is a distance in time and other norms and values have become shared that you can also get a hearing for the other side of the coin.

That is why oral history projects about 'doers' or 'traitors' are so rare. There is no social reward for explaining how you look back and explain to yourself why, for instance, you beat somebody up. Oral history projects about memory and war are always about archetypical victim stories. The complexity of being a victim one day and so angry the next day that you beat someone up or kill them is rare. If it exists, for instance the stories of daughters of members of the SS and NSB from the project 'legacy of the war', it is buried away in the archive. It is only when those concerned

are dead—when it has become 'real' history—that is can be made public. There is a clear time lapse connected with the question of whether providing access is damaging for a person's social life.

JP

If you look at the development of oral history, initially it targeted the story of the man in the street, who was placed beside the big heroes. Oral historians had to focus on the working class and not on the elite, as regular historians did. In anthropology, oral history research concentrated on cultures that made use of oral culture rather than written sources, and audio and video were used too. In addition, the women's and black consciousness movements raised the issue of social groups who rarely, if ever, featured in the writings of regular historians. As a result of differentiation and showing differences within a movement, all kinds of more complex issues emerged. Oral history is also a way to show the complexity that exists within a person. The intersectional character of an issue provides new insights into how categories interact with one another. That transition has not yet yielded adequate results in adaptations of institutional structures such as archives, which often make use of traditional categories. Traditional power frameworks are maintained and reproduced within systems, and that means the disappearance of the nuance or of the possibility of making new connections and/or arriving at a new vocabulary. Certain concepts and connections become invisible while others are simply repeated. The interviewer can introduce a different approach and a new framework. Meanwhile, the structures in technology and institutions will reproduce the existing power relations.

SS

It is increasingly common to see the method of oral history being used in many other disciplines. Although the ideology, the focus on social inequality, is the context from which oral history has developed, it has evolved to become a method with a broad range of applications. The whole

idea that people are narrative beings, combined with digital technology, has penetrated every possible sector of society, from care for the elderly and psychiatric care to tourism and management. Even the ABN-AMRO bank advertises with the slogan 'What is your story?'. Professionals are very worried that the difference between classic oral history and all kinds of hybrid forms of storytelling is becoming blurred, but I think that there is no stopping it now that the process of democratization and digitization of history writing and heritage is under way.

AD

It is certainly interesting to see how methods of oral history are being applied everywhere, but what does storytelling mean in the world of trends?

SS

You always have a hype at first, of course, but at a certain moment it disappears, and something remains that has proven its worth as a new convention to convey information or to communicate. Museums, for instance, no longer just tell the chronological story, but introduce persons with whom you can identify. The personal narrative has become increasingly important to bring the paper archive to life.

JP

It's also connected with the method you use. I work with the method of life stories, so I interview someone not about a specific theme, but from the first recollection down to the present. It is no longer a question of underexposed or subordinate narratives, because it is much more about the development to which something has led: the long-term consequences and how people look back on it. For me it is relevant to show the diversity within a social movement. In history writing something is often presented as a linear process and a movement is characterized one-dimensionally, but I want to show the context too, the network in which it is embedded and people's doubts after the event. An interview of this kind brings out processes that are situated outside the direct theme. With regard to captains of industry, for

instance, it could be very interesting to find out more about how power works, for whom it is accessible, and to what extent they are able to reflect critically on it.

The Influence of Technology and the Recording of Interviews

AD

Is the way oral history is practised also influenced by the technologies that have been developed and used over time: For instance, does an audio recording yield different results from a video?

JP

If you look at oral history on video, the technological development is very important for both interviewer and interviewee. The camera has become handy and affordable, which has opened up the possibility of recording video interviews for a much larger group of people. That change has made people used to it, as a result of which it is also much less dramatic for the interviewee. The camera has a less prominent role during the interview and the interview can last longer without any interruption.

SS

Yes, and it is also interesting that a certain imperative arises: if you also record the image, unlike audio alone, you are expected to do something with it, to show the material to other people. You don't spend thousands of euros on a recording to bury it away in the archive, where it may perhaps be consulted once every five years on the basis of a strict protocol. That is not a good output for an investment. Besides there is an implicit logic that if you are recorded and you show your face, you also give up your identity with your story.

AD

Is that stronger than with just audio?

SS/JP

Yes, certainly.

JP

Video provides a lot of supplementary information. It shows

emotions that accompany a story. But it can also show contradictions between the story that is told (what you hear) and the way in which the interviewee expresses her/himself (what you see).

SS

And then you also get all the information about the setting, what people are wearing.

AD

Do you find that it makes people say different things?

SS

It has a lot to do with the conventions that people know themselves. They watch TV and see how people present themselves. There are all kinds of roles in which people can project themselves, and people are far more aware that others will see their image later on.

JP

I have the idea that the assumption is that it is detrimental, but I don't actually find much of that myself. That is because they are almost always untrained people, they do not start to talk or select deliberately. Sometimes it works a lot better than an audio interview. It is a performance in which they work in a highly concentrated way and see it as *the* moment to tell their story.

AD

It gives agency and empowerment.

JP

Yes, I give people plenty of space to feel in possession of their own story. They are the directors, not I. I see myself as the one who must do all in my power to let them tell their story. Elderly people may be very aware that this is perhaps the last and probably the only time that they will be able to tell the whole story. I recently concluded a project on abuse in the Roman Catholic Church. Empowerment was of the greatest importance for these women. They felt stronger by telling their story and going public. They often had to keep their experiences secret for a long time. For me it is important that a person is able to tell their own story as well as possible.

The interviews that I do for Atria are primary sources, and those sources are intended for future researchers whose research questions are not yet known to us. It is impossible to push the interview too much in the direction of a specific question if later on new connections are to be made and the interviews are to be analyzed from different disciplines.

Access and Accessibility

AD

Does this still have an influence once the information has eventually become accessible, perhaps even available online to be shared and used?

SS

I think that the impact of technology on access and retrieval of oral history is grossly overestimated, because these are projects that are conceived right from the start to be put online, and so you only get stories that are suitable to be put online or projects that are a subset of the most asked, the least controversial and the most attractive. Besides, most of oral history is not transcribed. I think that there is a major field of tension between what is technologically possible and what is socially desirable.

JP

At the same time, as an interviewer I am completely transparent because it's not just the answers that can be heard, but the questions too. Mistakes made in dates or an untactful question are not removed and fully incorporated in the database. In my case the interviewees can decide afterwards what is made available for the general public, or specifically for researchers. In the last resort they have the final say in what is done with their interview.

SS

I think that the internet is a fantastic medium to reach a broader public. But if you really want to do research on the basis of existing material, you simply have to go to the archive because there is not enough material online. I was recently involved in a large-scale retrieval project for oral

history, Narrated Past [Verteld Verleden], part of the big data infrastructure project CLARIAH, which is funded by NWO. It is an attempt to make federated searching between different collections possible. It's fine for the general public and for journalists, but you only get access to material when the interviewee has agreed for it to be available online. But I know that a military historian is less interested in those six-hundred online interviews; he wants to hear what happened in the most recent missions to former Yugoslavia and in Afghanistan, but those interviews are locked and can only be consulted at the institutes themselves. If you want to put that online, you have to design an expensive and intensive online environment with authentication. It will be possible in the future, but at present there are still many snags, as a result of which what is freely available online is only the tip of the iceberg.

JP

It's complex, especially for people who haven't grown up in a digital era. I often interview the elderly, and I consider it very important to allow them to make a proper estimate of what they do want to be available and what not. You have to offer people safeguards. On the other hand, I am part of a movement that aims for openness and transparency. Archives are public institutions that should handle their information as openly as possible. The latter is also increasingly important for an institution, but the individual interest of the interviewee may be very different and I feel jointly responsible for that.

AD

Exactly what are you safeguarding them against?

JP

People used violence or were themselves confronted with violence, they talk about relatives, they were members of a controversial movement. They may be themes that do not seem particularly relevant at the moment, but perhaps in a year's time may appear in a very different personal or socio-political framework. Social opinion about a topic can

change quickly. An interview that is simply available to the public may suddenly be used for a different discussion. The interviewees are often not fully aware of the scope and potential of the internet.

SS

It can happen, for instance, that someone says something that is completely wrong. If you put it on the internet, you can expect reactions on Facebook claiming that the interviewee is spreading lies. It may be only a small detail that is incorrect, but it casts a slur on the whole interview. Especially in the case of traumatized people, they may forget during the interview that what they are saying will be made public. They say something about their children or the neighbours, exaggerate dramatically without realizing it, or make comments that could be seen as racist. You want to protect someone in those situations.

At the same time all kinds of interests and wishes play a part at different moments. Take the Shoah Visual Archive created by Steven Spielberg: nothing was put online because of the fear that incorrect pronouncements might be misused by those who deny the Holocaust. It was only when the grandchildren of Holocaust victims asked why their grandparents could not be found online that they gave in and put a thousand of the 58,000 interviews on YouTube. So it only happened when an online generation made a fuss.

Big Data

AD

This reminds me of discussions about Big Data, and especially how it is dealt with within different disciplines. How do you see the influence of Big Data research in relation to (the data of) oral history?

SS

The catch with Big Data research and technology is that it gets off to a very cheerful and utopian start, but there is often little attention paid to source criticism and contextualization. In principle there are different layers of information

in an oral history interview: facts that are talked about, interpretation by the interviewee (emphases and lacunae), and an information layer that can be extracted from the data by technology—the so-called digital methods. That may be non-verbal information, such as sighs, pauses, crying, laughing, or gesture and body language in video interviews. But in the case of a large number of interviews you can attempt a distant reading, for instance by searching through five-hundred transcripts for patterns in language with the help of text-mining tools. It can be used as an analytical instrument if you have collected everything and want to move on to interpreting your material. But it is more commonly used to explore a mass of material, for example when a word turns out to be very frequently used when a particular period is under discussion, or by grouping interviewees you can go back to the transcripts with the hypothesis to see what happens.

JP

I find a real shortcoming that there is no culture of recycling, as is customary on the internet, neither by academics nor by Dutch journalists. The channels are used to filming everything with their own camera crews and prefer in-house production. If an interesting interview has taken place, they go to the person themselves to re-record the interview. It's a destruction of capital. We do high-quality filming with a professional. In qualitative terms the interview is fine, but the principle is taken for granted that nothing will be reused and that it will be done all over again.

SS

That will change once people who had certain experiences in the twentieth century are no longer around, then we will have to use what is already there. That is already starting now with material from the 1970s and 1980s and it will only increase in the future. I also think that the principle of Open Link Data and digital search techniques will constantly improve.

But I think that many Big Data and computer science researchers have a blind spot for the value that historians

attach to ambiguity and nuance and their need to have all the data at their disposal. For instance, if a tool fails to find references to the Second World War in the parliamentary proceedings, while researchers know that they are there, that is problematic for historians. The reaction of many Digital Humanities researchers is to throw in the towel, because not everything that one would like is accessible in an analog archive either. But a view like that doesn't help to bring us closer to one another. I think it is better to start with small-scale, feasible projects: let's do something very well and then see.

Future: Everyone Archives/is Archived, and the Value of Data

AD

You can see at the moment that more and more individuals or networks are copying and saving many digital sources or archives on the internet and sometimes putting them back into circulation again. The example of Geocities, which is discussed later in this publication, was almost lost until being saved by different people. How important are initiatives of this kind?

SS

There is a difference between an archive for sources (such as Geocities) and a historical archive. The original task of the historical archive is to represent the social reality of the past in all its diversity. The Internet Archive is a sort of charity organization to collect those sources that otherwise fall by the wayside, they do not necessarily have to keep all kinds of information. I could imagine that, say in ten years or so a new form of archiving might be propagated, perhaps by archives themselves, to keep a family archive in your own circle which can then be made available if someone dies.

AD

Do you think that in that case it will be responsibly kept, and how do you then cope with all the different data formats?

SS

I can imagine that tools will be developed for doing it yourself

in an easy way, like the building market that has changed from a professional market for carpenters and masons to a mass market for everyone, enabling you to put in your own bathroom.

JP

I find it pretty optimistic that everyone can supply their own archive. I can also imagine that under pressure of a larger supply, institutions select more strictly. Self-organization will certainly save the archives a lot of work. If people are turned away by archives, the owners will take matters in their own hands and create their own platform. The influence of traditional institutions will then decline.

SS

I am thinking mainly of the volume of work, people live longer, keep more, all in digital form and they all consider themselves to be very important.

JP

But what if the current institutions think the same way?

SS

No, but that's why they will say that you have to submit it digitally in a specific way and form. In a certain sense it's already happening. If you signed an archive declaration in the past, you had to send a copy of your publication to the archive and they checked whether you had observed the privacy regulations and whether the notes were properly documented. That is no longer done because the increase of scale and digitization have rendered it impossible. Instead you now have to sign something yourself and you are the one who is responsible for complying with the regulations. That increase of scale will also affect how archives deal with the supply.

AD

But isn't the standardization of information, in terms of both technology and content, one of the great challenges facing us today? On the one hand diversity is in danger of disappearing, on the other a lot of information can be lost through data conversion.

SS

Yes, but it's also a weighing up of having nothing or of having something with some loss. I also think that more things will be delegated because it will be easier. One organization targets one theme and another a different theme. But a combination of archives would yield extra value.

AD

And what happens with the information on commercial platforms to which we by no means have easy access? The pros and cons of loss are all clear, but as soon as empowerment comes up, you have a problem if certain things can no longer be retrieved.

SS

Yes, that might spark a revolution.

JP

I think it's very important for a movement to devote itself to making data open. Citizens must have access to information. But there is still little attention paid to the question of how to prepare people for a society centred on data. How can you read data? How can you combine flows of data to arrive at new discoveries? How can we put critical questions to the data? These will be important skills in the years ahead and education is not yet geared to them.

SS

The fact that a program is an actor, and thus is not neutral, is incredibly important to realize. A program is developed by a corporation and that corporation has a particular motivation. You should always ask yourself why you get certain results. Nothing goes without saying, and you have to learn that. So you don't just have to learn that someone on Facebook is not necessarily a real friend, but also how a system is structured. It is essential for every citizen to be able to raise questions about this.

WHAT THE ARCHIVE CAN'T CONTAIN

Nanna Bonde Thylstrup

Archives are predisposed to accumulate and contain. This is their *raison d'être* and how we know them—as institutions that gather and contain material, preferably for eternity. Yet, archival accumulation and containment is always followed by loss and abjection. Most often such a loss is presented to the public as a lamentable if not catastrophic event, for instance if a painting is vandalized, a statue broken or an archival space collapsed. This article, however, investigates intentional losses and abjections as an integral infrastructure of archives, more so than a spectacular and unintended event. It seeks to interrogate the shifting construction of loss in archival institutions, the policies and practices that are in place to regulate it, and the archival affects it gives rise to. The article is based on interviews with Danish archivists and librarians from institutions that range from state to local and municipal levels: common to them all is that they are the ones who are in charge of discarding archival material. From these statements the article seeks to tease out an archival theory that thinks of them in terms of container technologies and the consequences for relations of power.

The Archival Gender

Archives are both containers of information and technologies of power. They are usually thought of in the cumulative sense. Yet, while the main purpose of archives is to collect and preserve objects, they are also followed by a trail of debris that is expulsed by the archive. Historically, these archival expulsions have been the results of the exclusions and exemptions enacted by patriarchal administrations and they have therefore given rise to a patriarchal framing of the archive itself. As such, archival loss is often framed in violent terms, but interviews conducted with archivists suggest that there is also a level of care involved in the practice. This is the nuance that I wish to get at in the present article: how do archivists feel about disposing material? What meaning do they ascribe to the practice? And how is their experience of archival disposal

changing with the digital paradigm? Instead of posing these questions through the lens of power, I am interested in framing archives as container technologies and archivists as belonging to—and performing crucial tasks of—these container technologies.

In 2000 Zoë Sofia introduced the useful notion of 'container technology' to discuss various forms of household technologies, their specific affordances and their inscriptions in history. Sofia draws extensively on Lewis Mumford's essays in *Technics and Civilization* (1934) where he argued that technical history had placed too much emphasis on power tools such as arrowheads and spear tips, and should pay more attention to 'utensils, apparatus, utilities', which included pots and baskets, dye vats and brick kilns, and reservoirs, aqueducts, roads, and buildings. These technologies, Mumford suggested, inaugurated the passage from a masculine hunter-gatherer culture to a feminine agriculture based on settled village life. Indeed, he suggested, they were the catalyst of a development of a whole series of technologies that were focused on ideas of storage and protection. Mumford continues that while household utensils technologies were just as fundamental for understanding human development, they had been relegated to a much less prominent place in history partly because of their lack of development (a bowl has looked the same for millennia) in contrast to for instance the advances in war technology, but also because the history of technology favours practices that leave traces such as arrowheads and axes over those that do not leave such material traces such as ritual or community building. In her 2000 essay Sofia picks up on Mumford's 'points about the devaluation yet continuing importance of containers' (2000, 186). She does so in a subtle way that acknowledges Mumford's attention to gender, but also troubles the binaries he sets forth by reminding the reader that men's bodies and activities may just as easily be interpreted as container technologies as women's.

Sofia thus opens up the possibility of viewing container technologies in non-binary terms, consisting of features commonly ascribed to the masculine or the feminine. Such technologies, she suggests, could be conceived of as 'extra-uterine matrices' that provide shelters and human dwellings of all kinds, but the traditionally feminine domains can also pose as 'sadistic' machines.[1] The question that follows is: what can the idea of the archive as a container technology contribute to the project of analyzing and interpreting disposal processes and the affects they engender? Approaching archives as container technologies allows us to acknowledge archives as complex affective spaces. This means seeing archives not merely as passive keepers of information or aggressive power technologies that violently exclude histories, but also as actively creating debris through a series of performative and practical—and sometimes even nurturing—acts that designate some artefacts as 'history', and thus worth keeping, and others as 'waste', and thus to be discarded.

1 'This traditionally "feminine" domain of domestic equipment was not devoid of tools or machines used to perform sadistic actions on plant, animal, and mineral matter—implements for chopping, whipping, skewering, grinding, shredding, mashing, liquefying, etc.' (Sofia 2000, 189).

Bursting at the Seams: What the Archives Can't Contain

Theorists attentive to the wasteful aspect of archives are fond of invoking the French historian Arlette Farge's reminder that 'work in the archives requires a triage, a separation of documents. The question is knowing what to take and what to leave' (Farge 2013, 70).[2] While historians are faced with the choice of what to select *from* the archive, the archivists' choice is more radical as their appraisal determines the collection. The archivists' decisions about what to keep and what to leave are ideological and practical, and they are based on psychological, physical, technical and financial motivations. Psychological to ensure meaning-making, physical space to store the artefacts, technical infrastructures to organize them so that they can be retrieved and finances to ensure their preservation. These limitations have been the premise of archival institutions since their inception.

2 See, for example, Ernst 2013 and Hogan 2015.

And they have always posed a challenge for archivists, who are continuously required to monitor and judge the viability and vitality of their collections.

As American librarian Melvin Dewey noted at the beginning of the twentieth century, a 'normal librarian's instinct is to keep every book and pamphlet. He knows that possibly some day, somebody wants it' (Dewey 1926, 311). Part of this instinct stems from the archival experience that no objective measures of quality exist that stays constant over time. Thus collections will therefore never achieve a sublime state, but rather function as representations of different views and values as they change over time. As Dewey also noted, books are also often fetishized to a degree that their destruction becomes not only unprofessional, but also immoral, and accumulation the only ethical solution. This solution may also have been a viable solution in the nineteenth century and earlier, but the accelerating amount of printed matter that accrued due to lowering production prices and increasing literacy challenged this 'save-all' mentality. Archives and libraries could literally not contain any more and had to abject increasingly large quantities of matter. Dewey suggested that librarians should fight their preservation instinct and disenchant the book from 'a fetish to be worshipped' to 'a tool', if for nothing else then because of the lack of quality in many books, since 'if a competent jury sat on all that is printed in books, magazines, and newspapers, more than ninety percent would go back to the paper mill' (Dewey 1926, 311).

As archivist Timothy L. Ericson (1991) describes, archives were confronted with the same problem as libraries. The growing amounts of information in the late 1800s to early 1900s caused the British archivist Hilary Jenkinson in 1937 to note that the 1900s raised 'at least one new question in Archive Science; one which has been little considered prior to that time' (Jenkinson 1937, 21): quantity. One major source of the accelerating growth of information was the First World War that had amassed an 'impossibly bulky' holdings of records. Jenkinson was concerned that 'the post-War

years have only served to emphasize' the problem of modern accumulation (Jenkinson 1937, 21). In the past, he wrote,

> we have assumed that the Archivist … received invariably the formed collections of the past, that he had always space to house them and that consequently the question whether or no Archives were to be preserved at all did not arise. Unfortunately this is not invariably so in England, nor indeed anywhere: from the very beginning of the modern Archive era the necessity for destruction in certain cases has been put forward (Jenkinson 1937, 136).

He thus concluded:

> there is real danger that the Historian of the future, not to mention the Archivist, may be buried under the mass of his manuscript authorities; or alternatively that to deal with the accumulations measures may be taken which no Archivist could approve (ibid).

However, it wasn't merely the increasing amounts of information that posed a problem for the archives. It was also the changes in citizenship and the new expectations of government and record keeping. New roles for government included accountability to citizens as well as expanded rights and expectations of the guarantee that those rights would be available in the form of government records.

The growing amount of information in the twentieth century, and the different value with which it was assigned, meant that it was becoming increasingly clear that the role of archivists was not only what to keep but also what to discard. Parts of the heritage of culture thus became 'expendable to the highest degree, superfluous, trash' (Adorno 1981, 33). The disposal mandate was formalized and rationalized in various forms of disposal policies that also reflected the larger rationalization and professionalization processes that

were transforming institutions during modernity. These policies were stated in library legislation best-practice guidelines innocuously titled Collection Development and Management policies, outlining under what circumstances institutions could choose to rid themselves of material in their possession, how and under whose authority. The bureaucratic apparatus underpinning the practice of de-accessioning and disposal of books consequently developed in the subtle disenchanted discourse—promoted by Dewey. Only recently these guidelines on collection management also informed archives, whose own guidelines on disposal were not developed clearly until very late in the twentieth, and in some parts of the world the twenty-first century (Duranti and Franks 2015, 143). Today, the practice still goes by relatively unnoticed, guided by manuals and reports on how best to 'manage' collections.[3] While the term for the archival infrastructure of loss is inconspicuous, the manual labour disposal is more laden with affectivity.

3 Librarian Stanley Slote devoted much of his career to studying library weeding, and methods of doing so. In 1997 he estimated that a rule of thumb held by many library professionals is that about five percent of library collections are disposed every year (Slote 1999, 14).

Modes of Disposal

The disenchanted discourse in collection-management policies affirms that disposal is an infrastructural condition of the archive, but it fails to address the affective work of disposal. Archival disposal is often an emotionally charged symbolic act that connects to—and ignites—a wide spectrum of cultural connotations from political colonizations and oppressive social structures to questions of human (im)mortality and inclusion. Archival objects are affective objects; they enter into collections not only through administrative valuation processes but also symbolic practices that cast archival objects as more than physical facts of printed paper; rather, archival objects come into being as symbolic forms that represent a rich texture of political ideals such as enlightenment, education, transparency and accountability as well as complex psychological assessments of natality, mortality and infinity. It is no wonder, then, that the destruction of them activates a cognitive register in the public.

Archives are aware of this problematic, and even the most down-to-earth manuals for library disposal contain a word of caution about how to 'weed' collections in the right way. Outlining best-practices of disposal, a manual published by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, for instance, suggests that books can be destroyed in two ways: by burning them in an incinerator or by tossing them in the rubbish. If the latter method is used, the manual notes however, 'be sure the books won't be seen by someone passing by. Citizens might misunderstand the reasons for destroying "valuable" books' (Larson and Boon 2008, 83). Indeed, the manual emphasizes that disposal by destruction is the likeliest to cause a 'weeding controversy' because 'many people are shocked by the "waste" of throwing "good books" on the trash heap' and because '"book burning" has unpleasant connotations' (Larson and Boon 2008, 86). Certainly, when an event occurs that surfaces the weeding practices to the public, it is likely to trigger resistance. One recent controversy, dubbed Librarygate, caused Berkeley Public Library director Jeff Scott to resign after his weeding strategies caused an outrage, bringing one critic to ask whether he was part of 'our local chapter of ISIS' (Salo 2015). A similar controversy took place in Denmark, where the Dean of Humanities at the University of Copenhagen, Kirsten Refsing, had to change her strategy from burning close to 100,000 books to donating them, following a public outcry over the fact that a university would burn books; as she later noted in an interview, 'We are humanists, so the word "book burning" almost sounds like eating small children to us' (Jørgensen 2011).

Despite the resistance against these disposal strategies, books are transformed into waste at an ever-greater scale. In Denmark alone, the cultural ministry issued a programme in 2015 that demanded the destruction of 475,000 books from the Danish public libraries (Thorsen 2016). Torbjørn, the librarian who is in charge of carrying out parts of the programme speaks of book disposal in a highly practical

manner. Book disposal, as he notes, has always taken place in public libraries, primarily to give room for new works. Moreover, he emphasizes, the mandate of public libraries were never to be preservation institutions, but rather institutions that provide access to content. 'We are constantly told that we should provide access, not preserve', he says. Yet, in recent years, he notes, book disposal has also accelerated as a result of rationalization and repurposing of public libraries. Literature is emigrating to digital platforms, and reading spaces are transformed into other forms of citizen spaces that encompass everything from citizenship services to event spaces and meeting facilities. Today, the natural process of book removal has thus transformed into an aggressive weeding strategy coupled with a digitization strategy—and this, according to Torbjørn, is experienced by many librarians as a loss. A loss that is not limited to the material loss of books, but also an overall experience of a professional and disciplinary loss: if librarians no longer handle books, what is the essence of their professional identity?

Affects of Disposal

One way to lessen the archivist's complex affectivities related to archival disposal is to distance the archivist from the material. One example of such a distance we find in the world of Danish public libraries, where centralization processes in the early 2000s worked to increase the physical distance between librarian and the book in book acquisition processes. Librarians were no longer able to touch the books they were considering buying, but had to rely on a review of the book produced centrally in the administration. This distance was, as most rationalization processes are, an alienating experience to librarians. But it has also eased the process of the subsequent weeding strategy. Weeding strategies probably couldn't be executed on the scale that is necessary in Danish public libraries, Torbjørn argues, if each librarian had to physically handle

each book and weigh its qualities or lack of it. Instead, statistical numbers determine weeding processes: how many times has a book been borrowed over the past two years? And how many examples of them exist in the library's collection? The focus on lending statistics renders the process operational and removes the potential for affective appraisal. Yet, as Torbjørn notes, a number says nothing about the book's qualities and it has therefore been necessary to also establish a committee in the local branches that qualify the book disposals and they have had to make some 'tough decisions'.[4] It is easier, he notes, to set out statistical goals than execute the concrete decisions.

4 Interview, Torbjørn Porsmose Rokamp, conducted in Copenhagen, Denmark, May 2016.

Another form of alienation is the material one: as one archivist notes, the archival expulsion is felt less strongly in the digital realm:

> With paper archivalia you could see the big paper shredder. With data it is sometimes possible to revert one's decision. The paper shredder feels more violent than the delete button.[5]

5 Interview, anonymous archivist, conducted in Copenhagen, Denmark, May 2016.

While public libraries may just dispose copies of titles, archives always dispose unique material. As historian Sara Edenheim notes, the decision to shred or dispose is a crucial archival moment since the archive is 'a place to *literally* save bureaucratic documents from external elements because there are no other copies (not only paper or parchment, but also digital material)' (Edenheim 2014, 44). The material loss is final. Why is the delete button felt less strongly as an instigator of loss that a shredder? An explanation could be that the digital environment is still unaccustomed to conveying a material loss; while the analogue world was always defined by an economy of scarcity, the internet brought in a paradigm of information that suggested that hitting the delete-button never really implied a finality. However, this experience is deceptive; in the case of most archives, delete really means 'delete'.

The archivist's remark also suggests that some modes of disposal engender more affects than others. This is not least the case when it comes to book disposal. Once books have been declared 'dead' in libraries they are disposed of. The method of disposal, however, is not irrelevant. Book burning is a potent symbol of political aggression and censorship and library disposal by burning has as already noted raised controversy.[6] Confronted with this mode of disposal Torbjørn therefore also wishes to emphasize that the books of which they dispose are not burned, but rather turned into pulp. Concretely, once the books have been selected for disposal, they are added to a list, which is then brought to specific shelves from where they are loaded onto wagons that bring them to a special office. Here they are examined to see if they are fit for sale. If not, they are thrown into a dumpster marked 'Books', from there they are picked up by a company that specializes in waste management and taken to a recycling plant where they are turned into toilet paper and nappies. The book-turns-waste 'by the grace of Industrial magic' acquires new value. While the political symbolism of book burning evidently matters to Torbjørn, he also cites another public concern of book burning: the signalling of meaningless waste. Book burning is today not only conceived of as a politically aggressive act—it is also framed as a profoundly wasteful act.

6 See, for example, Hammitt 1945, IFLA's collection of literary quotes on book burning www.ifla.org/node/9361, accessed 20 June 2016, and UNESCO's report on destroyed libraries and archives in the twentieth century (Van der Hoeven and Van Albada 1996).

That book burning engenders affective reactions on behalf of nature—and not just civilization—is indicative of the preoccupation our generation has with waste and recycling in general. Yet, as Brian Neville and Johanne Villeneuve suggest, the themes of recycling and waste are more than an ecological theme: they are (also) a symptom of a generation preoccupied with how history should be mediated in future 'amid the decay of structures that once organized our collective and individual experience' (Neville and Villeneuve 2002, 1). Culture is material and psychological. And archival objects are affective matters—not least to the people who

have devoted their lives to them. The affective investment is tied up with the almost sacralized civilizational dimensions of archives. As Elisabeth Bloch, working in the municipal archive in Copenhagen notes,

> archivists have traditionally perceived themselves as neutral mediators of history. Traditionally, buildings that housed archives have had a physical similarity to houses of worship, and it is indicated that herein resides History. It is almost symbolic that we wear the white gloves: while they may have a practical purpose protecting papers from the acid secreting from our fingers, they also indicate the almost sacred nature of the material we are handling.[7]

7 Interview, Elisabeth Bloch, conducted in Copenhagen, Denmark, May 2016.

Yet, what happens when the sacralized matter meets the physical limits of the container? And how can we understand the complex affectivity engendered by the necessary waste process?

The Violence and Care of Archival Container Technologies

The archive as an unobtrusive space has a historical trajectory. As archivist Tom Nesmith notes, 'Archival work has … been thought to be most effective when it is unobtrusive or largely invisible' (Nesmith 2002, 29). This view on archival work stemmed from of a professional view on archives and the archivists that inhabited them as organic entities that grew naturally without much guidance or leadership, and that the archivists' main duty was to support this organism and its use without treading 'on any, or many, toes' (Jenkinson, quoted in Nesmith 2002, 28). Archivists in the twentieth century therefore adopted a 'strategy of self-effacement in their professional principles and discourse' (Nesmith 2002, 28). A self-effacing or unobtrusive self-identity is of course not necessarily opposed to exercise of power—unobtrusive behaviour can itself function as a form of control strategy. It

is a form of power in which archivists function not only as powerful archons but also as self-effacing curators in the literal sense of the word: caretakers, that belong to a very different and much more auxiliary role than the dominant role assigned to the archons. Tellingly, a historical nickname for archivists is 'handmaidens of historians', suggesting not only an unobtrusive archival space, but also an archival space tended for by female servants considered auxiliary to the historian in a subordinate capacity (Cook 2009). While the gender composition of archivists and archives says little about the feminine innate ability to care for objects vis-à-vis the masculine, it does situate the archive within a space that has traditionally been conceived of as a 'nurturing' and 'receptive' space in need of protection and penetration. Could this gendering of the archive affect how we think about archival discharge? Indeed, not only as a form of violence, but also as a form of care (remembering that caring acts can be just as violent as aggressive ones). And if so, whom or what is cared for? Reading the statements of the archivists it certainly becomes clear that their voices suggests their awareness of moral dilemmas in relation to themes of connection, not hurting, care and even mourning. Framing archives as container technologies allows archival acts of disposal to be both an aggressive, exclusionary and even hostile activity, as well as a performance of caring. It becomes possible to see the archivists' anarchontic 'instinct of destruction' in conjunction with a reparative instinct of safeguarding.

One story told by an archivist suggests that disposal can indeed happen as an act of caring (however, misguided) for the discharged: once, archives disposed of a substantial amount of information on forced removal of children because they felt that it would be too stigmatizing for children to have their traumatic past kept in the archives forever. Today, however, it has become obvious that it is more traumatic for the children not to have a record of their past and advances are therefore made towards saving much more material.

Yet in conjunction with this desire to save more, another archival tendency is also showing: in light of digitization and the Snowden revelations, people have become much more concerned with their place in the archive and whereas archives previously were criticized for not saving enough, they are now also criticized for saving too much.

Another archival loss that could be configured as an act of caring for the archival subject is the current move by Danish, Swedish and Dutch museums towards removing offensive archival terms from digitized titles and descriptions and replacing them with less racially-charged terminology. This 'loss' is by some (including the present author) experienced as a long-awaited recognition of, and break with, the countries' colonial history and a gesture of caring for archival subjects as well as objects. Others, however, perceive the gesture as a fundamental loss of cultural context and cultural heritage showing that even metadata, despite its original functional quality, is now also thought of in terms of preservation. According to historian Peter Fritzsche, 'The history of the archive is the recognition of loss' (Fritzsche 2005, 187). Such loss also calls for an examination of which kinds of bodies are abjected and in what contexts: whom and what is made inadmissible to the archival codes of intelligibility, how it is made known in policy and politics, and what is made to live 'in the shadowy regions of ontology' (Meijer and Prins 1998, 277). For the most part, these questions have been raised in relation to the patriarchive. Yet, this article shows that the archive is, and has always been, gendered in complex ways. Whereas I described in the beginning of this article that the operations of the archive have traditionally been related to the patriarchy, making feminine qualities invisible, perhaps this invisibility is enacted exactly because of their connotation with the feminine?

If so, archive theory would merely repeat a philosophical symptom, which has routinely made the female disappear both as object and subject of theory, not least in the philosophy of technology.[8] Conceptualizing archives as

8 See also Durham Peters (2015, 139–44) on the concept of container.

container technologies is an injunction to rethink archival gender codes, trouble their binaries and develop more nuanced understanding of them as relations of power that perform both domination and care.

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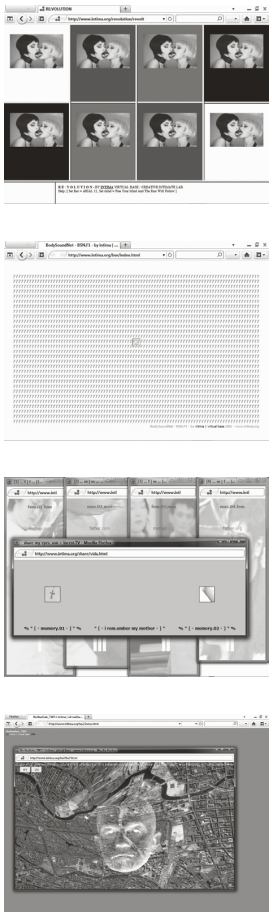
EXPUNCTION
Deleting www.intima.org Net Art Works
A Conversation

Robert Sakrowski & Igor Štromajer



Igor Štromajer: www.intima.org/expunction, 1996–2011

Between 11 May and 16 June 2011, Slovenian artist Igor Štromajer ritually deleted a number of his net art works produced between 1996 and 2007. He expunged one net art project per day, permanently deleting it from his online server, so that the projects are no longer available at the Intima Virtual Base. He deleted 37 net art works altogether, amounting to 3,288 files or 101.72 MB.

Those of Štromajer's projects that were not on the Intima Virtual Base online server at the time of expunction but are permanently loaded on the servers of the galleries and museums that have acquired them through purchases or donations (Centre Pompidou in Paris, Ars Electronica Lab in Linz, Computer Fine Arts Gallery in New York, MNCA Reina Sofía in Madrid, etc.) were (and still are) inaccessible to the artist for deletion.

Expunction broaches the questions of temporality, duration, archiving, and accessibility of (net) art works that automatically change over time as the hardware and software change (browsers, players, applications etc.), slowly but inexorably losing their functionality and consequently also their content. The artist's basic premise in this project was that whoever creates, programs, and composes art is also entitled to deprogram, deconstruct, and delete it. This is not an act of violence or destruction, but rather the observation of the natural rhythm of birth, life, and death, cyclically repeated and oscillating in natural amplitudes. In a way, Štromajer has erased history, including his own personal history, since he believes that our memory serves to deceive, to betray us, to misrepresent rather than paint and describe the past. A deceitful memory can be erased without qualms, for it does not offer an authentic image of the past of which it speaks, but always only a deceptive, a fraudulent, fabricated, and distorted image. For this reason the deleted works or their remaining fragments, undeletable once they have been made publicly accessible since the World Wide Web is so widely spread and fragmentary, tell us much more about

the originals (original works) than the originals themselves. With its empty slot and precise documentation, a nonexistent work, or rather its absence, points out the ephemerality of a net art work, telling at the same time much more about the deleted work than the so-called actual original could.

During several hours-long Skype conversations, German art historian Robert Sakrowski probed Štromajer about his project *Expunction*.

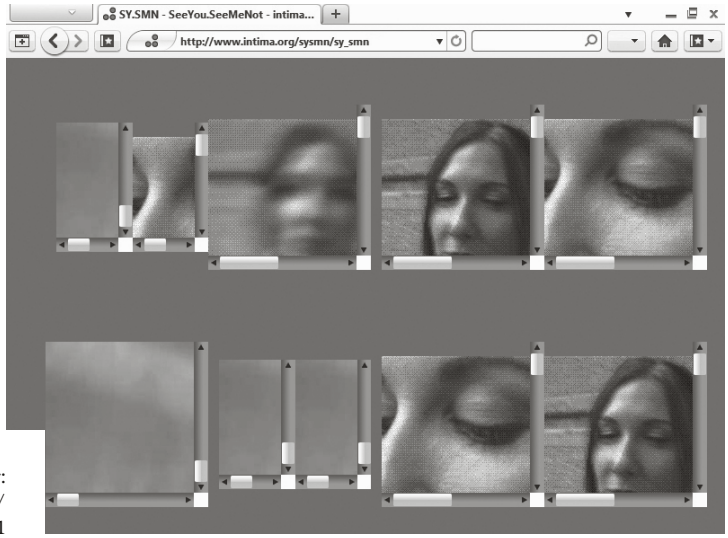
ROBERT SAKROWSKI

Expunction started in a specific time, a time that was characterized by the height of archiving experiments related to early net art, the ultimate dominance of social networking platforms, and the end of the myth of net art being distant from art companies in the form of post-internet art that had become mainstream.

In 2008 you converted *intima.org* from a 'traditional' website coded with HTML and Javascript to the CMS Wordpress. Around 2008–2009, you also started to become active on social networking sites. On the hardware side, smartphones significantly changed our relationships with the internet. Since the late 1990s, you've been describing yourself as a mobile internet communicator, but that's gained a whole new dimension today. You always saw programming as part of your artistic practice, as art that is performative and at the same time reflexive. Programming in the 1990s wasn't a question of resources, but around 2007, with the major social enterprises, it was no longer artists who were the innovators online, but the start-ups who embraced the 'American way of life'. Would it be right to say that around the year 2010, the internet finally departed from the internet of the 1990s, a network of websites and static HTML code, and that the outer form of your early net works no longer reflected your intentions adequately, because up until then you were still able to regularly adapt them to the browser development—were those works really so strongly dependent on your environment that they no longer made any sense outside an archival context?

IGOR ŠTROMAJER

At the beginning of this decade, archiving digital art works was a hot topic; there was a lot of discussion about how to preserve such ephemeral artworks in a fast changing online environment. Many conferences and symposiums took place in Europe and elsewhere. Artists, curators, researches and experts were all trying to find solutions and best ways to archive and preserve digital art, including net art, fragile digital collaborative online projects, and networked performances.



Igor Štromajer: www.intima.org/expunction, 1996–2011

At that time, in 2011, I went in the opposite direction. Instead of trying to preserve my works, I ritually deleted them, live, publicly, in front of the eyes of the online community. Slowly starting at the beginning of the new millennium, the internet became a very hostile environment, extremely commercialized and potentially dangerous for the kind of intimate net art I was doing at that time. Therefore, I decided to kill my works, just because it was about time to do it. I was also quite sure they had lived long enough to say everything, whatever they wanted to say. Their mission was accomplished, so they became useless, obsolete. And

killing them was an act of love, an act of mercy. Besides that, deleting them was as much fun as creating them; both processes are actually very similar, emotional and intense, just that the first one, the one that creates them, goes in one, and the other, the one that deletes them, in the opposite direction. But artistically, creating and destroying is the same thing. To be honest, deleting and deconstructing the works was even more intense: in just thirty-seven days, I went through a reversed emotional programming process, which originally took me eleven years to complete (1996–2007). A wonderful experience, I admit.

There were also a few technical things that made me think about the deletion even before 2001. For example, the way browsers were showing the source code was changing rapidly, and at the end, what the visitor actually saw in a browser was getting more and more distant from what I had originally programmed. Which is fine, it also raised lots of interesting question at that time, like the autonomy of the machine, the interpretation of the code, translation from one computer language into another, the actual authorship, etc., but on the other hand, all these technicalities did not have much to do with what the works were initially created for. And to keep my mind clean, I decided to ritually kill all of them.

Another important factor that also contributed to my decision was a political one. In 1995, when I started to work online, the internet was a free space, full of potential, it was the most open and democratic platform ever created. At least it appeared that way. We were all impressed by the freedom the internet was offering, by the possibilities of having free exchange of information, art, and opinions. Those were the golden times of direct online democracy. Everything was possible. It was shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the East was celebrating, and optimism was all around us. Then, slowly but surely, year by year, the internet became heavily controlled commercial crap, extremely limited in the content that was allowed to be published, heading more and

more towards what we have now. In that context, some of my net art works became illegal in certain environments, like on Facebook, because they contained explicit nudity, radical political statements, provocations, lies, etc., so it was almost impossible to discuss and present them on these platforms. The freedom disappeared almost entirely, even in the Dark Web. Strong commercial and morally conservative rules were applied. The whole of Europe, the whole world became very conservative. Facebook, Instagram and other social media demand puristic, non-problematic, beautiful and good-looking art, full of colours and senseless glitches, not my intimate, anarchistic and direct political pornography. Post-internet art and the Internet of Things are perfect examples of such conservative art forms; therefore they function well on Facebook. In that sense, the internet is already dead. Not just the internet as we knew it—I'm not nostalgic at all, far from it—but the whole idea of the internet as such.

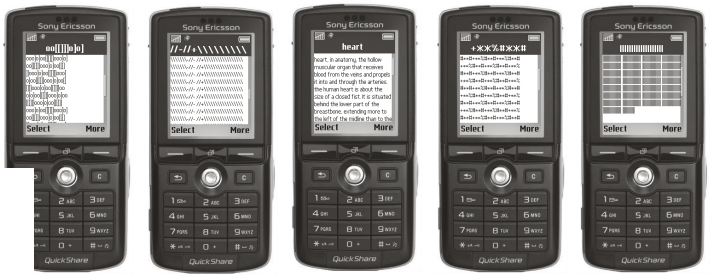
RS

The deleting process reflects the process of moving files from one server to another; it refers to the ephemeral and performative character of the net as medium. Could you explain this in relation to the URL as an identifier of a 'virtual location' and your net art activities.

IŠ

From the beginning, since my very first net art piece in 1996, I was moving net art works across the internet from one server to another, almost constantly changing their location. Sometimes entire pieces with all the files and folders, sometimes only parts of them, and mostly between four different servers which I was using as my bases, but also to some other remote servers, sometimes even to servers and other computers completely unknown to me. And because now different links to these net art works of mine exist all over the internet—on websites of various festivals, galleries, online art magazines, comments, lists, databases, texts and discussions—I wanted to help the visitors find the original work

by installing automatically redirecting pages which function as friendly interfaces and redirect (sometimes automatically, sometimes manually) visitors from old URLs to new ones, sometimes even by using two or three redirecting steps: from an old URL to a newer one, then to the latest, and finally to my Expunction website where the complete documentation about the works and the deletion process is available. This is how I was leaving traces, dispersing, sharing and distributing bits and bytes of my net art works even before the time had come to remove them from all available serves. Besides that, to me, location is a fiction. Not only a physical one, but a digital one as well. The URL (and other identifiers, including IP addresses) is nothing but a commercial tool pushed forward by the industry in order to control the users. It's a pity that the development of the internet went in this direction, imagine how wonderful it would be not to have such identifiers which are only serving the capital.

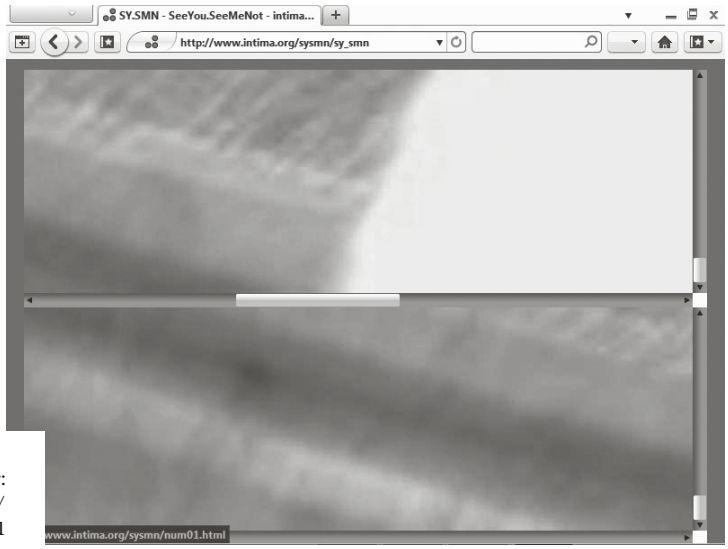


Igor Štromajer:
www.intima.org/
expunction, 1996–2011

RS

For me, *Expunction* is aligned with your performative net art activities, the body of work of *Ballettikka Internettikka* (2001–2011) and *Opera Internettika* (1998–2008). The ritual deletion of your net art works can therefore be seen as a performative expression, or even as confirmation of your artistic position so far, in terms of content as well as formally. Do you think that *Expunction*, as a performance, still lives on today? Since, on the one hand, the links to the works from the net lead to a reference to the *Expunction* website, in which the works are presented in the form archived by

you, and on the other hand, the ritual deletion of the data from the servers radically increases their presence in their absence, the detailed documentation of the works and the ritual deletion amounts to a cleaning up that enables a new configuration. At the same time, the absence of the works allows the works to be removed from memory and enter the present all the more clearly. In this way, your documentation could be seen as an ultra update, a super upgrade. Could you explain a bit about how the email from 3.3.2016, with the subject *-oμ4×* [RS] and the request to store a certain number of data files sent in the attachment can be understood in the context of *Expunction*?



Igor Štromajer: www.intima.org/expunction, 1996–2011

IŠ

If one can program and create art, then de-program it and delete it, one can also re-program it again, so that it resurges in a new form. It's a kind of a cycle, a durational, perhaps never-ending online performance with its natural rhythm: being constructed, deconstructed, then reconstructed anew, but this time differently. Who knows exactly what comes afterwards, but there is certainly no end to this cycle, because every trace, every move you make has its

consequences. I have removed all the works from my server, but I still have all the original files saved and preserved on my hard drives. Of course, I have no intention to put them back on the server again, especially not in the same form as before, but there are other modes of distributing, sharing and experiencing the potential art which is stuck and compressed in those removed files.

Recently, under the subject line *oμ4×*, I emailed five hundred randomly chosen files from my expunged contingent to a large number of close friends and colleagues around the world, a different number of files to each one of them, and I simply asked them to put the files somewhere safe, without giving any further conceptual explanation, because at the moment I also don't have any. Many of them have saved these files on their external hard drives or in their clouds, some in their phones or computers. Some of them also asked additional questions (to which I have no answers yet) and wanted to know more about the concept and about the reason for sending them these files, but all this was and still is a private communication between me and them, without any public audience, without anyone knowing what is actually going on, including myself. It was and still is simply a matter of trust, I would say, a real, intimate, private, personal communication art, something I've always wanted to do. And now I can, because I've come to a point where I don't need any external audience for my art anymore, a direct and private one-to-one communication is more than enough—to me and to the one on the other side of the internet. In this way, I'm not only continuing the *Expunction* process, but also changing the context in which the art is happening—from public to private. I did not publicly report about this *oμ4×* action, I did not post it on Twitter and Facebook, and I have no intention to do so. It's just between me and them. It's personal.

RS

Expunction is now hosted on `wordpress.com`. Why did you choose this hosting service? Is this decision related to your

move of your old 'static' website to a 'Wordpress powered' blog system in 2009? Did you outsource the responsibility to maintain the archive? Could you imagine an institutional responsibility of archiving your net art works?

IŠ

On the one hand, using Wordpress is part of the sharing, distributing and dispersing strategy, which means I'm distributing files and folders to many secure servers. These servers are being well maintained, I don't have to worry about the documentation getting lost or deleted. Wordpress is such a simple and also widespread platform that the information is safe and well secured there. And whenever I want, I can easily move the whole *Expunction* archive somewhere else, wherever I want, even onto my own server if needed. But for now, also for conceptual reasons, I wanted to use such a simple and basic, let's say primitive, plebeian platform as Wordpress.

And on the other hand, I don't want to be responsible for maintaining this online archive by myself. There are institutions, galleries, museums, and others already taking care about some of my works, because they have purchased them for their permanent collections, so now it's their responsibility to keep them running. People employed there are paid to do this. I'm not.

And there's a third perspective, too: not all art has to be documented and preserved. Some artworks are really worth nothing, so there's no harm if they just disappear. In the long term, they'll vanish anyhow, no matter how much we try to protect them.

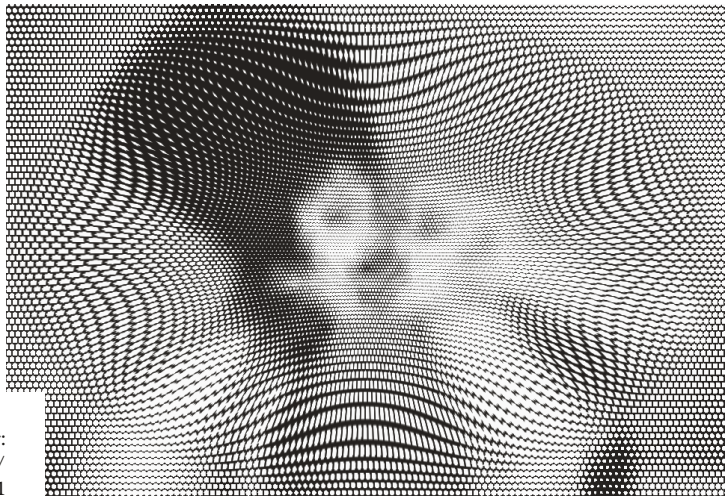
RS

You mention *ritual deletion*—could you explain a bit about why it's important for you to highlight this aspect?

IŠ

Ritually deleting the works just means that I was doing it in public space and in a certain sequence, in my case it was one artwork per day. Every morning I first documented the work in its last stage (all the visual and textual aspects of it,

including its external references), I deleted it from my server, posted about the deletion on various social networks, and then longer or shorter public discussions usually followed about the deleted piece or about the Expunction process in general. This was my daily ritual for thirty-seven days, that's why. In the end, when all the net art works were gone, I was really sad. Not because they were not online anymore, but because I'd become accustomed to this ritual and wanted to continue deleting and removing stuff. Deleting things triggers good vibes, because it represents a certain kind of purification; it makes space for something new to come, which is another standard premise of a ritual.



Igor Štromajer: www.intima.org/expunction, 1996–2011

RS

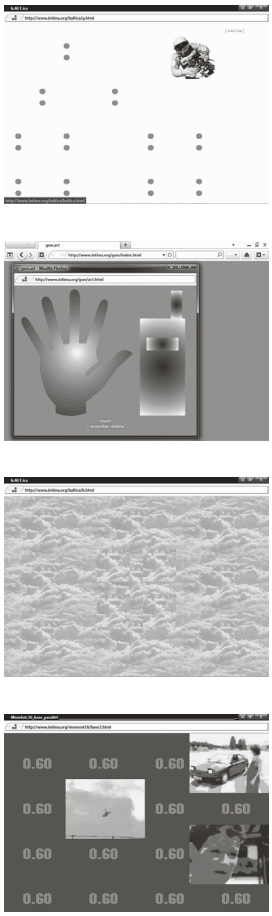
I think it is interesting that you used social media platforms to announce *Expunction*. Whereas most of the works that were deleted had little visibility, on these platforms the project—and thus the deleted projects—got a lot of attention. On the one hand, it raised the value of the deleted works, and on the other hand it felt like a capitulation; a surrender to the changing times. This ambivalence is what fascinates me most. It seems that through *Expunction* you made it possible to infiltrate the 'Facebook universe' with a real

netartactivity — it was shocking, it was and still is discursive, it is a meta reflection on the net conditions and their continuous change, it is performative and time-based and it has its own (HTML) universe. In my eyes it is a classical net art piece in the high times of the post-internet. So, if *Expunction* was a radical positioning for the time, where has it led you today?

IŠ

When I left Ljubljana and moved to Germany, I felt very lonely. I left most of my friends at home and didn't know many people in Hamburg and Frankfurt at the beginning, especially not well enough to become more personal with them. So I started using social networks to give me the false impression that I'm maintaining contacts with my friends and colleagues back home and also worldwide. I'm not stupid, I know it's a hoax, but I'm still living in this virtual utopia. It helps me not to feel so lonely.

In general, I always was an outsider and I still am. Artistically, it is a wonderful position to be in, the only one I actually know; it allows me to critically observe what is going on in the field of digital art and to find my own ways of how to do things. I even call myself a pseudo-artist, because I do things that artists usually do, almost in the same way, I kind of mimic their strategies and tactics, but in fact I'm not taking any responsibility for what I do. Artists have to, because they must build their career, pseudo-artists don't. Like the paramilitary: they pretend to be an army, when in fact they are little more than a private militia, they don't have to follow the rules and the laws of war, and in the battlefield they can do whatever they want, without having any responsibility. As a pseudo-artist, I can be a passionate amateur, an irresponsible citizen, and a really, really bad artist—all these without having a bad conscience. I also strongly believe that each one has to do her and his own art, and that the audience shouldn't expect me to do it for them or instead of them. Still, many people love my work, I just don't know why. I hope they do.



Igor Štromajer: www.intima.org/expunction, 1996–2011

In 1997, I had really bad luck, because as a young artist I naively submitted my first net art work to the EXTENSION exhibition and competition organized by the Hamburg Kunsthalle, where Cornelia Sollfrank brilliantly bombed the event with her 'Female Extension' (which later evolved into the net.art generator) which automatically created 289 non-existent female artists to compete. Her intervention was a wonderful cyberfeminist action, it was one of the turning points in net art history, many great essays were written about it. Unfortunately, I was one of the three awarded (all male) artists who got the final award at that competition, you know, one of the white/straight/male bad guys, and this has marked my further path in a very negative way, because the net art community started to perceive me as if I was their enemy, or at least the one Cornelia Sollfrank had been fighting against, although I had nothing to do with the selection process and the competition itself. But in the consciousness of the net art community of that time, the event remained an example of the conflict between Cornelia Sollfrank's excellent subversion and a non-critical participation of other artists, myself included. Im not talking bullshit: at many occasions, various artists and curators were making fun of the winners of that Extension competition in my presence, some of them without even knowing that I was one of the awarded artists. Later on, I was often perceived as the guy from the other side, a bad guy, and many doors were closed for me. The net art community never took me as one of them, but always as one of those guys Cornelia Sollfrank was ridiculing. So, without actually being guilty (and beside that, I deeply admire her work), I had to live with this, but it also helped me to establish my later pseudo-artistic position. Perhaps the whole story didn't happen exactly as I've described it, but this is how I remember it.

As a consequence, my work is present in just few net art history books, online lists, and retrospective exhibitions.

Most of the influential net art critics, theorists and curators don't take me seriously enough to include my work in their selections. Younger post-internet curators don't even know it. Or, for example, in some older books and overviews about net art, you can find screenshots from my works without any name or credit, presented just as accidental examples, not as real art works.

All this also helped me to easily remove my net art works from the server, because actually they didn't have any public value. They were seen as simply bad art, only my own playground. I was a pseudo-artist and a bad artist even before I officially became one, even before I declared myself as such. But once I realized that it is a good thing, that bad art inspires me and makes me happy, I started to play with it, I started to make love, not art. This is where the experience of deleting net art led me to. Some of my recent works are made specifically for social networks (like the *Ego Massage*), others don't depend so much on public distribution, because they are more intimate, personal, and they don't require the context of social networks. It's not always easy to deliberately, consciously and conceptually create bad artworks, but it's liberating and at the same time a huge privilege to be allowed to do it and to even enjoy being called a bad artist. Successful artists are a necessary evil. And I'm probably the happiest non-artist in the whole world.

April 2016

COPYING AS A WAY TO START SOMETHING NEW
A Conversation with Dušan Barok about Monoskop

Annet Dekker

Dušan Barok is an artist, writer, and cultural activist involved in critical practice in the fields of software, art, and theory. After founding and organizing the online culture portal *Koridor* in Slovakia from 1999–2002, in 2003 he co-founded the BURUNDI media lab where he organized the Translab evening series. A year later, the first ideas about building an online platform for texts and media started to emerge and Monoskop became a reality. More than a decade later, Barok is well-known as the main editor of Monoskop. In 2016, he began a PhD research project at the University of Amsterdam. His project, titled *Database for the Documentation of Contemporary Art*, investigates art databases as discursive platforms that provide context for artworks. In an extended email exchange, we discuss the possibilities and restraints of an online 'archive'.

ANNET DEKKER

You started Monoskop in 2004, already some time ago. What does the name mean?

DUŠAN BAROK

'Monoskop' is the Slovak equivalent of the English 'monoscope', which means an electric tube used in analogue TV broadcasting to produce images of test cards, station logotypes, error messages but also for calibrating cameras. Monoscopes were automatized television announcers designed to speak to both live and machine audiences about the status of a channel, broadcasting purely phatic messages.

AD

Can you explain why you wanted to do the project and how it developed to what it is now? In other words, what were your main aims and have they changed? If so, in which direction and what caused these changes?

DB

I began Monoskop as one of the strands of the BURUNDI media lab in Bratislava. Originally, it was designed as a wiki website for documenting media art and culture in the eastern part of Europe, whose backbone consisted of city entries composed of links to separate pages about various events,

initiatives, and individuals. In the early days it was modelled on Wikipedia (which had been running for two years when Monoskop started) and contained biographies and descriptions of events from a kind of neutral point of view. Over the years, the geographic and thematic boundaries have gradually expanded to embrace the arts and humanities in their widest sense, focusing primarily on lesser-known phenomena.[1] Perhaps the biggest change is the ongoing shift from mapping people, events, and places towards synthesizing discourses.

A turning point occurred during my studies at the Piet Zwart Institute, in the Networked Media programme from 2010–2012, which combined art, design, software, and theory with support in the philosophy of open source and prototyping. While there, I was researching aspects of the networked condition and how it transforms knowledge, sociality and economics: I wrote research papers on leaking as a technique of knowledge production, a critique of the social graph, and on the libertarian values embedded in the design of digital currencies. I was ready for more practice. When Aymeric Mansoux, one of the tutors, encouraged me to develop my then side-project Monoskop into a graduation work, the timing was good.

The website got its own domain, a redesign, and most crucially, the Monoskop wiki was restructured from its focus on media art and culture towards the much wider embrace of the arts and humanities. It turned to a media library of sorts. The graduation work also consisted of a symposium about personal collecting and media archiving,[2] which saw its loose follow-ups on media aesthetics (in Bergen)[3] and on knowledge classification and archives (in Mons)[4] last year.

AD

Did you have a background in library studies, or have you taken their ideas/methods of systemization and categorization (meta data)? If not, what are your methods and how did you develop them?

1 See for example https://monoskop.org/Features. Accessed 28 May 2016.

2 https://monoskop.org/Symposium. Accessed 28 May 2016.

3 https://monoskop.org/The_Extensions_of_Many. Accessed 28 May 2016.

4 https://monoskop.org/Ideographies_of_Knowledge. Accessed 28 May 2016.

DB

Besides the standard literature in information science (I have a degree in information technologies), I read some works of documentation scientists Paul Otlet and Suzanne Briet, historians such as W. Boyd Rayward and Ronald E. Day, as well as translated writings of Michel Pêcheux and other French discourse analysts of the 1960s and 1970s. This interest was triggered in late 2014 by the confluence of Femke's Mondotheque project and an invitation to be an artist-in-residence in Mons in Belgium at the Mundaneum, home to Paul Otlet's recently restored archive.

This led me to identify three tropes of organizing and navigating written records, which has guided my thinking about libraries and research ever since: class, reference, and index. Classification entails tree-like structuring, such as faceting the meanings of words and expressions, and developing classification systems for libraries. Referencing stands for citations, hyperlinking and bibliographies. Indexing ranges from the listing of occurrences of selected terms to an 'absolute' index of all terms, enabling full-text search.

With this in mind, I have done a number of experiments. There is an index of selected persons and terms from across the Monoskop wiki and Log.[5] There is a growing list of wiki entries with bibliographies and institutional infrastructures of fields and theories in the humanities.[6] There is a lexicon aggregating entries from some ten dictionaries of the humanities into a single page with hyperlinks to each full entry (unpublished). There is an alternative interface to the Monoskop Log, in which entries are navigated solely through a tag cloud acting as a multidimensional filter (unpublished). There is a reader containing some fifty books whose mutual references are turned into hyperlinks, and whose main interface consists of terms specific to each text, generated through tf-idf algorithm (unpublished). And so on.

5 https://monoskop.org/Index. Accessed 28 May 2016.

6 https://monoskop.org/Humanities. Accessed 28 May 2016.

AD

Indeed, looking at the archive in many alternative ways has

been an interesting process, clearly showing the influence of a changing back-end system. Are you interested in the idea of sharing and circulating texts as a new way not just of accessing and distributing but perhaps also of production—and publishing? I'm thinking how Aaaaarg started as a way to share and exchange ideas about a text. In what way do you think Monoskop plays (or could play) with these kinds of mechanisms? Do you think it brings out a new potential in publishing?

DB

The publishing market frames the publication as a singular body of work, autonomous from other titles on offer, and subjects it to the rules of the market—with a price tag and copyright notice attached. But for scholars and artists, these are rarely an issue. Most academic work is subsidized from public sources in the first place, and many would prefer to give their work away for free since openness attracts more citations. Why they opt to submit to the market is for quality editing and an increase of their own symbolic value in direct proportion to the ranking of their publishing house. This is not dissimilar from the music industry. And indeed, for many the goal is to compose chants that would gain popularity across academia and get their place in the popular imagination.

On the other hand, besides providing access, digital libraries are also fit to provide context by treating publications as a corpus of texts that can be accessed through an unlimited number of interfaces designed with an understanding of the functionality of databases and an openness to the imagination of the community of users. This can be done by creating layers of classification, interlinking bodies of texts through references, creating alternative indexes of persons, things and terms, making full-text search possible, making visual search possible—across the whole of corpus as well as its parts, and so on. Isn't this what makes a difference? To be sure, websites such as Aaaaarg and Monoskop have explored only the tip of

the iceberg of possibilities. There is much more to tinker and hack around.

AD

It is interesting that whilst the accessibility and search potential has radically changed, the content, a book or any other text, is still a particular kind of thing with its own characteristics and forms. Whereas the process of writing texts seems hard to change, would you be interested in creating more alliances between texts to bring out new bibliographies? In this sense, starting to produce new texts, by including other texts and documents, like emails, visuals, audio, CD-ROMs, or even un-published texts or manuscripts?

DB

Currently Monoskop is compiling more and more 'source' bibliographies, containing digital versions of actual texts they refer to. This has been very much in focus in the past two or three years and Monoskop is now home to hundreds of bibliographies of twentieth-century artists, writers, groups, and movements as well as of various theories and humanities disciplines.[7] As the next step I would like to move on to enabling full-text search within each such bibliography. This will make more apparent that the 'source' bibliography is a form of anthology, a corpus of texts representing a discourse. Another issue is to activate cross-references within texts—to turn page numbers in bibliographic citations inside texts into hyperlinks leading to other texts.

7 See for example https://monoskop.org/Foucault, https://monoskop.org/Lissitzky, https://monoskop.org/Humanities. All accessed 28 May 2016.

This is to experiment further with the specificity of digital text. Which is different both to oral speech and printed books. These can be described as three distinct yet mutually encapsulated domains. Orality emphasizes the sequence and narrative of an argument, in which words themselves are imagined as constituting meaning. Specific to writing, on the other hand, is referring to the written record; texts are brought together by way of references, which in turn create context, also called discourse. Statements are 'fixed' to paper and meaning is constituted by their contexts—both

within a given text and within a discourse in which it is embedded. What is specific to digital text, however, is that we can search it in milliseconds. Full-text search is enabled by the index—search engines operate thanks to bots that assign each expression a unique address and store it in a database. In this respect, the index usually found at the end of a printed book is something that has been automated with the arrival of machine search.

In other words, even though knowledge in the age of the internet is still being shaped by the departmentalization of academia and its related procedures and rituals of discourse production, and its modes of expression are centred around the verbal rhetoric, the flattening effects of the index really transformed the ways in which we come to 'know' things. To 'write' a 'book' in this context is to produce a searchable database instead.

AD

So, perhaps we finally have come to 'the death of the author', at least in so far as that automated mechanisms are becoming active agents in the (re)creation process. To return to Monoskop in its current form, what choices do you make regarding the content of the repositories, are there things you don't want to collect, or wish you could but have not been able to?

DB

In a sense, I turned to a wiki and started Monoskop as a way to keep track of my reading and browsing. It is a by-product of a succession of my interests, obsessions, and digressions. That it is publicly accessible is a consequence of the fact that paper notebooks, text files kept offline and private wikis proved to be inadequate at the moment when I needed to quickly find notes from reading some text earlier. It is not perfect, but it solved the issue of immediate access and retrieval. Plus there is a bonus of having the body of my past ten or twelve years of reading mutually interlinked and searchable. An interesting outcome is that these 'notes' are public—one is motivated to formulate and frame them

as to be readable and useful for others as well. A similar difference is between writing an entry in a personal diary and writing a blog post. That is also why the autonomy of technical infrastructure is so important here. Posting research notes on Facebook may increase one's visibility among peers, but the 'terms of service' say explicitly that anything can be deleted by administrators at any time, without any reason. I 'collect' things that I wish to be able to return to, to remember, or to recollect easily.

AD

Can you describe the process, how do you get the books, already digitized, or do you do a lot yourself? In other words, could you describe the (technical) process and organizational aspects of the project?

DB

In the beginning, I spent a lot of time exploring other digital libraries which served as sources for most of the entries on Log (Gigapedia, Libgen, Aaaaarg, Bibliotik, Scribd, Issuu, Karagarga, Google filetype:pdf). Later I started corresponding with a number of people from around the world (NYC, Rotterdam, Buenos Aires, Boulder, Berlin, Ploiesti, etc.) who contribute scans and links to scans on an irregular basis. Out-of-print and open-access titles often come directly from authors and publishers. Many artists' books and magazines were scraped or downloaded through URL manipulation from online collections of museums, archives and libraries. Needless to say, my offline archive is much bigger than what is on Monoskop. I tend to put online the files I prefer not to lose. The web is the best backup solution I have found so far.

The Monoskop wiki is open for everyone to edit; any user can upload their own works or scans and many do. Many of those who spent more time working on the website ended up being my friends. And many of my friends ended up having an account as well :). For everyone else, there is no record kept about what one downloaded, what one read and for how long... we don't care, we don't track.

AD

In what way has the larger (free) publishing context changed your project, there are currently several free texts sharing initiatives around (some already before you started like Textz.com or Aaaaarg), how do you collaborate, or distinguish from each other?

DB

It should not be an overstatement to say that while in the previous decade Monoskop was shaped primarily by the 'media culture' milieu which it intended to document, the branching out of its repository of highlighted publications Monoskop Log in 2009, and the broadening of its focus to also include the whole of the twentieth and twenty-first century situates it more firmly in the context of online archives, and especially digital libraries.

I only got to know others in this milieu later. I approached Sean Dockray in 2010, Marcell Mars approached me the following year, and then in 2013 he introduced me to Kenneth Goldsmith. We are in steady contact, especially through public events hosted by various cultural centres and galleries. The first large one was held at Ljubljana's hackerspace Kiberpipa in 2012. Later came the conferences and workshops organized by Kuda at a youth centre in Novi Sad (2013), by the Institute of Network Cultures at WORM, Rotterdam (2014), WKV and Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart (2014), Mama & Nova Gallery in Zagreb (2015), ECC at Mundaneum, Mons (2015), and most recently by the Media Department of the University of Malmö (2016).[8]

The leitmotif of all these events was the digital library and their atmosphere can be described as the spirit of early hacker culture that eventually left the walls of a computer lab. Only rarely there have been professional librarians, archivists, and publishers among the speakers, even though the voices represented were quite diverse.

To name just the more frequent participants… Marcell and Tom Medak (*Memory of the World*) advocate universal access to knowledge informed by the positions of the Yugoslav

8 For more information see, https://monoskop.org/Digital_libraries#Workshops_and_conferences. Accessed 28 May 2016.

Marxist school Praxis; Sean's work is critical of the militarization and commercialization of the university (in the context of which Aaaaarg will always come as secondary, as an extension of The Public School in Los Angeles); Kenneth aims to revive the literary avant-garde while standing on the shoulders of his heroes documented on UbuWeb; Sebastian Lütgert and Jan Berger are the most serious software developers among us, while their projects such as Textz.com and Pad.ma should be read against critical theory and Situationist cinema; Femke Snelting has initiated the collaborative research-publication Mondotheque about the legacy of the early twentieth century Brussels-born information scientist Paul Otlet, triggered by the attempt of Google to rebrand him as the father of the internet.

I have been trying to identify implications of the digital-networked textuality for knowledge production, including humanities research, while speaking from the position of a cultural worker who spent his formative years in the former Eastern Bloc, experiencing freedom as that of unprecedented access to information via the internet following the fall of Berlin Wall. In this respect, Monoskop is a way to bring into 'archival consciousness' what the East had missed out during the Cold War. And also more generally, what the non-West had missed out in the polarized world, and vice versa, what was invisible in the formal Western cultural canons.

There have been several attempts to develop new projects, and the collaborative efforts have materialized in shared infrastructure and introductions of new features in respective platforms, such as PDF reader and full-text search on Aaaaarg. Marcell and Tom along with their collaborators have been steadily developing the *Memory of the World* library and Sebastian resuscitated *Textz.com*. Besides that, there are overlaps in titles hosted in each library, and Monoskop bibliographies extensively link to scans on Libgen and Aaaaarg, while artists' profiles on the website link to audio and video recordings on UbuWeb.

AD

It is interesting to hear that there weren't any archivist or professional librarians involved (yet), what is your position towards these professional and institutional entities and persons?

DB

As the recent example of Sci-Hub showed, in the age of digital networks, for many researchers libraries are primarily free proxies to corporate repositories of academic journals.[9] Their other emerging role is that of a digital repository of works in the public domain (the role pioneered in the United States by Project Gutenberg and Internet Archive). There have been too many attempts to transpose librarians' techniques from the paperbound world into the digital domain. Yet, as I said before, there is much more to explore. Perhaps the most exciting inventive approaches can be found in the field of classics, for example in the Perseus Digital Library & Catalog and the Homer Multitext Project. Perseus combines digital editions of ancient literary works with multiple lexical tools in a way that even a non-professional can check and verify a disputable translation of a quote. Something that is hard to imagine being possible in print.

9 For more information see, www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/04/whos-downloading-pirated-papers-everyone. Accessed 28 May 2016.

AD

I think it is interesting to see how Monoskop and other repositories like it have gained different constituencies globally, for one you can see the kind of shift in the texts being put up. From the start you tried to bring in a strong 'eastern European voice', nevertheless at the moment the content of the repository reflects a very western perspective on critical theory, what are your future goals. And do you think it would be possible to include other voices? For example, have you ever considered the possibility of users uploading and editing texts themselves?

DB

The site certainly started with the primary focus on east-central European media art and culture, which I considered

myself to be part of in the early 2000s. I was naive enough to attempt to make a book on the theme between 2008–2010. During that period I came to notice the ambivalence of the notion of medium in an art-historical and technological sense (thanks to Florian Cramer). My understanding of media art was that it is an art specific to its medium, very much in Greenbergian terms, extended to the more recent 'developments', which were supposed to range from neo-geometrical painting through video art to net art.

At the same time, I implicitly understood art in the sense of 'expanded arts', as employed by the Fluxus in the early 1960s—objects as well as events that go beyond the (academic) separation between the arts to include music, film, poetry, dance, design, publishing, etc., which in turn made me also consider such phenomena as experimental film, electro-acoustic music and concrete poetry.

Add to it the geopolitically unstable notion of East-Central Europe and the striking lack of research in this area and all you end up with is a headache. It took me a while to realize that there's no point even attempting to write a coherent narrative of the history of media-specific expanded arts of East-Central Europe of the past hundred years. I ended up with a wiki page outlining the supposed milestones along with a bibliography.[10]

For this strand, the wiki served as the main notebook, leaving behind hundreds of wiki entries. The Log was more or less a 'log' of my research path and the presence of 'western' theory is to a certain extent a by-product of my search for a methodology and theoretical references.

As an indirect outcome, a new wiki section was launched recently. Instead of writing a history of media-specific 'expanded arts' in one corner of the world, it takes a somewhat different approach. Not a sequential text, not even an anthology, it is an online single-page annotated index, a 'meta-encyclopaedia' of art movements and styles, intended to offer an expansion of the art-historical canonical prioritization of the western painterly-sculptural tradition

10 https://monoskop.org/CEE. Accessed 28 May 2016. And https://monoskop.org/Central_and_Eastern_Europe_Bibliography. Accessed 28 May 2016.

to also include other artists and movements around the world.[11]

11 https://monoskop.org/Art. Accessed 28 May 2016.

AD

Can you say something about the longevity of the project? You briefly mentioned before that the web was your best backup solution. Yet, it is of course known that websites and databases require a lot of maintenance, so what will happen to the type of files that you offer? More and more voices are saying that, for example, the PDF format is all but stable. How do you deal with such challenges?

DB

Surely, in the realm of bits, nothing is designed to last forever. Uncritical adoption of Flash had turned out to be perhaps the worst tragedy so far. But while there certainly were more sane alternatives if one was OK with renouncing its emblematic visual effects and aesthetics that went with it, with PDF it is harder. There are EPUBs, but scholarly publications are simply unthinkable without page numbers that are not supported in this format. Another challenge the EPUB faces is from artists' books and other design- and layout-conscious publications—its simplified HTML format does not match the range of possibilities for typography and layout one is used to from designing for paper. Another open-source solution, PNG tarballs, is not a viable alternative for sharing books.

The main schism between PDF and HTML is that one represents the domain of print (easily portable, and with fixed page size), while the other the domain of web (embedded within it by hyperlinks pointing both directions, and with flexible page size). EPUB is developed with the intention of synthetizing both of them into a single format, but instead it reduces them into a third container, which is doomed to reinvent the whole thing once again.

It is unlikely that there will appear an ultimate convertor between PDF and HTML, simply because of the specificities of print and the web and the fact that they overlap only in some respects. Monoskop tends to provide HTML formats

next to PDFs where time allows. And if the PDF were to suddenly be doomed, there would be a big conversion party.

On the side of audio and video, most media files on Monoskop are in open formats—OGG and WEBM. There are many other challenges: keeping up-to-date with PHP and MySQL development, with the MediaWiki software and its numerous extensions, and the mysterious ICANN organization that controls the web domain.

AD

What were your biggest challenges beside technical ones? For example, have you ever been in trouble regarding copyright issues, or if not, how would you deal with such a situation?

DB

Monoskop operates on the assumption of making transformative use of the collected material. The fact of bringing it into certain new contexts, in which it can be accessed, viewed and interpreted, adds something that bookstores don't provide. Time will show whether this can be understood as fair use. It is an opt-out model and it proves to be working well so far. Takedowns are rare, and if they are legitimate, we comply.

AD

Perhaps related to this question, what is your experience with users engagement? I remember Sean (from Aaaaarg, in conversation with Matthew Fuller, Mute 2011) saying that some people mirror or download the whole site, not so much in an attempt to 'have everything' but as a way to make sure that the content remains accessible. It is a conscious decision because one knows that one day everything might be taken down. This is of course particularly pertinent, especially since while we're doing this interview Sean and Marcell are being sued by a Canadian publisher.

DB

That is absolutely true and any of these websites can disappear any time. Archives like Aaaaarg, Monoskop or UbuWeb are created by makers rather than guardians and it comes

as an imperative to us to embrace redundancy, to promote spreading their contents across as many nodes and sites as anyone wishes. We may look at copying not as merely mirroring or making backups, but opening up for possibilities to start new libraries, new platforms, new databases. That is how these came about as well. Let there be Zzzzzrgs, Ůbŭwebs and Multiskops.

Bibliography

Fuller, Matthew. 'In the Paradise of Too Many Books: An Interview with Sean Dockray'. *Mute*, 4 May 2011. www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/paradise-too-many-books-interview-sean-dockray. Accessed 31 May 2016.

Online digital libraries

Aaaaarg, http://aaaaarg.fail.
Bibliotik, https://bibliotik.me.
Issuu, https://issuu.com.
Karagarga, https://karagarga.in.
Library Genesis / LibGen, http://gen.lib.rus.ec.
Memory of the World, https://library.memoryoftheworld.org.
Monoskop, https://monoskop.org.
Pad.ma, https://pad.ma.
Scribd, https://scribd.com.
Textz.com, https://textz.com.
UbuWeb, www.ubu.com.

STILL THERE
Ruins and Templates of Geocities

Olia Lialina

The free web hosting service Geocities was founded by Beverly Hills in July 1995, which exactly corresponds with the moment that the web left academia and started to become accessible to everyone. Users began learning Hyper Text Markup Language, and welcomed each other onto their 'home pages'—the first personal websites.

Geocities soon emerged as one of the most popular and inhabited places on the web and remained so until the late 1990s. Yahoo! purchased it in January 1999, at the peak of dot.com fever.

In the new millennium, Geocities proved to be a bad investment for Yahoo!. Having a Geocities page basically became synonymous with dilettantism and bad taste. Moreover, the days of home pages were numbered as people drifted to social network profiles.

Ten years later, in April 2009, Yahoo! announced that it was shutting down Geocities.

On 26 October 2009, Geocities ceased to exist. But during the time between the announcement in April and its official death notice, a group of people calling themselves the Archive Team[1] managed to rescue almost a terabyte of Geocities pages. On 26 October 2010, marking the first anniversary of this Digital Massacre, the Archive Team started to seed `geocities.archiveteam.torrent`.[2]

On 1 November 2010, my partner Dragan Espenschied and I bought a 2-TB disk and started downloading the largest BitTorrent file of all time. In January 2011, we were able to start unzipping the first files to analyze them.

The last bits reached us at the end of March 2011. In the meantime, we had fixed some file path errors and managed to release a modified version of the torrent.[3]

The 'Amateur' Web

For anyone researching the 1990s web—the web prior to the advent of social networking and professional web design—Geocities' importance cannot be overstated. It was an invaluable site for its users. Archivist-activist Jason

1 For more information see, `http://archiveteam.org`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

2 The original torrent is available at The Pirate Bay, `https://thepiratebay.se/torrent/5923737/Geocities_-_The_Torrent`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

3 Ibid.

Scott, who was responsible for initiating the Geocities rescue operation, underscored the uniqueness and novelty of the experience Geocities users were getting from the website in a speech he gave at the Personal Digital Archiving Conference in 2011:

> Geocities arrived in roughly 1995, and was, for hundreds of thousands of people, their first experience with the idea of a webpage, of a full-colour, completely controlled presentation on anything they wanted. For some people, their potential audience was greater for them than for anyone in the entire history of their genetic line. It was, to these people, breathtaking.[4]

Geocities became the symbol of the amateur web—its locus in space and time—and for many, is still synonymous with the web as we came to know it. For instance, in 2004, the British designer Bruce Lawson made a provocative contribution to CSS Zen Garden[5] with a page filled with animated graphics from various public domain collections. This theme was called *Geocities 1996*.[6] Another work that became well known recently was created by U.S. designer Mike Lacher. In 2010, he wrote a tool that would 'make any webpage look like it was made by a 13 year-old in 1996!' and also included Geocities in the name—*Geocitiesizer* (Lacher 2010).

At the same time, we need to be careful—unforgiving, even—to refrain from reducing the wide variety of innovations created by web amateurs to something you might see on some Geocities-user's personal page. Geocities' developments were special in many ways including the various templates and banners that Geocities imposed on its users, the linking system, the site's own heroes and traditions that have never been really known beyond its own domain. These included the graphics-related preferences of certain groups or, in Geocities lingo, 'neighbourhoods'. And the very fact that the early Geocities

4 Jason Scott's script for this talk is available on his website, http://ascii.textfiles.com/archives/3029. Accessed 10 May 2016.

5 CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) is a language that enables the separation of a document's content and presentation. The site CSS Zen Garden (www.csszengarden.com) was originally created in 2003 to promote the usage of this language for web designers, by showing how it overcomes limitations of HTML based designs from the 1990s. The CSS Zen Garden became a popular place for graphic artists to show off their Photoshop skills.

6 The CCS Zen Garden is available at www.csszengarden.com. Accessed 10 May 2016.

was divided into themed neighbourhoods structured user behaviour in a particular way. For example, 'SoHo' was for artists, 'Heartland' for family and pets, 'The Tropics' for vacations and travelling, and the 'Pentagon' for military personnel (Blade's Place 2011). So it would be inappropriate to simply equate Geocities with the amateur web. Geocities was a universe of its own.

It's very clear now, ever since Geocities was deleted from the web, it can be looked at directory after directory, and Dragan and I can immerse ourselves once again in a particular community or web ring. This artificial way of surfing helps to distinguish the Geocities-specific aesthetics and it eventually led us to insights about what typical amateur elements originated on Geocities.

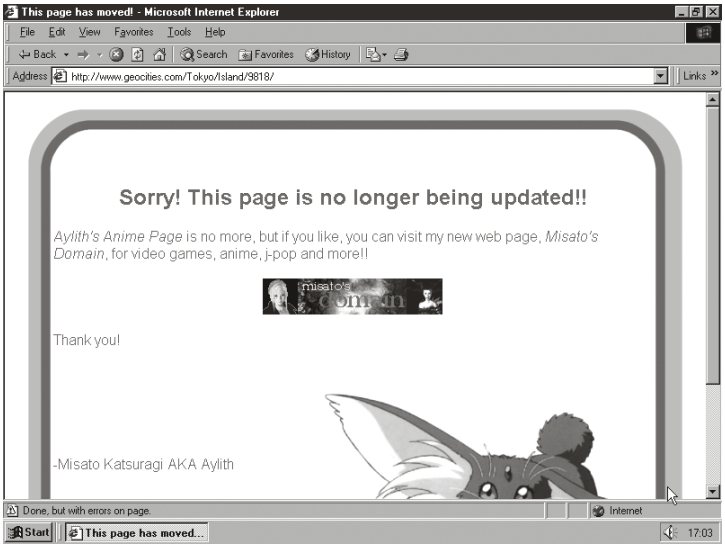
Therein lies a curious paradox: on the one hand, the shutting down of Geocities was no doubt a barbaric act. On the other hand, the buzz it created and the fact that Geocities was eventually rescued and archived has created this research opportunity to investigate the web as it existed in the 1990s in a more meaningful way than was ever possible before.

This means looking at the sheer quantity of web profiles collected in one location, the freedom of not being dependent on search engine algorithms, the popularity of some of the page's authors, their desire to link to other authors and the option to access data and run scripts that enable us to confirm or disprove our assumptions—or rather, memories—of the 1990s web.

For instance, we found out that Felix the Cat—one of the most widely used animated GIFs —was especially popular in Geocities' Pentagon neighbourhood. We have also disproven my assumption, based on subjective experience, that the most common page section divider in the Pentagon neighbourhood was the blood dripping line, while it was actually an image of barbed wire.

We've looked for the origins of some navigation elements and tried to determine which border set was the most popular

among those in the Heartland community, and also how often users dared to alter the set makers' designs and combine elements from different graphics collections.



A script written in May 2011 has compiled a collection of more than 500,000 pages that use framesets, a technique which has justifiably been called unsuitable for any serious website and has been the subject of ridicule since mid-1996—right from the moment of its inception.[7] The material that we have amassed will help us to figure out exactly which types of framesets were the most popular, how correctly or incorrectly they were applied, to what extent users consciously misused this technique and how often and why users split their home page screens into three or more compartments.

These are questions that form the essence of research in the domain of Digital Folklore.[8] The fact that a huge chunk of amateur web is available to researchers will certainly breathe new life into the field. For the purposes of this essay, I will concentrate on some of the broader issues such as: How do web pages get old? What remains behind of dead web pages and web services?

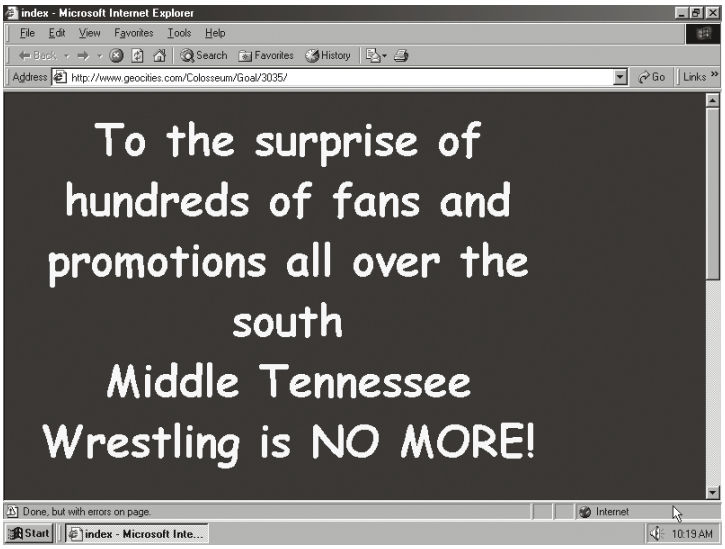
7 In the beginning of 2011, the `<frame>` tag was removed from the HTML5 standard by the W3C. For more information see, `www.w3.org/TR/html5-diff/#absent-elements`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

8 For more information about Digital Folklore see, Lialina and Espenschied 2009.

Strange as it may seem, the very first tag we entered when we started writing about our findings on the blog *One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age* was the word 'alive'. And the very first post with this tag concerned a discovery that we thought was nothing less than sensational: `www.geocities.com` was still out there.

Yahoo! had deleted the personal pages of all of its users, but the company's clip art somehow survived online.[9] You can see it for yourself by typing `www.geocities.com/clipart/pbi/backgrounds/` into the address bar of your browser. This folder contains backgrounds, templates, navigation elements created not by users but by Yahoo!'s own designers to help users create their pages using Yahoo!'s proprietary software *PageBuilder*.

9 Except some paid-for 'Geocities Plus' accounts that Google still finds by the thousand. For more information see, Lialina 2011.



These images presumably survived because, in October 2009, some Geocities users agreed to Yahoo!'s self-serving offer to move their pages to Yahoo! Web Hosting. This allowed the users to maintain the appearance and functionality of their sites, many of which had been created long ago with outdated versions of Yahoo!'s *PageBuilder*. It's also possible that some of the old templates are still being used on Japan's

http://geocities.co.jp, which was never shut down.

We could have checked this by asking Yahoo!'s public relations department, but to be frank, I preferred not to do this because if my assumptions turned out to be wrong, it meant that www.geocities.com/clipart/ wasn't supposed to have been left online. Maybe it was just a glitch that would eventually be repaired by their systems administrators. Which means files like BdayOrangeImage.gif, HobbyBlueBkgnd.gif, and MeetMyDogBkgnd.gif, among others, could be easily wiped off the net forever. These are the very files that do such a great job of documenting Yahoo!'s ideas of how users should have designed their personal pages as well as what was considered a good home page choice at the end of the Millennium — and what was considered a good reason to put up a home page in the first place.

This same folder contains an invisible but very important image—c.gif. Early web designers always kept a clear/empty image file containing just 1 pixel of nothing in their projects' graphics folder. Sometimes they were 'clear.gif', while I called mine '0.gif'. Geocities own file is 10×10 pixels. Clear GIFs were indispensible in the world of pre-CSS layouts. Invisible and small graphics could be stretched in width and height to keep the page's visible elements at desirable distances from each other.

In 2011, Dragan and I showed our c.gif findings at a presentation of *Digital Folklore* at the New Museum in New York. Although most of the people in attendance were unable to see the importance of this miserable little invisible gif entity, there was one man in the audience who assumed that the c.gif survives not because of the user profiles that Yahoo! continues to host, but because the entire Yahoo! empire would collapse without it. Maybe it is indeed still being used in the company's own layouts and deleting it may very well be like pulling the critical wooden block out of the Jenga tower.

Good point! I can imagine an even more dramatic scenario, however. If Yahoo! were to suddenly delete the c.gif, the

shock waves of its action would be felt throughout the web. Because no one really knows how many layouts outside of the Geocities environment are based on this `c.gif`.

This leads us to our next question: What have the ramifications of the deletion of Geocities been for the web?

Looking at the Remains

The Archive Team has managed to preserve a significant portion of Geocities. Our analysis of its directory structure reveals some 1.2 million accounts. We cannot know, however, what percentage this represents and how many profiles are still missing. In his torrent announcement, Jason Scott simply shrugged it off:

> How much? We'll never know … But we know we got a bunch of Geocities sites—a significant percentage, especially of earlier, pre-acquisition data. We archived it as best we could, we compared notes, we merged and double-checked and did whatever needed to be done with what we happened to have (Scott 2010).

We often discovered that the links we were checking actually led to other files that had not been archived. Perhaps the Archive Team missed them, or perhaps they had been deleted earlier.

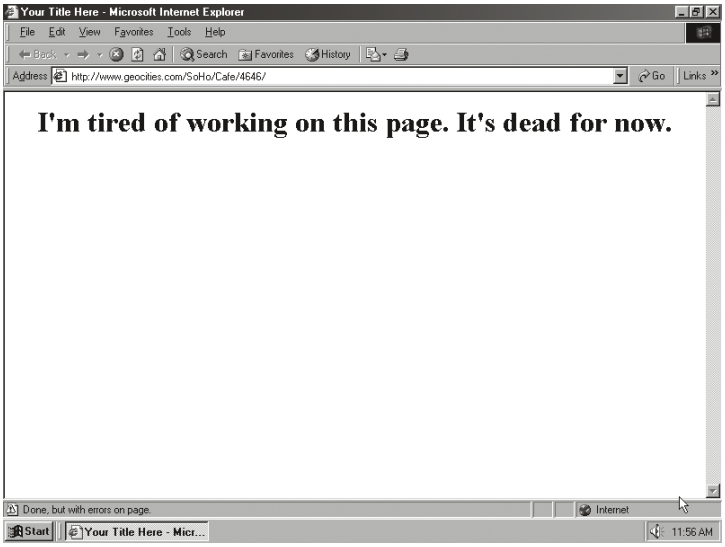
Partially preserved profiles, with some missing files, are also quite frequent. Missing images are, of course, especially common. A border with an icon inside it (different for every browser), telling the viewer that this is where an image was supposed to be, are a telltale, classic sign that the site is dead. Site designs based entirely on images were a common standard during the second half of the 1990s, and in their abandonment, they became veritable ruins, spontaneous monuments to their designers.

Once again, we don't know whether the files were lost due to glitches during the archiving process, or to the site

owner's lack of skill or failure to maintain the files and links between them. Or maybe we should just blame the idea of distributed content itself.

Sometimes we managed to find the pictures in a different folder and we were able to restore the page. If we didn't find anything, we tried to imagine what it might have looked like judging from the file names and surviving page elements. And sometimes, we just looked at the remains, like tourists in ancient Pompeii.

It's hard to remain uninvolved for long, though. While you keep within the boundaries of the archive, the amount of destruction seems normal and even right to a certain extent: profiles that have been torn away from the web, never maintained, killed off, are not supposed to look any other way.



The Influence of Geocities' Destruction

By deleting Geocities off the net, Yahoo! has also contributed to the destruction of many pages on other servers and other services.

Take the case of Tripod, for instance. In the mid–1990s, this contemporary and competitor of Geocities offered its

users an advanced site-building engine, as well as graphics and rudimentary social networking tools. It enjoyed a fair amount of popularity, especially among college students, and was considered a more proper/tasteful place to maintain a profile. The only, but very significant, drawback was its size limit: Tripod users were limited to 100 KB of free space—while Geocities was already offering 1 MB.[10] This is why some users turned to Geocities, while others maintained their sites on Tripod but used Geocities to store their larger JPEGS, embedding them with absolute URLs into their Tripod pages. URLs that are no longer valid.

This means that the scope of the destruction is much larger than originally assumed. There are many pages out there that look just like *Dancing Jack's*[11] account on `Tripod.com` or *Clover Pony's*[12] on `Angelfire.com`.

Regular users may be unaware of it because it occurred on the peripheries of the web and concerned mainly old, unmaintained websites that never ranked very high on Google. Which doesn't make it any less menacing. I think that the moment is ripe for the world to hear their sad story. These cases could serve as a model of a catastrophe that could easily happen if Flickr, YouTube or Picasa were suddenly to decide that users' data isn't valuable and profitable enough to continue to store.

We created the tag 'ruins' soon after we started working with the torrent, and realized that we would have to eventually deal with many malfunctioning pages and sites in one way or another. Missing images, dead links, placeholders for the Yahoo! counter staring at you like empty eye sockets, and elsewhere, crazed calendars counting off the year 19111. We reserved the ruins section to publish the most striking or paradoxical screenshots.[13]

The more our eyes got used to all of the destruction, the more we were drawn to pages that were somehow completely preserved, sometimes perfectly, but still felt as if they were from a bygone era.

10 It's interesting to note that the rumour of `Tripod.com` shutting down appeared in January 2009—three months before the Geocities closure was announced—but was instantly refuted. Tripod was never shut down in the end. I think that the owners of the site decided against closure because, among other things, the site didn't require much space—all bandwidth-intensive content had been stored elsewhere on the web. For more information see, Arrington 2009 and Fox 2009.

11 Dancing Jack, *The Gribbon Family Tree*. (no date), `http://dancingjack.tripod.com`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

12 Clover Pony, *Horse Triumph*. (no date), `www.angelfire.com/ok/cloverpony/`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

13 See `http://blog.geocities.institute/archives/tag/ruins`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

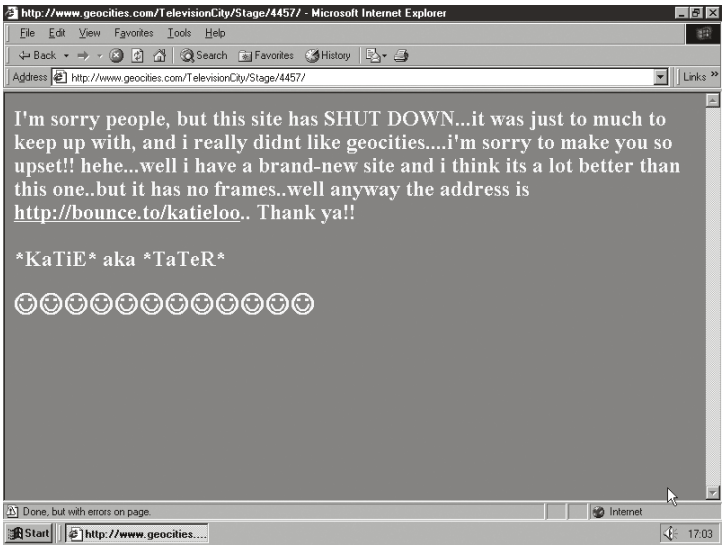
There are two particular types:

First, we have the *Under Construction* pages—the ones that promise that new material will be published over the weekend or next week. Some include notes from the author pointing out that it's been a long time since he or she has written anything (besides *Welcome to my Homepage*), and this is usually followed by promises to be more diligent in the future. Geocities is rife with these unfulfilled promises. Some of them are nothing more than a line on an otherwise empty page; some are generously decorated with *Under Construction* graphics that are so characteristic of the late 1990s. Any user could have any number of reasons for not returning to their projects. The main one being that most people didn't really need home pages. Yet, even those who didn't really need a home page were trying their hand at being a webmaster.

'I've no idea yet, on what to put here … BUT! … When you come back … I'm sure you'll find something interesting!', one user promises in 1997. His 'coming soon' had remained online at `www.geocities.com/Wellesley/1545/` for 13 years before it was archived for perpetuity.

Unsuccessful attempts to set up a page have no particular value and may not be that visually gripping, but when you do come across them, you always get this special feeling—they remind you of the times when eternal construction was the core of all online activity.

The other type of pages we call *This page has moved*. These include an author's message declaring that his or her profile will no longer be updated. They may be neutral, sad, or sometimes full of hatred towards Geocities. The last type wasn't so rare: At the turn of the century, users had plenty of reason to berate the service—including a lack of respect for the community and neighbourhood ideas, banners and watermarks that gave away the company's intentions of catering to investors rather than users. While another variation on this were the happy and excited users who issued closing messages that announced they were finally buying their own domain name.



The Value of Context

These types of announcements speak volumes about the times in which they appeared—in the last months of the twentieth century, the dot.com era, the times of commercialisation and individualisation of online worlds, of building walled gardens, both personal and corporate. These were the times when professional web design emerged and flourished, breeding contempt for Geocities-based design and its users who seemed to be 'stuck' in the last century—namely, in communities and web rings. It is during this time that the name 'Geocities' acquired most of its negative connotations and became a swear word in the professional community.

But that is not the reason why we categorized closed pages as ruins. Their goodbyes wouldn't have seemed so dramatic if, when we clicked on the new address, a working website were to pop up. But that was never the case. Links led to '404-errors', domains that were for sale, or sold to someone else a long time ago. *This page has moved* announcements have outlived the new addresses. There's a certain irony in that. Ten years is an extremely long time for a website—most of them don't survive for that long, and

those that do will most likely be the forgotten or closed profiles on free webhosting services.

But not always. And here we come back to our 'Alive' tag. It was not only the first tag we created—it happened to amass the most entries. Since it starts with the letter A, it's the first one in the alphabetic list—a symbolic reference that is very dear to us.

The most exciting part of working with the archive hasn't been the discovery of well-preserved relics but the fact that it turned out to be a great portal to the real web—pages that you can surf by clicking through the links (not by searching!), where the author, the designer and the webmaster turn out to be one and the same person, or relatives.

Although it's true that most of Geocities pages link to other Geocities pages, many of the links actually stay within a particular neighbourhood. But if you manage to get out of the Geocities archive through a link that is still pointing to a valid resource, there is a good chance you'll find yourself in a jungle of files and links that Google's algorithms don't even dare to wade through.

For instance, many pages in the Heartland Neighbourhood used graphics made by Marsha, and there's a button on them that leads to `http://marshasgraphics.com`.[14] This is how I found Marsha and from there I ended up on a page dedicated to her, where I found a link to *The Mystical World of Unicorns and Pegasus*.[15] Here all of the unicorns looked familiar, but the theme music unicorn. mid made me curious. It appeared to be composed by Geoff, who has a rich collection of original MIDI compositions.[16] Geoff's wife[17] writes about fairies, her garden and pets, and links to other users who share her passions. My trip could be endless.

Another example is *Narnie's World*,[18] which contains links to dining establishments in Okeechobee, Florida, but also recipes, first aid tips, information for Vietnam veterans, Christmas pages, personal webcams. It was a

14 Marsha, *Marsha's Wellness Graphics*. Version from 16 May 2009, `http://marshasgraphics.com`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

15 Mystic Startlight, *The Mystical World of Unicorns and Pegasus*. Version from November 2001, `www.angelfire.com/rpg/ldyofstarlight/unicorns.html`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

16 W.G. Anderson, *Lost Lagoon Music*. Version from 8 August 2011. `http://lostlagoon.com/music/`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

17 Camomile, *Camomile's World, a World of Fairies, Angels, Music, Poetry, and Inspirations, Adoptions*. Version from 8 August 2011, `http://camomilesworld.com`. Accessed 10 May 2016.

18 Narnie, *Narnie's World*. Version from 19 March 2009, `www.geocities.com/PicketFence/Garden/6268/` (historic site, no longer working).

personal link list that had grown into a valuable resource for the inhabitants of Okeechobee, Florida.

Can we classify these not particularly modern and not very up-to-date pages as actually 'alive'? Certainly. Even given the fact that Marshasgraphics was last updated in 2009, Unicorns and Pegasus in 2001. They comprise an alternative infrastructure; the web that they weave lies outside the walled gardens. The main question, however, is, for how long will they be able to continue doing that and remain more alive than the archived Geocities?

Narnie's World also led me to a magical tribute to the state of Michigan—*I am Michigan*—on the Richard Nicols' *Creations*[19] site, an ultimate fan site. Whatever or whomever Richard likes or admires becomes immortalized by him in HTML. His monuments, made of nested tables, background images and WAV sound files are funny, naive and touching. But, there's more! *I am Michigan* is a proper resource offering useful links and information about Michigan. Earlier this year, Nichols wrote that he'd appreciate donations from the global web community to cover his web-hosting costs 'otherwise the site will be taken down by July 2011'. Unfortunately, it happened. Richard's Creations site is currently only accessible through the *Wayback Machine*—and not even in its entirety.[20]

19 Richard Nichols, *I am Michigan*. Version from 2011, `http://richards-creations.net/I_am_Michigan.html` (historic site, no longer working).

Regrettably, we were never able to create a mirror of the site while it was still up, and we continue to think that if only Richard Nichols had hosted his site on Geocities, it would have been closed a year and a half earlier, but at least more of it would have been saved.

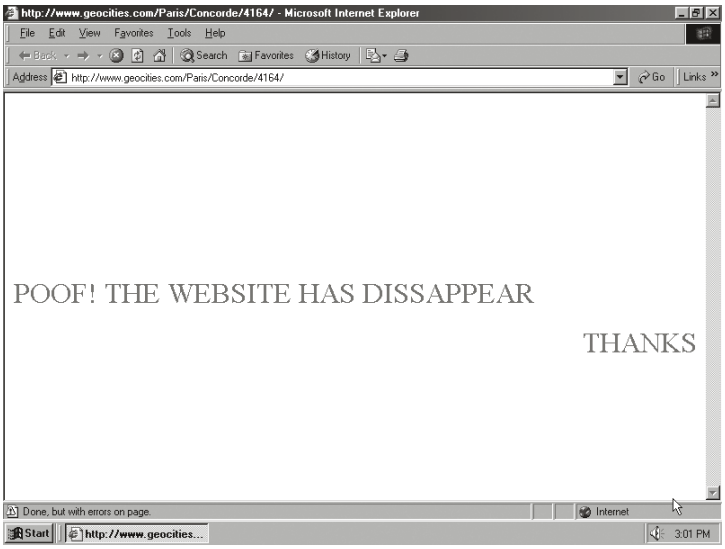
20 The Wayback Machine is a service by the Internet Archive (`https://archive.org`) that provides access to older versions of websites available in the archives of the web information company Alexa, that has been crawling the web since 1996.

Bordered Backgrounds

There are many pages in the archive that have remained intact since 1996. And whatever their appearance, they have something in common: pages made in the last century were designed for monitors of the last century. That is why old JPEGs aren't just more compressed; they have smaller dimensions as well. Old GIFs don't just contain fewer frames

and refresh at crazy rates, but they also take up incredibly little screen space. We can often tell how old pages are not only by the date of the last update or the style and type of graphics used, but by their size as well.

Many Geocities pages were decorated with bordered backgrounds. And it seems that they were designed specifically to betray age.



Pages with themed borders on the left were particularly popular among Geocities set makers –users who were courageous enough to offer self-made sets of elements useful to create a typical personal page. A set usually featured a background image and an image that declared *Welcome to My Home Page*, as well as buttons like 'Back', 'Next', 'E-mail', and elements to distinguish guest books and web rings.

There were many great motifs to choose from in their collections, from neutral ones with generic ornaments to specific ones like Christmas, Halloween or a particular breed of dog. Religious and Victorian themes were admired by users, many of whom, contrary to the popular believe, were not teenagers or geeks, but professional housewives in their fifties.

Bordered backgrounds were different from tiled backgrounds in that the latter can repeat infinitely so the appearance of the background doesn't depend on the size of the browser window or the user's computer screen. Meanwhile, a bordered background was not supposed to repeat horizontally.

In other words, these were fairly short (to reduce traffic) but wide background images that could fill up an entire screen: 640, 800, or 1024 pixels, depending on the year they were created. Other common backgrounds were comprised of 700 or 1000 pixels in width. These backgrounds were particularly charming because adding this little extra breadth meant that the authors were preparing for the future—the very future that I am now observing them from.

Needless to say that on my screen—which is far from the biggest available today—I see these borders repeating two, sometimes three times, and, in the same way that we can count the concentric rings of a tree stump to estimate the age of a tree, the number of repetitions on some level give an indication of the page's age and how much the author was able to envision the speed at which technology progresses.

Ageing With Grace

We know how the web looked in the 1990s. An exaggerated version of this aesthetic spilled over into modern design in the form of starry wallpapers, 'under construction' signs, and animated GIFs. Whenever a designer or artist wants to recreate that 1990s feel, they usually turn to these elements, which is acknowledged by those who remember or studied web design seriously. Various research and/or art projects allow us the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the past. But this is not the same as actually revealing or feeling the age of this particular medium.

The web is almost twenty years old now.[21] Throughout these years, it has transformed from a new medium to new media in the best very sense of the word—it continues to evolve. Its 'stupidity', its neutrality, which lies at

21 Even older if we count from the year in which Tim Berners-Lee invented HTTP and HTML, 1989. I prefer to count from 1993 when the Mosaic browser fell into the hands of users and they started to build the web.

the core of web architecture, allows it to continue to grow but without ever really growing old or mature.

Dealing with an eternally young medium means that we always have to deal with something new—technically as well as ideologically and aesthetically. It means that the dying of web pages, users or services is seen as a natural process. And it makes no sense to speak of a project reaching middle age, because age has no value here. Getting old is something that you don't do on the web.

The Geocities archive provides us with the experience of getting old. Coming into contact with aged pages is an important lesson that defies the impression that on the web, everything always happens in the present.

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PERMEABLE ARCHIVE
A Conversation with Babak Afrassiabi & Nasrin Tabatabai from *Pages*

Annet Dekker

Since 2004, Babak Afrassiabi and Nasrin Tabatabai have been collaborating under the name Pages, developing various projects and publishing the bilingual magazine, also named *Pages*, in Farsi and English. Their projects and the magazine's editorial approach are closely linked, described by the artists as 'attempts in articulating the indecisive space between art and its historical condition'. At the moment they are exploring and experimenting to create an online platform, *Permeable Archive*, to publish and archive past and future projects. This contradictory title is in many ways emblematic for many of the projects that Pages develop, in which they engage in expansive re-readings of history and the intricacies of geo-politics. Similar to their other practices, what they propose with *Permeable Archive* is a rethinking of the archive: its structure, creation and accessibility. Pages proposes a permeable, or seeping, post archival mode—meaning 'to flow or pass slowly through fine pores or small openings, to enter or penetrate slowly, to become diffused or spread'.[1] Emphasizing the impossibility of a coherent archive, in what follows Pages describes how such an archive can provide a means to counter the modernist heritage of archives, moving beyond historical purpose in favour of disjunction, retraction and deviation.

1 Quote from the Merriam-Webster dictionary of the verb 'seep', in 'Seep [editorial note]'. *Pages* 9 (October 2013): 85.

ANNET DEKKER

Could you briefly describe how the idea for *Permeable Archive* began, and what you are trying to achieve?

BABAK AFRASSIABI & NASRIN TABATABAI

We started the project in 2015 and *Permeable Archive* was the working title we came up with. In practical terms it is mainly an online platform for publishing and archiving. But it expands on some of our recent ideas we were busy with in the past two years while working on *Pages*. With *Pages*, every issue is always an end point. We edit the various materials towards this point. But we want this online platform to be a space for open-end editing and archiving, an open magazine as it were, endlessly edited and disseminated in

collaboration with our contributors and even our readers.

AD

With *Pages* you tried to connect different worlds and disciplines while discussing specific topics, in what way will that strategy come back into the online archive?

BA & NT

One of the characteristics of the magazine is indeed its eclectic selection of archival and original material which are edited around specific topics. We always try to keep an organic relationship between the materials and the topics. The ongoing exchanges we have with our authors always feed back into the editing orientation of the issues. But these processes are inevitably left out of the final print. Readers only sense its outcome. In the new online platform we want the thematic focus to be even less predefined, so that the interconnections between the various materials is something that is open and traceable by our readers. The emphasis is instead placed on individual contributions and their long-term progression through the website—the general editorial direction will evolve along the lines of these single progressing materials. So for a large part it is the structural approach in the editing that defines the themes.

AD

Could you explain in slightly more technical detail how you're making the connections between the different articles, people and projects, so that they become networked?

BA & NT

It is difficult at this stage to predict exactly how a network will evolve from the project or to fully understand the 'real-world' effects of it. But we would like to see it as something that is sustainable not through permanence but through volatility (or permeability, to refer to the project's working title). Everything that is put online is always susceptible to appropriation along different lines and by different actors (authors and readers). As an example, the website facilitates the authors to directly upload and re-edit their contributions at any given time. Then there are additional research

materials, or excerpts of dialogues that surround them, which will always supplement these contributions. Authors may follow a long-term involvement with these materials or have one-time engagement. But at the other end, all this is accessible to the reader and they can choose to compile selections of material from the website into a single PDF or e-book. These selections are then automatically stored and added to the archive. In time they will increase in number and become a collection of online editions, which can be downloaded or ordered via print-on-demand by other readers and (like other material on the website) as torrent files from other platforms. While their authors may still be updating the original materials, the files generated by the readers become unique snapshots of the progressing archive. This example will affect the archive in the long run when there will be dispersions of the same texts and images with differing even dissonant frames of reference.

AD

How do you see *Permeable Archive* in relation to your paper magazine Pages?

BA & NT

For us, this online platform is an extension of *Pages.* But as an editing tool it will end up defining the print issues of *Pages* as well. While we are developing the online archive at certain intervals we will put together a selection of the content and edit them into single print issues.

For us, the printed format of the magazine still offers unique editing possibilities, something we are not ready to let go of. What we have tried so far to explore in *Pages* is the intertwined relationship between the different materials in each issue. The fact that readers are engaged to retrace the underlying narratives between the various elements is characteristic of these printed issues. The topic in each issue is always something that gradually evolves as one goes through the pages. This is perhaps more visible in issues six and nine.

Another aspect that is crucial to the print version is the simultaneity of the Farsi and English translations. This

almost tactile immediacy of the two languages is something that is more difficult to implement online. But the choice of developing this online platform was something that grew out of the explorations of editing strategies in *Pages*, and our recent engagements with questions around archiving. In the end we don't see this project as an online version of *Pages*, but its expansion. It is a platform and a tool for experimenting with the various challenges of publishing, i.e. writing, translation, editing, distribution, archiving etc.

AD

In a previous work *List in Progress* (2012), part of the *Seep* installation, you detailed the contents of a collection. Rather than by title or the name of the artist, you chose to index the list by the measurements of the works. This shifted the focus from the traditional art historical relations to one of volume and space. As argued elsewhere in this publication, indexing transforms the way a digital publication, or one could argue a digital archive, is created; i.e. to 'write' a 'book' in this context is to produce a searchable database instead. Next to taking advantage of a 'circulating' or collaborative editing process, how do you want to implement such tactics with(in) the online archive?

BA & NT

It is really interesting how digital indexing has changed the nature of the archive. Traditionally, the index always testifies to the presence of an outside object. In a way it reassures us of its existence. This is taken further with digital indexing, to the extent that the object and the index have become one and the same. Which means the object is denied any dissociation from the index; or there cannot ever be a mis-indexing. The index is both referent and context.

With *List in Progress* we were actually re-indexing the western collection of the contemporary art museum in Tehran. With works by iconic European and American modern and contemporary artists, it is believed to be the largest of its kind outside the western world. It was put together toward the end of the 1970s and inaugurated with the museum in

Seep, *Pages magazine* issue 9, October 2012, pp 98-99

1978. The project was part of the government's long-term modernization plan, and the collection was supposed to launch a sense of the 'contemporary', or a contemporaneity with the West. A vision removed from the imminent political changes outside of the museum. With the Islamic Revolution only a year later, the whole collection was withdrawn to the museum's cellar and kept there for almost twenty years. The collection got removed from its (art-)historical 'context' and was instead absorbed into a historical chasm. Even now when the collection is exhibited, it always is a re-hang in absentia. One could argue that the collection became truly 'contemporary' only with its withdrawal into the depot. So re-indexing the collection based on the volume the art works occupy in a way re-emphasizes this dehistoricization of the collection and its dissociation from its archival context (canons of contemporary art). Starting from the smallest to the largest objects in the collection, you end up with a strange, almost unfamiliar, list of art works. We should mention that 'List in Progress' is always displayed next to a scale model of the museum, which depicts only the corridors and ramps of the museum leading down to the cellar.

We see *Permeable Archive* to follow a process of de-contextualization. What makes this possible is that constant

re-appropriation of the archive we referred to earlier. This undermines the indexing of the archive since the associations of the archive's various materials will always be shifting. Again, these re-appropriations are not only a means to a network but about defamiliarization, or not only about connectivity but also about the archival self-disseverment. In a way the online archive should constantly dissociate from itself as a pre-given (as an index). We imagine a kind of archival network that severs itself as it expands. As such it follows more immediately the changes in its content. For us this is how archiving and publishing could correspond in a more radical way.

AD

It could be argued that what you're proposing is not an archive anymore, because it doesn't preserve or even collect, but something much more 'fluid' or as you describe it as 'permeable' comes in. How do you see the relation between the traditional archive and this new method, form or platform?

BA & NT

It is true that *Permeable Archive* will not be an archive in the traditional sense, but this is not because of the different possibilities online publishing can offer. As we mentioned, the online material is always prone to re-articulation, which already undermines the notion of archive as stored content.

The starting point of this project was about how to rethink publishing through archiving. Obviously publishing and archiving are by definition interconnected. Every act of publishing is a testimony to the archive. But at the same time, this relationship has never been in a more critical state than now. This is especially so with the rapid expansion of the web and digital technologies into our daily lives. We are experiencing a boundless and indiscriminate distribution and accumulation of 'content' but one that is always cleared from its geopolitics. What is always missing from the images of information is the labour and protocols of power inherent to it.

With the internet, everything we encounter is always already accumulated and distributed, as users we've just become silent labourers of this endless rotation. Maybe there is no exit but we can surely engage with it more 'loudly' to at least open it to its own material condition. With this project we are interested to see how we can still invent a workspace. How to publish/archive as opposed to the claustrophobia of infinite proliferation? Perhaps we should think in terms of subtraction and supplementarity, which are defined by the negative. When we first started thinking of this project what indeed came to our mind was a structure that is porous or permeable. The question we should be occupied with is what could be the labour of permeability?

AD

In the project *Seep* you refer to the archive's relationship with its geographical and historical context. How do you think this will affect the online archive? For example, with the different temporality and fluidness of the online archive, do you think a historical position, one of the main aims of an archive, is still possible? If not, what possible consequences could there be?

BA & NT

It is impossible to imagine archives without their relation to geography and history. But maybe it is more interesting to think of the historical (or geographical) 'situations' than 'contexts' here. Context operates according to precedence and priority; it is a closed system, which places complexities of conditions under a single totality. Whereas situation is open and indeterminate. It is what is not contextualized. So from this perspective we could say that the online archive can be in a historical and geographical relationship but one that is carried by different localities and temporalities as you say. One of the arguments that drove the Seep project was the question of the location of the archive, which is normally the building where the archive is housed. For example the BP archive, which is one of the subjects in Seep, is housed in the vaults of the University of Warwick in the West Midlands,

UK. It holds an important part of the British history. But the archive equally refers to several other geographies. Thinking about all these different localities when going through the BP archive, one cannot help feeling a certain historical and geographical void. This void is something that needs to be addressed in any archival practice.

AD

Thinking about permeable, rather perhaps than a mechanism of flow, to me it is just as much, or more, about breaks, ruptures and discontinuity, how do you see that tension?

BA & NT

We might think that permeability is the ruin of archives, but the fact is that ruptures and discontinuities are inherent to any archive, only they're often sealed off by it. It is interesting that in recent years, more and more libraries and museums are placing their archives and collections online. The larger the number of online items, the more validated the archive, seems to be the logic. But even if this increase in 'content' means an increase in accessibility and the democratization of information, it does not automatically result in knowledge. This kind of democratization often translates to the recirculation of the same.

Our idea of archival permeability actually grew out of the project *Seep* which, as we referred to, connects two twentieth century archives: one is the early archive of the British petroleum, which belongs to the company's first fifty years when it was operating with the name of Anglo-Persian Oil Company in south-west Iran, the other is the collection of Western art in the museum of contemporary art in Tehran we spoke of. Reading the two together as one narrative opens a different side of the archive, a side that is marked by historical and geographical rift. The kind of archive that is proposed in *Seep* is analogous to the oozing of crude oil from under the ground. This analogy begun in fact when we unexpectedly encountered an actual natural oil seepage between two mountains in south-west Iran when researching for the project. Black tar massively pouring out from

between the rocks and under our feet, and entering into the nearby river, perhaps since eternity. This is literary a post-archival seeping that defies stratification, eats away at the ground and pours (unlike refined oil) beyond historical purpose. Seeping is opposed to storage and targeted dissemination.

AUTONOMOUS ARCHIVING

Özge Çelikaslan

#OccupyGezi: This is Just the Beginning!

On the 27th and 28th of May 2013, the Taksim Solidarity Platform announced a protest against the demolition of the northern part of Gezi Park in realization of the Istanbul Greater Municipality's Taksim Pedestrian Project. The protest, which was initiated by a small group, expanded into a much larger, mass action. The harsh intervention of the police on the 29th and 30th of May led to an increase in the number of protesters. Following the conflict in the streets on the 30th and 31st of May, hundreds of thousands of people went to Taksim Square and started to protect Gezi Park. This soon spread to other cities in Turkey; the focus of the mass protest became a fight for rights and democracy. Since 2012, there had been a public debate about the Taksim Square Project that was initiated by the Istanbul Greater Municipality, which has an upside-down form that both public and professionals from the Chamber of Architects and Chamber of Urban Planners were against. This is another form of public space project initiated by governmental organizations which aimed to be a clean, controlled, high-surveillance space, including the building of a replica nineteenth-century Ottoman barracks, Topçu Kışlası, and said by the Prime Minister to include the construction of a shopping centre and mosque. The project was designed without any participatory practices and without consulting civil society organizations and chambers. As soon as the project was announced to the public, the Taksim Solidarity Platform,[1] combining civil society organizations, chambers, independent political groups, collectives and individuals under its umbrella, initiated public protests, petitions, events and a festival in Gezi Park in the following months to create a public opinion on the defence of public spaces that should be protected as cultural heritages of the city.

But there was an intense moment when the bulldozers started breaking down the walls and taking down the trees in Gezi Park. Due to incompliance of the demolishment with

1 For more information see http://taksimdayanisma.org. Accessed 25 May 2016.

the signed development plan, civilians occupied the park to protest against the construction. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's statement, 'No matter what you do, we gave our final decision about Gezi Park', provoked more people to join the protest.[2] Protesters started occupying the park day and night in their tents. As the news spread, Turkish artists also started supporting the protest.

2 http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-ne-yaparsaniz-yapin-kararimizi-verdik-gezi-parki-yikilacak,230897. Accessed 25 May 2016.

At around 5 a.m. on the second day of occupation, police forces raided the park with tear gas and started burning protesters' tents without any warning. Consequently, construction vehicles proceeded to the area. Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder stood against the bulldozers and stopped the demolition. The attitude of the police forces was the breaking point of the protest, which resulted in a tremendous increase to the number of protesters. Early the next morning, the police attacked the protesters for a second time. After dispersing the crowd, police started to cover the park with barriers, which eventually increased the tension of the conflict further to the streets. Clashes continued until the early hours of the morning. The violent attitude of the police force caused thousands of other people all over Turkey to join the protests. The whole public somehow affiliated themselves with different kind of problems related to authoritarian government and the protests became a

struggle for human rights and democracy in public space in any sense. 3.5 million people took active part in almost 5,000 demonstrations across Turkey.

Videoccupy: All Efforts are for 'I See'

On the 2nd of June, the media activist collective Videoccupy was set up by a group of people from diverse backgrounds, with the aim of recording the whole process in the context of mapping the visual memory and creating an open-source digital media archive of Gezi resistance. Members of the collective also aimed to create their own media by revealing police violence towards protestors who were using their democratic rights, though they were being portrayed in Turkish mainstream media as if they were totally offensive, unfair, predatory, and looters. However, police frequently fired plastic bullets directly at protesters' heads and upper bodies. Tear gas canisters were routinely fired directly at protestors, bystanders and sometimes into residential buildings and medical facilities, resulting in hundreds of injuries. Chemical irritants were added to water cannon supply tanks. Female protesters were sexually abused by law enforcement officials. Live ammunition was used. Eleven people were killed and more than 8,000 were injured at the demonstrations across Turkey.

Videoccupy aimed to visualize the peaceful intent of the resistance movement to open the public spaces in the city to public. Members of the collective recorded everyday life at Gezi Park from the very first day it was occupied by the citizens until police attacked the park, burned the tents, fired gas and brutally removed people on the 15th of June. Videoccupy also aimed to collect visual data from the protestors who were using their mobile phones, iPads or video/photo cameras to make recordings. Members of the collective made a call to the protestors in the first days of the occupation of the park and collected data under the tent of a pioneering political activist collective called Our Commons. The call was made on the 4th of June by the members of the collective:

> On the 2nd of June we founded a video collective Videoccupy. We aim to record the visual memory and archive the resistance process since the 27th of May 2013. It collects recordings made with devices such as iPads, phones and video cameras. The collected material will be archived and designed as a portal for public access. If you wish to use the moving images or have any questions, you can contact us. The Videoccupy collective wishes to visualize the peaceful intentions of the resistance movement for opening the public spaces in the city to the public. Moreover, Videoccupy intends to invent the potentialities of emancipation of 'seeing'. According to Jacques Rancière, emancipation occurs when the questioning of contrast between looking and action starts. Thus, we believe that the videograms we produce, multiply and share exist in between this questioning. In this emancipative space, our witness of the resistance process with video is strolling around independently from the manipulated mainstream media and against the authoritative gaze of records of power. Because we use video as an emancipative device not only in this resistance but also in our lives: we do not show or represent, we produce the potentialities of action of 'I see'. As our friend, beloved Ulus Baker whom we wish were with us would say: all efforts are for 'I see'—so it is not something like 'I will show' or 'I came to see'. If you want to contribute to our archive, you may create a link in one of the video portals and send it to our email address. In order to help the organization of the archive, please file your moving images as name/location/date/hour/event.[3]

A lot of activists became aware of the importance of visually recording such an important moment, and being able to witness what was happening and what unfair act has been inflicted by the government towards protestors.

3 www.opendemocracy.net/author/m%C3%BC%C5%9Fthereklerimiz. Accessed 25 May 2016.

They were very much interested in recording the everyday life of the park; people sharing the common space, creating different kinds of solidarity practices, and certainly different visual languages and also disseminating these visual languages. As no one knew when and where the protests, occupation and resistance would end, collective members realized the importance of interviewing people in order to figure out which kind of people were visiting the park and who was taking part in the resistance. Interviews focused on their contribution to the process, their thoughts, their imagination of society, democracy, formation of citizenship and also the public space they are dreaming of. Members of the collective also interviewed certain leading persons and important figures of the protests, such as the director of the Chamber of Architects, the members of parliament who were contributing and supporting the protests, lawyers, leading persons of political parties and activist groups. They were asked about their points of view on the whole resistance process in the framework of urban rights, democracy and emancipation, appropriation of public space, and the effects of recent social movements on Gezi resistance.

Afterwards, the collective started to bring all this data together by organizing the tasks and distributing the voluntary work among its members, and shared all the recordings with the public: interviews, happenings, violence, everyday acts, visual languages, different protest types and the transformation of public space. After the protestors were evicted from the park, Videoccupy kept recording various forms of protests that followed, such as many park forums, acts of disobedience, press releases of different NGOs, mass gatherings and marches to stand against the brutality and human rights violations committed by the police.

In terms of visual production, Videoccupy was not interested in documentary; it was more about seeing actions, recording at that moment and directly presenting what was seen and what was recorded. Therefore being very careful with editing anything in order to bring 'naked' visual material

to the audience. Trying to form and be part of a collective identity is all about that effort. For the members of the collective, the camera is not a tool; the camera is part of the body which moves with the body and takes part in the event directly. The camera is not considered a tool for recording from outside; it is there in the event, physically taking part in it with all the eyes. And video activist tactics are based on collective imagery and collective image recording.

The aim was to create a public digital archive with more than two thousand hours of recordings, organised by date, location, type of protests and topic. The aim of the archive was to be participatory, interactive, expanding and alive. The act of archiving visual data is crucial in order to keep the visual collective memory alive.

Collective Memory

In many ways, the Gezi Park protests were an unprecedented social uprising, not only due to the heterogeneity of the protesters and actors involved, and their ways of acting, which created collaboration and solidarity, but also due to the extensive use of all kinds of new media that led to a proliferation of audio-visual and written materials being produced and shared in social media platforms. In a process where what is happening on the streets has no

exposure in mass media at all or is completely manipulated or distorted, to think about and investigate the questions of collective memory becomes indispensible. At this point, a digital media archive as a tool of collective memory is a *milieu de mémoire* that gathers what would otherwise be forgotten, distorted or intentionally erased from the social memory. It also allows us to question what is visible and hidden and creates a space of collective investigation and creation based on the material available.

Within the wider scope of an online media archive platform focusing on social and political movements in Turkey, it was meaningful to start with Videoccupy's video archive of Gezi and immediately create an open-access online visual memory platform just after the protests. `https://bak.ma` emerged from these discussions. The social and political agenda has always been very lively and protests against all forms of authoritarian governance and repression have been going on in different ways and forms. bak.ma has the potential to establish connections between the past, the recent past and the future, both with regard to previous and upcoming movements. The significance of this archive stems from its potential as a resourceful platform and a space of memory, which paved the way for new ways of thinking through the visual material.

Normal Citizens Get Lost!

Moving away from traditional state archives and their authoritarian methods, bak.ma is an attempt to create new means for archiving images. In Turkish, the word 'bakma' means 'don't look', and the name 'bak.ma' is also inspired by a quote in an article written by Cypriot thinker Ulus S. Baker. Baker discusses 'seeing' as an emancipatory act, and he chooses a very specific moment, which happened in 1995 during the protests against F-type prisons in Ankara:

> 'Normal Citizens Get Lost'... an announcement by the police could be heard in the centre of Ankara.

> Citizens whom are not 'normal' should probably be the ones who were to be surrounded by the police force and the tanks ready to spray water. The state's desire is definitely to make them 'disappear' (this doesn't need a special ability) and disperse as soon as possible. However, for the first time, we are learning through a police announcement to 'normal' citizens that people must 'get lost', 'scatter', so they suddenly disappear from the busiest squares and streets in the city. 'Don't look!'. Another police announcement, just like the 'Get lost!' command, ringing in the ears... 'Don't look!', this command shows a distinction between 'to look' and 'to see' a special talent of human beings... It is as if human beings truly had a talent to see everything, with countless eyes (like the bees) as if they were not looking and it is inevitable... (Baker 1996).

As such, bak.ma is about looking: looking in different ways and from different perspectives. One year after Gezi, the bak.ma digital media archive of social movements was accessible, following lengthy discussions about the collected visual data. It can be seen as an autonomous archival initiative.

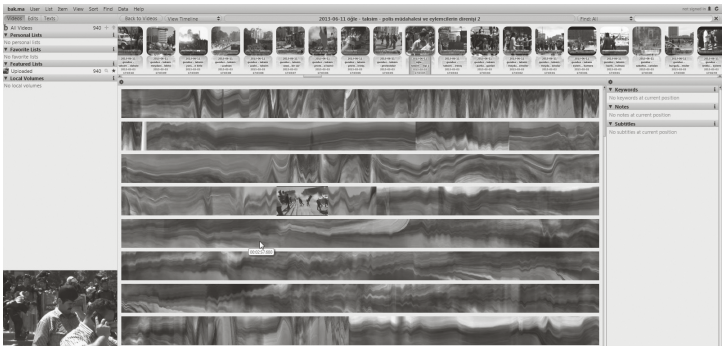
The term autonomous archive refers to Lawrence Liang, legal researcher, lawyer and member of pad.ma.[4] He argued, 'as a particular form, state archives do not exhaust the concept of the archive'. He continued that

> the task of creating an archive is neither to replicate nor to mimic state archives but to creatively produce a concept of the archive. An archive actively creates new ways of thinking about how we access our individual and collective experiences. Autonomous archives do not just supplement what is missing in state archives; they also render what is present, unstable (Liang 2016).

4 pad.ma is short for Public Access Digital Media Archive, for more information see: https://pad.ma. Accessed 25 May 2016.

In her article 'On the Necropolitics: Decolonizing Archiving', Pelin Tan asserts that the characteristics of an autonomous and decolonized archival structure can be seen in its collective assemblage of production (editing, recording, montage) and its shifting representation in different political genres and via display. As she argues:

> If we look at the discourse and definition of the contemporary meaning of 'decolonization' in the context of a regime of image discourse and politics, the term is more complex and beyond the dualistic structure of colonizer/colonized and formation of subjectivities. Techno-politics based infrastructural colonization is more complex where extra statecraft is involved. Thus, discussing the practice of decolonization is already a confusing concept. How moving-image archives are utilized and how they function in a process of decolonization not only regards the sharing and use of open-source digital tools. It's also about the storage and management of a database of continuous demonstrations, actions of resistance and civil struggles (Tan 2016).



In this context, according to Tan, the structure of bak.ma needs to be understood in the framework of necropolitical decolonization, which is through the image itself. Video footage on bak.ma provides the residuals of each of the

subjectivities that create everyday assemblages.

As Liang claimed that the state archives cannot define the archive since they are just a form of archives, they do not exhaust the concept of the archive. And as he says,

> Autonomous archival initiatives are often a response to the monopolization of public memory by the state, and the political effects that flow from such mnemonic power. But attempts to create autonomous archives do not necessarily supplement the memory machine of the state (Liang 2016).

As an autonomous archival practice, bak.ma should not be considered as a storage space or a database for preserving images. As Liang affirms:

> Contemporary archival impulses attempt to realize the potential of the archive as virtuality, and challenge us to think through the productive capacities of an archive beyond the blackmail of memory and amnesia. The production of a concept is a provocation, a refusal to answer to the call of the known, and an opportunity to intensify our experiences. The archive is therefore not representational; it is creative. The naming of something as an archive is not the end, but the beginning of a debate (Liang 2016).

Autonomous archives consist of various media, and since they are mostly based on free software, they motivate their users to be active and productive. Thus these archival practices are the complete opposite of state archives. The archives mostly emerge in areas of conflict. For example, in Ukraine, while former president Viktor Yanukovych was fleeing the country on a boat in 2014, a group of journalists, writers and activists rescued 23,776 secret documents that had been thrown into the lake by Yanukovych's family. For two years, these 'secret' documents have been available on

yanukovychleaks.org, while the physical copies are preserved in a collective space. Other examples can be found in Syria and Egypt, such as the Syrian Archive, the Tahrir archives by the Mosireen Collective and filmingrevolution.org initiated by Alisa Lebow, which is described as a meta-documentary about documentary and independent filmmaking in Egypt. Since the revolution, it has brought together the collective wisdom and creative strategies of media-makers in Egypt. The archive consists of edited video material and testimonies of video activists. Members of Mosireen came together in Tahrir and produced several testimonial videos, documenting the uprising in Egypt over three years. They shared around 250 partly edited videos on their YouTube channel, the 'Mosireen Archive', which was the most viewed YouTube channel in January 2012.[5] As Basia Lewandowska Cummings stated:

5 www.youtube.com/user/Mosireen. Accessed 25 May 2016.

> A public survey from a year earlier reported that 84 percent of Egyptians relied on state-owned TV for their news, Mosireen's digital ubiquity was a major coup. The battle for images and the narratives they afforded raged during the revolution. Mosireen were fearlessly creating a democratic, open-access image archive that bore witness to it all (Cummings 2013).

During the same period in Syria, many activists were on the streets documenting the clashes, bomb attacks, and their own deaths. As Ali Shamseddine and John Rich say,

> A torrent of images of Syrian heroics, deaths, conversations, and screams flooded the web as soon as the revolution broke out. These new Syrian diaries were formed by digital images and videos of the everyday. Syrians diligently used social media (blogs, articles, and forum entries), unleashing massive amounts of information documenting events and ascertaining facts. All of this has been archived on the web for

circulation and use (Shamseddine and Rich 2014).

6 https://syrianarchive.org. Accessed 25 May 2016.

The Syrian Archive[6] was initiated by Syrian human rights organizations, media activists, journalists, and lawyers. Licensed under Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0), they clarify the mission of the archive as a shared archive to preserve material relating to human rights violations. In the archive, all the violations in Syria are listed and mapped town by town and most of them are documented. This practice could be seen as a survival tool or tactic, to which Shamseddine and Rich respond,

> [The Syrians are] desperately archiving their individual dying. Blood flows for cameras to see. Maybe Syrians know deep down that counting their dead won't grant them immediate or near-term emancipation. Documentation needs a sense of finality to be regarded as a document. It is not enough for 200,000 or 300,000 people to die. The survival of a few Syrians casts doubt on the validity of the document. With such doubt, Syrians try even harder to internationalize their struggle and to reach with their bloodshed those who are powerless to stop it (Shamseddine and Rich 2014).

They continue that the intensity and amount of deaths are not the material but the purpose of the Syrian archive. Therefore, this new archive is not about the effects of life and facts but it is about the ongoing deaths, as they mention,

> In the case of Syria, there are many documents: pictures, videos, names, stories, and rumours of death and torture. Each victim has a name and a body, a face and a life story that is part of the countless entries in the archive. It's possible to imagine that such an enormous archive could turn the blood of Syrians into water (Shamseddine and Rich 2014).

Digital Space is the Public Space

Urban space no longer refers to where we live and work; it is the space where the social and political are constantly reproduced. Urban justice movements are becoming more vital than ever in cities and conflicted geographies where any citizen can participate in/through different actions with several abilities in their everyday life. We now live in a technological and digital age where image making and moving image editing are not only accessible by any citizen but also have the potential to claim the future imagination regarding social and political co-existences. iPads, iPhones, and handy cheap digital HD cameras enable us to become part of the 'event' where social and political rupture happen in our society and cities.

In this context, bak.ma aims to reveal the recent history of Turkey by means of audio-visual recordings, documents and testimonies. The content of the archive is being extended to include and involve visual data of other social movements such as TEKEL (tobacco) workers' resistance in 2009–2010, May days, workers marches from 1977 until now, feminist and LGBTI movements, ecology movements, and specific demonstrations, events, meetings, talks, and interviews.

The platform is open for everyone to use and by using the software program pan/do.ra, bak.ma has a special categorization that can be organized by topic, date, name, time of the day or location and that can be controlled by any of its members.

Members can also edit videos online, download and upload videos, and create tags and annotations. bak.ma not only aims to contain Gezi upheaval's videos but also several other videograms that were stored in hidden parts of computers by media activists. Pan.do/ra is a free and open source program. The data (depending on its size especially for massive uploads) is classified by date and topic and can be transferred to a computer running Linux. The whole process is based on collective working principles. Collective documentation and montage requires working collaboratively to produce alternative economic organizations and spaces in place. According to Tan, the 'collective' does not suggest the massing together of similar subjects, nor should the term 'action' imply an efficacy that originates in intentional beings or that is distinct from thought.

> In short, collective action requires the ethics of a community economy. I fact, I would articulate this more as an act of ethics of locality that meets the needs suggested by our everyday knowledge and the experience of safeguarding our livelihoods in urban spaces. The relational network established as a result is more of an instant community that chooses to think and discuss together rather than a normative structure. Self-organization is not a simple hierarchy based on certain labor activities and their division but, conversely, a work/labor structure that allows one to be a farmer in the morning and a graphic designer in the afternoon (Tan 2014, 17).

In the process of building the archive, everyone involved in the collective structure has discussed archiving practices and urban movements, collecting visual data, videograms of civil disobedience and the possibility of editing the revolution in a metaphoric sense. This is to say that we believe that the term 'archiving' in digital video production and dissemination not only means making an open source

memory of hidden and disobedient practices, but it also provides an autonomous structure that leads to collective montage, uploading, leaking images, and re-building a collective memory of political disobedience. bak.ma invites users and guests to dive into its deep and wavy video ocean.

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AN INVITATION
Speculations on Appraisal and a Meandering Cache

Tina Bastajian

How might video out-takes, raw and unused footage from prior projects, with thematic and political affinities, intersect and comingle with the bak.ma archive? Could an artistic-research project which formed a *lieu de mémoire* be revisited within the context of a collective archival endeavour that offers a platform that extends a collective *milieu de mémoire?* These thoughts surfaced after reading the essay *Autonomous Archiving by* Özge Çelikaslan, conferring with her sources, and through encountering the *bak.ma* database. My archival impulses were stimulated to revisit the notion of the remnant, that which is left behind and subsequent archival afterlives, given the context of 'autonomous archiving' in relation to the collective activist voices which grew out of the Gezi Park resistance, as well as footage from a past project of my own which transpired on the streets of Istanbul.

Coffee Deposits and Out-Takes

The interactive documentary, *Coffee Deposits:::Topologies of Chance* (2010), a project I developed in collaboration with artist Seda Manavoğlu, is a hybrid between documentary forms and the ludic, contoured into an interactive Flash environment which is distributed as a DVD-ROM and partially available on the web.[1] The project's initial intent was to build upon in-situ Turkish coffee encounters to collect stories while exploring a multiplicity of layers and movements of Istanbul's denizens. The work is broken into seven distinct nodes, *palimpsest, mobile networks, mediums, contours, pattern recognition, traceuse*, and *belly of Istanbul*, which form a slow mapping of unpredictable and rapidly shifting urban patterns and diverse stories and accounts by those who inhabit, walk, dwell, witness, work and protest in the city.

1 www.coffeedeposits.nl and http://coffee-deposits.blogspot.nl. Accessed June 2016.

Our project transpired during a multitude of citywide events, holidays and political actions: for example, the 2009 Istanbul Biennial, various alternative (anti)Biennial initiatives, Direnistanbul's (Resistanbul)[2] interventions, Ramadan, and IMF/World Bank street protests. Our

2 https://resistanbul.wordpress.com. Accessed June 2016.

encounters operated in a zone not encumbered by art venues or curatorial initiatives, and thus relatively 'off the radar'. At the same time, we participated in many street marches and protests with Resistanbul, such as the rally in support for migrant rights at a local detention centre in the *Kumkapı district*, which is interwoven into the node: *mobile networks*.

When embarking on this project, one central motivation was to experiment with geo-caching.[3] We were interested in exploring the potential for unanticipated (autonomous) spaces within databased and locational storytelling that would emerge through the use of real and simulated geo-caching and by employing augmented reality tactics. Through various traversals, the project slowly and obliquely revealed many layers of alterity that Seda and I negotiated and transgressed. Thorny issues such as gender, class, language, age, religion, and the multi-focality of identity surfaced, together with those with whom we walked, and from the micro-publics we stimulated and engaged with.

3 Geocaching is a worldwide network and lo-tech game-like sport that uses geo coordinates (with the help of a smart phone App or GPS device) to find hidden physical 'caches'.

Issues of contingency and failure whilst in public space figure prominently to cast an ironic and reflexive lens towards data visualization, and to challenge geo-located vernacular. Likewise, we sought to both problematize the compression of the groundwork in location-aware media practices within the navigation to activate other layers of syntax and forms of agency which unfolded whilst walking, tracing and inscription. This is evident for example in the node *mobile networks*, and our time spent and kilometres walked with many mobile junk recyclers or 'hurdacı' (Bilal, Hakan, Engin, Ibrahim, etc.) who are predominately seasonal migrant workers and whose trade is encroaching upon obsolescence with pressure from the municipality and private waste companies. These traversals resonated deeply with us, flexing modulations of becoming and liminality—in public and private spaces, and dwelling in migratory and non-places. Just as the coffee cup and its sediments could not stimulate an interface in public

space, by the same token, the jitter and drift of the GPS data traces would could not fully account for the thickness of our meandering; that that is to say, the stutters, technological and social glitches that also informed the process of our mobility, place-making and shared walks.

There is also a thicker implication of my own personal history/geography in relation to Turkey, being an Armenian from the diaspora (US) with roots in Eastern Anatolia.[4] I am acutely aware of the tension and fissures between historical record, the archive, personal histories and the erasures that persist in the present. In his recent text *Re-flexion in Ruins*, literary scholar David Kazanjian probes,

> Can one interrupt the work of 'genocide,' and break open the Armenian Genocide's entombment, without reproducing the terrible logics of denial? What forms would this interruption take, what spaces might it open up? How might Armenian diasporic culture act and speak amongst the ruins … ? (Kazanjian 2011, 274).

Therein lies my desire, which is to imagine and generate new spaces of inquiry and habitus through one-on-one encounters in public space, and by challenging more hegemonic documentary conventions through forms of de-centering that encouraged multiple story threads, as well as to consider approaches to re-activate one's footage in a space and context with shared political, social, and cultural affinities.

The *bak.ma* project could offer such a space. While our used and unseen footage filmed from *Coffee Deposits* was not directly related to Gezi Park, I was encouraged by the statement that the *bak.ma* archive had expanded

> by involving visual data of other social movements such as TEKEL (tobacco) workers' resistance in 2009–2010, May days, workers' marches from 1977 until now, feminist and LGBTI movements, ecology move-

4 I use the notion of thickness to contour the context of my own position and observations albeit experimental and auto-ethnographic in form. This refers obliquely to anthropologist Clifford Geertz's concept of thick and thin description, in relation to ethnography (Geertz 1973).

ments, and specific demonstrations, … etc.

Rather than entombing or relegating the silences captured through static, surrogate and conceptual archival shoeboxes, as pictured below from a past project, the *bak.ma* archive suggests an alternative. As Çelikaslan contends,

> Members can also edit videos online, download and upload videos, and create tags and annotations. *bak.ma* not only aims to contain Gezi upheaval's videos but also several other videograms that were stored in hidden parts of computers by media activists. (Çelikaslan, 2016).

Reading this passage, I begin to reflect on our raw and hidden videos or videograms (Mini-DV tapes). This kind of residual data generated from documentary works or other forms of documentation related to live events and situational modes of chronicling, are more commonly referred to as out-takes. Unused footage is often relegated to unmarked film canisters, forgotten hard disks, unreadable DVDs, unplayable video tapes, or supplementary storage devices. Alternatively, for many artists and media makers, out-takes (both analogue and digital) are invariably recycled into entirely new works and/or become part of an ongoing iterative process. Our material was created and filmed in Istanbul under different conditions and frameworks, sporadically between the years 2009–2010, and accordingly, we would need to appraise their overall relevance to *bak.ma*: The Gezi Park resistance, social movements in Turkey, activism, tactical media, documentary voices, and so on.

Post-Documentary Sensibility

Scholar Michael Frisch coined the term 'post-documentary sensibility' to emphasize the use of digital tools to (re)produce and access content, opening up the understanding of the documentary format, as he mentions

> the very notion of documentary as product—is displaced by a notion of documentary as process—as an ongoing, contextually contingent, fluid construction of meaning … [to] open new dimensions of understanding and engagement through the broadly inclusive sharing and interrogation of memory (Frisch 2006, 17).

Although Frisch's concept foremost resonates the move towards (often under-utilized) oral history collections, indexing, transcription and digital assets management, the text posits the surplus or supplements that the documentary form duly affords. His text also supports the current

> shift from the final documentary to a notion at the core of which is located the body of documentation in a searchable and easily navigated and used database environment—a platform for the generation of paths and versions on a far more fluid, ongoing basis. In such modes, every search and inquiry can lead to a different focus, or material for a different story, and each one is as instantly and continually as accessible and easily constructed as any other (Frisch 2006, 15).

The *bak.ma* archival initiative offers such a sensibility when considering out-takes and raw footage, but more importantly, extends beyond searching, indexing, transcription and navigation. It offers an 'invitation' to its unique platform in which to reappraise and possibly contribute footage as a small means to counter the hegemony of the archive and so-called official narratives. As the pad.ma project (Public Access Digital Media Archive) lucidly asserts in its '10 Theses on the Archive':

> Rather than collapsing into a reinforcement of disciplinary fortresses that preclude outsiders and

jealously guard the authenticity of knowledge and experience by historians, or resorting to a language of hostile takings by activists and artists, how do we think of the encroachments into the archives as an expansion of our sensibilities and the sensibilities of the archive. Archives are not threats, they are invitations.[5]

5 '10 Theses on the Archive', was co-authored by members of *pad.ma*: Lawrence Liang, Sebastian Lütgert and Ashok Sukumaran during 'Don't Wait for the Archive—I' (Homeworks workshop, Beirut, April 2010). The text is available at `https://pad.ma/documents/OH`. Accessed June 2016.

Such an invitation calls for us to rethink and appraise our out-takes and raw footage, as well as how participatory and autonomous archiving uproots the so-called sanctity of documentary standards and ethics to expand our 'sensibilities'. Rummaging through digital tapes, hard-drives, storage boxes, editing timelines and prior texts would be necessary to untether the editorial decisions within the interactive environment Seda and I created in 2010.

Appraisal

As UNESCO archival consultant Sam Kula has contended, 'Appraisal of moving image records is a contentious issue' (Kula 1990, 29). Likewise, in order to approach one's data for appraisal and performing acts of metaphorical and actual transcoding in an autonomous archival space such as *bak.ma*, a careful revisiting of past footage (raw and edited) is a first yet crucial step in our own process. These notions are further supported after having read Çelikaslan's essay and the section delineating Videooccupy's 'visual production' strategies of employing limited editing to produce 'naked visual material' for the audience, which she argues, supports the formation of a collective identity. I would like to suggest that these tactics potentially inform appraisal, and by extension, future uploaded data to the *bak.ma* database.

During the process of our project, the recording of visual material was informed by a logic of capture that attempted to counter conventional documentary and location-aware approaches: to embody an unfolding in the present. We

were acutely aware that one's movement within public/urban space is inevitably prone to unpredictable urban conditions that can only be navigated *in-situ* and at the same time, mindful that the encounter must not encumbered by the role of documentation. Camera usage at times became just short of an afterthought, without tripods or other external devices, our solo camera was often left recording by being propped up on boxes of cardboard, or nearby cement steps, and at others, left entirely uninterrupted capturing audio only when the image field became obstructed and often indecipherable.[6]

These factors punctuated by street-level capture methods, in and around location-aware media, interfaces and dramaturgical devices, could be seen as situated 'contiguously' or rather, ambient writing instruments that do not speak for, but construct polyphonic traces and utterances that 'speak nearby'.[7] To a certain extent, our recording strategies whether they be explicit or improvised were invoked as our bodies moved in-situ. Considering that the rhythm and urgency of our traversals were in stark contrast to video activist recordings, such as those generated from the Gezi Park movement, the notion of recording from inside, or perhaps 'nearby' bears an affective resemblance to the bodily approach of Çelikaslan's notion of collective recording:

> For the members of the collective, the camera is not a tool; the camera is part of the body which moves with the body and takes part in the event directly. The camera is not considered a tool for recording from outside, it is there in the event, physically taking part in it with all the eyes. And video activist tactics are based on collective imagery and collective image recording (Çelikaslan 2016).

Navigating successfully through all the rhizomic threads in the DVD-ROM, the duration of the entire *Coffee Deposits*

6 Operating 'against the fetish value of high resolution', this type or genre of video images could be said to resonate with Steyerl's description of 'poor images' (Steyerl 2009).

7 Documentary filmmaker and theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha has formulated an indirect approach and attitude of 'speaking nearby' which evades 'speaking about.' She contends that this is 'a speaking that does not objectify, does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place. A speaking that reflects on itself and can come very close to a subject without, however, seizing or claiming it. … Because actually, this is not just a technique or a statement to be made verbally. It is an attitude in life, a way of positioning oneself in relation to the world (Minh-ha 1992, 87).

DVD-ROM spans over three hours. To understand what it would mean to apply a close-reading to a sampling of footage, I decided to view and appraise the ambulation that we conducted with LGBTT activist and journalist Deniz Deniz. While working in Istanbul, our friend, activist and filmmaker Güliz Sağlam suggested we look into the recent Deniz Deniz action where she performed her daily walk through Istanbul's Beyoğlu district while walking in pedestrian spaces, and was fined by the police for 'disrupting traffic'. She, amongst many others, was, and still is, a target for police harassment by their issuing absurd and expensive traffic tickets, which attempt to keep transsexuals and transvestites from moving freely in the city during daylight hours. Consequently, Deniz Deniz self reported the incidents around these walks in the newspaper *Radikal*, with the headline 'Walking for Transsexuals is Forbidden'.[8] During our interview we walked, retraced and recorded long-takes on Istiklal Caddesi, a pedestrian boulevard that spans approximately three kilometres.

8 www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/transeksuele-yurumek-yasak-955733. Accessed June 2016.

Viewing the edited footage from the node: *contours*, next to a handful of cut-away shots to still images, there is an interview that takes the form of an extremely long-take that continues uninterrupted for twenty minutes or more. According to film scholar David MacDougall, long takes in documentaries, 'characteristically contain ambiguities, interruptions, and competing centers of attention. The content is mingled in ways which make it difficult for the filmmaker to isolate "signal" from "noise"' (MacDougall 1992, 44). Similar characteristics can be found throughout the various tagged and uploaded videograms on *bak.ma*: solidarity marches, gatherings, activist events, and related talks.

In our interactive yet static archive via the DVD-ROM, *contours* begins with a contextual threshold, which provides an entry passage to the backstory in the form of a letter correspondence and wandering animated GPS trail that then embarks to the main sections of our traversals with Deniz Deniz. This also included related documents such as

her traffic ticket, the *Radikal* newspaper article, etc. Could such expanded forms of contextualization be applied within the autonomous archive? Or, would a supplementation to this meandering data cache be needed?

Many of the videograms on *bak.ma* have been tagged by theme or event name, dates, time of day, bit-rate and so forth. Its format and design seemed relatively easy to use which also adds to its non-hierarchical interface. While searching for more extensive forms of tagging and description within the *bak.ma* database, what I found was that this was unevenly utilized throughout the archive. Some users on *bak.ma* clearly took advantage of these tags and distinguishing digital characteristics, while others included little or no tagging, and only provided a descriptive section/thematic title to help users locate the clips they want to view and potentially re-assemble, alter, etc.

I decided to break down our raw footage with the long take as the driving logic behind the archival selections, together with the many themes in affinity and solidarity with *bak.ma*. Such a reconfigured 'post-documentary sensibility' could slightly offset more common digitization strategies, (oral history collections, etc.) which 'funnel the bulk material down to a core of examples, or themes from the study of the bulk documentation illustrated', a regime that Frisch described as the differentiation of digital data as 'raw vs. cooked' (Frisch 2016, 96).

The long-take in-situ has many affordances (social, technical, political), which may potentially promote autonomous spaces (both offline and online), as well as evoke and expose extremely personal and sensitive conversation topics. For example, after our city walks with Deniz Deniz (pictured below) on the streets, Istiklal Caddesi, Yüksek Kaldırım, Bankalar Caddesi, and within the vicinity of the Galata Tower, there is a section where we stop in the middle of a pedestrian staircase (Kamondo Stairs). There we make Turkish coffee, (to really disrupt traffic) and continue talking for an extended period of time. Again, the encounter is filmed in a long-take:

capturing passersby, the coffee brewing process, spontaneous coffee cup (fortune) readings, where personal and political stories are blurred, exchanged, translated and debated. Accordingly, as researcher and co-initiator of *pad.ma* Lawrence Liang reminds us, 'there is the contingent surplus where any act of image-making always captures the unintended, the ambient and the transient' (Liang 2016, 103).

With this scenario in mind, the strategy of the raw long-take may call for varying modes of selection criteria given the multiple factors at play in the footage, especially if they are appraised over a period of time. Perhaps creating a space for iterative changes, extended tagging and annotation could be in the form of an external wiki. As Axel Bruns mentions, the editability of wikis 'enable their users to create a network of knowledge that is structured ad hoc through multiple interlinkages between individual pieces of information in the knowledge base' which in turn, also supports a process-oriented approach to 'offer some degree of secondary temporal structuration for their contents' (Bruns 2008, 102–3). In this way, out-takes from a project such as ours could be appraised to distinguish the diversity of conditions and contexts embedded into and surrounding the footage.

To be sure, issues around privacy, ethics and on-camera permissions would invariably come into play, especially considering the sensitivity of the material, and/or levels of intimacy cultivated during the recording. A revisiting of the original 'contract of good faith' between those appearing and participating in the footage might also be a consideration. Indeed, it goes without saying that, 'selection is hindered by the fact that we can never fully anticipate the use of anything in the future' (Cox 2011, 218). These and other related issues necessitate a more cogent and expansive revisiting, which is out of the scope of this short essay. Although I have only surveyed a sampling from our documented traversals in this text, I can only imagine that remaining mindful and transparent to the aforementioned

complexities when revisiting and reappraising many hours of materials might inevitably become prey to the 'funneling' process that Frisch outlined. Regardless, the *bak.ma* archive and the gesture of the invitation beckon.

Post-Script

I am pre-occupied with the thickness of our archive to reach beyond the ruin, the shoebox of unseen images and silenced voices, and the ethics behind making personal encounters available as *raw data* which were filmed and distributed under different conditions from a Creative Commons Attribution and ShareAlike 3.0 economy. To be sure, approaches of appraisal would certainly inform future data framing through the decontextualization process. Media historian Lisa Gitelman and Virginia Jackson posit the conundrum of decontextualization and framing through both data and in the photographic image:

> The presumptive objectivity of the photographic image like the presumptive rawness of data seems necessary somehow … At the very least the photographic image is always framed and selected out of the profilmic experience in which the photographer stands, points, shoots. Data too need to be understood as framed and framing … Indeed, the seemingly indispensable misperception that data are ever raw seems to be one way in which data are forever contextualized—that is, framed–accordingly to a mythology of their own supposed decontextualization (Gitelman and Jackson 2013, 5).

How to approach my own *framed* appraisal criteria? How might one construct an accompanying supplement that addresses the editorial choices and re-contextualization in selecting through a digital heap of so-called raw data?

One suggestion I made was using the strategy of the long-take, in which each archival 'deposit' might provide a link

to a wiki page that orients for example, the selection of long takes, their omissions, anomalies, et cetera. By no means is this a template, nor am I suggesting that other activists, artists, documentarians who want to upload and collaborate with *bak.ma* need to adhere to this rationale. However, as also mentioned by Gitelman and Jackson, 'Data require our participation. Data need us' (Gitelman and Jackson 2013, 6). As well, library and information sciences scholar Richard J. Cox argued, 'appraisal documentation is necessary since the nature of the new digital documentary universe requires re-thinking appraisal as a continuous rather than one-time process (as it has often been thought of)' (Cox 2011, 228). I would add that appraisal documentation is especially necessary within the archival ecologies discussed here. Perhaps this wiki could be an addition to bak.ma's existing tagging options and provided metadata fields within their interface.

While operating along the fissures of activist and tactical media, the out-takes and archival surpluses from *Coffee Deposits:::Topologies of Chance* are imbued with their own lapses, affordances, anomalies, predesigned outcomes and adventitious detours, and perhaps necessitate a more reflexive stance to *détourne* the raw mythologies of any given footage.

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Lost and Living (in) Archives is the outcome of three thematic projects that I organized as part of the Media Design and Communication programme at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. The aim of the series was to investigate the transformation from physical to digital archives. Although the book is a mere glimpse of what has been studied and discussed, each of the contributions in this book offers a different perspective on this change, showing at times that perhaps little is changing and how we need to keep going back to revisit and rework the complexities of the archive. I'd like to thank all the students who wholeheartedly participated in class and inspired me to pursue this publication, the tutors Aymeric Mansoux, Michael Murtaugh, Andre Castro, Steve Rushton, David Haines, Barend Onneweer, and in particular Tina Bastajian who co-organized one of the thematic projects with me, Leslie Robbins for her (in)-visible presence, and Simon Pummell and Renée Turner for their generous support in making this book possible.

Annet Dekker

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Tabatabai and Afrassiabi live in Rotterdam and work in the Netherlands and Iran. Their work has been presented internationally in various solo and group exhibitions. They have been tutors at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht (2008–2013) and Erg, école supérieure des arts, Brussels (2015–present).

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