DIGITAL ARCHIVES WORKSHOP

RMIT DESIGN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

(Friday) **18 June 2010**

These observations on
the digital archive were
collected from workshop
participants.

Presented by Geoplaced knowledge
and the RMIT Design Archives.

David Carlin

RMIT University

RMIT design archive building
= Brancusi atelier

Tech issues:
file formats? } sustainability
platform? }

Farewell the keepers!

How to collect the 'digital-born'?

Stories generated, connected, collected

Terabyte = TERRORbyte
til Infinity
"From Now to Eternity", but we can't play last year's

"Whatever today means"

infinity vs 'abandonware', 'orphanware'

There is no designed object → in games
                                                    space

adding voices to the collection'

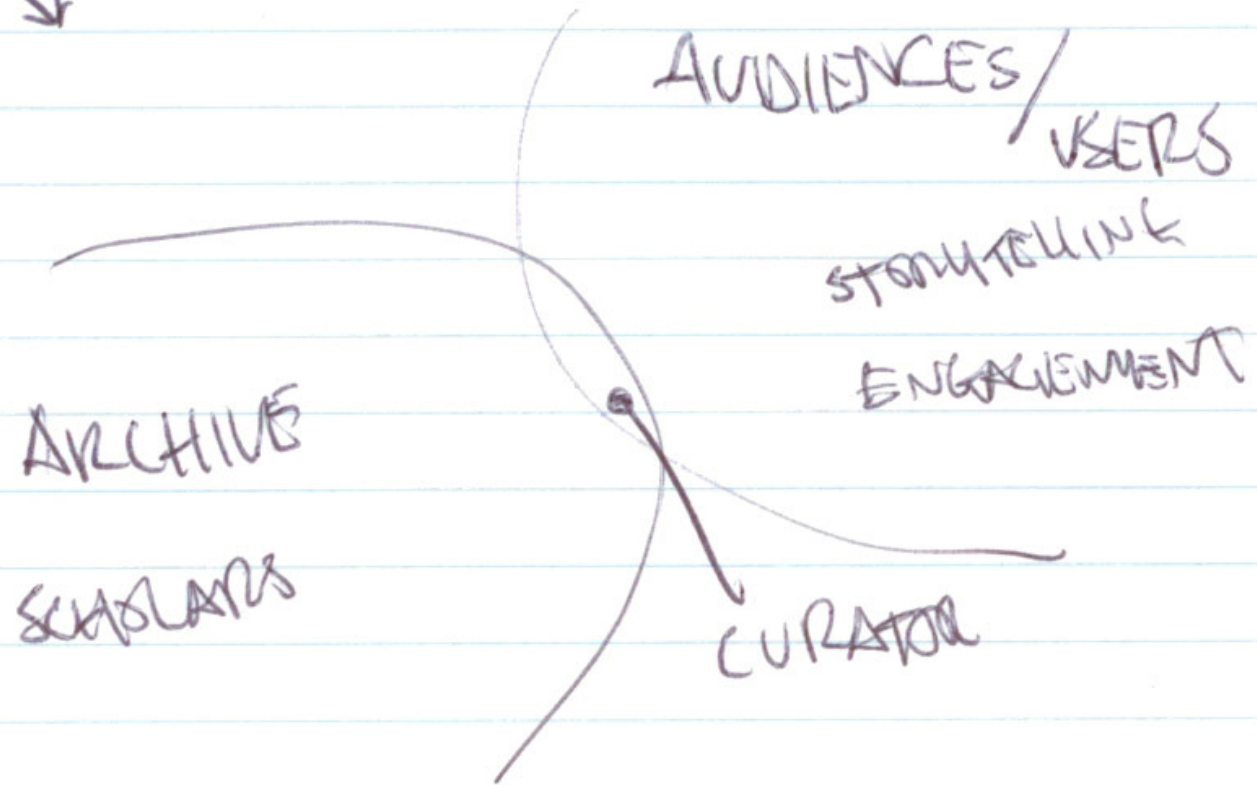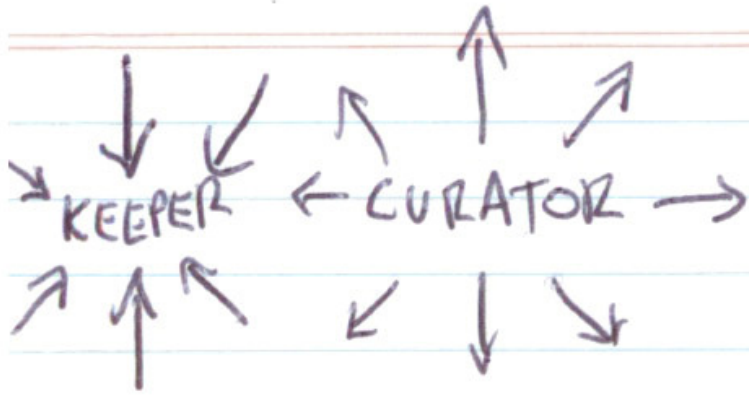the fragility of data

Iamkit / Fedora / Tangible Wiki / Circopedia /

the important archivists of games are the fan
        communities'

                tangible heritage vs intangible heritage

Jean-Pierre Chabrol

National Gallery of Victoria

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KEEPER ← CURATOR →

ARCHIVE

SCHOLARS

AUDIENCES/
USERS

STORYTELLING

ENGAGEMENT

CURATOR

Michael Dunbar

RMIT University

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Frank Feltham

RMIT University

Powerhouse.

÷ Management is a process.
not an end in itself.

Online collections are fine but
if you consider the promise of sensing technologies
how might you interact with
these collections in embodied & multi-modal ways.

→ If you have physical collections how might
you display and indicate these as ~~their~~
heterarchical and part of a digital framework

Christine Garnaut

UNISA Architecture Museum and Archive

· collections are more than the sum of their parts - don't think of collections as a series of silos - transdisciplinary approach, critical

· there's a cost to collecting - think critically about what you collect and what you do with it

· stories behind objects support the collection + its significance

· investigate 'Digitool' + NZ Rosetta program - possibilities as access + preservation tools

· Copyright - Annie's 3 forms re IP transfer

· 'Digitool' has capacity to convert file to today 'whatever today means'

· Games fan community is a rich + rigorous research resource - can do/provide the research that museum doesn't →

have the resources to do → popular memory archive.
Concept transferable to other contexts
use colleagues/students with expertise to assist with
projects for which museum doesn't have resources (technical,
personnel)
issues around rights with digitisation

Sandy Gillam

RMIT University Secretariat

RMIT ARCHIVES

OBSERVATIONS

- ORGANISATIONS/GROUPS JUST NOT TACKLING DIGITAL ARCHIVES • ARCHIVES DOWN IN BASEMENTS/VISIBILITY
- SIMILAR ISSUES BEING CONFRONTED BY ALL
- ARCHIVISTS NO LONGER PASSIVE "KEEPERS", BUT CURATORS
- CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL MEDIA = A CHALLENGE

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QUESTIONS & ISSUES

- BEST WAY TO CONTROL & MANAGE?
- BEST WAY TO INDEX HUGE DIGITAL COLLECTIONS?
- ISSUE OF METADATA FOR "BORN DIGITAL"
- BORN DIGITAL = "THE PROBLEMATIC STUFF"
- DETERMINING COPYRIGHT FOR ONLINE ACCESS!
- BUREAUS HOLDING DATA → WHAT HAPPENS TO DATA IF COMPANY GOES BROKE?
- CONVERSION & MIGRATION CHALLENGES
- COMPLETENESS OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS & CORRUPTION OF RECORDS, DEATH OF CDs ETC.
- REQUIREMENT FOR INTER-DISCIPLINARY LINEAGES
- SOCIAL MEDIA/YOUTUBE → RAISED AWARENESS BUT LOWERED QUALITY? —

Opportunities into Infinity
  — beyond shelves digital
    work practice

  — opportunities for city/
    civic — access to/
    collections
  — facilitating greater
    access digitally

  — exhibition spaces online

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Facilitating access.
- digital files
- cataloguing, tagging,
  meta data
           - searching capabilities
- statements of
         significance

Penny Mercer

RMIT University Information and Web Services

It's so important to keep up connections to allow collaboration, especially in unexpected ways.

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Jane Mullett
RMIT University

- the remix culture

- building the profile of the collection as a research resource   searchability

- what have you got all this junk for?

- if RMIT had all its digital journals in paper it would be a 2 km. long line ...

~~an self life in records~~ "

born digital material

"abandon ware " + "orphan ware "

billions of hours of footage

- ▶ ARE WE BRAVE ENOUGH TO THROW OUT THE PAPER?

- ▶ KEEPER → CURATOR → FACILITATOR

- ▶ LOOK @ OPENSOURCE OPTIONS
    - → COLLECTIVE ACCESS
    - → FEDORA

- ▶ HOW DO WE XNOIT <u>MASSIVE</u> DATASETS

- ▶ "IT SEEMS SO FRIGHTENING"....
    - WE NEED SOME BRAVERY; BE
    - AND REALISING THAT IT WILL NEVER! PERFECT

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'Its that sharing not the keeping'

The new curator: facilitator, broker, scholar, networked, storyteller, listener, thinking laterally, connected, exercising judgement, being nimble, informed, investigator, advocacy

Collection = site, movable, intangible, collection records → communicate the context — interact so tell stories + listen to stories.

(then Head NY Public Library)
re Library collection
Vartan Gregorian. "The DNA of our civilization"

Laetitia Shand

RMIT Design Research Insitute

• curating the past / preserving the present — are we neglecting the now?

• Not just objects but the stories / popular memory

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Helen Stuckey

RMIT·

ACMI

THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW DIGITAL DARK AGE

MUCH MATERAIL HOSTED ELECTRONICALLY ON COMMERCAIL

SITES. — WHAT·SAFE GUARDS ARE THERE TO THE

FUTURE· OF THESE· DIGITAL ARTEFAUTS·

HOW DO· ARCHIVE INSTITUTIONS·

INTERFACE + ASSOCIATIONS·

HOW DO WE MAKE MEANINGFUL· RELATIONSHIPS·

BETWEEN· DIGITAL ARTEFACTS·INFORMATION· WITH·

PHYSICAL ARTEFIACTS· IN COLLECTIONS·

Laurene Vaughan

RMIT University

RMIT Design Research

- how do we enable + ensure that both the tangible + intangible 'things' + 'conversations/ narratives' and the items in an archive are part of the design + the experience of using the archive?

- ethics and ownership

- meaningful + useful engagement

- with so much 'stuff' what do we
archive + why?
  - interception

- How can the voices of the makers be 'present'
in an archive? And in what form? how literal?

- For living archives how do you manage ongoing
Management?

- to remix enable or, not?

Rachael Wilson

RMIT University

-so important to reminded that 'curators' have an important cultural role outside the 'management' of organisations

-very useful to get the full "spectrum" of info - collecting ... libraries, museum's achives ... & to understood our shared concerns.
also of interest that the roles of libraians, archivists etc. are bleeding together.

→ DOCAM is the name of the Canadian project to develop standards for the preservation of 'media arts' objects.