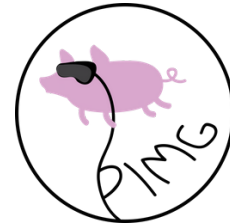


Preserving Immersive Media Knowledge

Building Session

12 December 2023, 9:00-10:30 GMT



Outline

After experimenting with writing sessions back in August, we are continuing our knowledge building activities with collaborative sessions focused on particular topics in immersive media preservation. We will invite participants to share experiences and collectively work towards building knowledge in this field.

In the first half of this session we are excited to welcome two presentations from Candice Cranmer (ACMI, Melbourne) and Giulia Carla Rossi & Ian Cooke (British Library, London). They will share their recent experiences in stewarding immersive media materials into collections.

In the second half we will collectively work towards a novel contribution to the Preserving Immersive Media Knowledge Base. Building on these case studies we will open up the discussion to all participants and explore the development of a 'complexity matrix'. This idea arose from the first writing session back in August, posited as a tool to help identify the relative complexity of the immersive media materials/experiences, guide pragmatic preservation actions and advocate for resources to support them.

Programme

- 5 mins: Introduction (Jack and Tom)
- 15 mins: Australian Centre for the Moving Image case study (Candice Cranmer)
- 15 mins: British Library case study (Giulia Carla Rossi and Ian Cooke)
- 10 mins: Break
- 10 mins: Introduction to complexity matrix idea (Jack and Tom)
- 35 mins: Discussion (All)

Relevant Resources

NDSA *Levels of Digital Preservation*

<https://ndsa.org/publications/levels-of-digital-preservation/>

Somaya Langley, *Almost There: Simple strategies for partial preservation of complex digital works* https://aiccm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/LANGLEY_NatConf2011.pdf

Eddy Colloton with Elena Cordova, *ONE-SIZE-NEVER-FITS-ALL: Maintenance Culture and Media Preservation* <https://journal.voca.network/one-size-never-fits-all/>

Ricky Erway, 2012, *You've Got to Walk Before You Can Run: First Steps for Managing Born Digital Content Received on Physical Media*
<https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2012/2012-06.pdf>
<https://digitalpowrr.niu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Resources-for-Technical-Steps.pdf>

NDSA *Digital Preservation in a Box*
https://wiki.diglib.org/index.php/NDSA:Digital_Preservation_in_a_Box

sasha arden "*Augmenting Our Approach to Preservation: Documentation of Experience for Immersive Media*"
https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1793/Augmenting_Our_Approach_to_Preservation.pdf

https://www.nycarchivists.org/Resources/Documents/Dollar-Ashley_2013_DPCMM%20White%20Paper_NAGARA%20Digital%20Judicial%20Records_8Feb2013-1.pdf

2 articles focusing on preserving tech/media/software assemblages (re. their affordances):
on media art and 'second originals', Emmanuel Guez et al.:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19455224.2017.1320299>

on video games and 'assemblages', Dany Guay-Belanger:
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/15554120211020381?icid=int.sj-abstract.citing-articles>.
16

Potential complexity factors

We have identified a few complexity/risk factors that could form a basis for discussion- please add to them if you can!

- Difficult to document which makes it harder to understand and reconstruct
- Difficult to verify experiences are being accurately recreated. How much does this matter?
- Durability of hardware
- Reliance on other networks
- Real time 3D vs 360 video

- Static vs Room vs augmented infinite scale experiences
- Interactive vs passive experiences
- Varying access/display needs e.g. physical enactment, virtual experience only
- Inter-departmental collaboration
- Access to and/or preservation of production materials
- Proprietary code/third party software that requires legal intervention to access
- Internal resources, not just during the documentation phase but long term
- Creating documentation, including metadata that is understood by future researchers (harder than it sounds)
- Where is the material on a scale of obsolescence? e.g. from contemporaneously accessible to already obsolete
- Access to creators/producers
- Development-software environment snapshotting (os, drivers, custom shaders, etc.)
- Preservation of works based on metaverse/social vr platforms (VRC, Resonite, Neos, etc.) What happens when underlying server or protocols are not supported anymore? (Photon etc.)
- Preservation methods for physical installations
- How to preserve experiences that rely on live actors, and/or live multiplayer interactions
- Format-conversion best practices, when they are used for preservation:: 360 to 180, fulldome, flat, etc.
- How to preserve preboarding / onboarding / offboarding / post-experience parts of Immersive works

Collaborative Notes

Candice Cranmer

ACMI - 2x VR and 3x 360 video artworks in collection

Epiphytes 2022 Tully Arnot (artist) Dr Josh Harle (collaborator - Tactical Space Lab)

- Live preservation journey

Room scale interaction mapped to space it's displayed in

Flexible in room size, carpet, layout..

Binaural sound

Scent released several times during experience - custom device created for this including 3D printed components and reused materials (e.g. plastic bottles) - also network dependency? Did it also have a maintenance dependency across departments?

Hardware: Meta Quest 2, headphones, infra-red lights - not collected

“Preservation strategies that do not include collecting hardware” for variable works with complex hardware and software components in their historical state and subsequent installation iterations—what documentation is necessary and how can these decisions be made crystal clear for future researchers, employees of the institution, etc?

“The work does not have to be shown with the scent, the artist is happy for the VR to be shown on its own” -Cranmer

Making sure that upfront it is made clear by institutions who should be involved with x conversations, otherwise you may lose the ability to capture information from assistants, technologists as collaborators, and other stakeholders

Artists should not be surprised, after dealing with curators, etc that they’re being contacted by conservators and other museum stakeholders to do artist interviews, etc. How can up front written agendas help mitigate this for more disparate departments and hierarchies in institutions?

Protocols that allow for certain post-acquisition documentation during the run of the installation instead of waiting after. In general, there needs to be more respect internally for the work of the conservator throughout the process.

“One interview is not enough to look at the preservation of the piece” - Cranmer

Different models of collaboration? Horizontal relationships with makers/Artists/? Why the hierarchy of artist/maker? How does knowledge transfer work?

What are agreements with artists/ collaborators around collection? Is there a good model that supports this?- So many unknowns at the start

Giulia Carla Rossi and Ian Cooke: Everything Forever

Emerging formats term used to describe “born-digital publications at high risk of loss”
Complex mixture of format types, connected to external information, experimental
Sometimes ‘emerging’ refers to the Library capability - some of these formats have been around for a while!

Immersive smartphone app “The Cartographer’s Confession” for IOS/Android produced 2017, no longer available via the app stores

Complexity factors: interactive, locomotive, multi-media, sw/hw dependencies, access required within specific archival setting at BL

'Contextual collecting' a means of enhancing objects with information about the how what and where

(The reality is that standardization is unlikely for emerging formats, especially while at the peak of being active and adopted because of capitalism)

Can we mitigate app obsolescence by committing to using open source tools, down to avoiding app store compilation of code? (Would need to be downloaded directly from the institution, etc)

Before these applications are created, conservators should be involved with pre-production conversations

*Did work with the developer and creators directly throughout the process. All "discrete" as Giulia puts it, files were captured, as well as supplemental materials from the production process. It was helpful that they were personally invested in the reality that it would need to be conserved in the future.

"The only thing we don't have is the app itself" - Rossi - ____ -

But they did create playthroughs, including the VR, which they did not only use for internal documentation but actually put on display...(did they receive the creators' blessing to do this? How does the author of the work feel about it?)

Considering the needs of the users of the future: ie gestures, (socio technical moments)

Here the link to Florence's paper

<https://bl.iro.bl.uk/concern/reports/37f6e434-73cf-43f5-8d7e-7ab37a6de832?locale=en&page=3>

An early (2008) thesis on documenting audience interaction for an interactive piece, not VR
<https://www.fondation-langlois.org/pdf/e/On-the-Couch%20Case%20Study.pdf>

Ben Grosser - <https://bengrosser.com/projects/go-rando/>

The second show at arebyte: <https://www.arebyte.com/software-for-less>

Accepting that sometimes we can preserve the original experience, but we can work with the artist to find alternative ways to show what a work was, as it has been done with performance art for a long time....

Conversation

Museum as mausoleum (prioritizing acquisition even in the face of lack of resources for the purpose of documentation) versus the desire to keep all works active upon reinstallation in the face of lack of resources

Note: There is a resource for active multi-participant, “never finished” documentation being developed right now that is inspired by the Variable Media Initiative. Public discussions of this tool were mentioned in the first FORA event, held at Onassis ONX Studio in New York. The tool will first be used for a select number of TRANSFER Gallery artworks. The project is currently led by Kelani Nichole. The tool will be open source and is still in the early stages. If you’d like to get in touch about these ideas before the next Knowledge Building Session feel free to reach out to rharsanyi@movingimage.org and kelaniatwork@gmail.com

Question posed:

Is there a need for volumetric or photogrammetry capture for these types of works (VR/AR/etc.)?