

Digitizing Zines: Tension Between Digital Desires & Print Culture Ideals

Session Proposal by Melissa Rogers (@melissarogers17), Daniela Capistrano (@dcap), Jenna Freedman (@barnlib)

Daniela Capistrano ([People of Color Zine Project](#)), Jenna Freedman ([Barnard Zine Library](#)), and Melissa Rogers ([Women's Studies Multimedia Studio](#), University of Maryland) are interested in opening up a conversation about issues of ethics and materiality when it comes to digitizing and digitally archiving zines: do-it-yourself, independent publications, usually circulated on a small scale. What is gained and what is lost when they are changed from print to pixels? We explore questions of fair use regarding materials that are sometimes orphan works, and other ethical concerns of zine archivists, librarians, scholars and creators.

As zines gain institutional histories by finding homes in both community and university libraries and archives, as well as in digital formats online, it is important to ask what is at stake in digitizing them. What are the goals of digitizing, and what are ethical ways to go about archiving and circulating the ephemeral (and often anti-copyright) medium of zines? How might digitizing initiatives best involve the members of the communities to which zines matter, and what practices can help ensure that digital archiving serves their needs? What kinds of collaborative, activist, and artistic projects could come out of efforts to digitize zines and preserve the worlds from which they emerge?

A little background reading:

[People of Color Zine Project](#), [Queer Zine Archive Project](#)

Licona, Adela. "(B)orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines." *NWSA Journal*. Vol. 17, No. 2 (2005), pp. 104-129. www.jstor.org/stable/4317128 (accessed March 15, 2013). [Part of her new book [Zines in Third Space!](#)]

Piepmeyer, Alison. "Why Zines Matter: Materiality and the Creation of Embodied Community." *American Periodicals*. Vol. 18, No. 2 (2008), pp. 213-238. www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/41219799 (accessed March 15, 2013). [Part of her book *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism*]

Wooten, Kelly. "Why We're Not Digitizing Zines | Digital Collections Blog." News, Events & Exhibits – Duke University Libraries Blogs. blogs.library.duke.edu/digital-collections/2009/09/21/why-were-not-digitizing-zines (accessed March 15, 2013).

Session Notes

[Dan's notes]

zines as "old tech"

-zines as physical/material project/object

policing/sharing of online materials

teaching with zines

zines as ephemera/print culture

"storyteller's midwife"

70s women's lib periodicals

-alternative press digitization of women's lib periodicals

what we owe to communities now versus what we owe to the future (researchers, future community members)

-fear of loss versus respect for community

zine nostalgia-girls cutting and pasting physical zines and then scanning them and sending them to one another

issues of audience scale and access—ethical complications of digitizing and disseminating zines that had small runs, bc small run might have been bc of \$ issues, but also might have been intentional

-different publics at different scales

Michelle Moravec:

<http://www.revealdigital.com/page/titlelist-FAP/Title%20List---Feminist-Alternative-Press>

issue with zines being put into a book? issue with zines being put into a library to begin with?

Association for Internet Researchers

different value systems: zine community ethos versus copyright and fair use

-collect and expose while bringing in feminist values

ethical questions of archiving zines also apply to questions of archiving performance art, artist materials, activist materials

question of anonymous zines

-anonymity can't always be protected—strategies can be "leaky," and people have to consider protecting jobs

people changing their minds, especially teenagers

-don't take "fuck copyright" as a true ceding of author's rights because they may have changed their mind

difference between an audience of a million strangers versus a few people that you know, in terms of comfort

standards and practices in zine culture?

-anarchist-rotted community, so general resistance to rules

-however, zine archivists are developing standards for how to deal with them in libraries and archives

-dialogue between zinesters and zine librarians

zine-making workshops with high school girls that are about making zines, but also educating them about history of zine culture and role of women of color in zine culture

-pros and cons of including certain information

issue of paying for zine collections

-produced collaboratively, so should person who did the collecting get the money?

-people selling zine collections maybe using them to fund retirement

zine-making as the beginning of a career, self-promotion through zines?

-a: relatively rare bc of community ethos?

[/Dan's notes]