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Report from Helsinki Photomedia 2016

http://helsinkiphotomedia.aalto.fi/ocs/index.php/hpm/index/pages/view/HM_2016_index

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The theme of Helsinki Photomedia 2016 was "Photographic Agencies and Materiality" which led to a number of presentations that explored the physical presence of photographic film and prints, often contrasting it with the absence of materiality in the digital and online environment. On the topic of photographic agencies, British theorist David Bates gave a work-in-progress talk, in which he used examples of personal family photograph collections and art photography held by museums and institutions to explore the relationship between image and text and its impact on our understanding of the photograph's context and subjectivity. Most of the artists and theorists drew upon seminal texts in the photography canon, such as Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, Susan Sontag's *On Photography* and essays by Walter Benjamin. However, in David Bates's talk he engaged with the concept of the archival institution and the role of the archives as put forward in Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* to frame his discussion of "new materialism". The theme of archives was an undercurrent to a number of presentations, yet in almost all cases the topic was approached from the perspective of a patron or creator. As a result, I was active in the Q&A following the talks, with the aim of providing and encouraging interdisciplinary approaches and dissemination that involved both archivists, photographers and new media professionals.

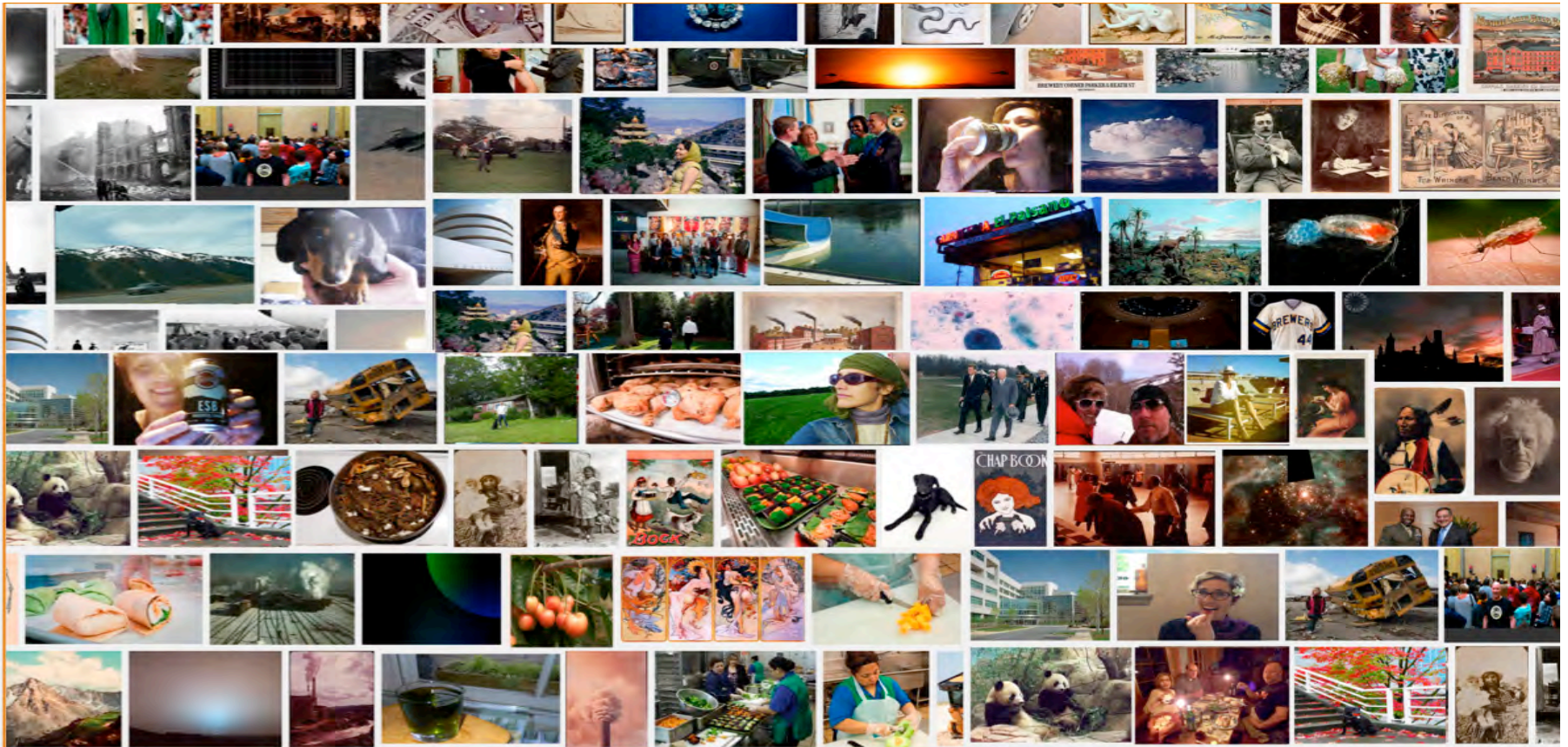
My presentation, entitled "The Loss of Materiality: Impact on Digital Estates and Archives" presented findings from the InterPARES Trust NA Team Project 14 on Model Cloud Contracts and my SSHRC funded doctoral

award research on the "Archival Trustworthiness of Digital Photographs in Social Media Platforms". My presentation was well received, and in fact, Geoffrey Batchen, the keynote speaker of the conference and author of seminal books on photography theory was in attendance and asked a number of questions regarding ownership and possession of digital collections held in social media accounts. There was a robust discussion following my presentation as the audience was eager to understand the legal parameters guiding personal collections shared online and the role of cloud computing and contractual obligations imposed by the providers onto individuals and organizations. The issues raised by audience members reflected many of the comments made by interviewees in my study, which reveal a lack of understanding of social media provider's contracts, confusion surrounding the physical location of content stored "in the cloud" and the relationship between jurisdiction and privacy when dealing with legal access to personal records shared through social media services. I concluded that this area is still still a nascent research topic and one that appeals to a range of audiences.

The Loss of Materiality: Impact on Digital Estates and Archives



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Interdisciplinary Research



InterPARES Trust Project

www.interparestrust.org

NA Team Project 14:
Cloud Service Contracts

Bushey, J., Demouline, M., McLelland, R.
2015. "Cloud Service Contracts: An Issue of
Trust." *Canadian Journal of Information and
Library Science*, 39 (2): 128-153.

Bushey, J. 2015. "Digital Traces as Evidence
and Social Memory." Poster Presentation at
International Council of Archives, 28-29
September, Reykjavik, Iceland.

SSHRC Doctoral Award

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Archival Trustworthiness of Digital
Photographs in Social Media
Platforms.

Focus on contemporary photographic
practice involving smartphones and social
media platforms.

Concepts and methods of Contemporary
Archival Diplomatics.

Overview

- Research Questions
- Survey findings
- Interview findings
- Cloud Service findings
- Implications (Legal & Cultural)
 - Individuals
 - Social Media Providers
 - Archival Institutions

Research Questions

- Are individuals aware of the challenges presented by SMP to continuing access and long-term preservation?
- What are individual's perceptions about continuing access and long-term preservation of their digital photograph collections held in SMP?
- How effective are cloud service contracts at addressing the needs of archival institutions?



Survey Questionnaire

Practices of Accessing, Sharing and Storing Digital Photographs on Social Media Platforms





To what degree are individuals aware of SMP policies & procedures?

Terms of Use regarding inactive accounts, backups, sharing passwords, and providing access to accounts of deceased members for purposes of preservation or deletion.



What would individuals pass down to future generations?

Volumes of digital photographs challenge curation/selection.
Dissemination across multiple platforms introduces complexity.
Social media metadata (e.g., hashtags and comments) may be lost.

Selected Attributes of Interview Participants									
Respondent ID	Age	Country	Gender	Account Type	Years as Member	Photo Practice	Social Media Use	Total Images	Expect Access
R_267	19–29	Canada	Female	Free	6–10	Fine Art	Both	1,001–5,000	20 yr \geq
R_336	19–29	USA	Male	Both	2–5	Professional	Business	1,001–5,000	10–20 yr
R_489	30–39	Canada	Male	Both	6–10	Both	Both	101,000 \geq	20 yr \geq
R_35	30–39	USA	Female	Free	6–10	Amateur	Personal	101–500	10–20 yr
R_229	30–39	Australia	Female	Free	6–10	Amateur	Both	501–1,000	10–20 yr
R_445	30–39	France	Female	Free	11–15	Amateur	Both	501–1000	1–3 yr
R_474	40–49	Canada	Female	Both	6–10	Both	Both	50,001	4–6 yr
R_215	40–49	Canada	Male	Free	2–5	Both	Both	101–500	Don't know
R_195	40–49	Canada	Male	Free	6–10	Amateur	Personal	101–500	7–10 yr
R_271	40–49	Canada	Male	Free	6–10	Both	Personal	10,000–50,000	Don't know
R_90	40–49	USA	Male	Free	6–10	Amateur	Both	1,001–5,000	Don't know
R_484	50–59	Canada	Male	Both	2–5	Both	Both	101,000 \geq	Don't know
R_268	50–59	Canada	Male	Both	6–10	Amateur	Both	1,001–5,000	Don't know
R_339	50–59	USA	Male	Free	2–5	Professional	Both	501–1,000	Don't know
R_366	50–59	Sweden	Female	Free	2–5	Amateur	Both	1-100	4–6 yr
R_478	60–69	Canada	Male	Paid	6–10	Both	Both	10,000–50,000	Don't know
R_308	60–69	USA	Male	Free	6–10	Professional	Both	101–500	<1 yr
R_354	60–69	England	Male	Free	6–10	Professional	Both	1–100	<1 yr

Semi-structured Interviews

Photographic Practice Using Mobile/Smartphones and Social Media Platforms



*“I think that **sharing digital images on social media makes you feel like they are saved...** I know I have to remind myself that just because **I uploaded them to a social media service doesn't mean that they're always going to be available there.**” (R_445)*

*“I don't really know **where things go in the cloud.**” (R_268)*

*“If Facebook shut down right now **they have a complete right to just delete everything.**” (R_336)*

*“Well, **I haven't made plans,** I'm not prepared to disappear quite yet.” (R_489)*

*“I believe **it’s important to add comments and tags.** For one thing I think **the picture is much more interesting if you know ‘why’ or ‘what it is’ or ‘where it was’...**” (R_478)*

*“I usually write ‘here I was at the wherever, or whatever’. And to me, I do it because I figure **I’m trying to tell a story** or something.” (R_35)*





Cloud Service Contracts and Archives

Boilerplate contracts, lack of transparency, sustainability, privacy and cross-border flow...



SMP Contract Issues

➤ Ownership and Future Use

- Social media contracts assign ownership of user-generated content to the creator, but retain an unlimited, royalty-free, non-exclusive license to re-use members' content, even after the account has been terminated.

➤ Storage and Backup

- Social media contracts state that the service supports sharing, not storage.

➤ Ongoing Access for Deletion and/or Preservation

- Service providers may end the service for breach of contract and/or inactivity of the account. Notification of the customer is not required.
- In the case of death, memorialization of account may be provided, but no service allows a beneficiary to remove account and/or download or delete content. "No Right of Survivorship and Non-Transferability."

➤ Jurisdiction

- Free accounts have no control over data storage location, therefore Privacy laws are difficult to establish.

Loss of Materiality = Intangible Assets

- Digital Asset
- Ownership vs. Possession
- Limited Future Access
- Privacy Legislation

Conclusion

- From an archival perspective, the ways in which social media platforms memorialize the deceased and govern control over access to inactive accounts impacts the acquisition and preservation of personal digital archives by family, friends and archival institutions.