Curating the Digital Documentary

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Best Practices Exchange 2020
Overview

- Introduction & background
- Research questions
- Methods
- Results
- Next steps
Welcome to the MIT Open Documentary Lab.

We bring storytellers, technologists, and scholars together to advance the new arts of documentary.

EVENT
5/20/19-5/22/19 La Diablita Robot Workshop

NEWS
Collective Wisdom Field Study Out Now

moments of innovation
Pennebaker: “I don’t know what to do with the digital stuff...”

D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus are documentary filmmakers who’ve recorded 60 years’ worth of memorable folks in some of history’s most culturally significant moments. Reels upon reels of their footage, tons of which
Research Domains

Documentary film
Moving image archives
Digital preservation
Research Focus

Filmmaker workflows, technology, preservation practices, and digital artifacts
Research questions

How do independent documentary filmmakers use digital tools, platforms, and technology to implement their filmmaking workflows from creation through production and distribution?

What tools, software, and platforms are filmmakers using? How do they currently archive/preserve their media?

What types of contextual information (metadata) are generated throughout the production and distribution phases?

Based on the data, what might a digital curation model for documentaries look like?
Methods

1. Developed sample of 15 films and filmmakers from a series of five major, documentary film festivals around the U.S.

2. Collected websites and social media artifacts for the films as evidence of contextual materials and metadata.

3. Based on the data and comparable models in the sciences and humanities, proposed model for a digital video curation framework.
Key Finding #1: Filmmakers engage in self-directed digital curation strategies.
Results

Key Finding #2: Filmmakers share some common practices in digital asset management.
Key Finding #3: The current project – not the future – is the focus.
Results

Key Finding #4: Respondents have not developed formal relationships with archives.
Results

Key Finding 5: Metadata is widely dispersed and exists in many different formats.
Results

Key finding 6: Interactive documentaries require a different approach to preservation.
Digital Documentary Curation Nodes

- INVENTORY
  Document digital video assets and project components

- SHARE/PERFORM
  Document film festival & theatrical screenings, online distribution, social media

- PROVIDE CONTEXT
  Create and capture film metadata and information architecture

- PRESERVE
  Plan for long-term stewardship, identify succession plan, provide sustainable resources

- CLEAR COPYRIGHT/IP
  Ensure clearance for music, media, interviews

- STORE
  Document platforms, devices, cloud storage accounts
A DMP for Documentary Filmmakers

https://tinyurl.com/ycshfjmf
Thank you!

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