

Curating the Digital Archive

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The development of digital technology that has reached the level of easy access and operation by home users has consequently resulted to an imagined level of evolutionary termination of this science and expectations that are therefore perceptive. Such a statement is capable to illustrate the vast audience of digital technology users and their vast perception of this science as tool, object and signature of our Age. Part of this audience believes that digital technology has reached the level of perfection that film distribution can be highly "trusted" to the online community. Here, the term "trusted" refers to expectations of instant preservation of material primary conditions, long-lasting acquisition and the safeguard of an answer to Derrida's argument on the closed archive and its paternal value in *Before the Law*. YouTube has become increasingly the new archive experience. So it's the same role UBU web and LUX online are offering. The only difference is restrictions in content for specialising purposes and dedication to the development of an organised body of collection for the interests of a specialist study. In the early months of 1996 the British Film Institute (BFI) received a grand number of ninety letters from the media industry to support a new national videotheque network that would give access to the BFI archive collection. The project conception, initially named THE IMAGINATION, was to use advanced digital technology to liberate a national collection of film and its associated data, stills, posters and designs; a history told in moving images and is held in the collections of features and short film, documentaries, animation, newsreels, television programmes and amateur films which span for a century. More than a decade later this bid has now taken the form of an online encyclopaedia of British film and television from 1895 until today (www.screenonline.org.uk). Nevertheless, this is an example of how the concept of digital archiving got to the bottom steps of what has become now a major influence towards debates on safeguarding the past for future generations and perhaps a threat towards loosing the idealism of object collecting and physical presence at its very real moment; the moment when the audience comes opposite the object that is a century old. Instead all this experience, the life of things, film, stills, documents are sitting within the utopian walls of a central server. On debating archives, assumptions of content specific categories are of no essential importance since the majority of them aim to fulfil a sole objective; the gathering of social evolution in any medium available and according to technological inventions. The archive itself recognises the value of its dynamic records of history and social sciences. Though, the archives to be explored later in this work will focus those of significant importance within the arena of international visual culture, reference to systems of digital operation and patrons involved pave the economic image and explore patterns of the visual image circulation which will be examined according to the current state of art practice.