

# EMISFÉRICA



Time magazine, 2006

## Save As

Diana Taylor | New York University

**Abstract:** The new digital era is obsessed with archives—as metaphor, as place, as system, and as logic of knowledge production, transmission, and preservation. Digital technologies constitute yet another system of transmission that is rapidly complicating western systems of knowledge, raising new issues around presence, temporality, space, embodiment, sociability, and memory (usually associated with what Taylor denominates the repertoire of embodied knowledge) and those of copyright, authority, history, and preservation (linked to the archive). As paradigms and practices shift in the storing and transmission of knowledge, we are getting glimpses into the range of implications—from the most practical (how and where do we store our materials if we want to preserve them?) to the most existential (does the epistemic change radically alter our subjectivity?). Are the changes qualitative or quantitative, she asks in her essay. Does the current shift resemble past ones (for example, the transition from an oral culture to print) or does the move towards digital technologies enact its own specific social and ethical presuppositions?

The digital raises new issues about memory and knowledge production and transmission in the so-called “era of the archive.” Technologies offer new futures for our pasts; the past and present are increasingly thought through in terms of future access and preservation. This temporal dislocation perfectly captures the moment in which we currently find ourselves in

# EMISFÉRICA

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relation to digital technologies: the feeling of not being coterminous with our time; the belatedness and not-there-yet quality of the now. As my colleague Clay Shirky puts it, it's as if we once again inhabited the uncertainty of the early 1500s. Looking back at the Gutenberg era now, it is easy to describe the world before the invention of the printing press in the early 1400s, or after the spread of print culture in the late 1500s. But what about that long transition period when people knew where they had been but had no idea where they were headed?<sup>1</sup> That's where we find ourselves now—academics, artists, scientists, publishers, computer whizzes, designers, and economic forecasters alike.

The anxiety, however, cannot be limited to technology—to whether this or that system or platform will predominate. Neither can we attribute it to competing economic models brought into conflict by shifting consumer habits or to the struggles for control played out in many arenas from national interest to global markets. Rather we know from that earlier shift from embodied, oral cultures to print culture that what we know is radically altered by how we know it. While embodied cultures relied on the “now” of physical presence and relations, “being there” together for transmission, print made it possible to separate knower from known and transmit knowledge through letters, books, and other documents over broad stretches of time and space. In an earlier work I described these epistemic systems as the “repertoire” of embodied knowledge—the doing, repeating, and mimetic practices that are performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing (in short: all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non-reproducible knowledge transferred from body to body), and the “archive” of supposedly lasting, stable objects such as books, documents, bones, photographs, and so on that theoretically resist change over time. While the ‘live’ nature of the repertoire confined to the ever changing ‘now’ has long lived under the sign of erasure, the archive constructed and safeguarded a “knowable” past that could be accessed over time.

The different systems provoke different ways of knowing and being in the world—the repertoire supports “embodied cognition,” collective thinking, and knowing in place, whereas archival culture favors rational, linear, and so called objective and universal thought and individualism.<sup>2</sup> The rise of memory and history, as differentiated categories, seems to stem from the embodied/ documented divide. But these are not static binaries, or a sequential pre/post, but active processes—two of several interrelated and coterminous systems that continually participate in the creation, storage and transmission of knowledge.

Digital technologies constitute yet another system of transmission that is rapidly complicating western systems of knowledge, raising new issues around presence, temporality, space, embodiment, sociability, and memory (usually associated with the repertoire) and those of copyright, authority, history, and preservation (linked to the archive). Digital databases seemingly combine the access to vast reservoirs of materials we normally associate with archives with the ephemerality of the “live.” A website crash reminds us of the fragility of this technology. Although the digital will not replace print culture anymore than print replaced embodied practice, the ways in which it alters, expands, challenges, and otherwise affects our

# EMISFÉRICA

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current ways of knowing and being have not completely come into focus. If the repertoire consists of embodied acts of transfer and the archive preserves and safeguards print and material culture—objects—what to make of the digital that displaces both bodies and objects as it transmits more information faster and more broadly than ever before? Here I will argue that the digital that enables almost limitless access to information yet shifts constantly, ushers in not the age of the archive nor simply a new dimension of interaction for the repertoire, but something quite different that draws on, and simultaneously alters both.

Again, I want to insist that the embodied, the archival, and the digital overlap and work together and mutually construct each other. We have always lived in a “mixed reality.”<sup>3</sup> The Aztecs performed elaborate ceremonies in attempts to mirror and control the powerful cosmic forces that governed their lives; Sue-Ellen Case argues that the medieval cathedral staged the virtual, while 17<sup>th</sup> century theatre patented its ownership of virtual space.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, the technologies of the virtual have changed more than the concept of living simultaneously in contiguous spaces. Losing oneself in a literary work of fiction, or getting caught up in the as if-ness of a performance, or entering a trance state in candomblé, have long preceded the experience of living an alternate reality provided by the virtual realm online.



Kodak Catalog, 1913

But the digital and the virtual are not interchangeable, even though they are often used as if they were; the change in technologies is profoundly significant. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, Kodak has socialized people into living with and using new technologies. This camera was light enough for women to handle as they enjoyed the increased independence, mobility,

# EMISFÉRICA

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and leisure time of class privilege. The affluent could make memories now to use later. The capitalist joy of taking and possessing are clear, and so too the production of an emerging “you” whose every outing deserves to be recorded. The Youification of the social world so rampant now had been inaugurated. You's experience, moreover, organized what did and what did not matter—a precursor for the Do It Yourself (DIY) contemporary environments in which people surround themselves with worlds of their own making. In order to sell “memory” as a commodity, Kodak also actively promoted nostalgia as an epistemic lens—the urgency of the photo rests on our knowing that the photographed object/subject will be lost, that the present vanishes, and that these happy moments are bound to end. The nostalgia is built into the technology itself: a memento mori as were the first miniature paintings of loved ones. These early technologies stage the vanishing “now” to construct a past that can be accessed (and mourned) at some later time. The pace of the socialization into the digital has accelerated vertiginously.

As paradigms and practices shift in the storing and transmission of knowledge, we are getting glimpses into the range of implications—from the most practical (how and where do we store our materials if we want to preserve them?) to the most existential (does the epistemic change radically alter our subjectivity?). Are the changes qualitative or quantitative? Does the current shift resemble past ones (for example, the transition from an oral culture to print) or does the move towards digital technologies enact its own specific social and ethical presuppositions?

While the digital reconfigures both the “live” and the archival, I will start with the latter. The new digital era is obsessed with archives—as metaphor, as place, as system, and as logic of knowledge production, transmission, and preservation. Why?

The term “archive” has become increasingly capacious, interchangeable with “save,” “contain,” “record,” “upload,” “preserve,” and “share,” and with systems of organization such as a “collection,” “library,” “inventory,” and “museum.” “Archive” seems to magically transcend the contradictions between “open” and “closed,” democratic and elitist; a fetish, it covers over several contradictory and irreconcilable mechanisms of power.<sup>5</sup> But without understanding the power and control that underwrite the archive it is difficult to assess the political and economic implications of what is saved and what is forgotten. Since the Archeon served as the place where official documents were filed and stored in ancient Greece, the archive has been synonymous with government and order. Before discussing what I feel is at stake in these changing definitions and distinctions, I will clarify how I understand “archive.”

An archive is simultaneously an authorized place (the physical or digital site housing collections),<sup>6</sup> a thing/object (or collection of things—the historical records and unique or representative objects marked for inclusion), and a practice (the logic of selection, organization, access, and preservation over time that deems certain objects “archivable”). Place, thing, and practice function in a mutually sustaining way. The “thing” is nameable, ‘storable,’ and preserve-able, imbued with the power and authority—perhaps even aura—of both place and of

# EMISFÉRICA

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selection. We know the thing is important because it has been selected to be preserved in the archive. It does not matter whether the thing was made to be saved—carbon copies of letters and even daily newspapers or handouts at a protest march take on a special status in the archive. In turn, notions of historical accuracy, of authenticity, authorship, property (including copyright), specialized knowledge, expertise, cultural relevance, even “truth” are underwritten by faith in the object found in the archive. This circular legitimating epistemic system again affirms the centrality of the place. The archive comes to function, Foucault noted, not simply as the space of enunciation, the place from which one speaks, but also (and primarily) “the law of what can be said.”<sup>7</sup> Place/thing/practice exist in a tightly bound connection in which each relies on the other for its authority. Each has a different logic and politics of making visible.

But why has archive gained such enormous power or, better, become the site of such contestations of power as we move into the digital age?



Time Magazine, December 2006

On one hand, digital technologies offer the updated Marxist promise for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: that we—individual users—now control the means of production, distribution, and access to information, communities, and online worlds. While the capitalist grids and surveillance systems sustaining the digital remain, in fact, stronger than ever, the egalitarian and even revolutionary promise is compelling. In 2006, Time Magazine declared YOU “Person of the Year” because YOU control the information age. YouTube invites us to “broadcast” ourselves; Facebook allows us to share our daily lives with our community of friends; Twitter provides real time updates on where we are and what we’re doing; Second Life offers us a chance to design

# EMISFÉRICA

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our own avatars and explore, shop, meet, and live online in ways that perhaps can't happen in "first" life. Philip Rosedale, the founder of Second Life, envisions life as a project rather than an existential condition—a "meta-verse," as opposed to a universe.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt about the potentially democratizing power of internet technologies particularly those that (as opposed to television) seem to offer as many points of entry and navigation as there are users. The role of Facebook in organizing rallies in Egypt, as well as recent texting and Twittering by protesters THROUGHOUT THE WORLD indicate a level of inclusivity and immediacy in the digital that would be unthinkable in archival practice.<sup>9</sup> I take the contradictory, complicated, multivalent aspects of digital technologies as a given, a necessary starting point. What I am questioning, however, is whether digital technologies merely extend what we do in embodied and print/material cultures (the repertoire and the archive) into cyberspace, or whether they constitute their very own system of transmission that share some of the features we are used to while moving us into a very different system of knowledge and subjectivity.

What is at stake in this argument? In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, I asked what was gained (or lost) by extending "archive" to include the "live"? Embodied practices, measured by the knowledge regimes sustained by the archive, I argued, fail to provide hard "evidence" of the past. The impossibility of archiving the "live" came to equate absence and disappearance. Historical documents prove that the land belonged to the settlers, not to the Native populations, etc. The personal and political repercussions have been devastating. Here, I pose a similar question: what is gained (or lost) by using the word archive to describe the seemingly democratic, participatory, non-specialized, readily available uploading, publication, and access of materials in cyberspace?



## The Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library

Some digital archives function much in the way brick and mortar archives do. The Hemispheric Institute's Digital Video Library, [Figure 5] which I helped create, is an online archive. HIDVL is a growing online repository of some 600 hours of non-downloadable streaming videos of performance from throughout the Americas that is free and accessible for viewing. HIDVL started in the early days of online video archiving (in 2000) as a special collection of New York

# EMISFÉRICA

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University Libraries and will be maintained for a very long time, some 500 years. Each hour of video costs more than 1000 dollars to process, not counting the intellectual labor that has gone into curating the materials, developing a tri-lingual interface, creating artist profiles, indexes, search tools, and so on.

Different technologies spur different practices (and visa versa) and different things to collect and think about. Digital technologies far exceed print in offering scholars and artists a way to both document and consult “live” practices. Video captures a sense of the kinetic and aural dimensions of the event/work, the physical and facial expressions of participants, the choreographies of meaning. We knew that wonderful performance work in the Americas had either not been documented or, if it had been, videos were rapidly decomposing in boxes under artists’ beds and in their closets. Digitizing them would not only preserve them but also make them widely and easily accessible—a major issue in Latin America where universities have limited holdings and publications very limited circulation. We were also eager to explore the theoretical complexities of archiving performance and the complicated relationships between ‘live’ performance and its mediations.



Reverend Billy  
Photo: Julio Pantoja

On one level, then, we were simply transferring video from one digital format to another. On another, we were commissioning and recording performances that we then transferred to HIDVL. So, while we were adding to the collection we also helped generate new work. Some performances stage the archive—revivals based in part on old scripts and videos. Other performances, such as work by Anna Deavere Smith, are better known as video than as live solo work. Some performances become themselves only through the process of documentation; for example, an Ana Mendieta piece staged for the camera and known only through photographs or video. We have born digital materials that never had an “original” in another medium and hybrid work in which archived videos of performances provoked new “live” and online performances. These materials give rise to new scholarly thinking about the many lives of performance (past and present), allow us access to work and traditions that we cannot see live,

# EMISFÉRICA

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and encourage us to reflect on what happens to “live” events that rely so heavily on context and audience when shown to people from very different contexts. I would love to speculate what viewers in 500 years will make of Rev. Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping, but this is not the time.

This politics of the copy, rather than the “original,” helps us imagine HIDVL as a post-colonial archive. We return the materials and a digital copy to the creators, who maintain the rights. We capture or copy the original signal of the videos and store them in Iron Mountain (the archive of archives; the new “digital authority”) to be updated and copied into new formats as the technologies change. But “copy” as a form of transmission also differentiates the archival from the digital and, most profoundly, from the repertoire. People may copy the way that others dance or speak, but we usually call this mimesis or imitation—a form of learning through doing, mirroring, or parodying another’s actions in which each iteration differs from the next. Even with strenuous discipline, embodied practices will always show a slight degree of variation. A printed copy of a book, however, is virtually indistinguishable from others of the same run. The only differences stem from use; for example, an underlined word, a torn jacket. Nonetheless, the number of books in a run is finite. If I give away my last copy, it is gone. The function CTRL+C allows me to copy automatically, without a discernable limit. Unlike the archive, based on the logic and aura of the original or representative item, the digital relies on the logic and mechanism of the copy that enables the migration from one system or format to another that secures “preservation.” Save As. Interestingly, the aura that comes from the selection process can accrue to the digital copies archived in collections. “Aura,” therefore, may have as much to do with the nature of the selection process as with the status of the thing.

In other ways, however, HIDVL replicates the hierarchies and exclusions inherent in the archival project itself. The process of selection and valorization by experts maintains the logic of the archive intact. Dreams of unlimited access seduce users to participate in the colonialist fantasy that total access is not simply an ideal but a right. While performance scholarship worries more about context, audience, and reception than about the “original” or “authentic” (impossible, insofar as performance is never the same way twice), the human effort that goes into this project, the emphasis on training and expertise, the institutional auspice provided by the university, and the required levels of financial support makes us facetiously compare ourselves to medieval monks.

Nonetheless, most of what people call online “archives” are not archives though they may have some archival features. Skits posted on YouTube or other sites are not archived even though YouTube has been referred to as a “media archive.”<sup>10</sup> This is actually not a technological issue, or even a preservation issue—storage is cheap. It is a commitment issue: the owners may or may not commit to preserving these materials long term. Further, there is no selection process for materials uploaded online. No one vouches as to its sources or veracity. Expertise is irrelevant. The materials seem free and available to anyone with Internet access, avoiding the rituals of participation governing traditional archives. Power and politics continue to underwrite



# EMISFÉRICA

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access, though at first it is not clear how.

These so-called digital archives can be characterized as what N. Katherine Hayles calls a skeuomorph—“a design function that is no longer functional in itself but that refers back to a feature that was functional at an earlier time.”<sup>11</sup> The trashcan icon on our computers that makes a swishing emptying noise is a skeuomorph. So are digital documents and Stickies—all of these are references to past functions that help users adapt to new ways of organizing information. It is the familiarity with these past things and practices that facilitates the leap into a virtual place via technologies most people cannot really comprehend or control. But things and practices are not the same. Online items are composed of bits, not atoms. Digital technology demands that every-thing/practice be transformed into an object and tagged. Our relationship with the thing also changes—we can link to an image but we cannot hold, touch, taste, or smell a person or object. Memory of past usage, however, is programmed into the ways we approach the technologies of the future. But this memory—our individual and collective memory of embodied behaviors—is not to be confused with Kodak’s glossy print memories or with the memory on my computer or, increasingly, the move to huge online operating systems such as Web 2.0 with enough memory to support YouTube or Google.<sup>12</sup> Now we are entering Web 3.0 with interactive functions that move our memories of being able to annotate, chat, and work collaboratively online. My memory, invoked by my documents assures me I am still part of an uninterrupted system of knowledge production that has only been shifted to another, faster, more efficient platform.

This, however, is not the case: place/thing/practice change online. Again, the three are deeply inter-connected and altered in and through digital technologies. The spatiality of the archive as “public building” gives way to the paradoxical ubiquity and seeming no-where-ness of the digital archive.<sup>14</sup> The site-specific character of performance repertoires, which unfold in the here-and-now, also give way to the multi-sited-ness of the web. We are all seemingly “here,” live, now, online, no matter where the “here” might be. The “here” of the repertoire is immediate, the “here” of the archive is distant, but locatable, the here of the web is immediate and (only apparently) unlocatable.

Some of the new digital variations severely challenge the dominance and logic of the archive. Many of the very large projects (such as Google Books) are commercial, though they claim to provide free access to incomplete versions of texts, assuring neither access nor preservation, though the order icon is ready at hand. Google claims sole ownership of “orphan” books—an end run around laws pertaining to content, authorship, and copyright. If print culture produced the concept of copyright, it is not clear yet what legal and legitimating mechanisms will control issues of access and transmission online.

As important as the pressure on the ‘thing’ or content, perhaps, is the invisible politics of place. Where do these collections and archives live? Google et al. own the operating systems and databases that enable access to their massive repositories. This poses other legal issues

# EMISFÉRICA

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not covered in conventional copyright agreements. By owning the operating system, these commercial giants in fact become the ultimate guarantor of value and control. They can censor materials, cherry pick titles, and rescind licensing privileges for those of us who now lease rather than own copies of the book.<sup>15</sup> These digital practices loop back into print culture as well. The most obvious repercussion is the question: who wants to pay for a book they can access “free” online? I am not against freely sharing materials; Latin American scholars and students survive on pirated books and articles. Nonetheless, it is important to note that what is online is not free. The economic models have long-term repercussions across the range of archival practices having to do with understandings of content, ownership, authority (peer review), copyright, and so on.<sup>16</sup> Preservation of digital materials, thus, is not the happy by-product of digitizing or uploading. While it may be true that “data never dies” it is also true that it lives as bits of information that we might not be able to access. Changing technologies and platforms render our materials obsolete far more often than they archive or preserve them.<sup>17</sup>



Finally, I would like to take a quick look at the complicated and changing ways embodied, print,

# EMISFÉRICA

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and digital cultures affect the what we know and how we know it by going back to Time Magazine's 2006 issue of Person of the Year. Here is an image of my copy. TIME. Person of the Year. 2006. Its cover features an image of a computer; a thin red line, reminiscent of YouTube's playback timer, cuts across the monitor running from 00:00 to 20:06. The screen is a reflective silver shiny Mylar mirror emblazoned with a single word: You. The headline beneath the computer screen, aligned to the left of the page, reads: "Yes, You. You control the Information Age. Welcome to your world." Nicely balanced on the cover, to the right of "You" is... well, "me"—sort of. The mailing sticker has my (misspelled) name and address on it. The cover proclaims the imperative to perform. You. Insert yourself here. Yes, You. Your face on the cover! There's a twist here too. While the magazine requires an embodied response from me—I need to hold it in my hands and up to my face to see myself—the design conceit of the video monitor with the timeline transports me to the digital. I try to align the discursive You with the embodied me. I hold the magazine close. Even so, I hardly recognize myself. This distorting mirror shows You (me) as not me, only the vaguest image, a concept more than a person. And who is the invisible "I" that names me You? Is it Uncle Sam's pointing finger from the WWII posters? Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market? Althusser's hailing, "You!" The unseen eye of surveillance that demands: "If You See Something, Say Something?" Or a combination—a parody of hailing and recognition, Martin Buber's I/Thou minus the I... Inside the cover, an ad for Chevrolet announces "THIS IS OUR PERSON OF THE YEAR"—and the "TRUCK OF THE YEAR" that dominates the environment. The contest, and contestation, of who really controls the world and its resources starts before I even get to the Table of Contents.



Time Magazine online, December 2006

Here is the issue in Time's online archive: the bold black You dominates the screen. The "Yes, You" is centered under the screen rather than to the left (who needs a mailing label online?)

# EMISFÉRICA

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The reflective surface is gone. Time's Managing Editor acknowledges the challenges in reproducing the effect of the mirror, "when there's no one standing in front of it." So Time created an animated online version using photos apparently submitted by readers that appeared in the print version to keep something of the interactive quality of the original. This, clearly, is a different kind of performance where You/I is positioned as a spectator to other people's photographs rather than as the subject/protagonist. The online You becomes the object of my looking, one more commodity.

It does not take much to see that these photos could not have been generated by readers—they are all posed in identical, candy colored boxes—again, a photo simulated to look like YouTube. You also comes in all colors. With one odd exception, You is young, beautiful, under thirty, happy, self-satisfied, "cool," independent, on-the-go, not doing much of anything except listening to music or performing for the viewer. Only two of the men seem to have traditional professions—the doctor and the soldier. The "new" You is a global citizen. Mobile ethnicities transcend geographical divides. Race and gender are now a "style" or fashion statement. We're all post-racism and post-sexism, the images suggest. Space is produced [Figure 24], a studio backdrop. You is unlocatable in other ways as well. There are no hints as to where people are or where they've come from; no other people in the shots, no family photos. Two women photograph themselves—very You. The celebratory images affirm embodiment; the designer body seemingly provides an entry point to the world. But these are not the bodies of the repertoire. This You actually exists not in relationship to but as separate from. There is no outside, no exterior with which You might maintain a relationship in the interpenetration of self/interior that Merleau-Ponty elaborated. Inter-subjectivity is possible only through technology.<sup>18</sup> You might chat and text but not talk or read. The new cogito: I Text therefore IM. This You is the product rather than producer of the Information Age. THEM.



Time Magazine, December 2006

There is much more to say about this construction of You, both as Person of the Year and in these images, which cannot be included here but it is important to note that the online You is an

# EMISFÉRICA

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elusive object: when I tried to access the virtual gallery a year later, it was gone (links took me to Vladimir Putin). When I looked again after six months, some of the images from the gallery were online, but only as loose images and not as part of the magazine's layout or organizing concept. However, other images, not included in the original publication, had also been added as if they were part of the original, while others had been re-inscribed with logos of other websites. What kind of archive is this that erases rather than preserves the traces of its former incarnation?



Time Magazine, author's copy, december 2006

The Time archive, then, does not maintain the objects, or even digital renditions. My experience with the issue is different. I cannot hold it. I can't flip pages. There are no page numbers online. Reading has morphed into navigation (or surfing). Instead of linear and sequential, cause and effect, the digital is about simultaneity, interruption, and multi-tasking. Everything written for online media tends to be short; the digital has its own attention span. I engage in politics online even as I do something else. The essays, extracted from the issue, are searchable and clearly attributed to authors and identifiable as URLs. But I can't get a sense of connections between various social, economic, and political relations by examining the layouts and the physical placement of essays and ads. Where is the happy cowboy—the "real" person of the year according to Chevrolet? I cannot go back and examine the magazine issue as a (flimsily) bounded microcosm of cultural concerns, fears, and strategies made visible in the competing messages. Instead of an editor in charge of putting the materials together, the online curatorial process is driven by data-mining techniques and crawlers, which identify patterns of information in a database. I, too, am being constantly

# EMISFÉRICA

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updated with today's ads, each programmed to pick up key words and customize the display to suit "my" tastes. This too is all about me/You but in a different way. It is my profile, not the editor's, which arranges the information for me. The web's interactivity filters my information and sends it to those who pay for access to me. As Wendy Chun notes: online, in order to use, one has to agree to be used.<sup>19</sup>

This digital "archival" practice, I believe, can prove profoundly anti-archival. The shift from the archive to the digital has moved us away from the institutional, the confined, the long term of Foucault's disciplinary society to the "control" society outlined by Deleuze—free-floating, short term, rapidly shifting. We move from the analog to the digital, from signature to password, from citizen to nomad, from typographic man to graphic man, as McLuhan put it.<sup>20</sup> For better and for worse, the politics of the archive are not the politics of the digital.

What counts as embodied knowledge has also morphed. Cyberspace has forced us to name and delimit the "real." "Real time" is not the same as the present. "Live" is not the same as alive. An online community is not the same as a group of people. The "flesh" body is not the same as the very powerful electronic body—the one whose credit ratings or medical history or suspicious activities can sink an application or have a person strip searched at the border.<sup>21</sup>

The digital has also provoked an upset in terms of expertise. Many major scholars feel totally incompetent with ever changing technologies; the young are the true masters of this field. But even the young know less than the younger. It's not just the ever-accelerating generational shifts that make people feel they are out of the meaning-making loop. The subject-as-consumer is tied into the rapid cycle of obsolescence necessary to sell. "Forgetting," as Paul Connerton notes, "is an essential ingredient in the operation of the market."<sup>22</sup> The feeling of not being coterminous with our time, then, is built into the technologies themselves. The anxiety about loss and forgetting, I believe, might explain our current obsession with archives and the nostalgia both for embodiment and for the object. Technologies code the affect in the constant mandate to Save and Save As and we experience the symptom—the need to preserve not just things (documents, bones, fossils) but ways of thinking and knowing—memory, sociability, affect, emotions, gestures, etc, and processes—i.e., the ways in which we work, select, transmit, access, and preserve. But the digital, I suggested, will not replace archives or repertoires. If anything, earlier distinctions between online and offline have crumbled for the many of us across the social spectrum who are now never offline either because we have cell phones or because our money is kept in a bank account. Perhaps the current rush to "archive" has less to do with place/thing/practice and more with trying to save and preserve a sense of self as we face the uncertain future, emphasizing our agency in the selection and meaning making process that we fear threatens to outpace us.

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**Diana Taylor** is University Professor of Performance Studies and Spanish at NYU. She is the author of *Theatre of Crisis: Drama and Politics in Latin America* (1991), which won the Best Book Award given by New England Council on Latin American Studies and Honorable

# EMISFÉRICA

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Mention in the Joe E. Callaway Prize for the Best Book on Drama, of *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's 'Dirty War'*, Duke U.P., 1997, and *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Duke U.P., 2003) which won the Outstanding Book award from the Association of Theatre in Higher Education, and the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize from the Modern Language Association. She is co-editor of: PMLA's special issue on WAR, published October 2009, *Stages of Conflict: A Reader in Latin American Theatre and Performance* (Michigan U. P.), *Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Perform* (Duke U.P., 2004), *Defiant Acts/Actos Desafiantes: Four Plays by Diana Raznovich* (Bucknell U. P., 2002), *Negotiating Performance in Latin/o America: Gender, Sexuality and Theatricality* (Duke U.P., 1994), and *The Politics of Motherhood: Activists from Left to Right* (University Press of New England, 1997), and editor of five volumes of critical essays on Latin American, Latino, and Spanish playwrights. Her articles on Latin American and Latino performance have appeared in *The Drama Review*, *Theatre Journal*, *Performing Arts Journal*, *Latin American Theatre Review*, *Estreno*, *Gestos*, *Signs*, *MLQ* and other scholarly journals. She has also been invited to participate in discussions on the role of new technologies in the arts and humanities in important conferences and commissions in the Americas (i.e. ACLS Commission on Cyberinfrastructure). She is the recipient of numerous awards including the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2005-6. Diana Taylor is founding Director of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, funded by foundations such as Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon, the Henry Luce Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Clay Shirky, "Newspapers and Thinking the

Unthinkable." <http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/> accessed July 14, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> See de Waal, Frans. 2009. *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society*. New York: Harmony Books.

<sup>3</sup> Hansen, Mark B. N. 2006. *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Sue-Ellen Case. 2007. *Performing Science and the Virtual*. New York: Routledge, pp. 9 and 51.

<sup>5</sup> Anne McClintock referred to the archive as fetish in the Pct 2, 2009 meeting of the Engendering Archives working group, CDAD. Columbia University.

<sup>6</sup> The archive means "there, where authority, social order are exercised" as Jacques Derrida puts it, "in that place." Derrida, Jacques. 1995. *Archive Fever*. Translated Eric

# EMISFÉRICA

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Prenowitz, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, p. 129.

<sup>8</sup> YouTube (November 22, 2006). "[The Origin of Second Life and its Relation to Real Life](#)". [YouTube](#).

<sup>9</sup> In Istanbul, Facebook was used to organize a rally against the building of a nuclear plant: <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=8201902011&ref=fb>. See Moynihan, Colin. 2009. "Arrest Puts Focus on Protesters' Texting," *New York Times*, Oct 5, 2009, p. A19.

<sup>10</sup> Jean Burgess and Joshua Green refer to YouTube as "a media archive" among other things in their book, Burgess, Jean and Joshua Green. 2009. *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, Cambridge UK: Polity Press, p.5.

<sup>11</sup> Hayles, N. Katherine. 1999. *How We Became Posthuman; Virtual bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ron Eglash, in *Computing Power*, cautions of shift of computer memory to large operating systems: "In terms of individual use this is a move toward democratization through lay access, but in terms of business ownership it is a move towards monopolization, as only large scale corporations such as Google can afford the economy of scale that such memory demands place on hardware" pg. 60. In Eglash, Ron. 2008. *Software Studies/a lexicon*, ed. Matthew Fuller. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press.

<sup>13</sup> Critical Commons For Fair & Critical Participation in Media Culture has a community generated archive of lectures and media clips. The USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education at USC has an archive of approximately 52,000 videotaped testimonies from Holocaust survivors and other witnesses available at their center and online. The online description of the Internet Archive reads: "The Internet Archive, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper library, we provide free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public."

<sup>14</sup> There is no need to burn books when they can simply disappear. "Takedown notices" often have more to do with business competition than with copyright infringement. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_Millennium\\_Copyright\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_Millennium_Copyright_Act), accessed Sept. 28, 2009.



<sup>15</sup> The peer review process, vital in establishing the authority of print journals, is being undercut in print culture as well as online. In *A Second Opinion*, Arnold S. Relman, former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* notes the widespread practice of authors evaluating the effectiveness of drugs that have economic ties to pharmaceutical companies. Their findings are suspect and the process is ineffective. An article in the *New York Times*, Singer, Natasha and Duff Wilson. 2009. “Unmasking the Ghosts: Medical Editors Take on Hidden Writers.” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2009, p. B1, states: “In medical journal circles, the exorcism of industry financed editorial assistance even has its own name: ghostbusting.”

<sup>16</sup> Other organizations are currently dealing with similar issues—the financial and copyright implications of creating collections and even archives of copies. Every digital archive has to face these economic, technological, and legal challenges. What is the economic model? Many of the very large projects are commercial, though they claim to provide free access. Here again, content is secondary to the financial and technological models being tested, and the repercussions are severely testing the dominance and logic of the archive. Open access online increasingly devalues content in what Chris Anderson has called the “migration to Free” (140). He notes “the computer industry wants content to be free. Apple doesn’t make its billions selling music files, it makes it selling iPods. Free content makes the devices it plays on more valuable” (142). A related question of ‘free’ content and costly devices is being argued in the courts now with respect to Amazon’s Kindle. Google, also in court, now claims sole ownership of ‘orphan’ books—another end run around laws pertaining to content, authorship, and copyright that the archive made possible. If print culture produced the copyright, it’s not clear yet what legal and legitimating mechanisms will control issues of access and transmission online.

<sup>17</sup> Cool and color-saturated, posing for a camera, You is something-to-be-looked-at, the object of an unidentified gaze. You’s body is a project, something it has rather than something it is. The image performs a possible future. With enough exercise or dieting or make-up, we too could be You. “Your best body ever! Get it Now! Keep it Forever!” It goes with everything. You represents not something/someone that is, but something/someone that could be. You invites identification with ideal otherness that, marketers try to convince us, is ours for the price of the product. But of course I will never be You. As eating disorders reach epidemic proportions, the fetishized You-as-product threatens to disappear the agent of the labor that went into creating it—the women and men who starve and binge themselves into shape. You exist only as representation.

<sup>18</sup> Wendy Hui Kyong Chun. 2006. *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 130.

<sup>19</sup> Giles Deleuze. 1994. “Postscript on Control Societies,” in Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Ed. Lewis Lapham. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

<sup>20</sup> EDT's, *The Recombinant Theater and the Performative Matrix*

<sup>21</sup> Connerton, Paul. 2008. "Seven Types of Forgetting." In *Memory Studies*, Vol 1, No. 1, January, p. 67.

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