On being a Digital Curator for the Performing Arts

Doug Reside, Digital Curator
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
dougreside@nypl.org
My role is digital media curation.

Am I supposed to know what that means?

Ha ha! I look down on you for not understanding my trendy jargon.

Your ignorance is on display for all to see!

Leave this meeting now! You are not worthy!

Maybe you could just tell us what curation means.

Fine, let's try that.

It means um... um...

Is it too late for me to overlook your ignorance and move on?

On the Tip of Creative Tongues

THE Tipping Point, a store in Houston that calls itself a sneaker lifestyle shop, does not just sell a collection of differently colored rubber soles, along with books, music and apparel. No, its Web site declares, the store “curates” its merchandise.
A New Spin
Are DJs, rappers and bloggers ‘curators’?
By N. Elizabeth Schlatter

A November 2008 headline in The New York Times read as follows: “Ludacris as Curator of His Own Hip-Hop Museum.”

The concert review described how the musician Ludacris featured guest rappers and DJs famous in the ‘80s and ‘90s in his own new recordings and live performances. Praising the inclusion of songs and appearances by other artists in the concert, the reviewer wrote, “A cavalcade of guests emerged to take the stage for a few moments each, a showcase of New York hip-hop history with a devoted
1) Acquire
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2) Exhibit
What is a Digital Curator?
by Doug Reside, Digital Curator of Performing Arts, Library for the Performing Arts
April 4, 2011

Allow me to introduce myself — my name is Doug Reside, and in February I became the first Digital Curator for the Performing Arts at The New York Public Library. The position of Digital Curator is a fairly new one (not just at NYPL, but in the world in general), and those of us who hold the title do different kinds of things depending on the particular needs of our institutions. I thought it might be useful, then, for me to explain what it means for NYPL to have created this position, and how it will benefit you as a user of our collections.

Traditionally, curators are responsible for acquiring material for a collection, preserving these materials for future generations, helping users locate items from the collection and providing contextual information so they can better understand them, and designing exhibits for the benefit and enjoyment of the public. As digital curator, I will do most of these things as well, but I have specifically made it my mission to:

1. make as much of our collection available online as copyright law, professional ethics, and our budget permits

2. provide both contextual information and software tools to make our digital collections as useful as possible

3. improve methods for preserving and providing access to the "born digital" materials (word processor files, digital musical scores, 3d set designs, etc.) that are now part of the creative history of most contemporary works of art

http://www.nypl.org/blog/2011/04/04/what-digital-curato
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Proposed solutions from traditionalists

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- require that donors give us analog copies of everything
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- wait to acquire born digital collections until we figure it all out
- require that donors give us analog copies
- print everything.
A tool that compresses stacks of hard disk images by removing common file sets (such as operating systems) for storage, but which can re-insert that data into a file on request.
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- A tool which quickly generates a stemma of files scattered across several disk images.

- A tool for reading magnetically encoded data off of any kind of medium no matter the size or shape.