

Digital Archive

This is a group project. In a group of 2-3 students will choose a topic or object, such as phones, laptops, tablets computers, books, typewriters, chapbooks, any physical media or new media, to archive using digital tools. Students are absolutely able and encouraged to use objects in the MAL. Students will construct a digital archive of the chosen object with their group as a page on class website through WordPress. Examples range from traditional visual archives such as the Rossetti Archive, which examines manuscripts, to media archaeological archives like the cuneiform project, which compares new media to ancient technology, to the e-lit archives which house entirely born digital content. As a group, students will consider whether it is better to photograph or video their object, how to do so, and how to describe it. The final product will be a small webpage that contains a combination of visual and written documentation that digitally archives the object. Topics to consider addressing in the written portion:

1. What is the history of this object?
2. What is the physical experience of interacting with it?
3. What type of social/political implications does this object have?
4. If you were choosing to display this object how would you? Would you have other objects nearby? Would you put it in another place in MAL? Why?
5. What is the difficulty in representing an object in the online/through words?
6. What are the possibilities (and perhaps failures) this object presents?
7. How does this compare to similar objects (today and past)?

The basic requirements an archive should address are:

1. Background research information on the object (manufacturer, dates etc)
2. Size/dimensions
3. Documented experience with the object
4. Understanding of where this object is in the history of media
5. Visualization

The minimum word count is 2,000 words; however the maximum is 8,000 (negotiable). I expect students to do above the basic requirements and engage with some of the above questions. Discuss these in your groups. Think about how you want to present this information on a webpage (we will workshop this as well). Imagine how your viewer will understand the difficulties of learning to turn something on or off if it is older for example- how will you represent that?