


Transmediation as Radical Pedagogy in Building Queer and Trans Digital Archives

Elspeth Brown <Elspeth_dot_Brown_at_utoronto_dot_ca>, University of Toronto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5977-7186>

Cait McKinney <cait_mckinney_at_sfu_dot_ca>, Simon Fraser University

Dan Guadagnolo <daniel_dot_guadagnolo_at_utoronto_dot_ca>, University of Toronto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5216-6545>

Juan Carlos Mezo Gonzalez <jc_dot_mezogonzalez_at_mail_dot_utoronto_dot_ca>, University of Toronto


Sid Cunningham <sidney_dot_cunningham_at_gmail_dot_com>, York University

Caleigh Inman

Zohar Freeman <zohar_dot_freeman_at_gmail_dot_com>, Harvard Law School

Amal Khurram

Alisha Krishna <alisha_dot_krishna_at_mail_dot_utoronto_dot_ca>, University of Toronto Faculty of Law

Mackenzie Stewart <Mackenzie_dot_stewart_at_utoronto_dot_ca>, University of Toronto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9149-1076>

Abstract

This article analyzes a one-month, intensive digital collections lab focused on queer and trans community history, in partnership with the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory, and based at Toronto's The ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ+ Archives. This collaboration between ten intergenerational scholars and two community organizations produced three digital exhibitions, focusing on post-1945 Toronto-based queer and trans activist history: "Not a Place on the Map: The Desh Pardesh Project," an oral history project about the queer South Asian diasporic arts and culture festival Desh Pardesh (1988 - 2001); the Foolscap Gay Oral History Project, a 1980s community-based oral history project of Toronto gay life pre Stonewall; and *gendertrash from hell*, an early 1990s zine published by transsexual artists, sex workers, and activists Mirha-Soleil Ross and Xanthra Phillipa McKay.

In analyzing our work within the context of radical pedagogy and critical DH practice, we focus on how we mapped spaces, (dis)inherited metadata, and designed interfaces that would offer tactile, affective engagements with these histories. We analyze our work through the lens of trans(affective)mediation, an approach that understands the conversion of analog to digital objects for online archives in relationship to anti-racist trans studies, affect, and the collaborative potential of community-engaged DH. We argue that this concept offers queer and trans community-based DH scholars and practitioners a means of challenging the ways in which white, cis-normativity is naturalized within both LGBTQ+ community archives and digital humanities tools and practices.

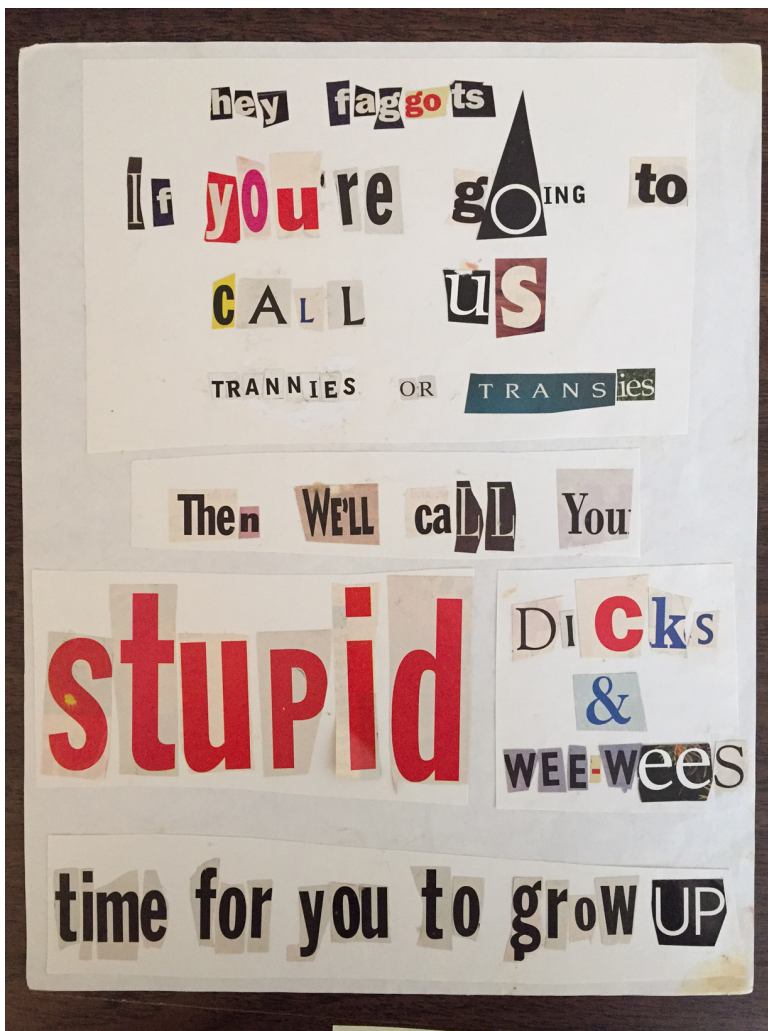


Figure 1. poster by Mirha-Soleil Ross and Xanthra Phillips, 8.5 x 11", published on the back cover of *gendertrash from hell* 2, 1993.

"Hey faggots," the hand-made poster shouts, "if you're going to call us trannies or transies, then we'll call you stupid dicks and wee-wees...time for you to grow up" (Fig. 1). Made by transsexual artists, sex workers, and activists Mirha-Soleil Ross and Xanthra Phillipa McKay for their 1990s zine *gendertrash from hell*, the poster hilariously reproduces the cut-letter aesthetic of a ransom demand, using schoolyard argot to threaten "stupid dicks and wee-wees" while, at the same time, admonishing their faggot readers to "grow up." The carefully cut-and-pasted magazine lettering references anonymity (the form uses mechanically printed lettering to shield the individualizing "tell" of the hand-written), as well as the circulation of media: demands such as this one show up ominously — in the movies anyway — in the target's mailbox. Appearing in *gendertrash*, Ross and McKay repurpose this older media form — the ransom note — as part of a zine, a paper DIY publication that circulated to trans activists and others in Canada, the U.S. and Europe in the 1990s. Now, our collaborative team transitions the media once more, from analogue to digital, as we digitize *gendertrash* for an open-source queer and trans community archive and digital exhibition. To borrow from Jessica Marie Johnson, we are recreating trans feeling in digital form: by gently releasing an artifact of trans femme becoming into a digital environment, this zine will become mediated through devices, metadata, "likes," retweets, and a network of trans commenters, creating in the process an instance of trans femme digital practice.[Johnson 2018]

This essay is about how ten diverse queer and trans DIY digital humanists, mostly students and all social justice oriented, created three digital exhibitions on queer and trans history, with accompanying podcasts, over the course of four weeks. Our project was based at The ArQuives, the largest independent LGBTQ+ community archive in the world, and the three projects focused on a wide range of Toronto-based queer and trans activist history: "Not a Place on the Map: The Desh Pardesh Project," an oral history project about the queer South Asian diasporic arts and culture festival

Desh Pardesh (1988 - 2001); the Foolscap Gay Oral History Project, a 1980s community-based oral history project of Toronto gay life pre-Stonewall; and *gendertrash from hell*, the trans zine published by Ross and MacKay in the early 1990s. We worked together daily on a collaboration that brought together the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory (the Collaboratory), a multi-year project on US and Canadian queer and trans oral history directed by Prof. Elspeth H. Brown; The ArQuives; the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC); the University of Toronto; and York University.

Our collaboration emerges from the recognition that many gay and lesbian community archives founded in the 1970s are no longer necessarily outside the mainstream and, in fact, now benefit from varying forms of structural inequality. Projects like ours are necessary in intervening in the “symbolic annihilation” of trans and BIPOC people within the queer community archive [Caswell 2014b] [Caswell 2017] [Brown 2020]. These gay and lesbian archives, radical in their time in many ways, are also bound up in histories of cisnormativity, whiteness, and settler colonialism; this history leaves a complex affective terrain that QTBIPOC activists-students-scholars must necessarily navigate as they encounter materials in the queer community archive. This work requires not only the labour of everyday DH praxis — digitizing, writing metadata, building exhibitions and podcasts — but also the affective labour of navigating the archival silences and information taxonomies built for documenting cis, white, gay and lesbian social movements. As Marika Cifor has argued, the turn to recognizing the distinctive affective experiences of LGBTQ persons and collections within the archive can surface the specific needs of queer and trans people whose histories have been long-denied through processes of marginalization and non-recognition.[Cifor 2016a] [Cifor 2016b] [Cifor 2017] While some of these affective encounters can produce a radical empathy as project members encounter materials that are personally meaningful, other encounters can produce more complex responses of disidentification and refusal [Caswell 2016].

We understood our work to be in dialogue with other scholars who bring questions of critical humanities scholarship to bear on digital praxis: projects that are motivated by questions of social transformation and radical politics.^[1] As an intergenerational, multi-institutional, queer, trans, and racially diverse gathering of DIY critical digital humanists, our work is an experiment in radical pedagogy that cuts across the institutional boundaries of both the liberal, LGBTQ+ community archive and the neoliberal university. Indeed, if part of the point of doing queer/trans digital histories is providing meaningful access to generational knowledge transfer, then involving undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, senior faculty, archivists, and community members as makers is key to expanding our understanding of cultural and political inheritance, both in terms of what histories, politics and cultures are remembered and what histories, politics, and cultures can be inherited.

Our thinking about the complex affective landscapes of DH praxis has been shaped by the concept of “trans(affective)mediation,” a term we borrow from Daniel C. Brouwer and Adela C. Licona to explore the relationship between anti-racist queer and trans studies, affect, and the collaborative potential of community-engaged DH. Brouwer and Licona rework the idea of transmediation — the transformation of one medium to another — to account for the “affective stakes in the process of moving between print and digital” [Brouwer 2016]. Their work has focused on the affective terrain of both zine makers and zine readers, who experienced contradictory feelings of affirmation and loss as digital preservation intervened in zine culture’s attributes of immediacy, material vulnerability, and haptic intimacy. We have drawn from this work to consider the affective terrain of the queer, trans, and BIPOC DIY archivists who have engaged with QTBIPOC archival objects en route to building DH public humanities projects. Trans(affective)mediation, we argue, is a valuable tool for archival and DH activists whose project goals, like ours, seek to decenter whiteness, destabilize assumptions about ability, value horizontal digital labour structures, and elevate the experiences of trans and nonbinary peoples of colour. In migrating media in this way, we consider transmedia as about both media and embodiment: trans studies asks us to consider “trans” as not simply about embodied histories, but also about movement and migration more broadly — in this particular case, the migration of media from analogue to digital. Our projects have addressed two forms of silences: the silencing of specific voices and experiences within the LGBTQ+ community archive and the erasure of marginalized, non-white community members who do the daily work of curating, maintaining, researching, analyzing, writing, digitizing, recording, and making within these archives [Boellstorff et al. 2014a]. At the same time, this work has provoked mixed feelings. A methodology of trans(affective)mediation has enabled us to account for this contradictory emotional terrain as we both transform one medium into another and encounter both affirming archival objects and those that naturalize systemic inequalities based on race, gender expression, and ability.

By documenting the processes that informed the mounting of these three projects, this article argues that through its call to focus and reflection in digital praxis and process, trans(affective)mediation offers queer and trans community-based DH scholars and practitioners a means of challenging the many ways that white cis-normativity becomes naturalized within both LGBTQ+ community archives and digital humanities tools and practices.

In what follows, we reflect upon and document the various methods, practices, and mediations that came together in the mounting of our three projects. Through trans(affective)mediation, we offer “lessons learned,” so to speak, the varying affective engagements that emerged, as well as a set of protocols for what we nonetheless believe is a radical, community-engaged vision of queer and trans-positive DH. The first portion of our article contextualizes our work with two sections on radical pedagogy and critical DH practice, as well as the challenges of “inheriting [archival] data” within radical DH work. The second portion of our essay delves more deeply into the specifics of the work we did together, including the ambivalences, frustrations, and utopian visions of intergenerational and inter-community solidarities which emerged. Following this, a section entitled “Mapping Space and Time” reflects on how digital explorations of spaces using the open-source GIS platform integrated with Omeka can spatialize histories of gentrification and colonization as they shape queer communities over time; in this section we reflect on the limits of our project for achieving the intersectional results we sought. The following section, “Making Data,” reports on our discussions and evolving practices around queering metadata description as a materialization of complex identity formations through the deceptively simple choices we make about tagging. Our final section, “Trans(affective)mediation and Tactile Digital Histories,” discusses the affective dimensions of working in “analog” archives in which our own racial, ethnic, sexual, or gender identities are implicated, and reflects and reports on both content and interface design choices we made in order to offer users of our digital collections potential entries into these experiences with the past. Drawing together the method, the making, and the digital materials that resulted, this essay argues for a trans(affective)medial vision of critical DH: an approach that is deeply reflective upon process; maintains a robust community-engaged praxis; and that challenges both DH and archival scholars alike to consider how normative forms of DH and archival making, maintenance, and curation enforce dominant structures of power.

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Radical Pedagogy, Intersectionality, and Critical DH Protocols & Praxis

Radical pedagogy that values horizontal, shared leadership and open, democratic exchange is central to building a critical DH praxis that is socially just and meaningfully engaged in feminist, anti-racist, and anti-ableist perspectives. Early in our time together, we discussed our ethical commitments as a diverse collaboration of queer, trans, and non-binary scholars and activists, reflecting upon how we wanted these commitments to shape our digital methods, our practices, our project development, and our final outcomes. We wanted to develop what Anthony Bayani Rodriguez has described as a “guerilla praxis,” one that “allows students to approach academic knowledge production as a public good and a form of social movement activism relevant to the material conditions of our times” [Rodriguez 2017] [Yao 2018]. These reflections proved central to developing a shared DH practice defined by 1) horizontal work relations and a meaningful division of labour, 2) drawing from DH’s roots in feminist pedagogy, a shared commitment to intersectionality, and 3) a recognition of critical disability studies’ important role in the development of socially just digital projects. We sought modes of DH protocol and practice (transmediation) that reflected our affective-ethical commitments as DH scholars and activists. As we argue here, these methodological commitments challenge underlying, normative assumptions in popular DH research and teaching projects.

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In our case, we have followed a feminist pedagogy that is both anti-racist and trans centric, and which has brought together digital humanities praxis with community-engaged queer and trans history. As Jessica DeSpain has argued, digital humanities’ emphasis on experiment, making, and collaboration is deeply indebted to a longer history of feminist pedagogy, even though so much of recent digital humanities work occludes this history [DeSpain 2016]. Feminist DH pedagogy foregrounds the goal of collaboration over hierarchy; designs the research environment so that a range of abilities are welcomed; examines the relationship between technology, media, and structural inequality as the work unfolds; and works closely with communities beyond the classroom. These feminist principles have been central to how many progressive digital humanists have understood their praxis, including our own, even if they are often dismissed for their DIY roots.

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We designed our work together as a feminist, trans-positive and anti-racist intervention into DH and community archive projects. As Roopika Risam has argued, drawing on the work of legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, an intersectional approach — one that foregrounds the intersections of race, gender, and class in the analysis of structural inequality — allows digital humanities practitioners to overcome the field's current divisions of making/programming vs. analysis and criticism [Risam 2015] [Crenshaw 1991] [Nowviskie 2014] [Nash 2017]. Yet pursuing an intersectional approach within digital humanities projects is to work against the grain because, as Tara McPherson has argued, the difficulty in bringing together an analysis of race with an engagement with technology is “an effect of the very designs of our technological systems, designs that emerged in post-WWII computational culture” [McPherson 2012]. We recognized that this seeming difficulty in bringing together race and technology is itself a problem of privilege. Scholars of color working at the intersections of media, technology and race, such as Anna Everett, Lisa Nakamura, Wendy Chun, Kara Keeling, Simone Browne, and Safiya Noble, among others, foreground questions of race and racism in the context of white supremacy, both within the academy and outside of it.^[2]

We have also approached our work together with insights drawn from Critical Disability Studies (CDS), a field of study that one of the students has particular expertise in. CDS examines why and how certain body-minds are deemed normal and natural, while others are not.^[3] The field challenged us to conjure up alternative material-discursive, labour, and digital spaces in which disability is both anticipated and desired. Disabled scholars and activists have long used digital tools to participate in humanities scholarship as their work has often been excluded from more traditional avenues of publication.^[4] Recently, digital humanities scholars have begun to consider the importance of building accessible digital tools and spaces as part an intersectional DH practice, rejecting a view of DH “tools of the trade” as neutral technological objects existing within complex power structures, rather than as technologies constituted through relations of power [Risam 2015] [McPherson 2014]. Bringing digital humanities into conversation with disability studies pushes critically engaged digital humanities practitioners to reimagine the form of digital tools, work, and spaces. This commitment reminded us to contest digital tools which function only within a system of compulsory able-bodiedness and to welcome the difference in form our tools and projects will take when they are designed to embrace disability [Williams 2012] [Godden 2016] [McRuer 2006].

The questions raised by CDS very quickly reshaped our thinking. During our work together, we recognized the silences which an ableist model of digital space can enforce. As such, we took several steps to increase the accessibility of our three exhibitions. First, any audio materials in our collections were uploaded along with full transcripts. Second, we used ABBYY Finereader software to apply optical character recognition to all of the text-based archival materials in our collections. This allows the texts to be read by screen readers, a technology which reads texts out loud and is used by many people who are blind or low-vision. And third, we included image descriptions for any image based materials in our digital collections, and embedded alt-text for images whenever possible. We used these three accessibility tools as they applied to the particular needs of each collection.

Inheriting Data

Working with archival collections, we soon recognized our three projects as a form of transmedial intergenerational cultural and political transfer and inheritance, and yet we also recognized how both the archival collections we selected and our group itself looked decidedly different from the kinds of white, cis, and heteronormative narratives which are often celebrated in LGBTQ+ community archival practice. The data we inherited, and the DH practices that we undertook, would have an uneasy relationship to where many of us understood our own position to be in LGBTQ+ history and life. We recognized these tricky encounters as precisely the kinds of trans(affective)mediations described by Brouwer and Licona. Where they documented the various affects that emerged when using queer ephemera that had been digitized, we sought to explore trans(affective)mediation through the process of digitization and mounting. Practically speaking, our projects drew on a range of analog and born-digital objects. In some cases, we digitized oral history interviews from cassette tapes that had not been listened to since the early 1980s. Other interviews conducted more recently came to us as digital audio, and in these cases, our “digitizing work” meant creating transcripts, abstracts, metadata, and streaming audio. Across all three projects, we accessed larger, paper-based archival collections to curate the exhibitions, choosing appropriate material to digitize and finding documents, images, photographs, and other

ephemera that would bring these rich histories to life for users. We designed three creative exhibitions using Omeka and its Neatline plugin, an open source platform for digital collections designed by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. All three exhibitions were accompanied by podcasts, specific to the content and process of collaborative, critical DH praxis. Our undergraduate participants curated the digital exhibitions and made the podcasts while more senior members of the lab provided mentorship, including scholarly and technical support. In addition to the podcasts, we also took turns creating reflective social media content (blogs for The ArQuives and the Collaboratory websites; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts) about our work in progress: a form of public-facing outreach to the communities we hoped to reach with our digital projects. To learn all of these technical processes, we came up with a series of workshops on topics such as writing abstracts, creating metadata, and using Omeka. We taught each other skills that were specific to particular collections, such as digitizing cassette tapes and records, or scanning photographs. In many cases we learned together. For example, Neatline was new to all of us, as was writing, recording, and producing podcasts. We sought support from the GitHub community when we were truly stumped by Neatline, and we reached out to the Queer Zine Archive Project, and a few DH librarians, via Twitter and Facebook when we wanted to learn best practices around document accessibility. Through these practices, all of us explored the wider, collaborative DH world.

All of our work together took place off-campus, in the second-floor gallery space of The ArQuives, Canada's LGBTQ+ Archives. Founded in 1973, The ArQuives is primarily run by its 100+ volunteers, some of who have volunteered on a weekly basis for 40 years. As the largest independent and community-based LGBTQ+ archives in the world, The ArQuives houses records related to LGBTQ+ activism, art, and community life in Canada and around the world. The archives holds a significant periodicals collection, along with oral histories and other audio; film and video; books; banners and other textiles; a modest art collection; and other forms of ephemera crucial to queer world-making, such as pin-buttons and nightclub matchbooks. Building the archives' trans collections has been a significant focus in recent years, through partnership with the Collaboratory. Like many other community archives, The ArQuives has invested heavily in developing digital infrastructures, as a way of doing outreach beyond the archives' doors.

The ArQuives is an activist archive that documents social movements and activist campaigns for social justice [Flinn 2009b] [Flinn 2011] [Flinn 2009a] [Caswell 2014b]. Community archives like this one exploded in the 1970s, as activists in the civil rights, feminist, anti-war, and gay liberation movements sought to collect and preserve the records that emerged from these protests [Barriault 2009] [Brown 2011] [Bastian and Alexander 2009] [Sheffield 2017]. This longer gay and lesbian history presents specific challenges to contemporary queer and trans archival activism, however. The ArQuives, like many 1970s gay organizations, was founded by a generation of gay, white, cis gendered men whose organization and activism helped end the criminalization of same-sex desire and who helped found key institutions of gay and lesbian sociality, politics, and history during this period. It can be difficult for activist archivists, perhaps for some white gay men in particular, to understand how and why histories and methods imbricated with a heroic narrative of "gay and lesbian" sacrifice and struggle can, at the same time, be a site for the ongoing preservation of white, middle-class, cis values. Left unexamined, these embedded narratives, which shape decisions around collections and resource allocation, re-marginalize queer and trans people of color, Two-Spirit people, rural and poor members of the LGBTQ+ community, those who are disabled, and other marginalized groups [Brown 2020]. Our collective work on these three collections, exhibitions, and podcasts — especially the *Desh Pardesh* and *gendertrash*/Mirha-Soleil Ross projects — is part of a larger effort to shift The ArQuives towards a less exclusionary future. We conceptualized the digital exhibitions as a place where students, activists, and others can learn about our intersectional, queer, and trans past while at the same time learning about the The ArQuives and its extensive holdings.

As a team, we spent a lot of energy reflecting on how our critical ethical commitments should intersect with praxis and protocol. We are an intergenerational group with different relationships to the university, to gay and lesbian archives, and to the labor of making digital collections. Each of us contributed in significant ways to the intellectual design of the digital collections we worked on. At the same time, students expressed some frustration with the theory/praxis divide in DH and our projects, and reflected in their evaluations that as we progressed, more and more time was spent "learning technologies and putting together the exhibits." As one student wrote in their evaluation, these technical tasks were "challenging in and of themselves. But I definitely [think] we could have done more to make links — like how are power

relations reproduced in the creation of metadata? How does our exhibition ‘trans-mediate’ these materials?” That students left the lab able to frame these kind of questions in relationship to the digital humanities is impressive, but it is also clear that the practical work of building digital collections, which is often repetitive or even mundane, overshadowed the theoretical outcomes we hoped for. This article is, in part, a way of bringing those threads together, to create that space and time.

Even as the data we inherited bore little resemblance to our own queer and trans lives, our team brought together faculty, community members, undergraduate, and graduate students into work models that emphasized collaboration, presence, and co-creation. As one student wrote in their evaluation of the lab, “It was really great to have undergrads, graduate students, postdoc, and professors all in the room together learning from one another. I witnessed some really beautiful moments of mentorship, and to me this was an example of the way we can combat this individualistic [neoliberal] culture of academia in which we are told to consistently put ourselves and our careers first.” Students noted that they chose projects they cared about because they aligned with their own interests or identity formations. At the same time, students expressed some frustration with working on three separate collections, instead of drawing connections across projects. As one student wrote, “I also hoped that we would do more collaboration in the larger group of five rather than entirely working in the sub-groups. I had hoped there would be a bit more inter-group exchange. It was hard to facilitate that as we were short on time!” This student’s critique of collaboration illuminates some of the problems that come along with grant or task based DH projects that pursue ambitious outcomes in short periods of time. Sometimes “the work” gets in the way.

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Our group’s partnerships with community organizations such as The ArQuives and SAVAC exemplify how the digital has transformed the traditional learning space of the classroom, rendering students active participants and collaborators on research that can take new forms, as traditional research papers make room for digital exhibitions, Wikipedia articles, and other DH research outcomes [Burdick 2012] [Kill 2012, 389–406]. In some cases, as in our work together at The ArQuives, collaborative work takes place outside the classroom altogether. In moving outside the classroom to engage in digital humanities praxis, our work together unfolds in dialogue with community engaged scholarship, public history and public humanities, fields that have long sought to decenter the classroom as the sole site of learning about the past, especially in LGBTQ+ contexts.

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Digital Mapping Space and Time

In our work with the Foolscape Gay Oral History collection, we drew on digital mapping technologies to understand overlapping spatial histories of the city. Making maps allowed us to draw connections across Toronto’s queer communities, for example, by connecting gay men’s cruising spaces to histories of colonization. At the end of the project, we found that while these connections were often visible to us as makers, they did not necessarily come across for users of these discrete collections: our materials, research design, and tools did not always align in the ways we had hoped. Because we’d organized our work into three distinct projects based on the specific fonds we were working with, the original archival logics of separating whiteness from colonialism, for example, found their way into our mapping work. In our analysis of our collaborative work, we were reminded of how, as Jen Jack Giesecking has argued, GIS can reproduce the military logics of its origins as a technology. Like Giesecking, we felt this affective tension acutely. We found ourselves in need of “new and easier-to-use technologies, algorithms, and tools” that worked more effectively against the grain of colonial logics [Giesecking 2018].

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Mapping Foolscape is a digital exhibition that provides insights into the Toronto gay scene between the 1940s and late 1960s. The main primary source is a series of oral history interviews that John Grube and Lionel Collier conducted between 1981 and 1987, known as the *Foolscape Oral History Project*. The project produced over 100 interviews with Canadian gay men born in the first half of the twentieth century, who had spent most of their lives in Toronto. The respondents — mostly white, middle-class, and English-speaking — were part of Grube’s and Collier’s social circle, and ranged in age from 36 to 92. The interviews covered the respondents’ early lives, coming out experiences, initiations into the “gay community,” interpersonal relationships, sex lives, interactions with police or psychiatric therapy, contact with and opinions on the gay liberation movement, among other themes.

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The authors' digital exhibition, "Mapping Foolscap", offers some of the digitized audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews, as well as an interactive map that locates the venues where gay men gathered, cruised, and socialized in pre-1970s Toronto. ^[5] The map locates popular movie theatres such as The Bay and The Rio; public spaces and cruising sites such as High Park, Allan Gardens, and Queen's Park; bars and "beverage rooms" such as the King Cole Room in the Park Plaza Hotel, the King's Plate Room in the King Edward Hotel, Letros, the Quest, and the St. Charles and the Parkside taverns. We supplemented the map entries with photographs and other graphic materials, as well as with audio clips from the interviews. Through these clips, the Foolscap narrators describe these spaces in their own words, or discuss their social and sexual interactions therein. *Mapping Foolscap* is in dialogue with the work of David Churchill, George Chauncey, John Grube, and other North American scholars, and seeks to provide a significant tool for researchers and the general public interested in Toronto's gay history by facilitating the access to a rich, first-hand source that only a few people have heard about [Churchill 2004] [Grube 1986] [Grube 1991] [Grube 1997].

The Foolscap Gay Oral History Project offers an astonishingly rich and detailed portrait of Toronto's gay scene before Stonewall. Yet the project was far from intersectional: almost all of the 100 narrators are cis-gendered, gay white men, many of whom were middle class at the time of the interview. This does not accurately reflect the increasing diversity of Toronto's gay community during the 1980s. These white interviewees are mostly silent on race, even though the mid-1980s was a heated political moment for building anti-racism in Toronto's gay liberation community. ^[6] Despite this rich contemporaneous debate about race within the lesbian and gay community, the Foolscap interviewers did not pose questions to their narrators that would ask them to reflect on race, gender, and other markers of difference, and we were left to figure out how to map these erasures in the present [Moraga 1983] [Ross 1995].

To address such silences, contemporary activist and community historian Río Rodríguez, whose work is affiliated with the Marvellous Grounds project, has developed digital maps in collaboration with queer and trans Black, Indigenous and people of colour in Toronto. Rodríguez's research in Mapping QTBIPOC Toronto demonstrates how GIS maps represent "the city not as defined by history projects that intend to commemorate institutional success, nor as places that have a single history," but rather their maps value "the multiplicity of voices that are often erased from understandings of public history due to racism, classism and transphobia" [Rodríguez 2016, 74]. Rodríguez' critical mapping work intervenes into dominant narrative of Toronto's queer past, one that has privileged the life histories of white gay men and their activism, of which Foolscap is a part.

In visualizing the social geography of Toronto's QTBIPOC histories, Rodríguez' work dovetails with other critical DH projects that have brought an intersectional lens to understanding the history and politics of place. The FemTechNet's "Situated Knowledges Mapping Project," for example, explores how working with GIS systems can become a way for students to engage with these complex histories. Designed as a classroom activity, this project prompts students to become mapmakers, answering questions such as "How are places racialized, gendered, classed, designated or felt as safe or dangerous? ...What knowledges come from being part of a dominant culture in a place? And from a minoritized culture in a place?". ^[7] Engagement with the politics of gentrification is common to DH mapping projects that draw on interviews and oral histories, and recent notable examples include Kristy Kang's *Seoul of Los Angeles: Contested Identities and Transnationalism in Immigrant Space*, and the Bay-area based Anti-eviction Mapping Project [Kang 2013] [The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project].

DH has enabled public history projects to reach outside of the archive or museum to produce visitor itineraries that map onto the physical places within the city. Some of these spatial humanities approaches bring viewers and listeners, physically, into the urban environment through GPS-enabled mobile devices that provide digital access to localized "tales of the city."^[8] Immersed in our critical DH work at The ArQuives, we pursued an "old-school" approach to learning about these histories: Rodríguez led us on a real-life "Radical Queer Walking Tour" shaped by their research for the GIS-enabled Mapping QTBIPOC Toronto project. With this tour, Rodríguez and their collaborators seek to displace white supremacist histories of Toronto's "Gay Village" with stories focused on BIPOC activism, sex work, gentrification, and other ongoing struggles as they might be connected to the past. ^[9] The tour provided students with a model for translating their own critical engagements with lived space to the histories they were working on. Ideally, this intersectional approach to mapping Toronto's queer and trans past would inform the curatorial approach to the students'

Rodríguez's model enabled us to see new relationships between empire and sexuality as they came together in the physical space of the city. For example, as the Foolscape oral histories show, one of the city's key spaces for gay cruising and public sex had been the bandstand located in (the appropriately named) Queen's Park.^[10] But in 1969 the city dismantled the bandstand and installed, in its place, a five-ton equestrian statue of King Edward VII donated by the Indian government while "in the process of getting rid of reminders of the days of British rule" [Wencer 2014]. Working with maps allowed us to understand how the landscape itself functioned as a material palimpsest for overlapping histories of both global and local structures of power: one concerning the histories of British imperialism, the Commonwealth, and the South Asian diaspora; the other concerning illicit sexualities in the space of the city.^[11] These overlapping histories were visible to us, as makers, to some extent, but the decision to keep the three digital collections separate renders these connections invisible to users. At the end of our project, we concluded that what had began as a division of labour aimed at "getting as much done" as possible over the course of the month reinscribed the original archival logics of each collection in digital space. We knew going into this project that the design of digital collections would impact how users learn about Toronto's queer and history from the The ArQuives's Digital Collections site; we didn't realize until the end of the project that achieving the intersectionality we sought at a deep, technological level would have required us to think outside existing models for building archives and organizing work.

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In our contributions to the The ArQuives' digital exhibitions site, we decided to digitize collections that included histories of queer and trans people of colour, namely the Mirha Soleil Ross and Desh Pardesh collection. Because we organized our work around already existing collections, rather than a set of thematics that linked all of them, our research design maintains the liberal tokenism of "adding" QTBIPOC to the historical record [Ware 2017]. It was not until after the lab that we realized a critical trans(affective)mediation praxis could break the "reproduction" logics that often inundate digital archives with the same oppressive dynamics as their physical counterparts by imagining movements across "separate" collections. Trans(affective)mediation processes that use digital tools to draw thematic, spatial, and descriptive associations between apparently discrete historical moments or groups is one way digital archives might sort through these problems and challenge the "grain" of existing archival logics.^[12]

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How might we create new research designs that both accommodate the strategic essentialisms that are sometime useful at the level of pedagogy where, for example, students work on the projects that most closely match their identities while, at the same time, interrogating and complicating the stability of such identity categories? As one of the students who worked on the Foolscape collection wrote in their evaluation of the lab, while they felt ready to challenge the racism and misogyny built into the collection's logic, they needed more interaction with their peers and mentors working on other collections in order to find the tools to do this. In retrospect we wonder what this experiment would look like if we had, instead, developed a project not around existing archival collections that were already organized by identity categories but instead had focused on a thematic that crossed these categories — queer arts organizing in Toronto in the 1980s and 90s, as one example. While our digital collections don't begin from this kind of productive schema, our interventions in writing metadata achieved some success in using digital tools to undo some of the logics that govern (white) "gay and lesbian" archives. We explore this work in the next section.

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Making Queer and Trans Metadata

Most digital collections depend on text-based descriptions, such as tagging objects by subject and keyword, in order to be search-retrievable, and ultimately intelligible and meaningful for the communities they represent. Yet standards practices in metadata description often fail to adequately index the complex histories, identities and embodiments contained within queer and trans cultural heritage materials. Standard subject heading vocabularies — databases of terms that creators can use to tag objects within a digital collection — sometimes use outdated or pejorative language to describe queer and trans subjects [Berman 2008]. Standard vocabularies oriented toward whiteness might not drill-down to the level of granularity required for the archives of queer diasporas. Queer and trans metadata initiatives such as the Homosaurus project, for example, assist in addressing the failures of descriptive standards for queer and trans cultural heritage materials by putting forward new, community generated standard vocabularies as linked data.^[13]

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Doing community-based digital collections work from a queer, trans, and anti-racist perspective meant finding ways to revise standard, normative metadata vocabularies for our particular collections. We did this work with an understanding that queer and trans users have been some of the most adamant critics of metadata standards within the libraries and archives field. ^[14] Our first workshop as a lab group focused on learning how to write metadata for oral history interviews on Omeka. As a group, we explored the political implications imbued in processes of making and revising data, weighing both the necessity and limitations of standard classification practices, and discussing the need to critique and demystify how databases are built [Bowker 1999]. We found it necessary to improvise and bend some of rules that guide best practices in using controlled vocabularies [Wolfe 2008]. By talking about metadata, and practicing making data together, we oriented our work toward each of our political commitments and ideas about identity-based terminologies. As we added objects to our digital collections and came up against the inevitable compromises that invoking standards requires, we moved toward a more flexible understanding of description [Duff 2002]. Our lab was an immersive experience in data as something that is made through small, singular acts that add up to larger infrastructures of intelligibility. While the Homosaurus worked well for The Foolscap and Mirha-Soleil Ross collections, digitizing the Desh Pardesh oral history project made us aware of the vocabulary's 2017 limitations for describing the archives of queer of color diasporas. We discovered, for example, how LGBTQ+ metadata interventions such as Homosaurus had been organized around whiteness as a structuring logic.

The Desh Pardesh exhibition emerged as a metadata and curatorial collaboration between The ArQuives, the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC), and the University of Toronto. Desh Pardesh ("home away from home") was a groundbreaking multidisciplinary queer South Asian arts festival that operated in Toronto from 1988-2001. Bakirathi Mani has written that "for the decade of its existence, Desh Pardesh was a monument to the possibility of creating diasporic communities that worked through national, linguistic, and religious differences in order to create a queer, anti-racist, and activist South Asian collectivity" [Mani 2001]. Since its closure in 2001, the festival has become a relic for the Toronto South Asian arts community. While the festival has been sporadically commemorated with a few events, reflections, and critical essays over the past 15 years, there had yet to be any sustained investigation into this queer diasporic festival which took hold of the Canadian arts scene in the 1990s [Fernandez 2006]. In part, this is due to the paucity of archival sources; as Gayathri Gopinath has argued, events such as Desh Pardesh often resist textualization because the "queer spectatorial practice and the mercurial performances and more informal forms of sociality" that occur at queer diasporic night clubs, festivals, and community events are not easily documented [Gopinath 2005]. To address this archival silence, in 2013 Indu Vashist, SAVAC's Executive Director, created "Not a Place on the Map: The Desh Pardesh Project," a three-year oral history project about queer South Asian history in Toronto focused on Desh Pardesh. Hired in May 2014, SAVAC's Anna Malla mobilized the festival's networks to complete 36 oral interviews over two years. Coinciding with the month-long research lab, the accessioning of the Desh Pardesh research material at The ArQuives gave us the opportunity to tease out the complexities of writing metadata for archives of queer diasporic communities and lives. In using the Homosaurus to write metadata for the Desh Pardesh Project, we encountered many examples that show how whiteness as normativity is embedded within LGBTQ projects. "Asian Cultures" and "Anti-racism" drawn from the Homosaurus, for example, would only scrape the surface of this project's descriptive needs. The team lamented that the Homosaurus could only tag queer South Asian dance practices that involved dance traditions such as Bharata Natyam or Giddha as "exotic dancers," for example; they bristled at how distinctions between events and projects involving Tamil, Goan or Punjabi communities would be conflated into "Asian Cultures," "Asian Religions" or "Asian Studies." Beyond its Anglophone commitment, the use of "Asian" as a cultural and racial referent exposes the Homosaurus' Anglo-European roots. In wrestling with these limits, team members encountered and navigated what Brandon Walsh, drawing on Sianne Ngai, has described as the "ugly feelings" of failure as epistemology, where "frustration and anxiety are central components of the classroom, not experiences to be delicately avoided" [Walsh 2019]. While we initially considered writing to create a new standard vocabulary for writing queer South Asian diasporic metadata, this proved far too ambitious for a month-long lab. In the end, we took a DIY approach, blending the Homosaurus with a modest, standard vocabulary that two members of our team generated out of listening to the oral history interviews, and considering the language used across narrators to describe queer and trans South Asian diasporic experience. Further considering the cultures-religions-studies triad used to complicate "Asian" in Homosaurus, we thought about the ways in which the practice of writing metadata in (white) LGBTQ archives has been historically marked and continues to be marked by Orientalist imaginations of the (Asian) Other. In the face of these LGBT archival

practices, we opted to contextualize the project by writing into the digital collection an analysis of the further entrenchment of neoliberal governmentality in Ontario under the Mike Harris government of the 1990s. We hope that this reframing encourages alternative reading practices of this queer diasporic archive. Since taking over the Homosaurus, Rawson has been addressing critiques such as this one by working with collaborators to expand the vocabulary in key areas, such as slang, BDSM, Indigenous and Black terms; the Homosaurus welcomes collaborators in strengthening the project overall.

For the Mirha-Soleil Ross collection, another team created a page about their own relationships to identification and the terminology used in *gendertrash* to describe trans people and trans community. As K.J. Rawson has shown, digital humanities projects provide methodological tools for tracking shifting terminologies within trans communities across literary and cultural production. For Rawson, DH tools are entries to doing community-based etymologies, which matter for understanding the shifting cultural conditions in relation to which trans communities make themselves intelligible [Rawson 2014]. In the *gendertrash* exhibition's "A Note On Terminology," three team members identify, respectively, as a "bisexual trans man, a queer cis femme, and a queer trans man" who "encounter *gendertrash*'s unusual terminology not merely as an historical artifact, but as a radical challenge to the way we understand identity, community, and attraction that remains just as relevant and necessary today." Narrating our own reading practices around identity labels and search terms makes more transparent the role of makers in community-driven databases, emphasizing our subjective investments in materials as a force that inevitably shapes how trans histories become intelligible in the present. Weaving these self reflexive discussions about terminology and its categorizing effects into our digital collections mirrors the care with which we have written metadata — with knowledge that these terms orient users to the histories they encounter. While tags and keyword classification often operate in the background of user's search retrieval and navigation experiences, our outward reflections on description seek to bring these behind-the-scenes processes to the fore of the interface.

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Trans(affective)mediation and Tactile Digital Histories

Trans(affective)mediation was central to our deliberate engagement with remediation as an active, and often uncomfortable process that is an inevitable part of making digital objects from paper documents. As Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin have argued, remediation is a primary characteristic of digital media; digital media reproduce, adapt, or otherwise reference older forms [Bolter 2000]. While remediation is a temporal phenomena that describes the relation between "old" and "new" media, the idea of transmediation explored by Henry Jenkins and others points to the difficulty of conceptually or technically sustaining divisions between media forms in the context of digital platforms. Techniques and aesthetics from "print," "video," and "the web" productively converge [Jenkins 2017]. Digital archives present a peculiar kind of transition across media in that they at once seek to promote and obscure the digital object's status as reproduction. Online archives promise wide access to audiences who might not ever visit a brick-and-mortar archive and they do this, in part, by separating digital objects from their referents. On the other hand, digital archives are invested in creating experiences for users that are "as good as the real thing," a promise that rests, in part, on denying the digital encounter's status as substitute. Most members of our group are millennials accustomed to encountering queer and trans historical materials through platforms such as Instagram; for many of us, the lab presented a first encounter with archival research, and we learned basic practices in handling documents well, alongside some more critical introductions to archival arrangement. We were at once captivated by the aura of these objects and invested in their presentation in the age of digital reproduction, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin [Benjamin 1969, 217–251]. Playing with the relationship between digital objects and their analog "originals" was, for us, a purposeful practice. It became a significant focus when we considered selection, description and display, accessibility, but also the affective encounters we were staging for ourselves, and others.

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Brouwer and Licon's "trans(affective)mediation" is one way of marking the affective dimensions of digitized versions of queer, trans, and P.O.C. cultural heritage materials. Transmediation, which they define "as the translation, or transformation, of one medium into another medium, a crossing over and a conversion of one already existing medium into another," is here marked with affective potentiality, as digitization may provide opportunities for distinct sensory possibilities [Brouwer 2016] [Jenkins 2021]. Brouwer and Licon capture, in part, the ambivalence of digitization with this term, thinking through how online reproductions of queer, trans, and P.O.C. zines offer wider access and

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preservation, but also the loss of tactility, material records of use, and encounters with embodied others who are also readers [Brouwer 2016, 73].^[15] This ambivalent position guided our protocols for both collaboration and digitization, and we searched out ways of reproducing more meaningful encounters for users through experimentation with the Omeka platform, as we describe below. The anecdote about Mirha-Soleil Ross and Xanthra Philippa MacKay's "Dicks and Weeweews" collage that opens this article gives a sense of how our work brought this attention to form, and the affective dimensions of working with paper zines, to bear on both digital collection design and encoding queer and trans life against the normativity of metadata.

Ross is a transsexual artist, activist, and sex worker best known for her video and performance art, her role as editor of the 1993-1995 zine *gendertrash* and as 1997-1999 organizer of Counting Past 2 – the first international trans film festival in Canada. Her sizable personal fonds at The ArQuives consists of books, periodicals, videos, physical artifacts, correspondence, working papers, and periodical clippings that represent not only her own work and interests as a collector, but also material traces of the collaborative and more broadly social aspects of much of her work. The *gendertrash* series that became the focus of our digital collection contains a large amount of correspondence with retailers, subscribers (including prisoners who received the zine for free), and hopeful or successful contributors — as well as draft manuscripts, clip art, zine pasteups, and financial documents. The correspondence, more than anything else, demonstrates how much Ross's practice built upon networks of trans activists, artists, and publishers across North America and Europe who supported each other by the transnational exchange of information, social connections, subscriptions and advertising space, despite a lack of complete consensus around issues like sex work, prison reform, medico legal gatekeeping, and activist strategies. Our digital collection sought to reproduce, or at least gesture toward these networks in some way, building upon Brouwer and Licona's assertion that digitized zines ought to be understood and experienced within extensive, complex networks that reproduce but also depart from paper circulation methods [Brouwer 2016, 80].

As part of this project, Ross gave archives volunteers permission to digitize and share all issues of *gendertrash* online. Previously, only the first issue, edited by Xanthra Phillips, had been accessible online (through the Queer Zine Archive Project).^[16] In itself, the periodical represents an aesthetically and historically significant assemblage of news, resource listings, art, and commentary, tied together by the radical queer politics of Ross and her partner/collaborator Xanthra Mackay. In addition to our use of ABBYY to make *gendertrash* scans compatible with screen readers, we were also motivated by questions of accessibility in deciding what material to make public; we wanted to provide a scholarly rigorous discussion of *gendertrash*'s historical context that would be compelling for a broad public while providing easier access to important related objects from the Ross fonds. Our team felt this would align our digital presentation of *gendertrash* more with the claimed purpose of the original *gendertrash* : "giv[ing] a voice to gender queers, who've been discouraged from speaking out & communicating with each other" [Mackay 1993].

As we were attempting to digitally publish our Omeka exhibit, we had some difficulty finding materials to share that wouldn't require lengthy consultations around privacy and rights (i.e. correspondence).^[17] We ultimately decided to begin with a small exhibit centered around images of the original artwork and paste-ups used to produce the zines, and activist buttons (made by Ross and Mackay) that could be ordered through forms published in *gendertrash* and other trans periodicals. We furthermore uploaded a modified version of one of these order forms to the Neatline plugin for Omeka, and made it so that clicking on individual issues or buttons on the form would allow online visitors to access the digitized zines and buttons (Fig. 2). The small selection of objects in the exhibit are eye-catching and representative of the politics of the zine overall while the Neatline navigation serves as a reminder of the way a single print artifact may have been able to serve as a material link for isolated trans people to connect both with a wider community and also with a larger body of trans material culture.

subscribe to: gendertrash

a Canadian community & politically oriented
publication for transsexual & transgendered persons



gendertrash		quantity	amount
gendertrash #1	\$20		
gendertrash #2	\$20		
gendertrash #3	\$20		
gendertrash #4	\$20		
gendertrash #5	\$20 (Aug 1, 1995)		
total amount (gendertrash)			

#	Buttons	quantity
B1	Stop Violence Against Transsexuals Now!	
B2	Don't touch me I'm electric IS epileptic	
B3	Don't call me FRANKIE shitface	
B4	Maries Fight Back	
B5	Make Love not Steak	
B6	Hi Bi Love	
B7	We don't need balls to play	
B8	Drag King	
B9	This Transie's Angry	
B10	Sex Change	
B11	Blatantly Bi	
B12	Trans Curious	
B13	100% TransGendered	
B14	Gender Fuck Me	
B15	I love 'em butch	
B16	Feminists for TransGender Liberation	
B17	(no to) genderphobia	
B18	Just say No to transphobia	
B19	Butchy Femme	
B20	F2M Queer	
B21	IS butch	
B22	Have a safe GenderFuck	
B23	Trans Dyke	
B24	Trans Tag	
B25	Gender Outlaw	
B26	Gender Queer	
B27	Transsexual Hooker	
B28	The Empire Strikes Back	
B29	Transsexuals get AIDS too	
B30	Transgender Fury	
B31	I love Transsexuals	
B32	IS lives under IS control Now!	
B33	Theory Mutilates Surgery Liberates	
B34	Only a Transsexual could love you	
B35	Employment Equity for Transsexuals	
B36	I have big feet - So what???	
B37	Woman-born Transsexual	
B38	I'd rather be dead than genetic	
B39	Transsexuals for Animal Liberation	
B40	Nobody knows I'm a Transsexual	

#	More Buttons	quant.
B41	Decriminalize Prostitution Now!	
B42	Pissed Off Transsexuals United	
B43	Gender Liberation	
B44	Polysexual	
B45	Poly gendered	
B46	Gender Oriented	
B47	gendertrash	
B48	Keep your theories off my gender identity	
B49	High Drag	
B50	High Femme	
B51	Switch	
B52	Cult Feaser	
B53	Top Femme	
B54	Baby Dyke	
B55	Small penises: anything more than a mouthful is wasted	
B56	Stone Butch	
B57	Bi-Curious not Bi-Confused	
B58	Veggie Queer	
B59	IS & Against Racism	
B60	Feminists for Prostitutes' Rights	
B61	Whining Works!	
B62	Hormonally Insane	
B63	Veggie IS	
total number of buttons:		25
price (buttons are 1/\$2, 3/\$5, 10/\$15 or 25/\$25)		
s/h (\$1 on all button orders under \$10)		
total amount (buttons)		25

Booklets	
HIV/AIDS and the TG Communities in Canada	
by Ki Namaste	\$5.00
total amount (booklets)	

Video Offer	
gendertroublemakers *	
by Jeanne B & Xanthea Philippa	
VHS approx. 26 min. \$30	
Chroniques by Jeanne B. *	
VHS approx. 12 min. \$20	
An Adventure in Tucking with Jeanne B. *	
VHS approx. 5 min. \$20	
total (video offers)	

Total Amount	
total gendertrash	
total donations	
total price of buttons (including s/h)	
total video	
total amount	

Box 500-62, 552 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 2E3

Figure 2. Interactive order form as part of *gendertrash* exhibition, The ArQuives Digital Collections

This order form uses simple image-mapping technologies built into the Neatline plugin in order to remediate the affective experience of receiving, completing, and mailing a paper order form, for “born digital” users who may never have had to send away for a publication this way. As Brouwer and Licona, but also Kate Eichhorn and Jenna Freedman, have all argued, tactility, records of wear, use, of making, reading, and photocopying together, or for others, are fundamental to the status of zines as media [Eichhorn 2013]. Recreating this order form online reproduces the experience of touching, choosing, sifting and sorting within a digital interfaces, or at the very least, shows users that this experience might have taken place by organizing the collection around the pre-printed form as a media infrastructure of engagement. These are affective gestures that form part of what it means to participate in trans material cultures.

Like our reflections on making data, a critical transmediation practice required us to insert our own processes of encountering “the originals” in the stories we told to users about making these digital collections. To launch and contextualize each collection, we produced podcasts, through a workshop format lead by Stacey Copeland, a feminist podcast-maker, radio host, and doctoral candidate at Simon Fraser University. As Hannah McGregor argues, learning podcasting develops technical skills from which queer, trans, and racialized communities, outsiders to normative representations of “maker cultures,” are often excluded. Podcasting is not actually that difficult, technically speaking, and allows students to engage with processes of making that enrich humanities education and provides opportunities for self-expression. In each of these podcasts, students found ways to place themselves within the stories they told about making digital collections.

For the *gendertrash* podcast, two team members narrated the process of unboxing some of the Ross fonds in real-time, in a recording that captures the excitement that comes along with touching trans historical documents for the first time.

They digitized selections from Ross's collection, in order to include audio from Vaginal Davis and Robespierre's 1994 punk anthem, *Queens (Make the World Go Round)*, situating their unboxing processes in an immersive engagement with what Ross' acoustic environment might have been like while making *gendertrash* [McGreggor 2017]. Mapping of the Foolscape interviews led another set of team members to understand the importance of space for gay men in a transnational context, as one of the grad students revisited his own memories of these geographies in Mexico City. Their podcast edited original interview clips in ways that brought stories of being in these spaces to life, for example, adding the sounds of a summer thunderstorm to a clip in which a narrator describes seeking shelter from the rain in a bandstand with another man who would quickly become a lover. Two members of the team described what it felt like being brown and queer and encountering these records of a history in which you might locate yourself. As one of our group described it in their podcast, "I wish that a community as large and as strong as Desh still existed. What amazes me is that in 2017, I don't feel the same sense of empowerment as Natasha. With Desh, people weren't alone, and had the space to explore their identity within the safety of a group that feels the same way." Through these podcast stories, creating queer, trans, and P.O.C.-centred digital collections became precisely about critical forms of inheritance, finding an explicitly queer, trans, brown, or anti-racist history of the city that mirror experiences today, while recognizing differences that matter.

Conclusion

Our experiments with trans(affective)mediation techniques drew on critical approaches to digital mapping, writing queer and trans metadata, and building online interfaces in order to offer users engagements with the past that were also engagements with how digital collections get made. Our work together and our reflections on collaboration brought forward some challenges, which will shape our work in the future. As we have suggested here, while aspects of our research design limited the ability of our finished collections to fully realize the anti-racist, intersectional approach to queer and trans history we aimed for, we believe our approach offers critical DH practitioners many entries to thinking about digital archives and the labouring conditions that shape how queer and trans scholars, students, and activists do research together. Our work is one instance of how social justice-engaged university researchers from all stages of academic life can collaborate with community groups to produce digital collections that transmediate our relationships to the past: this aspirational process draws connections across communities of struggle by breaking down more rigid archival logics; it can re-write the database forms and standards used to describe and mediate access to collections; and in turn, can offer ways to re create the tactile and affective dimensions of "touching" queer and trans histories.

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Notes

[1] The work here is growing, but see scholars and activists networked with #transformDH and the FemTechNet collective, as well as [Nieves 2018] [Earhart 2016] [Lothian 2013] [Chun 2014] [Cong-Huyen 2015] [Posner 2015]

[2] The scholarship on race, media, and technology is growing quickly, but see [Everett 2002] [Everett 2009] [Nakamura 2008] [Nakamura and Chow-White 2013] [Chun 2006] [Chun 2009] and [Noble 2019].

[3] "Body-minds" is Eli Clare's term, see [Clare 2017]

[4] See for example, Mia Mingus, *Leaving Evidence* (blog), <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/>; AJ Withers, stillmyrevolution (blog), <https://stillmyrevolution.org/>; Lydia X. Z. Brown, Autistic Hoya (blog), <http://www.autistichoya.com/>

[5] The digital collection only draws on interviews with narrators who are deceased or have given their permission for audio to be shared online.

[6] As quoted in [McCaskell 2016]; for further writing about racism in Toronto's gay community during these years, see [Ha 2017]

[7] Femtechnet Situated Knowledges Map, <https://femtechnet.org/docc/feminist-mapping/situatedknowledge-map/>

[8] There are numerous examples of these data landscape projects; in Toronto, one of the earliest, and most successful projects has been [Murmur], a documentary aural project that records stories and memories told about specific geographic locations (see <http://murmurtoronto.ca/>)

[9] Rodríguez discusses how they developed this tour in some detail in [Rodríguez 2016]

[10] For further history about Queen's Park and public sex, see [Maynard 1994] [Churchill 2004]

[11] For some recent work that is bringing together oral history and queer and trans urban culture, [Boyd 2012] [Johnson 2016] [Moore 2014] [Murphy 2016] [Ruiz 2014] [Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project 2020]

[12] The idea of an "archival grain" references [Stoler 2010]. Anti-colonial and anti-racists critiques of archives that explore using multimedia to undo archival logics include [Gumbs 2011] along with Rodríguez's work, cited above.

[13] The Homosaurus vocabulary is available at <http://homosaurus.org/>. The Homosaurus has since moved to Northeastern University under the direction of K.J. Rawson, and has transitioned to a linked data vocabulary; the editorial board has been working on it steadily to address some of the 2017 shortcomings described in this section.

[14] See, for example, [Roberto 2011]

[15] For ambivalence about digitizing in the LGBTQ2+ context, see [Cowan 2018] and [Chenier 2015]

[16] See http://archive.qzap.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/337

[17] With funding from the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory, some members of our team worked for about 8 months to organize, describe, and archive the Mirha-Soleil Ross holdings at The ArQuives. This work has involved extensive collaboration with Ms. Ross, based in Montreal, as well as indispensable assistance from Nora Butler and Trish Salah.

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