digital cultural heritage: FUTURE VISIONS

Edited by Kelly Greenop and Chris Landorf

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The papers published in these proceedings are a record of the symposium mentioned on the title page. They reflect the authors' opinions and are published as submitted in their final form with limited editorial change. Their inclusion in this publication does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the editors.

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The symposium Convenors received a total of 33 abstracts. All abstracts underwent a double-blind peer review by two members of the Symposium Organising Committee. Authors of accepted abstracts (24) were invited to submit a full paper following presentation of their draft papers at the symposium. All submitted full papers (8) were again double-blind peer reviewed by two anonymous reviewers and given the opportunity to address reviewer comments. Papers were matched as closely as possible to referees in a related field and with similar interests to the authors. Revised papers underwent a final post-symposium review by the editors before notification of acceptance for publication in the symposium proceedings.

Please note that the paper displayed as an abstract only in the proceedings is currently being developed for an edited book on digital cultural heritage.

Innovative new data collection and digital visualisation techniques can capture and share historic artefacts, places and practices faster, in greater detail and amongst a wider community than ever before. Creative virtual environments that provide interactive interpretations of place, archives enriched with digital film and audio recordings, histories augmented by crowd-sourced data all have the potential to engage new audiences, engender alternative meanings and enhance current management practices. At a less tangible level, new technologies can also contribute to debates about societal relationships with the historical past, contemporary present and possible futures, as well as drive questions about authenticity, integrity, authorship and the democratisation of heritage.

Yet for many, gaps still exist between these evolving technologies and their application in everyday heritage practice. Following the success of a sister conference in Brisbane, Australia in April 2017, this symposium focused on the emerging disciplines of digital cultural heritage and the established practice of heritage management. The symposium aimed to provide a platform for debate between those developing and applying innovative digital technology, and those seeking to integrated best practice into the preservation, presentation and sustainable management of cultural heritage.

The symposium was designed to encourage critical debate across a wide range of heritage-related disciplines. We welcomed papers from practitioners and academics working in cultural heritage and related fields such as architecture, anthropology, archaeology, geography, media studies, museum studies and tourism. We particularly encouraged papers that explored the challenges of digitising tangible and intangible cultural heritage, those that identified issues with digitisation and digital interaction, and those that addressed the theoretical challenges posed by digital cultural heritage.

Kelly Greenop and Chris Landorf
EDITORS and SYMPOSIUM CONVENORS

digital cultural heritage:
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London Symposium

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Future Pasts, Past Future: Or material preservation in an Increasingly digital world

Abstract

The rather problematic - yet emblematic - Smithsonian 'streets in the sky', seems to have been proven insufficient, or better inefficient, in putting Robin Hood Gardens on 'the List', joining the ever-growing fleet of English Heritage. Instead, the provocative and influential public housing scheme, designed and completed in 1972 by two of Britain's most important architectural designers and thinkers and also leading protagonists of New Brutalism, was paradoxically given the title of 'monument' and offered a place in 'PastScapes' – a repository / link in Historic England's online presence for non-listed or non-designated sites. After the failed campaign to save the historic estate and the concurrent approval of the planning application of the second phase of the 'Blackwall Regeneration Project' - which gave a conclusion to this controversial conservation case - local MP Margaret Hodge suggested that a 3D scan of the concrete complex would be enough preservation to legitimize its demolition, raising the question amoungst others, of how much a digital replica can really replace a building.

In this increasingly digital world, it seems that we are slowly starting to (if not already doing so) delegate the preservation issue to a new set of evolving technologies, that along with their incredible possibilities and fascinating/interesting capabilities, they bring to the table their own dialectics. Dialectics not quite known and certainly not yet fully determined. Dialectics that will probably once and for all change, shift, disrupt or relocate any relationship with the historical past, unmaking every established idea, notion and concept around cultural heritage, historical monuments and monumentality or even the very own idea of preservation. When everything migrates from the material to the immaterial and ultimately to the digitized computer bank or the cloud, all will be different.

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