



**London
South Bank
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Documenting Experience: the
Practices and Challenges of
Audience-Generated Content in
Theatre and Performance
Documentation

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores whether and how audience-generated content produced from and about audiences' experience and during and as part of a live performance might become part of a theatre and performance work's archive. It sets out to examine both the challenges as well as the documentational opportunities that this material might afford. The thesis is influenced by Gabriella Giannachi's articulation of digital technologies as archival interfaces and Sarah Bay-Cheng's convergence of live performance and documentation. It examines the function of audience-generated content during three case studies and postulates that audiences can be regarded as co-producers of performance documents. To do so, it analyses how *Speak Bitterness* by Forced Entertainment, *Karen* by Blast Theory, and *Flatland* by Extant request that their audiences activate the live performance or augment its experience by using a digital technology, and how by doing so they leave digital traces behind.

Building upon this condition the thesis interrogates how the three company case-studies archive these works' audience-generated traces. In addition, it investigates how digital traces are perceived by institutional theatre and performance collections. Through interviews with the case-study practitioners, the curator of the British Library Sound Archive and the archivists of the National Theatre and Victoria and Albert Museum the thesis reveals a set of technical and organisational challenges involved in this process. Although audience-generated traces are considered valuable marketing and research material they also unsettle established notions and structures of performance documentation and its archive. Rethinking the established notion of the performance document and the form of files through which it conveys knowledge, the thesis returns to Ricoeur's theory of the trace so as to expand ideas of how performance documentation enables ways of knowing a past performance. It argues that, as direct remnants of the live performance moment originating in the participant, audience-generated content offers solutions to 'presencing' the audience in documentation and novel ways for revisiting a past performance work from within its unfolding.

Key Words

performance studies, archive, performance documentation, user-generated content, social media, digital technologies, Forced Entertainment, Extant, Blast Theory

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Introduction

0.1. Preface

The broader UK research community has been examining and developing a practice for collecting and preserving performance-based works.¹ Recent literature has also explored institutional methods of collecting and documenting performance (Giannachi and Westerman, 2018) in addition to ways of staging its re-enactment and exhibiting its documents (Remes et al., 2014; Guy, 2016). Drawing on the practices of museums, archiving institutions, and academics in collecting and staging theatre and performance based on its documents, this research comes out of an examination of performance practitioners' documentation strategies as informed by the archiving of the user-generated content – referred to in this thesis as audience-generated content – derived from their work. The point of departure for this research is the increasing number of performance works that use digital technologies as a tool for facilitating new ways of participatory spectatorship, thus producing and depending on audience-generated content. It is equally concerned with performance documentation studies that present audience-generated content as a form of documentation and consider its long-term value (Bay-Cheng, 2012), as well as opportunities for its archivization (Chatzichristodoulou, 2014).

Theatre and performance practices that might either participatory, interactive, or immersive and that dramaturgically employ digital technologies mediate their audiences' engagement and place it at the centre of the live performance. For works with strong 'participative intent' documenting 'the behaviours of artwork and audience' is paramount (Graham, 2014, p. 76-77). Considering digital technologies as archival structures formed through their users' activities and audience-generated content (Shanks, 2008; Ernst, 2013; Giannachi, 2016; Hadley, 2017), recent studies have also argued that the 'digital process becomes [a] crucial defining factor in the notion of

¹ The most recent example is the 2019-2022 AHRC funded project *Documenting digital art: re-thinking histories and practices of documentation in the museum and beyond* led by Gabriella Giannachi. Additionally, from 2011 to 2014 the UK Research and Innovation body funded the programme *Performing Documents: Modelling creative and curatorial engagements with live arts and performance archives*. This project examined practical approaches to performance historiography and considered the use of documentation in the reconstruction and revisiting of performance works. During the same period, the research network *Collecting the Performative* at Tate examined the practice of collecting and preserving performance and resulted in creating a list of questions that should be considered when collecting a performance work.

documenting or archiving the work' (Nash and Vaughan, 2017, p. 150). When embedding digital technologies in performance, the live moment organically creates traces of itself through the audience-generated content of its audience's experience (Bay-Cheng, 2012; Giannachi, 2016; Chatzichristodoulou, 2014). The way that this thesis understands and examines this process is based on the articulation of the trace outlined in Chapter 1.1. In computational studies, the concept of a digital trace refers to born-digital artefacts produced by users' actions (Ellison et al., 2006, 2011; Krämer and Winter, 2008). Similarly, Paul Ricoeur has written that traces are marks of a past event, existence, practice, or activity (2004, p. 119). Although when taken in isolation it cannot reveal the history of its marking, and is, therefore, prone to neglect and erasure, a trace can demonstrate why and how an archive is formed since it is responsible for its creation (Ibid.).

Recent studies describe audience-generated content as a form of documentation (Giannachi, 2016; Bay-Cheng, 2016) that is equal to other types of performance documents highlighting, however, its precarity, neglect, and destruction. Following this they recommend researching archival strategies that can facilitate the preservation of and access to such records (Chatzichristodoulou, 2014; Sant, 2016). A few research projects that have attended to this (Giannachi et al, 2010; Pérez, 2014) stress concentrate solely on photographic and video content. They open the space for additional research into the pragmatic aspects of archiving other types of audience-generated content – such as data and social media feeds – outside its initial technological environment.

Building on the above discussions, this thesis delves into the underexplored field of the archival appraisal and management of audience-generated content by practitioners and institutions. It examines whether and how audience-generated content – as a direct trace of an audience's mediated experience and, consequently, of the live performance itself – can find its place within the archive of a performance. More particularly, the thesis looks into the ways that practitioners and institutions evaluate the audience-generated content of a performance and it explores how this material is archived after the end of the live moment. In other words, it examines how practitioners gather, select, curate, safeguard, and preserve audience-generated content as part of a performance's archive. This leads to the main research question addressed in this study:

How do practices of documenting and archiving a performance reflect theoretical trends that consider the archival value of audience-generated content, which is produced during and as part of a performance?

In order to approach and respond to this question, the present work observes and analyses the integration of audience-generated content in three live performances (chapter 4) – namely *Speak Bitterness* (2015) by Forced Entertainment, *Karen* (2015) by Blast Theory, and *Flatland* (2015) by Extant. Through this exploration, and by building on discussions about the archival abilities and features of digital technologies (Giannachi, 2016; Taylor, 2010), as well as the concept of the trace (chapter 1.2), the thesis argues that in the three case studies, audiences are co-documentarists of the live performance (chapter 4.4). In so doing, it delves into how practitioners manage audience-generated content when creating the archives of a work. The thesis compares these findings to the established documentation practices of each performance company and the archiving practices of three UK performance collections: the National Theatre Archive, the Theatre and Performance Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Literary and Creative Recordings Collection of the British Library (chapter 5). These comparisons serve to address the complex relationship between the way current performance archiving practices are framed and understood, and the appearance of documentation as structured by audience-generated content. They also allow for a consideration of any possible conceptual and practical obstacles that might hinder the archiving of audience-generated content. At the centre of this examination lie the following questions:

- i) What is the audience's role in shaping the documentation of performance organically generated by their own traces?
- ii) What are the challenges that audience-generated content creates for practitioners and performance archivists/curators in comparison to established performance documentation and archiving practices?
- iii) Within the context of big data what factors regulate which files will be kept?
- iv) What are the implications of discarding audience-generated traces?
- v) What are the capacities and potentials of audience-generated content as archived documents?

These questions are intended to help unearth the theoretical and pragmatic potentials as well as limitations involved in the archiving process of audience-generated content.

A series of practical challenges emerge which are analysed as pertaining to two groups: a) the technical characteristics of audience-generated content, and b) the organisational obstacles that relate to the development of alternative documentation strategies. In the first subset (chapter 6.1) belong problems relevant to the context of big data; namely, information overload, the format of audience-generated content, and any privacy policies that might impede the collection of audience-generated content, as well as its long-term preservation, sharing, and re-working. The second group of challenges (chapter 6.2) are concerned with the ways that collaborative relationships between practitioners, academics, and scientists, as well as funding and the commercialisation of purpose-built digital technologies, might affect not only the experimentation with alternative documentation processes and frameworks, but the entire process of creating long-term accessible and meaningful performance documentation. Alongside these pragmatic problems, a set of conceptual understandings relating to the authorship of and expectations for the documentation of a live performance also emerges as influencing the archiving of audience-generated content (chapter 6.3). Comprised of photographs, videos, and text-based descriptions, the documentation of a live performance is viewed by practitioners and institutions as providing mediations of past actions, allowing present and future audiences to see or read about a past live performance. Documents are designed and even fabricated to provide an immediately perceptible picture of the live performance, offering the viewpoint of a passive spectator. A second anticipation is that the documentation's authorship confirms the creative role and copyright of the artist. Theatre and performance archives most often than not bear the signature of professional documentarists, artists, and institutions.

Contrary to professional recording methods, audience-generated content constitutes a residue of the live audience's experience and its contribution to the live performance. Such content is fragmentary and might equally comprise of other forms of digital data, as it might of photographs, videos, and text. As a trace generated during the live performance, audience-generated content depends heavily on other documents, other content, and other media, such as the particular technology through which it was produced. In order for the information that it holds to be accessed, such data has to be migrated to and curated alongside other performance documents in new databases. This demand for interpreting audience-generated content, which requires specialised knowledge and skills that practitioners often lack, might pose a threat to the control practitioners hold over the documentation and history of their work. Furthermore, these characteristics of audience-generated content challenge current understandings of the

purpose of documentation. Indeed, the thesis argues that these characteristics are counterintuitive to conventional ways of doing and understanding performance documentation and its archive. Because it defies traditional understandings of what the performance document is and does, audience-generated content, similar to Ricoeur's trace [2008 (1998)], is frequently overlooked. As a result, it is frequently treated as mere waste (Giannachi, 2016, p. 2). But it is precisely, this thesis argues, for this very same reason that audience-generated content may constitute a valuable archival material (chapter 7).

Building on literature that finds audiences' experiences and perspectives beneficial in assisting the historiography (Bay-Cheng, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2017; Robertson, 2012) and conservation of time-based works (Beerrens et al, 2012; van Saaze, 2015; Muller, 2008), this thesis argues in chapter 7 for the importance of archiving audience-generated content. Audience-generated content provides a context for the live performance in relation to the engagement of its audiences. It additionally exposes the multimodal conditions of the work – how different media converge and work with one another to produce a unified work. As a trace of the audience experience, audience-generated content can provide an inside perspective of the live performance next to that of the artists. This is highly beneficial in the case of works that cannot be recorded or photographed. Even more so, through its interpretation – for example, by using data visualisation or arranging files into purpose-built archives – audience-generated content can become a source for creating new reinterpretations and futures for the performance work. Because of its multivalent format, such content can allow for the production of new ways of revisiting a performance work. Ultimately, the information contained by audience-generated content can be useful to the performance piece itself, to archiving practices, to computational researchers as well as to other artists, while its interpretative potential can build new cross-disciplinary collaborations. Departing from discussions that see the performance archive as enabling the interpretation of the performance by facilitating new ways of experiencing it in the present and future (Jones, 1997, 2012; Schneider, 2011; Bedford, 2012) the thesis finally contends that archiving audience-generated content has the potential to extend a performance work across time and to establish it as an ever-expanding artwork.

Having argued for the benefit of archiving audience-generated content for the historiography and continuation of the performance piece, the thesis suggests in its concluding chapter that we must rethink current theatre and performance record-

management practices so as to enable the creation of theatre and performance archives that include audience-generated content (chapter 7). Under these considerations it proposes that further research should be conducted so as to explore frameworks for retaining audience-generated content according to the needs of each project. It suggests that funding be allocated to developing artists' technical skills and making more time and resources available that could facilitate the archiving of audience-generated content. It, additionally, proposes that discussions be held on how to best ensure the ethical use of such content.

This thesis explicitly examines the processes of performance documentation and particularly the documentation of the live performance. It looks at how the live performance of selected works was captured and what documents were created and collected by the practitioners. In addition, it questions how the artists view these practices and how they envision the storing of these objects in the aftermath of their work. To counterbalance this perspective, the thesis also investigates how three major theatre and performance collections document live theatre and performance works and what is their vision and understanding of documentation. A clear-cut distinction between documenting and archiving informs the entire argument. Whereas documenting is the intentional - or unintentional as I will show - capturing of live performance in any form - thus, it creates documents that can be used during the various stages of a performance work - archiving is the process of curating documents for their long-term survival. Archiving presupposes the completion of a project and the labelling of its documents as inactive information.

Archival studies are, therefore, a crucial component of the thesis because they provide the tools for understanding what documenting and documentation are in the now. Without question, plenty could also be examined in relation to archival science and the performance archive – its structure, its data and metadata, the best strategies of curating the variable performance documents. Indeed, some reference into distinct archival frameworks has been unavoidable in this thesis. However, this study focuses on highlighting how digital technologies change the establishing practices of documenting live performance, paving as such the way to future research in archiving solutions.

0.2. Methodology

In order to study the position of practitioners and institutions in relation to the archiving of audience-generated content, this research employed a tripartite methodological approach which comprised of the observation and analysis of three live performances, followed by an analysis of their available documentation, which involved my own responses as an audience member and reader of performance documents and audience-generated content, and, finally, semi-structured interviews with key practitioners from the case studies. This multidimensional analysis of theatre and performance documentation was later supplemented with interviews with the representatives of three institutional UK theatre and performance collections.

The performance works that were selected as the thesis's case studies are *Speak Bitterness* (2015) by Forced Entertainment, *Karen* (2015) by Blast Theory, and *Flatland* (2015) by Extant. These were chosen because their live performance and its documentation form a dynamic interrelationship. The works considered as the three case studies are devised in a way that involves audiences in the live performance through the use of digital technology. This type of audience engagement produces a variety of audience-generated content that is fed back into the live performance. In other words, the live performance is shaped through the mediation of the audience's experience. During the live performances, audience-generated content functions as a tool that sets off a particular narrative or dramatic action: audiences use digital technologies to document their experiences in pictures or in text and share it online, they physically or digitally act upon the digital cues/content they receive and, ultimately, they allow their physical and digital activity to be captured and stored as part of a dataset. To rephrase, the unique experience and dramaturgical settings of each of these three live performances is enabled through the production of audience-generated content. This leads to the syncretism and inseparability of the live performance with the production of its documentation, to paraphrase here Maria Chatzichristodoulou (2014, p. 58). Ultimately, all three case studies exemplify an organic relationship between the live moment and their (live) self-recording, as analysed in chapter 4.4.

The case studies were also selected for the reason that as soon as their live performance ends the audience-generated content is left behind as a by-product of the live performance and the audience's experience of it. Documentation can potentially

combine a practitioner's recordings of the live performance with direct residues of the audience's engagement. Of particular interest to this research is the format of audience-generated content; in addition to being unique for each case study based on the functioning of digital technology, the content of all three works shares one common characteristic that distinguishes it from the established format of live performance documents. With the exception of a handful of tweeted photographs during *Speak Bitterness* (2015), instead of visual and audio-visual representations, – the examined audience-generated content features short phrases and computational data: tweets from *Speak Bitterness* (2015), questionnaire responses and geolocation data from *Karen* (2015), and location and orientation data from *Flatland* (2015). The case studies, thus, offer a rich ground for examining the distinctive challenges relevant to each type of audience-generated content, while addressing questions associated with classical ways of learning about a past live performance.

Before any prior reading, it is paramount here to explain the use of the term performance particularly because the three case studies differ from each other in almost every respect. While *Karen* (2015) is a mobile phone application that solicits its user-players' interaction – I will return to the term “user-player” in chapter 6.2.iii where I systematically reflect on *Karen* –, *Flatland* (2015) asks the bodily presence and performance of its audience. Finally, irrespective of how *Speak Bitterness* (2015) encourages its online audience to perform in parallel with the live performance their response to what it experiences, it is a theatrically-based performance in that it is performed on a stage leaving no room for interaction between performers and audience. It needs to be noted that the subject matter of this thesis is neither to examine nor to analyse the term performance, or to consider what is the best definition for each case study. However, although each case study belongs in contrasting forms of theatre and performance, I emphasise on their common element, which is to involve the audience through its mediatisation in the live moment. Prioritising this standpoint and focusing on the live moment, how this is manifested, and what is the role of the audience led to categorising the three case studies under the broader umbrella of theatre and performance.

It is noteworthy that the three case studies offer to their audiences the opportunity to contribute to the live moment through the digital mediatisation of their experience. Certainly, each one of them uses different methods and tools to mediatise the audience and I will elaborate on this point in chapter 4. Suffice is to say here that all three

audiences' reactions and responses become part of the essence of each work and its experience - even in the case of *Speak Bitterness* (2015). Because their audiences' actions and their by-products – i.e. audience-generated content - do not affect the live performance I do not regard the three case studies as being purely participatory works. Even in *Karen* (2015), as I will discuss in chapter 4.2, the audience-generated content is used to inform the final reports – the videos sent to each user-player are always the same irrespective of which answer they choose in the multiple-choice questions. Astrid Breel considers this mode of involvement as 'participation in the *outcome*' (2015, p. 369, italics in original). While the three works are created and produced by the practitioners, their activation or a part of their live experience requires the audience to perform in certain ways. Instead of considered as participation per se, the engagement of the case studies' audiences is recognized as a performance in its own right; a performance that helps shape the live moment (see chapter 4.4). In this sense, the three case studies approximate Claire Bishop's 'delegated performance' (2012), which is performed either by professionals, amateur performers, or the audience rather than the artist allowing room for this engagement to be participation, interaction, immersion. Despite avoiding the term, the three case studies share with participatory performance form the weight of the audiences' presence and action during the live moment and, therefore, they share questions relating to the accrediting and exploitation of audiences.

While maintaining this context throughout the thesis, I refer to the three case studies as "performance works", "performance pieces", and "case studies" interchangeably. This is in place partly in order to avoid the overuse of the term 'theatre and performance' and partly so as to emphasise that the subject of examination is the moment of enactment of the three case studies, which I refer to as "live moment" or "live performance," how this is documented, and how the products of this documentation are being managed. Such a terminological decision is heavily guided by the desire to recognize the limitation imposed by selecting to examine particular works and to leave open the possibility that this study will be relevant to other participatory, interactive, or immersive theatre and performance works that mediate their audiences' performance as part of their activation and to works that are yet to be created (see pages 70-78). Finally, the focus on the live performance leads to heavily employing the term "performance documentation" and "performance archive", which abide by the terminology used in performance studies. The term "performance" is also deployed on the same grounds in the theoretical discussions of this thesis and in order to abide to the terminology of theatre and performance studies.

Interviews are here considered as the most appropriate method for gaining insight and understanding (Gillham, 2000; Ritchie, 2003) of practitioners' documentation strategies and the archiving principles of institutions. Engaging with the practitioners of the three case studies and the leads of three institutional performance collections reflects the value given to their personal involvement in performance documentation and archiving as well as their experience. The choice of a semi-structured model for the interviews is based on integrating personal encounters, in which 'open, direct, verbal questions are used to elicit detailed narratives and stories' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The combination of predefined questions with the freedom to allow and follow up on spontaneous remarks provided insights that would not have arisen in the context of more formal and structured interviews. Finally, the semi-structured format allowed for the possibility of meeting interviewees more than once and posing additional questions according to the needs of the research. This was the case with Maria Oshodi and Nick Tandavanitj with whom I met twice. The interviews emphasised how practitioners practically manage, store, curate, share, and preserve audience-generated content and examined their conceptualisation of documentation.

In order to explore the record management strategies of each performance company with regard to the three case studies, I interviewed the following practitioners: the Director of Forced Entertainment, Tim Etchells, the lead artist of *Karen*, Nick Tantavanidj, the Director of Extant and the creative leader of *Flatland*, Maria Oshodi, and Dr Adam Spiers, the robotics engineer who developed the haptic device of *Flatland*. These interviewees were chosen on the basis of their expertise, by virtue of their involvement in the three case studies, their ability to reflect on and provide detailed information about the documentation and archiving practices of the three companies and their performance works, and their willingness to share their knowledge. The practitioner interviews were conducted with the aim of understanding how artists with different making practices but whose works mediate their audience's experiences, approach ideas and methods relating to the archiving of audience-generated content. The interviews were used to analyse a) how practitioners understand the documentation of the live performance, b) what documentation strategies they have established during their long-standing practices, for example, what types of documents they produce and for what purpose, and c) what practical challenges audience-generated content poses to these strategies and, by proxy, to the practitioners' understanding of documentation.

In addition to the case studies, this thesis delved into the documentation initiatives and archiving practices of three major UK performance collections. To this end it interviewed Erin Lee, the head archivist at the National Theatre, Ramona Riedzewski, the head of Collections Management of the Theatre and Performance Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Stephen Cleary, the lead curator of the British Library Sound Archive. The collection professionals were selected because the institutions they represent are repositories that house cultural resources, with departments dedicated to theatre and performance archives. The institutions' missions, the forms of media they handle, how they organise their material, and how they relate to their users, presented the opportunity to explore any variations and similarities in their documentation and archiving frameworks. Through this examination the thesis sketches a canon of documentation that is present in all archiving collections of performance documents (chapter 3.5.) and considers their individual approaches towards audience-generated content.

An important factor for choosing to focus on Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the British Library, and the National Theatre instead of other collections was the fact that apart from archiving performance documents that they inherit or purposefully collect, they are active in documenting live performance, as I will discuss in chapter 3.2. In brief, since the National Theatre is a working theatre and creates its own productions, it also documents them. On the other hand, the Victoria and Albert Museum allocates a small part of its funds to video recording of West End plays while the British Library video records, using a single camera, fringe theatre and live art from venues such as the ICA, Battersea Arts Centre, and the Chelsea Theatre. New recordings created by the V&A are incorporated into its National Video Archive of Performance (NVAP), which was established in 1992. Respectively, video recordings of the British Library enhance its Sound Archive. The rest of the archiving institutions, which might hold even larger collections of performance documents, do not engage in processes of documenting live theatre and performance. For instance, the Theatre Collection of the University of Bristol holds a significant number of artefacts and archives of British theatre and live art dating back to the late 18th century without, however, producing its own documentation of current works.

Moreover, as public institutions the V&A, the British Library, and the National Theatre are publicly funded – at least partially. In this sense, the performance companies that created the three case studies and the three archiving institutions are

aligned since, as I will discuss in chapters 4.3 and 6.3.ii, Forced Entertainment, Blast Theory, and Extant are all National Portfolio Organisations – they had received additional public funding for creating *Speak Bitterness*, *Karen*, and *Flatland* respectively. Each institution collects, archives, and makes available different types of documents and cultural items. As such, they demonstrate how performance are so pliable that they can be hosted by heterogeneous collection. Ultimately, their capacity to epitomize the different forms of the Archiving Institution, including its assurance to be a publicly accessible entity that is protected through public policies and money is what rendered the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library, and the National Theatre ideal for this thesis.

The fact that the three selected institutions are operating on common ground is reinforced by the fact that the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library, and the National Theatre are members of the Association of Performing Arts Collection (apac). Funded by the Arts Council, apac is a ‘membership organisation for professionals, specialists, and other individuals working with or interested in performing arts heritage in the United Kingdom and Ireland.’² Aiming to cross-fertilise ideas, the organisation accommodates a sharing of best practices of collecting and archiving performance heritage as well as a network of archivists, which is evident in the knowledge that the three collection professionals have for each other’s’ practices and the informal manner that they address each other in their interviews. What Erin Lee, Ramona Riedzewski, and Stephen Cleary ultimately offer to this thesis is the possibility to identify a consensus over what the publicly funded practices of documenting, collecting, and archiving theatre and performance documents currently are. Lastly, delving deep into the performance collections of institutions such as the Live Arts Development Agency (LADA) and Tate was considered unnecessary on the grounds that they both focus on performance and live art largely excluding theatre practices.

The interviews with the performance and the archiving practitioners provided a clearer understanding of how audience-generated content might be assessed by a variety of professionals who manage and curate performance documentation collections. Emphasis was given to how established performance archiving practices might be evolving, given the fact that there is currently a great range of documents at their disposal, including documents generated as a by-product of the live performance,

² <https://performingartscollections.org.uk/>

without any recording effort being made on the part of the artists or the institutions. Comparing and contrasting the performance documentation and archival strategies of institutions and artists allows for a panoramic view of the current state of performance documentation and the performance archive. Through such an analysis, this research thus delves into the technical challenges posed by audience-generated content, and challenges to record management practices, for established ways of documenting and archiving theatre and performance.

These semi-structured interviews built upon Laura Molloy's study (2014) of UK performing practitioners' digital curation literacy. In 2014 Molloy interviewed twelve practitioners in order to examine their awareness of management and preservation methods of digital objects. Working in different fields of performance, including music and theatre, and with different media, all of her interviewees were Scotland residents and were producing work unattached from any academic institution or funding scheme. Although the majority of the interviewees were found to purposefully create digital objects for various uses, including documentation, and although they pronounced a confidence in archiving them, the study showed that they lack both the technical skills and access to relevant knowledge for doing so. Such an outcome urged Molloy to conclude that practitioners need access to digital skills infrastructure (2014, p. 13) especially since they are asked to possess such skills in their funding applications through the presentation of digital objects (Ibid., p. 8). Expanding on these observations, the interviews set the focus of this thesis on performance works that require from their audiences to actively engage in their live moment by using a given set of digital technologies and tools. Even more so, the thesis investigates a particular set of digital objects – i.e. audience-generated content.

Further to the interviews with practitioners and collection professionals from the three archiving institutions, this research undertook a performance documentation analysis in order to dig deeper into the causes of mistreat as well as to suggest the infrastructural changes that are needed. It looked at the audience-generated content of each case study and juxtaposed it with the rest of the collected documentation material. Each case study posed its own set of limitations which are analysed in Sections 5.1.iii and 5.2.i. One of these limitations relates to access. The video recordings of *Speak Bitterness* were available to view during a visit to Forced Entertainment's offices in Sheffield on July 5, 2017; its tweets on the other hand were accessible at any time. Although none of *Karen's* documentation was available to view, I obtained my own raw

data. Finally, during her second interview, Maria Oshodi presented a variety of digital documents produced by Extant for/from *Flatland*. Despite this, *Flatland*'s audience-generated content was only available to access from information contained in academic articles by Dr Adam Spiers et al. (2015, 2016). By viewing the documents from each case study and addressing any obstacles to access where appropriate, the thesis responds to issues relating to the technical aspects of audience-generated content, such as its format, quantity, and privacy policies (chapter 6.2.) which spill into its collaborative relationships (chapter 6.3.i). Brining these findings into dialogue with the companies' established documentation practices and the performance archive frameworks currently in place at the three institutional performance collections, my research identifies variances in theatre and performance practices and, by extension, considers how they are practically and conceptually challenging performance documentation.

0.3. The structure of the thesis

The first part of the thesis contextualises performance documentation and the archive in relation to performance works that use digital technologies as dramaturgical tools. Chapter 1 examines the objects and concepts of the archive and of documentation, bringing them into focus with digital technologies. The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the archival features of digital technologies and reflect on how they have brought about the creation of documentation that is live, instantly accessible, and grounded in user participation and public access. Building on these observations, the chapter presents digital technologies as forms of documentation media that can reconfigure the content of an archive. The chapter finally contends that various configurations of the archive that currently co-exist. Chapter 1 frames the notion of the archive whilst highlighting how technological advancements affect concepts of storage and preservation, and which technologies are considered legitimate for generating documentation. Departing from chapter 1, chapter 2 turns specifically to performance documentation' it discusses literature around the genealogy and purpose of performance documentation in order to map the practical and conceptual changes brought about by digital technologies. The debates discussed in this chapter set the foundation for the thesis's field review, bringing the concept of the trace into closer focus.

By blending archival and performance documentation studies, these two first chapters devise a fertile ground for establishing the documentation capacities of

performance works that integrate digital technologies as their dramaturgical elements and for examining how the digital remains of such process are perceived and handled by practitioners and institutions alike. The aim of this thesis, which is to determine how performance works that solicit via the use of digital technologies a form of participation, interaction, or performance from their audiences are being documented, is already present here. At the same time the limitations of the thesis to not analyse in depth current archiving solutions and to neither propose any specific archiving frameworks or methods are also visible.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 structure the field review of this thesis. Chapter 3 discusses how institutions collect theatre and performance and how the audiences access and experience performance documentation. Chapter 4 introduces the three cases studies and examines how each one of them uses digital technology: how the digital technology contributed to the live performance and the role it played in experiencing the work. In so doing, this chapter argues for an organic relationship between live performance and its documentation. Building on discussions of the archival features of digital technologies presented in chapters 1 and 2, chapter 4 maintains that audiences become documentarist in the three case studies by virtue of their own performance in the works and their generating of related data. Drawing on this consideration, the thesis argues that audience-generated content should be considered part of the archive of the works.

Before moving on to questions of the archiving of audience-generated content, chapter 5 investigates the established documentation practices of the three practitioners. The chapter identifies differences in the recording and documentation strategies of the three companies, linking them to their individual needs. It additionally identifies one common characteristic: practitioners generally strive to capture live performance using audio-visual recording media. These findings are juxtaposed with the practices of the three UK theatre and performance collections under investigation. The objective of the chapter is to reveal the range of documents that are currently expected to be included in the archived documentation of a work.

The final chapter of the field review, chapter 6, turns its attention to the afterlife and the archiving of audience-generated content of the three case studies. It looks at how practitioners manage the data files gathered from audiences' engagement and it delves into the challenges that these pose as soon as the live performance ends. The first two sections of the chapter reflect on and analyse the technical (6.2.) and organisational

challenges (6.3.) relating to practitioners' performance archiving. The final section maps practitioners' and theatre and performance archivists' assessment of audience-generated content and considers whether classical frameworks and understandings of performance archives are able to accommodate audience-generated content. Above all, the thesis argues that the rationale behind the documentation strategies of institutions and practitioners and their understanding of the performance archive determines what types of files will be included in their archives. Examining the practical and conceptual reasons behind the challenges posed by audience-generated content, chapter 6 lays the ground for proposing a discursive and conceptual shift in the archiving of such content.

Moving from the specific case studies toward a more general consideration of archival practices as a whole, chapter 7 frames the archival value of audience-generated content by discussing its abilities and potentials as archived material. Echoing Ricoeur's conceptualisation of the trace, audience-generated content, which is generated as a digital by-product of the audience's experience, is presented as constituting traces of the live performance and largely of the performance work. Because of their direct origin to the live performance, I argue that audience-generated traces open up a deeper, first-hand perspective into the participation, interaction, and engagement of audiences. Even more so, they can provide an internal viewpoint of the work, assist in research and potentially become the primary sources for new works that build upon user data and user-generated content. Having argued for the benefit of including audience-generated traces in performance archives according to the characteristics of each project, the thesis concludes by identifying areas of potential research and attention, and ways of aiding practitioners in experimenting with project-specific archival structures.

Chapter 1. A genealogy of documentation

With theatre and performance being an artform whose principal qualities are liveness and ephemerality, there is often an intense desire and interest to revisit and re-stage it. Processes of learning about a past performance piece or re-activating it are made possible through the study of its archive; in other words, by viewing, reading, encountering, and using its archived documentation. What emerges as a foundational point before looking at the conceptual and pragmatic relationships between theatre and performance and their documentation, however, is the need to review how documentation and the archive have been framed as objects as well as notions. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rounded perspective of what the archive is, what the elements that might comprise it are, and how technological advancements have influenced its understanding and articulation. The chapter explores how the structure and function of the archive have been influenced by digital and emerging technologies and what potentialities and limitations these might offer.

The chapter begins by examining the conceptualisation of the archive as a controlling mechanism; how as a physical place and object it constitutes an institution that directs the production of knowledge. The theories of Michael Foucault (1989) and Jacques Derrida (1996) are central to this articulation since they expand on the decision-making processes involved in the formation of the archive. Coupled with perspectives from archival studies (Novick, 1988; Cox, 1994; Mbembe, 2002; Cook, 2011) the first subsection of the chapter shows that the power of the archive lies not only in the information that it houses and how it curates it, but also in what it excludes.

After identifying the archive as a network of informational material, the chapter moves on to review what an archive can consist of. In other words, it examines the concept of documentation in archival science. In so doing, the second section draws on Suzanne Briet's theory of documentation, which sees any object as a potential document, and on Michael Buckland's conceptualisation of information, which maintains that ephemeral events can be items with informational value. This leads to a conceptualisation of the trace as a connecting tissue between the past existence and/or passage of an entity and how its history is constructed. Finally, the last section of this chapter considers how emerging technologies might be challenging and changing the archive. A core focus, here, is the work of Gabriella Giannachi (2017) as well as the perspectives from media

studies that argue for the performative and exhibition features of networking technologies. The chapter ultimately shows the potential democratisation of the latest, networked version of the archive due to its dependency on its users' contributions.

The chapter traces the evolution of the concept of the archive in line with the development of digital technologies. It shows how such technologies have instigated the creation of archives that are live, instantly accessible, and grounded in user participation and public access; archives that are constantly re-configuring themselves because their contents are in flux. The chapter ultimately contends that various configurations of the archive currently co-exist. Whilst networked archives – what Giannachi (2016) terms 'archives 4.0', including online platforms, social media, and mobile phone applications as shown in section 1.3 – shape the everyday and function as an immediate communication tool, the production of knowledge still lies in the hands of digital archivists and archiving intuitions (e.g. museums, libraries etc.) that preserve particular records for long-term access.

1.1. Framing the archive

The concept of the archive is multidimensional. It encompasses both the site where out-of-use files are stored for future knowledge as well as the files themselves. In an organisational context, an archive is the location where working and historical records or documents are retained and organised into meaningful collections. Within organisations the archive might be an entire department, as for example in the National Theatre Archive, which is responsible for managing present and past information for present and future use (Cox, 1994, p. 9). Secondly, the archive might indicate larger, usually public institutions which collect based on their research interests and expertise records of individuals, families, or other organisations; the most relevant UK example of this is the UK National Archives. Archives, as sites, safeguard objects that provide a range of informational items which can be used for structuring our knowledge about the past.

The archive is additionally framed as a collection 'of documents or "records" which have been selected for permanent preservation because of their value as evidence or as a source for historical or other research' (UK National Archives, 2016, p. 4). In this vein, Diana Taylor describes the archive as:

an authorized place (the physical or digital site housing collections), 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’) (2010, p. 4).

This means that the archive is ruled by particular systems of selection, categorisation, and preservation; the archive is depicted as an organisational apparatus which collects, catalogues, stores, and consequently presents informational material in a systematic way. In this vein, the archive can be viewed as a complex that becomes itself through the sum of its constituents or, in other words, by enfolding information in the form of documents. Within this context, Sue Breakell distinguishes between a collection and an archive (2008, §11). She explains that while the former is generated by the simple accumulation of material, in an archive records are curated so as to complement one another and shed light on particular facts (Ibid., §12). Embedded in the archives’ making process is, therefore, a conscious, deliberate, and methodical system of choosing and cataloguing documents, putting them into meaningful clusters.

Hal Foster describes the nature of the archive as at once ‘found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private’ (2004, p. 5). In this sense, an archive can comprise both private or personal records as well as records produced by the implementation of power. The UK National Archives, for example, house government-related files, while art institutions, museums, theatres, and art organizations that have archival departments hold formal archives of predominantly informal material.

Although archival practice generally strives to be as objective as possible – Sue Breakell argues, referencing the processes of the Institution Tate Archive, that archivists ‘aspire [to] a democratic facilitation’ (2008, §14) – this process is never without bias. At its core, archival activity involves decision-making processes. It begins with deciding what to keep – what is important to remember and, thus, what will be remembered – and how to keep it – how the information contained in documents will be remembered, and what conceptual links will be drawn from the network of information they structure. Within an institution, what guides this process more than the individual archivist is the institution’s agenda, values, and missions. Arguing against the idea that archived documents constitute ‘authentic’ objects, both historical and scientific, Peter Novick

(1988) describes this as a ‘noble dream’ - that of romantic positivism which fails to account for the creative acts of imagination involved in the formulation of historical truths.

According to Jeremy Packer, archives as places and mechanisms arise from struggles of power/knowledge. The archival activity and, therefore, the archive itself is influenced by storage solutions such as physical or digital storage space as well as the decisions taken by archivists (Geary, 2007). Where physical storage space refers to the personal as well as the archiving institutions’ buildings, rooms, and depositories that host all types of tangible archives and their documents, digital storage space (Blouin and Rosenberg, 2007) encompasses a variety of solutions such as specialised databases, cloud storage, and removable media (Ksherti, 2013; Peters and Besley, 2019). Peters and Besley argue that ‘digital technologies radically alter our existing institutions, making access to their embedded knowledge widely available and enable learning and research anytime, anywhere’ (2019, p. 1020). The storage of tangible documents is always tied to issues regarding the volume of objects a given space can contain. Digital storage space, on the other hand, provokes questions about the intellectual control of archives (Niu, 2015) and their security (Snyder and Kanich, 2013), and the format of the documents and planning ahead for the obsolescence of software, hardware, and their operating systems that support them.³ Moreover, the 60% annual growth of born-digital files and the 25% annual growth of digital storage solutions (Rosenthal, 2014) highlights the need for a constant negotiation regarding what is kept and what is discarded and how these are organised.

Anthony Cocciolo reports in the context of a research project that examined the challenges that the New York art museum encountered with born-digital documents that storage was one of the central discussions of one of the focus groups (2014). He particularly remarks that for backing up ‘electronic records contained within networked file storage’ metadata - for example the last date a file was accessed - were deemed to be crucial yet most frequently absent (2014, p. 4).

In addition to the dynamic, as Atina Grossmann (2007) explains with regard to the transition of custody from a person to an archiving institution that the latter’s collecting priorities as well as the values, emotional attachments, and concerns of the donors, all

³ Smithsonian Institution Archives’ website, [online] Available at: <https://siarchives.si.edu/what-we-do/digital-curation/digital-preservation-challenges-and-solutions>.

play a vital role in the establishment and curation of the archive. In this regard, Achille Mbembe defines archives as a status, rather than as pieces of information (Mbembe, 2002, p. 20). This status is a means to organise, select, and control the world, since the archive functions as evidence that something existed, that something was true. As a result, archives have often, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, de-legitimized or even excluded the history or particular ‘classes, regions, ethnic groups, or races, women as a gender, and non-heterosexual people’ (Cook, 2011, p. 174). The power of the archive derives from its materiality, its perceptible mediation of information into documents which it houses in physical and digital spaces. On this note, Robert Berkhofer argues that ‘what is in the archive is a function of the power relations in past and present societies’ (1995, p. 222). As Achille Mbembe also notes:

We often forget that not all documents are destined to be archives. In any given cultural system, only some documents fulfil the criteria of ‘archivability’ [...] Archives are the product of a process which converts a certain number of documents into items judged to be worthy of preserving and keeping in a public place, where they can be consulted according to well-established procedures and regulations. The archive [...] is fundamentally a matter of discrimination and selection, which, in the end, results in the granting of a privileged status to certain written documents, and the refusal of that same status to others (2002, p. 19-20).

At this point it is worth reviewing how the concept of the archive itself has been theorised, since this has affected the overall discipline of archival science. I will then go on to consider how the contents of the archive can also be conceptualised, as a document and as a trace. The notion of the archive has been conceptualised differently through the perspective of various disciplines. In itself this affirms Jacques Derrida’s suggestions that ‘nothing is less clear today than the word ‘archive’’ (1996, p. 90). Both a material object and a place, an interpretation of the archive entails a negotiation between practice and theory, to paraphrase Helen Freshwater (2003, p. 731). The concept of the archive is useful to show here how the construction of the archive informs what documents are so as to introduce the idea of the trace. My analysis combines two theoretical strands. On the one hand, the chapter looks at the work of

Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.⁴ It focuses on the way these scholars analyse the archive through the processes that are required for its making. Following this, it deconstructs the archive into its component parts showing that items become documents only when their informational value is recognized.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida maintains that whilst archiving is a process of rescue, it is also immanently one of destruction (1996). Archiving might aim at preserving the present for the future, but the creation of archives requires, as noted above, the selection of particular material that will be catalogued, curated into meaningful collections, and preserved so as to remain accessible in the long term. To paraphrase Elizabeth Yale, because archiving is a process that entails arranging information – i.e. arranging records in a way that they form a coherent story, consequently, archiving determines how that story will be read or seen – it also prevents all other alternative ways of presenting the same narrative (2015, p. 334). Archiving and archives are destructive because they impose one perspective and one approach onto a past event. Both the documents that are excluded from the archive as well as the methods that are used for structuring the records that enter the archive attest to the existence of such censored potential yet absent truths.

This can be explained by the *life cycle model* in archival science. This model suggests that in record-keeping there are two clearly definable stages creating, in this way, a sharp distinction between current and historical record-keeping. The first stage refers to the active use of the record by the creating agency, while the second stage refers to the management of records after their use (Atherton, 1985, p. 44). The passage from one stage to another is described as traversing an ‘archival threshold’ (Koerber, 2017, p. 6). This transaction corresponds to the transferring of records from the custody of the creating agency to an archive department. The life cycle model is reactive since it suggests managing records after they have been created. Ultimately, as Greg O’Shea and David Roberts (1996) maintain, record keeping demonstrates that only records that are assessed as having ongoing informational value are kept and managed, while any record that is considered to have no informational value is destroyed once it loses its administrative use.

⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, Roland Barthes, and Jean Baudrillard among others have also addressed challenges to the archive.

Ilya Kabakov suggests that not everything can be kept in the archive (2006, p. 33) and it is this inability that renders archival activity preferential and destructive. Derrida reflects on the discriminating nature of the archive by looking at its language, marking it as polyvalent and volatile. With each statement the archive makes, it represses all alternative possibilities. The production of meaning in the archive is created both by the presence of what it chooses to store and by the absence of what is not there. Connections between the documents that endure and those that are absent are of equal importance to every practical and theoretical archival work; they highlight the role of archivists as curators of memory and history. Besides this relationship, Derrida maintains that the production of knowledge instigated by the archive is subject to one more condition. The items housed in an archive and the ways that they are arranged depend on the technologies that are available. For Derrida, how the archive is formed, how its documents are arranged within it, and how it relates to the future, all rest upon the ‘technical structure of the archiving archive’ (1996, p. 17). In other words, the media that transmit and produce information determine how and what types of records are created and eventually stored. As such, media directly affect how knowledge is produced and how it is presented. In this vein, technology determines not only what archivable content can be produced but also what can be studied; technology directs ‘the very institution of the archivable event’ (1996, p. 18).

Derrida’s work has assisted in understanding how social, political, and technological agency is implicated in the production of the archive. It has particularly shown that documents have to provide particular types of information or methods of scholarship in order to be included in the archive (Manoff, 2004, p. 12). For example, paper-based files entail different curatorial, management, dissemination, and preservation solutions than digital documents. Therefore, the contents of the archive as well as the ways they relate to each other point to a complex of information that extends beyond the mere facts that the documents present. Eric Ketelaar (2001), Terry Cook (2011) as well as Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (2005) have encouraged growing awareness of how archives interfere with social memory. It is on this ground that Derrida asserts that the archive is bound with what it archives, when he writes that ‘the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence’ (1996, p. 17, original emphasis). Ultimately, the formation and management of the archive and the transformative change that recordkeeping and archival activity entail, involve a conscious and deliberate selection process and arrangement of documents which are contextually guided by the space and time within

which they take place; this is shown by both the *Records Continuum Model* (RCM) as well as the technological resources that have been available through time. I will return to the RCM in chapter 1.4. Here suffice is to say that this framework considers the record-keeping practice as an ever-evolving process during which archivists are actively involved.

Michel Foucault's examination of the archive also reflects on its organization. Foucault's approach specifically describes the archive through the conditions of its construction, rather than as a locus or a set of collected documents (1989, p.128-130). His interest in the archive derives from his concept of archaeology, which he describes as a historical analytical method that aims at revealing the 'relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains' (1989, p. 162). The task of archaeology is neither to identify what prompted certain facts nor to redefine their content. Rather, its task is to account for how the rules of their creation and arrangement are linked to institutions, political events, economic practices, and processes. Archaeology, therefore, should be based on neutrality and objectivity since it tries to identify the agendas that guide the structure of the archive. Although the archive is presented as a stable object in Foucault's theory, the philosopher contends that in its essence it enfoldes the rules involved for determining the longevity of statements, of the information the archive safeguards. He calls the archive 'the system of discursivity', that is to say, an apparatus that establishes what can be said (1989, p. 129). Foucault's argument is that reasoning and knowledge are both controlled by structural and operational rules. These rules are generated by the archive since the archive is where knowledge is housed for future generations. Within this context, Manoff states that Foucault perceives academic disciplines as 'systematic conceptual frameworks that define their own truth criteria' (2004, p. 18). As a result, all knowledge production is controlled by the archival frameworks that are in place when this knowledge is produced. Foucault's articulation of the archive as being symptomatic of the concepts and of the practical and theoretical knowledge of the era it is created, can thus be linked to the life cycle model described above.

In *The Order of Things* (2002), Foucault further discusses the characteristics of organizing systems. Focusing on philology, biology, and economics – three disciplines that emerged in the 19th century – Foucault considers why groups, lists, and orders of things may frequently appear as discordant or as inappropriate to non-specialists. Through his analysis, Foucault suggests that the archive is an institutional structure that

influences what types of evidential material can be evaluated and stored as documents. In other words, the evaluation of a file as a record – and thus a useful resource for the production of knowledge – is determined by the archival decisions of each institution. Questions of who is speaking in the archive, from where, and from which position become then paramount when engaging with the archive. s

Echoing Foucault, Derrida goes as far as to assert that the formation of the archive – the establishment and the presentation of a document as containing valuable information about the past – depends on the methods and subjectivity of the first archivist (1996, p. 55). Based on an inclusion and exclusion process, the archivist dictates whether a record will be regarded as a document. In the case of archives of artists' work, Derrida's position indicates that the creation of documentation related to the creation of a work of art depends on the artist's own understanding of what types of information are necessary for the dissemination of their practice. Furthermore, with regard to art museum archives, which are formed by acquiring documents from external sources, this implies that the archivist selects those files that might align with the agenda of the institution and structures them accordingly.

Ultimately, in both Foucault's and Derrida's discourses, the archive is conceptualised as an institution that determines what will be remembered and how. The archive controls the production of knowledge in the present and the future based on what documents it includes, what it eliminates, and how it combines all of these components together. Through this active inclusion-exclusion process, which the RCM defines as interactions between the documents and their context (i.e. the space and time within which they are produced and managed), the archive determines what material has long-term informational value and can be transformed into authoritative documents and invaluable sources of knowledge. Consequently, the archive encloses the intentions and motives of the practitioners and/or institutions that produce and manage the documents of an artwork.

1.2. On the nature of documents

For traditional archival science, archives and records are two separate things. Records are proofs of legal and business transactions, created, received, and preserved by institutions or individuals. Once a record ceases to fulfil its purpose it is destroyed. On

the other hand, archives are structured collections of items with long-term informational value. As Alexandra Walsham writes, while records are for immediate use, archives are held for posterity (2016, p. 13). Another distinction is that records are associated with language, while archives may hold items of material culture, as with, for instance, museum collections. Although advancements in digital technology and the managements of digital records have challenged the distinction between these definitions, records are still linked with information that can be read. Because the notion of the record is still so closely associated with a textual entity, the idea of a document is now taking its place. Writings in archival science do not necessarily distinguish between a record and a document and describe the former as ‘something fairly self-evident – a simple object such as a memo, letter, photograph, or electronic document – which need[s] no further explanation’ (Nesmith, 2006, p. 262). Understood in this vein, the document may be said to be the container that holds the informational content that is the record. Within the context of performance documentation, scholars prefer the term ‘document’ to ‘record’ since the former can accommodate a broader range of informational material, including tangible objects, produced in relation or by a performance work.

Based on its etymological explanation a document can be defined as: ‘any results of human efforts to tell, instruct, demonstrate, teach or produce a play, in short to document, by using some means in some ways’ (Lund, 2010, p. 741). This articulation emphasises the activity involved in the practice of producing documents. It points to a conscious process of documentation which enfolds the desire to communicate the information the documents contain. Although this definition of the document might be broad, it is instantly also very specific. In this regard, Lund maintains that the notion of the document might offer an alternative to that of ‘text’ in communication studies, a term that is similarly used to embrace the multiple variety of means through which meaning is constructed (Ibid.). Lund draws his argument from N. Katherine Hayles who describes the document in relation to literature as the physical embodiment of the text and the record (2003, p. 278). The question thus becomes: what types of objects and information can become a document and can be assessed as valuable components of the archive?

One of the earliest writings to reflect on the nature of the document is Suzanne Briet’s 1951 article *Qu’est-ce que la documentation*. Without disregarding the evidential quality of documents, Briet emphasizes the criteria based on which something can

become a document. She begins by explaining that a document is ‘any concrete or symbolic indexical sign [indice] preserved or recorded toward the ends of representing, of reconstructing, or of providing a physical and intellectual phenomenon’ (2006 [1951], p. 7). A document, therefore, entails recognizing in an object the ability to validate, demonstrate, or reactivate a past event. For something to have indexical value it must point to other things.⁵ This means that it is not just an isolated entity but that it derives meaning from its context. Rather than emphasizing that documents are autonomous ‘proofs’, Briet stresses that an item becomes a document only in relation to other material. Thus, for Briet, the document’s constitution as such arises from and within broader socio-cultural production (2006, [1951], p. 10). Indeed, in their online guide to archival principles for non-archivists, the UK National Archives write that ‘unlike books, archival records are not understood on their own as individual items. Their meaning comes from their relationships with other records and the people or organisations that created and used them’ (2016, p. 8).

Briet and Paul Otlet⁶ were the first to emphasize contextuality in their evolving notion of the ‘document’. Tom Nesmith notes that contextuality has become of principal concern in archival theory since the 1970s and that archivists draw attention to the role that contextual knowledge plays in archival work (2006, p. 260). In developing a framework for contextual information, Christopher Lee references the work of Lea et al. (1995), Dervin (1997), Stalnaker (1998), Edmonds (1999), Talja et al. (1999), Sharer and Ashmore (1987), Allison et al. (2004) and Pearce-Moses (2005) among others, to define context as ‘a set of things, factors or attributes that are related to a TE [target entity] in important ways (e.g. operationally, semantically, conceptually, pragmatically) but are not so closely related to the TE that they are considered to be exclusively part of the TE itself’ (2011, p. 96). For Briet, any object can become a document as long as it is processed for informational purposes. Fundamentally, Briet’s work on contextuality demonstrates how documents and the practices that validate them as such are interlinked with institutions and the material and technics they have at their disposal (Day, 2001, p. 7). In addition to socio-cultural conditions, the transformation of an item into a document is thus also influenced by the technological developments available at the time.

⁵ The concept of indexicality originates in Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory. It is one of the three fundamental sign modalities by which a sign can relate to its referent (1932 [1897]).

⁶ Paul Otlet emphasizes the social function of documentation as a way to gain knowledge and design a better world, connecting technological development with social progress (1934).

Building on material culture, Briet distinguishes between a central (original) document around which secondary documents can proliferate. The separation, cataloguing, and displaying of a document situates it as a central point – or a target entity in information science – around which additional interpretative material, which she terms *secondary documents*, can come into existence. In museum practices, the primary document equals the artwork or the object that is kept in the collection archive, while the secondary document is any relevant information about the artwork and contextual information that might also be held in the archive (Dekker, 2010). Briet's work reflects the overall approach of information science which considers the document to be, first and foremost, a physical entity containing information (Buckland, 1991; Smiraglia, 2001; Svenonius, 2000) or representing another thing (Lubetzky, 1953, cited in Smiraglia, 2001, p. 145; Gorman, 1980; IFLA, 1998; Smiraglia, 2001). Jean Meyriat's definition of the document, for example, is founded on the concepts of material nature – a document is an object that maintains information – and conceptual nature – the content of the object (Roux, 2016, p. 4). A relevant example is Briet's inclusion of living creatures as documents, provided that they are objects of the documentary act of selecting, cataloguing, and publicizing.

This understanding of primary and secondary documents originates in material culture and museum practice. However, the hierarchy it is based on is unsuitable when considering ephemeral events. For instance, the theatre and performance pieces with which this thesis is concerned constitute temporary situations that derive meaning from their context. Because the live unfolding of a work is impossible to preserve as such – I will reflect on the discourse around liveness and documentation in chapter 2.1 – what remains are products of its mediation, such as scripts, photographs, videos as well as peripheral information such as marketing material, articles, and audience feedback. Thus, with the absence of a target entity or a primary document what is left to be archived is just secondary material.

Michael Buckland (1991) touches upon how past events might be retained in the archive in his examination of the nature of information and the types of information that can be considered as having archival value.⁷ Buckland writes that events can be archived by either archiving the objects that originate from the event – i.e.

⁷ Archival value can also be referred to as retention value as in the work of Stephens and Wallace (2001).

representations of the event such as photographs and text - or through information in the form of instructions and notations for recreating the initial event (1991, p. 355-6). It is worth noting here the distinction between the different forms that information might take. Buckland describes the physical appearance of information as *information-as-thing*.⁸ He maintains that according to the field of information systems, knowledge can only be imparted through its physical representation, irrespective of whether this is analogue or digital in its materiality.

In this vein, any temporal activity that might be considered as having historical value can potentially be retained if it is mediated into another preservable form. Buckland further groups information-as-thing into objects, texts and documents, and data. He suggests that the latter is any record that is stored on a computer, since digital files are processes in the form of bits (1991, p. 352). Unlike documents, which consist of text and text-bearing items (including sound and images), data are numerical and thus transcribe information in a fundamentally different way. Despite this and despite differences in terms of tangibility, documents and data are of equal value since they can both be informative (1991, p. 353-54). In a computational environment any document or content is data. Buckland's use of the concept of the document extends from an individual informational item to the thing that can be stored in an archive or museum. He reflects on the work of documentarists and particularly Briet's argument that anything can be a document. In so doing, he demonstrates that an item's informational value derives from its signifying prospects; documents are either representations, or representatives of something (1991, p. 355).

Moreover, Buckland's analysis touches upon the criteria by which information is assessed as worth keeping, noting that museums, archives, libraries, and databases are all retrieval systems (1991, p 357). From a practical perspective, the archiving of documents relates to questions of their usefulness, significance, and worth to an individual or institution. The process of responding to these questions, or else their appraisal, is by assessing the retention value of a document,⁹ which entails identifying the primary and secondary values of a document (Stephens and Wallace, 2001, p. 6). Primary values reflect the reasons for the creation of a document or else the purpose it

⁸ The idea that information must be tangible has had plenty of opposition. For Machlup, information is pertinent to communication and thus has only two functions: to either narrate something or to be the narrated thing in itself (1983, p. 642). Additionally, Fairthorne (1954) argues that information is 'an attribute of the receiver's knowledge and interpretation of the signal' (cited in Buckland, 1991, p. 353).

⁹ In information science this process is termed *appraisal*.

served (Ibid.). The long-term uses of documents (Ibid.) are termed secondary values. These determine whether a document is retained or discarded and have therefore been termed as ‘values for preservation’ (1984, p. 13) and ‘historical value’ by information scientist Theodore Schellenberg (Ibid., p .16). Secondary values can be further divided into evidential value - the evidence that a document contains about its creator and their activities, functions, policies, or operations - and informational value - the information a document encloses about other people, organisations, and its own function (Schellenberg, 1984, p. 58).

Buckland argues that ‘the capability of “being informative”, the essential characteristic of information-as-thing, must also be situational since it depends on the inquiry and on the expertise of the inquirer’ (1991, p. 357). Thus, what constitutes the secondary values of documents or data is the interest and knowledge of the user. Buckland further maintains that because the user will project their subjective opinion, what is treated as information is based on consensus. It is worth considering in the context of this research, that the ways artists and performance practitioners strategize the capturing of their ephemeral works and the management and curation of the ensuing material are influenced by the general consensus, otherwise by the canon, of what performance documents should be. More often than not, this canon is established by the archival departments of art museums, which are frequently the final custodians of art documents. With regard to theatre and performance pieces, which can be collected and recreated only through a set of items that either represent or are informative of a particular moment of the live event, this research understands that documentation is constructed based on the type of information that artists and museums are familiar with. Before becoming documents, data and objects have to be validated as having archival value. In this respect, any types of residue of a live performance could be considered as being its remnant or trace.

In phenomenology, it is Levinas (1986) and Ricoeur (1988, 2004) that develop the concept of the trace.¹⁰ For Levinas, no sign resembles the trace, and yet it is possible for a trace to be used as a sign. In Levinas’s theory, the trace functions similarly to the items that Buckland identifies as being representative of an event. As Levinas writes, a ‘trace is a presence of that which properly speaking has never been there, of what is always past’ (1986, p. 358). For Ricoeur, the trace is the point between inner time (the

¹⁰ Derrida also refers to the trace by arguing that metaphysics is the history of the reduction of the trace, which is the absence of presence (1997, p. 71).

truth of memory) and social time (the truth of history). Mapping the properties of the archive, Ricoeur notes that archival studies generally acknowledge the existence of archive contents in the form of documents, items, or ephemera, but they only momentarily discuss how these media capture and convey meaning.¹¹ By examining the constituents of archives he observes that although residues can become archival documents that provide factual information, it is the unintentional traces that hold the greatest value for future historians. Echoing Foucault, Ricoeur maintains that to view documents as the only definitive holders of history eliminates other histories and traditions. The notion of the trace is introduced to contextualize the document and to allow for other forms of informational items to enter the archive. Ricoeur's thought process thus begins with the notion of the archive, moves on to that of the document - and among documents he considers eyewitness testimony -, and reaches its final epistemological presupposition in the concept of the trace (1988, p. 116).

In his latest work, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004), Ricoeur returns to the notion of the trace in order to explain the relation between the *eikōn* - the present image of a bygone event - and the 'original' event. Ricoeur focuses on the trace as a necessary component of the archive, as something that illustrates how the archive is formed. Ricoeur explains that archives come about because the past leaves a trace (2004, p. 119). As a mark of the past, the trace therefore holds within it reference to that event or a previous existence, practice, activity and so forth. Nevertheless, the trace does not necessarily reveal the history of its marking: who left it or what happened. The temporality of the trace is thus split between the then and now; as an entity it serves as evidence that something occurred, but it does not de facto reveal the meaning of that event. Ricoeur argues that inherent to such an understanding is the paradox of the finished event and the remaining trace: even though the trace remains as a token of the past, it cannot provide sufficient information to decipher that past and it is therefore frequently overlooked, rejected, or erased as unimportant. That being so, although the trace might be of equal informational value as the document, it is also fragile and prone to destruction.

¹¹ Ricoeur's conception of the trace is closely linked to that of the Martinican writer Édouard Glissant who speaks of the loss of collective memory, of an obscurity of the past, and finally of an impossible memory. The trace for Glissant entails any expression of being in the world under the conditions of oppression; they are obscure and nearly invisible because they have been forced into silence and secrecy.

This is particularly relevant to performance archives which, as Carolyn Steedman notes, involve the selecting, manipulating, and omitting of files:

The Archive is made from the selected and consciously chosen documentation from the past and from the mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there. (Steedman in Reason, 2006, p. 32)

The trace, as it is portrayed here, is a mark of an event that bears the potential of becoming a document. Erasing the trace, Ricoeur argues, erases knowledge of the events and/or the people it refers back to. Deleting a trace will not result in the erasure of the event itself, because the event will always continue to have occurred. Nevertheless, such an erasure eliminates potential ways of knowing what has passed.

Jacques Derrida's articulation of the archive is also closely linked to the role of the trace in remembering. Derrida states that 'the archive doesn't consist simply in remembering, in living memory, in anamnesis; but in consigning, in inscribing a trace in some external location – there is no archive without some location, that is, some space outside' (Derrida 1996, p. 42). The archive's power 'consists in selecting the traces in memory, in marginalising, censoring, destroying, such and such traces through precisely a selection' (Ibid. p. 44). Whilst the events that produced the traces are irrecoverable, they can still be "seen" through the traces that have been selected and preserved in the archive.

1.3. Contemporary receptions of the archive

So far, I have discussed in this chapter that the archival document is an indexical entity; as something that points to other things within the context in which it occurs. In this vein, Michael Foucault (2011) and Jacques Derrida's (1996) works, which articulate the archive as an institution that controls the production of knowledge, and the works of archival theorists relating to the history of archival science and the development of record-keeping frameworks (Cook, 1997; Spieker, 2008), show that the formation and management of the archive is bound with space, time, and technology. Under this consideration, the following section reflects on the pragmatic effects of digital technology on the archive and on archiving processes.

In her latest book *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday*, (2016) Gabriella Giannachi identifies five key stages or versions of the archive. Although socio-economic conditions inform her categorisation, these are also interlinked with and even directed by technological developments. Writing, typography, mechanisation, digitisation, and, finally, emerging technologies, have all fundamentally shifted archival practice and led to the emergence of different configurations of the archive (Giannachi, 2016, p. 25). The way that the archive collects, arranges, and presents documents – i.e. the way that it produces itself – is thus contingent on the available technological means; its configuration, potentialities, and limitations are all dictated by the media it embraces. Giannachi presents different versions of the archive as succeeding one another in line with the evolution of technology over time. However, this does not mean that every new version necessarily replaces previous ones. On the contrary, each new archive enhances rather than restricts the use of the previous archive; it supplements and even augments it, rather than eliminating it (Ibid.).

According to Giannachi the first ever indication of an archive occurred with Archives 0.0, or the ‘pre-archive’; a term that she borrows from Fissore (Fissore in Giannachi, 2016, p. 2). This type of archive marks the first attempts of individuals and communities to gather material pertaining to particular people or shared stories and histories. Giannachi describes the pre-archive as a rudimentary collection of material that is frequently mistaken for waste in archaeological excavations (2016, p. 2). In terms of its organisation the pre-archive has nothing in common with the subsequent versions of the archive that Giannachi outlines. Nevertheless, the material that can be identified as pre-archival are objects that can potentially convey a memory of a past event, activity, community, or person. Even more so, an encounter with such objects might even lead to the reconstruction of the meaning of a past event.

Arguably, the first clearly discernible types of archives are Archives 1.0, which makes public previously locally kept inscriptions. These archives were the first to historically collect, organise, and, for the first time, disclose informational material that attested to particular events (Sherwin-White in Giannachi, 2016, p. 2), including the bureaucracy of early states (Shanks in Giannachi, 2016, p. 2), family histories, the history of women (Jacquert in Giannachi, 2016, p. 2), and trading transactions (Veenhof in Giannachi, 2016, p. 2). Consisting primarily of legal information, the components of such archives were paper-based. Thus, writing was the primary medium of the first archives and

played a key role in the emergence of the ‘scriptural economy’ (De Certeau, 1984, p. 131–53).¹² Under the reign of Archives 1.0, the archive became an apparatus for establishing power and global presence.

Writing about late-Victorian England, Thomas Richards contends that the archive served as an ‘ideological construction for projecting the epistemological extension’ of its owner (Richards in Giannachi, 2016, p. 9). Gathering material while rejecting or even destroying other items served imperial and colonial purposes and, significantly, led to the formation of museums and nation states (Ibid.). The emergence of Archives 1.0 was therefore also the emergence of the archive as a *site*; a designated place where informational material could be collected, lodged, and housed. Such locations were given distinct names, such as *grapheion*, *agoranomeion*, *bibliothēkē*, *katalogeion*, and *mnemoneion*, depending on the documents they held (Cockle in Giannachi, 2016, p. xv). Similar variations of such archives still exist today in the form of libraries, specialist museums, government, corporate, and religious archives. Essentially, Archives 1.0 are the earliest appearance of purposeful and organised collections of information located at designated and purpose-built site. The word “archive” thus begins to indicate a site, an object, a medium, a concept, and gradually and most crucially for Giannachi, a form of communication and a ‘presencing’ tool (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011).

The substantial proliferation of records that the industrial revolution brought about saw the development of Archives 2.0. Apart from being a response to the need to manage records – their quantity, size, and hybridity – this third version of the archive emerged as a technology in its own right. According to Michael Shanks, the appearance of Archives 2.0 represents a profound shift in archival practice; it marks the ‘mechanization and digitization of archival databases’ (Shanks in Giannachi, 2016, p. 9).¹³ Archives 2.0 are associated with new information technology that linked together office systems and hypermedia documents and became the norm for businesses, universities, and governments by the mid-1980s. Terry Cook writes in this respect that digitization and digitally-born records changed archival practice and drove attention

¹² In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) De Certeau defines the scriptural economy as the normalisation of writing. Furthermore, he associates the term with the official institutions of writing culture and with the discourse of governance. Contrary to orality, writing comes in many forms, such as letters, diaries, ledgers, lists, and so on. Each form has its own conventions relating to its ‘audience, the moment of writing, and what can be written and how’ (Stanley, 2015, p. 840).

¹³ It is this change in archival activity that instigated the discourse of archival practice and produced the most influential works of the discipline. See for example the works of Hilary Jenkinson (1984), Theodore Schellenberg (1961), Suzanne Briet (1951).

from the content of the document to its function in relation to its creators and users (1997). This shift also resulted in a transformation of the role of archivists from that of custodians of remnants to ‘active shapers of the archival heritage’ (Ibid., p. 46). Archivists now constructed the archive, offering ‘a sense of identity, locality, history, culture, and personal and collective memory’ (Ibid., p. 44). Building on these articulations Giannachi thus links the emergence of Archives 2.0 with the emergence of the information society. She particularly notes that the changes brought about by digital technologies linked the role of archives with that of media, they augmented the role of the archive’s creator and its interpreter, which thus highlighted the subjectivity of knowledge. Digital technologies reshaped the structure of archives by transforming it into ‘a network of nodes that could endlessly reconfigure itself’ and programme its own growth (Giannachi, 2016, p. 12). Ultimately, the creation of digital databases enabled the collection and cataloguing of ‘differing, often subjective, values, including as ever, also obsolete materials and waste, that was capable of somehow augmenting the user’s sense of their own presence. It was also the mechanism for its transmission’ (Ibid.).

While Archives 0.0 and 1.0 were of an entirely physical nature and Archives 2.0 are entirely digital, the following versions of the archive combine the two in order to form a new mixed-reality archive, according to Shanks (2008) and Giannachi (2016). More particularly, Archives 3.0 and 4.0 merge physical and digital records and bring into central focus the contribution of the user. Michael Shanks’s concept of the Archive 3.0 was developed as a response to Lynn Hershman Leeson’s artwork *Life Squared* (2007)¹⁴ which re-produced two of her earlier works, the site-specific installation *The Dante Hotel* (1973–74) and the Second Life performance piece *Roberta Breitmore* (1972–78). Shanks describes Archives 3.0 as ‘new prosthetic architectures for the production and sharing of archival resources’ (Shanks in Giannachi, 2016, p. 1). In such versions, the physical archive is governed by cybernetic systems that instantly record their users’ activity and circulate it within the digital economy. Archives 3.0 facilitate, therefore, new spaces of enhanced collaboration, i.e. interactive sites of personal engagements, where the contents of the archive have performative capacities. This performativity takes the shape of users’ input in the creation, interpretation and reinterpretation of documents and, as a result, the expanding and changing of the archive itself.

¹⁴ For more information see Hershman Leeson and Shanks (2012) ‘Here and Now’, in Giannachi and Shanks *Archaeologies of Presence* and <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/women-art-revolution/about/life-squared>.

Giannachi maintains that the development of Archives 3.0 and 4.0 should be attributed to the emergence of Web 2.0 since their configurations include various networked interfaces, such as social media, blogs, mobile phone applications, and purpose-built technologies with similar characteristics. This articulation of emerging technologies as archives is derived from the fact that the function of such technologies depends on the production, reproduction, circulation and, by extension, the migration of “saved” information or data. Sharing the same views, digital archaeologist Wolfgang Ernst writes that in digital archives memory and the present become interlinked because the technology allows for ‘immediate feedback’ and for all present data to be turned ‘into archival entries and vice versa’ (2013, p. 98). Giannachi is very precise in her description of the characteristics of Archives 3.0 and 4.0. She notes that these archives are i) simultaneously objects and processes, ii) they frequently performative as well as interactive, immersive, and pervasive, asking for their users’ contribution and even participation, iii) they build on already existing archives, iv) they employ a range of new and old technologies to replay and rewrite the past and capture the present, v) they are fluid as they build upon cybernetic systems, and, finally, vi) they are interfaces for perceiving, interacting, and extracting value from the world; they are ‘the apparatus through which the latter can, quite literally, (in)form us’ (2016, p. 21). While Archives 2.0 employed relational databases and connected various digital files, Archives 3.0 and 4.0 merge the physical with the digital space, and the real with the mediated, instantly turning the users’ input into accessible archival entries. Even more so, they enable ‘the re-interpretation and re-writing of canonic entries by users’ (Ibid., p. 23). As such, the latest versions of archives are instruments for capturing and replaying the present; they are assemblages of information that are functional in the now. This stands in contrast to all the previous types of archives, which consist of a collection of out-of-use material.

The difference between Archives 3.0 and 4.0, Giannachi further explains, is the communication that their users have with one another. Giannachi argues that Archives 4.0 prompt:

relational thinking in allowing users to juxtapose one with the other and so perceive one through the other while also producing new knowledge that may be of use for the organization hosting the archive (Giannachi, 2016, p. 21).

In other words, the capacity that users have in Archives 3.0 to view the content of the archive and to contribute their own perspective to it, is enhanced by the capacity for users to connect with one another. As such, what forms the content of Archives 4.0 is not only the inscriptions of users, but most importantly the traces of the communication that takes place between them. Such archives allow multiple people in different geographical locations to simultaneously upload their own content, while also accessing, commenting on, replicating, and circulating the content uploaded by other users. In other words, these archives enable and capitalize on the capturing of the instant communication between users. As long as the users participate in the production, interpretation, and circulation of such archival material, digital and merging technologies surface as an expanding pool of information, linking images, texts and data to physical events, people, locations, objects, and so on. Thus, a key feature of Archives 4.0 is not just the active involvement of users, but also, by proxy, their transformation into observers, producers, subjects, and objects of the archive (Giannachi, 2016, p. 20). In other words, these digital interfaces form their content by facilitating co-production and user participation (Ernst, 2013, p. 97).

Archives 3.0 and 4.0 are performative systems since their content is shaped by the accumulation and exhibition of the digital by-products of the actions of their users – i.e. user-generated content -, who upload, produce, generate, store, structure, and restructure this content. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) theatrical "front stage/back stage" metaphor for impression management and the enactment of social roles, a number of media scholars maintain that the digital traces of the users' actions are in themselves archival material – artefacts of their online live performance (Ellison et al., 2006, 2011; Krämer and Winter, 2008). Moreover, the storage and display of these artefacts is what causes social media platforms to resemble exhibitions spaces (Hogan, 2010; Zhao et al., 2013). Yannis Mylonas argues that social media groups take the character of a 'highly informed digital archive in constant peer-to-peer development' (2016, p. 286) based on the public narratives that are produced and the administrative work that the formation of such content requires. These technologies, which are in essence Giannachi's Archives 4.0, facilitate and demand the activity of their users. These technologies emerge as archives because their function is based on the recording and storing of users' textual, pictorial, and numerical content as data. Ultimately, Shanks (2008), Giannachi (2016), and other media scholars conceptualise that user-generated content is archival content while the technology within which this content is created constitutes an archive.

Because of the immediacy of such practices, in Archives 3.0 and 4.0 the temporal space between the time of the live performance, the activity of the users, and the transformation of their activity into content and archivable material, collapses completely. Consequently, such archives transcend the classical record-keeping practices and principles that previous archives abided to (van Dijck, 2013, p. 92). Archives 3.0 and 4.0 challenge the linear processes of selecting pre-produced records and housing them in physical and digital locations so as to ensure their endurance over time and to preserve them for posterity. Even more so, they reorient and reconfigure the spatiality of the archive that has been established over the years. Archives 3.0 and 4.0 unfold within the multi-sited spaces of a network; a substantial departure from the immediacy of the physical archive (understood here both as object and concept) and its rootedness in a physical location. Amit Pinchevski proposes in this respect that digital technologies have subtracted the archive from Foucault's 'heterotopia' and 'heterochrony' logic (Foucault, 1986, p. 26), which sees the archive as an alienate space where time builds up. The archive has now been transformed into a 'social practice, a veritable living memory' (2011, p. 254).

Contrary to the aforementioned theories, Diana Taylor argues that emerging technologies, such as YouTube, may have been characterised as archives because of their own archival features – the recording and storing of their users' online performative activities – but in reality they are not archives (2010, p. 8). For Taylor, these technologies lack the most essential qualities and processes of an archive. Because archives exercise power and control over content by selecting the material that they will house, they confirm the veracity of the record and the expertise of its creator, and they determine what kind of access is given to the public. Taylor insists that although data may seem everlasting, this does not guarantee that they are accessed long-term. The speed with which technologies and platforms advance and change in fact impacts on the content of digital technologies and networking platforms, frequently rendering it inaccessible, if not obsolete (2010, p. 10).

Giannachi (2016) and, by extent, Shanks are also aware of the unreliability of Archives 3.0 and 4.0. They point to the uncertainty of digitally-born archives and their long-term existence, highlighting the precariousness of platforms on which audience-generated content is produced. It is useful to explain here the concept of audience-generated content that this thesis uses, which is derived from combining the idea of user-generated content and user data. User-generated content describes any form of

content such as images, videos, text, and audio that ‘comes from regular people who voluntarily contribute data, information, or media that then appears before others in a useful or entertaining way’ (Krumm et al., 2008, p. 10). On the other hand, user data constitutes any ‘data, information and other content of any type and in any format, medium or form, whether audio, visual, digital, screen, GUI or other, that is input, uploaded to, placed into or collected, stored, processed, generated or output by any device, system or network by or on behalf of’¹⁵ the owners of the digital technology. Substituting the term ‘user’ with ‘audience’ indicates in this thesis that the origin of the content can be traced to the audience of a live performance. Thus, audience-generated content is conceived as any type of born-digital by-product of the audience experience that is organically produced during and as part of a live performance.

Regarding the preservation of the content of Archives 3.0 and 4.0, Giannachi makes an important point when she notes that actively seeking to preserve such archives ‘may be of use for the organization[s]’ that hosts them (Giannachi, 2016, p. 21). Outside of the networked immediacy of these latest versions of the archive, their content can be migrated to external platforms and managed outside of the direct technological contexts within which it was created. Langlois et al. write in this respect that the management of big data ‘is not simply about collecting all kinds of facts about everything from human beings to commodities [...] it is about establishing relations between all these different facts and moments [and] managing data and transforming it into usable and sellable knowledge’ (Langlois, Redden, and Elmer 2015, p. 3). While networked content might be of immediate use to the creators and the archive, the long-term value of such content is yet uncertain and subject to the knowledge and interests of an archivist.

Indeed, in the closing paragraph of her theoretical framework Giannachi notes that ‘archives, libraries, museums, the Internet, have become more and more interchangeable, forming part of a broader social memory apparatus’ (2016, p. 25). Previous configurations of the archive, including the archive as a physical location, have not been eliminated, but have been overlaid with the archival features and potentialities of online platforms, databases, social media, and mobile phone applications. Consequently, Shanks (2008) and Giannachi’s (2016) discourses reveal that archives currently fulfil two distinct yet interlinked functions. On the one hand, the archival features of emerging technologies and the public availability of their content have

¹⁵ <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/user-data>

positioned them as instruments for writing and sharing the present. On the other hand, the continued existence of museums, libraries, and other archives, as well as the perseverance of traditional collecting practices and academic and commercial research projects that gather, analyse, and exploit user-generated content, demonstrates that the long-term preservation of born-digital information still functions independently from the cybernetic domain. In the present, networked databases and emerging technologies challenge the site-specificity and temporality of the archive spilling informational items into the here and now of digital economy, while bringing together contrasting and even sometimes contradictory content due to a democratization of the creation of records. As Giannachi writes, Archives 3.0 and 4.0 are a ‘mechanism that facilitates the creation, dissemination and preservation of different types of values within the digital economy’ (2016, p. 16). At the same time, informational items destined for posterity still have to abide by the rules of Giannachi’s Archives 1.0 and 2.0, which means that they are also subject to the authority of the archivist as well as the agenda and resources of the organization that holds or acquires them.

1.4. End note: Archiving in the digital age

The acknowledgement that digital informational items are precarious because their survival depends on the workings and existence of the database within which they have been created, has given rise to a new set of record-keeping frameworks. These models describe how records are managed during their lifespan. Their primary subject-matter is born-digital records that are created ‘digitally in the day-to-day business of an organisation, such as word-processed documents, PDFs, emails, image files, videos and so on’ (National Archives, 2017, p. 6). As noted in section 1.1., the earliest model of record-keeping is the life cycle model initially articulated by Theodore Schellenberg (Shepherd and Yeo, 2003, p. 5). This model sees records as passing from one stage to another, with the first stage being the creation of the document and the last the preservation of an inactive record in an archive. The life cycle model has been criticised by various archivists¹⁶ for being unable to account for digital records that are distributed throughout software. This has led to the creation of the *Records Continuum Model* (RCM), devised by Frank Upward in 1996. This model presents the record-keeping process as an interaction that takes place within a special and temporal context and in

¹⁶ For a discussion of a records continuum that predates the archival dialogue on electronic records, see Frank Upward (1994) and Atherton (1985).

which archivists are actively involved. Sue McKlemmish writes that the RCM ‘provides a graphical tool for framing issues about the relationship between records managers and archivists, past, present, and future’ (1997, p. 16).¹⁷ Within these frameworks, archiving denotes the practice of migrating born-digital records from their innate digital environments, which expose them to ‘permanent transformations and updating’ (Ernst, 2013, p. 99), that is to say, to more stable formats. User-generated content and data also fall under the rules of these frameworks since in addition to being of immediate use they can also be stored in archives. For instance, academic journals in the natural and life sciences and in the social sciences require researchers to store at least part of their data and other findings in a public archive. Data archives consist of out-of-use data that remains important to their creator or that must be retained for future reference.

There are numerous models for archiving born-digital material which offer different ways of thinking about and describing digital collections. Some have been created based on specific archival elements, such as the *Records in Contexts* (RiC) (International Council on Archives, 2016) and the *Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies* (PREMIS, 2015). RiC was established in 2012 by the International Council on Archives (ICA) Programme Commission for developing a standard for the description of records based on archival principles. Its aim was to integrate four existing standards and to reconcile cultural differences and differing theories and practices. Respectively, sponsored by the Library of Congress in 2003, PREMIS focused on the information a repository uses to support the digital preservation process.¹⁸ The management of digital archives can be grouped under the overarching umbrella of Digital Archiving, which may be described as practices that seek to preserve information regardless of the medium in which it is stored (Niven et al, 2010, p. 1).

For Adrian Cunningham, however, digital archiving is a form of digital curation (2008, p. 531). In the digital humanities the model of digital curation has become highly influential in debates about performance documentation (Sant, 2017). Digital curation, which has been extensively used in the field of UK higher education, consists of more than just managing archivable contents; it ‘is not end-of-life-cycle collection management’ (Cunningham, 2008, p. 533). Digital Curation entails ‘the preservation,

¹⁷ This RCM can be contrasted with the life cycle model. It argues for the proactive management of records and emphasises the multiple purposes of records, as Peter Marshall states (2000, p. 20).

¹⁸ More models have emerged from library science (Library of Congress, 2015) and from attempts to bring multiple approaches together.

promotion, and providing long-term access to born-digital and digitized collections’ (Sabharwal, 2015, p. 11). Stemming from the need in research to access data in the future so as to re-evaluate research findings and perhaps create new objects, this model corresponds to the entire cycle of a record’s life, from its creation to its long-term preservation and even reuse.

Rather than consisting of a linear process the model follows a pattern of concentric circles. These represent the eleven steps involved in the digital curation process: conceptualizing and planning the creation of digital objects, as well as options for the capturing and storing of such processes, producing these items and assigning them metadata, ensuring user access to the items, evaluating them and selecting those requiring long-term preservation, disposing of unselected material, transferring selected material to an archive or data repository, taking action for its long-term preservation, re-evaluating items that fail validation, storing them securely, ensuring their continuing access, and finally, ‘create[ing] new digital objects from the original data, by migration into a different form’ (Digital Curation Centre, n.d.). Sabharwal argues that digital curation aims to bring together archivists, digital humanists, and the public, as each one has a different perspective to offer (2015). While archivists reserve content, and humanists create thematic collections, social curation, enabled by emerging technologies, adds ‘meaning to the collections and enriches public discourse on collection or exhibition themes’ (Ibid.).

Bearing in mind the use of emerging technologies in theatre and performance making, Toni Sant uses the digital curation model in order to provide a framework for performance documentation. Arguing that performance documents should be stored and preserved in systematic archives that can be managed over time, Sant maintains that although practitioners have been responsible for which material end up being the official documents of a performance piece, the appraisal and archiving of documents requires professional attention (2017, p. 5). In this vein, he describes the documentation of performance works as the procedure of ‘storing documents and preserving them in a systematic way for long-term access through an archive’ (Ibid., p. 1). Sant’s perspective is rooted in archiving science and the procedures of arranging documents and has connotations to Laura Molloy’s study (2014) on performance practitioners’ digital curation skills (see also page 17). In her interviews, Molloy distinguished between ‘the creation of documentation and the preservation of these objects’ by referring to them as ‘digital outputs’ (2014, p. 11) and ‘preserved outputs’ (Ibid., p. 9) respectively. With the

word “documentation” being correlated with the ingredients of the archive, thus, denoting that the long-term informational value of individual items has already been identified, ‘digital outputs’ attempts to place a borderline between what is created and what is preserved. I find such a division to run counterintuitive to the documentational capacities and archiving characteristics of digital technologies. While ‘digital outputs’ are advantageous when emphasising processes of preservation, it also leaves unacknowledged the possibility of producing and immediately using some form of digital documentation during a live performance. Certainly, Molloy’s definition is adapted to the performance practices she investigates, which although they belong to the larger performance continuum, they expand beyond the practices examined in this thesis covering, for example, musical performance. Equally, I agree that while Sant’s position is beneficial for considering clear-cut boundaries between what material is produced as part of a live performance’s capturing method and which of this and how remains for the future, it is also unsuitable for discussing the documentational material of performance works with participatory elements or works whose audience is actively involved in the live moment by performing or interacting using digital technologies and tools.

Contrary to Sant’s position, Annet Dekker maintains that documentation is a process rather than an end-product and it can be a significant part of the artistic practice as it progresses in time and the presentation of the practice in the present and future (2014). Dekker’s perspective is rooted in net art and her position as a curator as well as a digital preservationist. It is relevant in this thesis, on the one hand, due to the digital interactive element of the art form and, on the other, because of its performative nature. Viewed through this lens, documentation relates to the ways that artists create and use performance documents in relation to a performance work. A flexibility with defining and understanding the term documentation is offered here, a flexibility that is needed when studying works that document their participants in order to at once feed the results back to them.

Recognising the differing but corresponding views of Sant and Dekker and taking into account the studies on the archiving capacities of digital technologies mentioned earlier (pages 39-42), I use the notion of documentation to refer to the material that demonstrates aspects of a past performance piece in the present and the future, including the content that might provide means of experiencing live performance in its present time. In this respect, I follow Matthew Reason’s rationale that documentation can be

thought of as the ‘resonances, traces and fragmentations – that it is possible to know, question or see performance at all’ (2006, p. 2). In other words, I reinstate to the term its etymological root presented by Lund (2010, p. 741) to ‘tell, instruct, demonstrate, teach or produce a play, in short to document, by using some means in some ways’ (see page 33). A conscious decision to exclude questions of preservation and archiving has, thus, been made leaving space to unearth in this thesis how the practitioners of the three case studies understand the term in relation to their work (see chapters 5.2.i, 5.3.1, and 6.1). Within the thesis I take a clear stance whether documentation refers to stored, preserved, or archived material where feelings of ambivalence might be instilled in the reader.

To conclude Sant’s use of the term ‘curation’ instead of ‘documentation’ situates archivists and other practitioners as institutors of performance documentation and it raises key considerations for this thesis in terms of the moment of formation of the archive. In relation to this thesis, his concept further suggests the need to examine practitioners’ overarching processes of rendering records into documents, in addition to how they follow or are influenced by institutional archiving practices and ideas. Such an analysis will allow for a fuller understanding of the current position of audience-generated content within performance documentation. Prior to that, I will consider in the next chapter how performance documentation has been framed so far and how it has been influenced by emerging technologies.

Chapter 2. Performance and documentation

This chapter begins by looking at how the relationship between the artform of performance and documentation has been analysed in performance studies and by proxy in the visual arts. It considers the way that live performance is deemed to be more valuable than its mediations, before going on to assess how and why this position can be countered. The second section of the chapter considers the latest arguments in the performance documentation debate for which documentation is inseparable from the performance event. Documentation, here, is perceived as a tool for activating or augmenting the live experience of the performance work (Chatzichristodoulou, 2014; Bay-Cheng, 2012) and as being equally informative as the live performance itself (Auslander, 1998, 2008; Jones, 1998, 2012; Schneider, 2008, 2011; Bedford, 2012). Having delved into the conceptual understanding of performance documentation, the third section will focus on the site of the institutional performance archive. It will

explore the types of documents held by institutions and consider the ways that audiences engage with such documents in both physical and digital locations. Having set the object and context of this thesis, section four will then expand on the additional documentation practices applied to other time-based art forms, including new media and installation art. Drawing on recent work in conservation studies, this section will sketch out alternative documentation methods based on the value of tacit knowledge, oral testimony as a methodological tool, and audience experience. These key debates will set the foundation for the thesis's field review, bringing the concept of the trace into close focus.

2.1. On the antagonism between live performance and its documentation

Performance documentation has carved out a long debate in performance studies; a debate which has run in parallel to considerations of the liveness of theatre and performance and, by extension, the processes of mediation. The question of liveness is not explicitly examined in this thesis. It is nevertheless inherent to the performance documentation debate that is mapped out in the first two sections of this chapter, and it is an implicit theme in discussions of the convergence of live performance and documentation.

In debates about liveness, the performance moment is considered the ultimate purpose of the artwork, and documentary material is frequently viewed as inferior and possibly even antagonistic to the work itself. The work of Peggy Phelan (1993) has been central to these arguments that perceive documentation as hostile to the performance – I consider here that the term performance embraces both theatrical and performance in general, although Phelan's treatise is dedicated to feminist performance art practice - and, more specifically, to the moment of its live performance and event. According to Phelan, 'performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance' (Phelan, 1993, p. 146, italics in original). Performance in Phelan's terms includes only the live moment, which is ungraspable and immaterial, lasting for only a specific period of time.¹⁹ As a

¹⁹ Phelan's articulation can be linked to Roger Copeland's earlier work. Valorising the notion of presence, Copeland argues that as a representation, performance documentation 'cannot be fully "present" precisely because it signifies or alludes to something that isn't fully there, whose "real" existence lies elsewhere' (Copeland, 1990, p. 35).

consequence, any document and archive of the performance work, and particularly any mediation of the live moment – for example its photographic or audio-visual representations – is seen as being inherently separate and different from the live event. It is precisely the ephemerality of the performance moment and its inevitable end that defines it as the artform it strives to be. Under this consideration, Phelan claims that documentation transforms the essence of the performance work into something else (Ibid., p. 148), bringing it into conflict with the performative moment. She writes that inherent in the goal of the artform is to ‘enact[s] the productive appeal of the nonreproductive’ (Ibid., p. 27). Phelan therefore denies practices for which documentation is intrinsic to the project itself, or part of the larger artistic intent. Certainly, documents are different entities to a live performance. Yet, when they are viewed as being antagonistic to the artwork they are completely devalued, and emphasis is placed on what they cannot rather than what they can do.

Phelan’s argument against performance documentation has been developed by emphasising the live moment as the most crucial objective of the performance genre. This focus has been shared by a number of artists. Matthew Reason, for instance, emphasises the ephemerality of the live performance as the ultimate intention of the art form (2006, p. 11). He therefore stresses that because documentation remains it cannot account for the ephemeral nature of the live moment. Performance historian RoseLee Goldberg highlights with regard to performance art that it emerged as an ‘anti-materialist’ form of art (Goldberg, 2005, p. 110). With live performance being ephemeral, artists in the 1960s and 1970s aimed at creating intangible works that could escape the transactions on the art market. Because documentation mediates part of the live performance into an object -as mentioned in page 29, Michael Buckland shows that events are archivable through their representations, and through the information and traces that attest to their reconstruction (1991, p. 355-56) - it also undermines the broader intent of theatre and performance.

Arguments that perceive the relationship between live performance and documentation as being antagonistic are based on a fundamental binary opposition: while performance is live, its documents and archives are “dead”. Live performance, in other words, *happens*, while documentation is objects that exist long after the live moment has finished. In this context, Rebecca Schneider underlines that ‘The New Oxford American Dictionary describes the adjective “live” negatively, giving us: ‘not dead or inanimate; living’. Respectively, she continues, within the context of the

performance experience we are given: ‘not a recording’ (2011, p. 90). Analysing the dichotomy between live performance and dead documentation lies outside of the scope of this thesis. However, I would like to emphasise that at the same time that this binary has been employed to distinguish between live performance and documentation, presenting them in antagonistic terms, it also reveals how the two are inevitably bound together in a symbiotic relationship. As the performative moment disappears, as per Phelan (1993), documentation arises as an inescapable necessity. Precisely because the live moment of performance is temporary and immaterial, documentation serves to satisfy the need for a physical or digital item demanded by any form of knowledge production or monetary exchange in the art world. Rooted in liveness and temporality, performance works inevitably entail their own documentation and archivization as much as they might resist it.

I have to note, here, that Phelan was never against documenting live performance or using the outputs of this process - photographs and videos – in order to learn about a past work. In a 2003 interview with Marquard Smith, she maintains that the intention of her 1993 book was to point out that the ephemeral nature of performance distinguishes it from artforms whose products are created so as to enter the economy of reproduction (Phelan, 2003, p. 294-5). Irrespective of her later statements, passages from her book *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance* (1993) that decode the ontology of performance by comparing it to documentation have been extensively employed in formulating counter arguments.

Arising out of Phelan’s reasoning, a second strand of scholarship maintains that documentation is unable to capture live performance because of its immanently different process. In this vein, Adrian Heathfield argues that documentation fails to capture and demonstrate the complexity of the live moment because it ‘disappears fast and leaves the scarcest trace for historical record’ (Heathfield, 2001, p.105). Erika Fischer-Lichte also maintains that documentation is ‘bound to fail’ (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 75) since live performance leaves no ‘fixed, transferable, and material artifacts’ (Ibid., p. 75). It is the understanding of this thesis that for both Fischer-Lichte and Heathfield the performative or live moment of the work does not leave behind any direct product and, most importantly, it does not envision doing so. This is despite the fact that the performative process and event leave direct remains in the form of

costumes and props,²⁰ as well as secondary documents such as audience feedback, criticism, promotional material and so forth.

Building on the work of Gabriella Giannachi (2016), Sarah Bay-Cheng (2012), and Maria Chatzichristodoulou (2014), this thesis suggests that Fischer-Lichte and Heathfield's ideas are significantly problematised by works that embed digital technologies in their live performances. For Fischer-Lichte and Heathfield, documentation aims at providing an exact or thorough account of the live performance moment, including its embodied action and the different media it employs. Since live performance is immaterial and traceless, documentation is seen to operate at an external level, using media of reproduction to mediate the live performance and turn it into another more "stable" form. According to such a viewpoint, therefore, documentation fails its own purpose. Nevertheless, works that integrate documentation into their own 'liveness' breakdown the supposed distinction between these two categories and the idea that documentation serves as an external supplement to the work.

Philip Auslander was one of the first to formulate an opposition to Phelan's rationale and to lay the groundwork for an understanding of performance and its documentation as being intertwined. In *Liveness* (1998), Auslander uses a historical account of what the characterisation "live" signifies in order to claim that the antithesis between the live and the mediated exists only on the level of cultural economy. Significantly, Auslander argues that the very concept of 'liveness' – our very conceptualisation of what 'the live' is – derives from 'mediatization' or else 'the developments of recording technologies' (Ibid., p. 56). In other words, it is the very possibility of recording or photographing a moment that allows us to think of it as 'live'. The concept of 'liveness' depends on the possibility of its reproduction. Auslander goes on to suggest that live performance and its mediation are equally valid, and neither can be identified as being more 'auratic or authentic' than the other (1998, p. 55). Instead, a reflexive relationship develops between the initial performative moment and its documentation, whereby 'the live now derives its authority from its reference to the mediated, which derives its authority from its reference to the live' (Ibid., p. 43). Responding to Phelan's argument that live

²⁰ The idea that material remains constitute valid documentation has also been criticised. Margaret Benton argues that props are unsuitable for reproducing the theatre's 'journey of imagination' (1997, p. 25-26). She suggests that exhibitions of performance documentation would benefit from more interactive displays as these better corresponded to the live experience of theatre. Benton builds her argument on her understanding that the experience of live performance is active while the experience of its documentation is passive.

performance disappears while its repetitions are always different from one another, Auslander notes that media also have a restricted lifespan. He suggests that ‘disappearance, existence only in the present moment, is not, then, an ontological quality of live performance that distinguishes it from modes of technical reproduction’ (2008, p. 50). The presentation of a photograph or video serves as an iteration of the very first file, which is also subject to degradation and change.

Thus, Auslander posits two conditions for documentation. Firstly, he argues that some form of documentation is a natural ingredient of any live performance. Secondly, he maintains that documentation is mediated when it is presented through an exhibition, a live-streaming, a broadcast, or an encountering in an archive. Implicitly Auslander here touches upon Briet’s concept of indexicality and the production of secondary documentation around a central document (see chapter 1.2). Secondly, Auslander emphasises that objects are perceived as stable and permanent based on our own perception of time; the specific time and way in which we encounter a particular version of an object and our limited access to it determine our perception of it as a stable entity.

Building on these arguments Auslander even goes so far as to suggest that live performance is just another way of expressing a script and can otherwise be seen as ‘one more reproducible text’ (Ibid., p. 55). Ultimately, for Auslander, to claim that the performative moment is the only real objective or aspect of a work is to ignore the sociocultural and political context of mediatisation,²¹ as well as any empirical and technological conditions that might escape our immediate perception. Auslander’s discussion focuses extensively on the dichotomy between the live moment and its documentation, raising questions about the essence of the artform: if both the performance moment and its documentation are different manifestations of the same thing then how do we define what the performance as an artwork is? This approach appears to devalue liveness to the degree that live performance and documentation can

²¹ For example, the last decade has seen the development of multiple forms of motion capture software by research centres which experiment with ways of capturing live dance performances. A few of these centres include the Motion Capture Database at the University of Cyprus (<http://dancedb.eu/>), the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE) at Coventry University (<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/centre-for-dance-research/>), the Motion Lab at Rush University (<https://www.rushu.rush.edu/research/departamental-research/orthopedic-surgery-research/motion-analysis-lab>), and the Centre for the Analysis of Motion, Entertainment Research and Applications based at the University of Bath (<https://www.camera.ac.uk/>).

be equated with each other and can be viewed as providing an audience with the same experience.

Amelia Jones also insists on the inherent mediation of live performance, stressing the cyclical relationship between the live and the mediated (1998, p. 37). Writing from the perspective of the observable performing body and photography, Jones insists that ‘there is no possibility of unmediated relationship to any kind of cultural product’ (Ibid., 203). Jones thus places herself in opposition to scholarship that perceives the performative moment as being the only original variation of the performance work. In contrast to Auslander, however, Jones is careful to highlight that the immediate experience of the performative moment and the experience of its documentation are two different things. She particularly insists that neither of the two has priority when it comes to ‘the historical truth of the performance’ (2012, p. 203). Perceived in this way, the document has value because it creates an alternative entry point to the essence of the entirety of the performance work, including the performative moment itself. In other words, the live audience that is present at the performative moment and the future audience of documentation are both able to experience the same work though they do so in a different way – their experiences are disparate, as they are activated through different means, but they are both equally valid.

Contrary to Phelan (1993), Reason (2006), and Heathfield (2001) amongst others (Copeland, 1990; Groys, 2008), who insist that documentation can never convey the live performance, Auslander (1998, 2008) and Jones (1998, 2012) argue that documentation presents an alternative but equally truthful experience. In recent scholarship, this argument has been used to show how in the context of a digital ecology²², the experience of the live performance automatically involves an engagement with documentation and sometimes even its production. I discussed in chapter 1.3. how for Michael Shanks and Gabriella Giannachi (2016) emerging technologies are instant archives in which the creation of a document converges with its use as archival material. In line with such a view, the positions outlined in this chapter suggest that a work of performance constitutes a network of different material that manifest themselves in various ways (see chapter 2.2.i). If that is so, then rather than being immanent to the performance moment, liveness is a conditional quality of the work. Within the context

²² Media ecology is understood as ‘the study of media environments, the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs’ (Strate in Bay-Cheng, 2012, p. 34).

of this thesis, this perceptual contingency of the live appears as a strength rather than a limitation. In works that use digital technologies to document their unfolding – while activating themselves or augmenting their audience experience – liveness can be understood in relation to the very production and encountering of the document, regardless of the form this takes.

2.1.i. Documentation as an extension of the work in time

The theories of Auslander (1998, 2008) and Jones (1998, 2012) are informed by traditional theatre and performance practices during which the performers and the audience are separated from each other. Concerned as they are with reconciling the division between live performance and documentation as insisted on by Phelan (1993) and other scholars, Auslander and Jones approach the experience of performance documentation as happening at a temporal distance from that of the performative moment. In this circular relationship between live performance, the creation of documents, and the experience of documentation, each stage is delineated as building on the previous one according to a linear model. Contributing to scholarship that resists the positing of a binary opposition between the performative moment and its documentation, Rosalind Krauss (1985) maintains that juxtaposing the performative moment with its documentation leads to a false assessment of an event as the original against its copy. She notes that valorising originality discredits any ‘repetition or copy or reduplication’ of the live performance (Krauss, 1985, p. 160). Krauss, here, touches upon the multiple futures that a performance work might have after its live moment. Building on such arguments that present live performance and documentation as being dependent on one another while being experienced in different times, the section that follows looks at how documentation can be described not only as forming part of the live performance but as its extension in time. In so doing, it establishes the benefit of ensuring long-term access to performance documentation.

As discussed, Auslander was the first scholar to maintain that live performance and its documentation are inseparable. He writes that ‘no documented work of performance art is performed solely as an end in itself: the performance is always at one level raw material for documentation, the final product through which it will be circulated and with which it will inevitably become identified’ (2008, p. 31). Although Auslander’s argument might seem to contradict Phelan’s renouncement of documentation, his

emphasis is on the purpose and unavoidability of documentation in a culture that values the art object and memory. In his later work Auslander extends this argument further, touching upon the idea that rather than retaining the performance moment, documentation extends it in time. Within this context he contends that documentation is what enables future audiences to revisit a completed performance work and its live moment. Thus, Auslander argues that debates around performance documentation should take into account the audience's experience of the performance documents. That documentation can communicate a performance work to a future audience is also reflected in Tracey Warr's writing who maps out three temporalities with regard to spectating a live performance:

the immediate audience, the audience that experiences the work through its distributed and fragmentary documentation, and the audiences of posterity, doing the same, but adding more layers to the discourses, texts and interpretations of the work. (Warr in Finbow, 2017, p. 47)

What these two scholars attempt to convey is that a performance piece consists of more than just its live performative moment. Instead, a performance work begins with its live production and continues to exist through its audiences' encounters with its documentation in the space of the archive, and through the reactivations and restaging of the performance piece that these archival documents allow. In other words, documentation allows for a work to be disseminated in time, enabling a series of possible metamorphoses. Performance documentation and how it is used after the end of the live performance moment, allows to formulate and establish an expanded performance artwork whose presentation shifts according to its context. As Christopher Bedford notes using a metaphor of virality, documentation 'permits the work to travel through time and space, absorbing and assimilating the conditions of history' (2012, p. 86). For Bedford, through its 'extension and reproduction [...] in the public sphere' (p. 78), documentation initiates the ontology of performance, bringing the work into new spaces and contexts.

Daisy Abbott and Claire Read (2017) also reflect on the role of documentation to the performance work from the start of its creation to its aftermath looking particularly at how the audience perceives and engages with online items. They examine, in the context of the NT Live broadcast *CumberHamlet* (2015) at Barbican Theatre, the production and use of documentation and assert that documents can be produced on a

rolling basis, that is to say before, during, and after the live performance. Included in this tripartite categorisation is the ‘unofficial documents created by audience members’ (2017, p. 165) which sit in the “post” set of documents. Pre-texts incorporate for Abbott and Read the roots of the performance such as the script as well as marketing material that predate but can inform any enactment. Just before the live streaming of *CumberHamlet* (2015) - and almost every NT Live broadcast – the researchers report that the audience had to watch a “teaser” video, which showed footage from the developmental phase of the work such as rehearsals and interviews with the cast. In the same vein, Abbott and Read explain that post-texts are those material which are produced after the completion of the live performance and are reviews, discussion, and analyses that can be both formal (e.g. published articles) and unofficial (social media) (Ibid. p. 176). In the midst of these pre- and post-documents sits the primary text of the performance work, which is the ‘live performance and its documentation via live streaming’ (Ibid. p. 165). Apart from the live performance and its video all other documents consequently function as interpretational objects. All this auxiliary material formulate what the researchers pronounce as ‘paradocumentation.’

To a great extent Abbott and Read’s approach to documentation resembles Briet’s (1993) discourse; it valorises as the central document a very specific event and its audio-visual recording and transmission. Around it supplementary material of various kinds are constantly being produced and (re)appropriated. The points of differentiation between Briet’s documentation and Abbot and Read’s paradocumentation are of most interest to this thesis.

Firstly, whilst Briet’s documentation is linear pointing constantly in a production of documents that aims to inform an unknown future, paradocumentation engages us in a multitemporal production of documentation whose products are used in the now of the live performance and in its future as an expanded artwork. Yes, the rather traditional video of the live performance seems to be shining in the midst of all other documents. Abbot and Read, however, show how documents created before the live performance can have an active role in shaping the live moment and equally how post-text are paramount in keeping the memory of the live event vivid. All this seems to make the “para” in paradocumentation almost redundant. Instead, I see in their argument the

possibility of considering documentation as holistic where pre-, con-, and post-texts of the live performance are of equitable value.²³

Abbot and Read additionally demonstrate how pre- and con- documentation and the live performance can be entangled. The con-text in the case of *CumberHamlet* (2015) is the filming and photographing of the live performance. Considering the temporal, although miniscule, delay between experiencing the live performance when sitting in the theatre auditorium and when sitting in the cinema, the live broadcasting involves blurring the boundaries between live and documentation, to borrow here Auslander's rationale (1999). Abbot and Read's terminology is an offering to the studies (Bey-Cheng, 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Giannachi, 2017; Hadley, 2017) which contend that audience-generated content can be a way of experiencing live performance in the now and knowing it in the future and, therefore, it is a legitimate form of documentation that needs to be considered in the formation of the performance archive. I will expand on these views on the following two subchapters (pages 62 and 67).

Rebecca Schneider also interrogates the pre-conceived notion of a linear performance-to-documentation scheme and proposes that it would be more productive to concentrate on how 'performance remains, but remains differently' (2011, p. 101). She insists that documentation serves the retaining, repeating, and developing of the performance piece over time. 'Documents that had seemed to indicate *only* the past, are now pitched towards the possibility of a future reenactment as much as toward the event they apparently recorded' (Ibid., p. 28, italics in original). Beyond representing the performative moment in the present, documentation is the means by which it can be further developed as an artwork. This view may seem counterintuitive to those who perceive documentation as mere evidence of a past event; but this is precisely the point. Schneider focuses on the purpose of documentation and its futurity: she considers what can be done with the document, how it can instruct/inspire the reanimation or further development of the work, and what practices of remembering (reperforming but differently, exhibiting) can evolve based on such documentation. She contends that

the place of the documentation of the "original" event has [...] shifted – becoming score, script, or material for "instruction." Documents that had

²³ An archive striving for equitable value between its parts requires that all its documents are assessed in order to be fairly and impartially curated considering the respective advantages and disadvantages with regards to each document's retainment, erasure, overabundance, scarcity, format, materiality and so forth.

seemed to indicate only the past, are now pitched toward the possibility of a future reenactment as much as toward the event they apparently recorded.
(Ibid., p. 28)

Schneider thus approaches documentation as a way of engaging with the performance work in a new and different manner ‘through the retelling, the recitation of the document’ (2008. p. 42). Audiences, she adds, are thus “‘present” to it otherwise, in a mode of transmission – a re-enactment’ (Ibid.). In this way, documentation structures its own live experiences around the performance as an artwork retained over time; it does so by facilitating the re-enactments and reactivations of the performative moment. To these futures of the live performance, we might add any creative revisiting of the work, including, for example, exhibitions of documents, the production of related interactive works, as well as the production of new performative pieces based on documentation.

For both Schneider (2011) and Bedford (2012), therefore, documentation is generative: its purpose is to mediate a live moment so as to retain it for the future, enable its interpretation, and facilitate new ways of experiencing it in the present. Documentation thus creates the future potentiality of a performance work. Briet’s systematic organisation of documentation (2006) analysed in chapter 1.2 also resonates with Bedford and Schneider’s views. To briefly recapitulate, Briet defines a document as a ‘symbolic indexical sign [indice]’ (2006, p. 10) whose purpose is that of ‘representing, of reconstituting, or of proving a physical or intellectual phenomenon’ (Ibid.). Briet notes that immanent to documents is the capacity to enable research and the production of knowledge. Alongside their representational ability, records should therefore be assessed as archivable documents on the basis of their potential to become a source for new things. Briet also emphasises the ever-evolving production of secondary documentation within institutional settings, writing that it is ‘a powerful means for the collectivization of knowledge and ideas’ (2006, p. 31). This constellation of peripheral material is what establishes the value of the primary document. Although in performance archives the central document might be replaced by a collection of material, Briet’s conceptualisation attends to the idea that through its documentation the performance work is an ever-expanding artwork with multiple live moments as well as moments of its revisiting.

Under these considerations, Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks assert that performance documentation has ‘less to do with replication than reworking and recontextualisation’ (2001, p. 58). Documentation does not attempt to repeat the performative moment in another medium but to provide the means to reactivate it and perhaps reconfigure the work in new ways. Rather than serving as a ‘speculation on past meaning or intention’ (p. 59), the perspectives that documentation enfold aim at presenting, rather than representing the performance work for the now of the documentation audience. Echoing these views in *Histories of Performance Documentation* (2017), Gabriella Giannachi considers the re-enactment of a performance piece and the reinterpretation of the work as a strategy of preservation, describing such re-presentations as ‘a series of folds’ of the work (2017, p. 129). Re-enactment and reinterpretation, she maintains, keep a performance work radiant across time by allowing it to evolve through various interpretations, re-enactments, presentations, and experiences in new settings. Giannachi, hence, suggests that we should read documentation based on its ‘capacity to build a range of relations’ (Giannachi, 2017a, p. 120) between the elements of the work, its participants, the modes and times of its presentation. Through its documentation, live performance thus takes the shape of a holistic artwork rather than a single disappearing event.

Writing in relation to questions of how to conserve time-based installation art, Vivian van Saaze also supports the view that documentation is a form of conservation (2013). Indeed, documentation is the *only* basis upon which future reconstructions of a work can be built. Consequently, van Saaze maintains that the way a work is documented affects ‘the perpetuation of the artwork’ (Ibid., p. 140). In other words, depending on the way it is structured and the information it contains, documentation can serve as an artwork in its own right or it can create the space for new potentialities.

What all these arguments bring to the fore is how crucial the selection and structuring of documentation is. The future lives of a performance work, its re-enactments, and its reinterpretations are determined by such activities and by what future audiences come to know about it: what types of documents they come across, which elements and, equally, which perspectives of the live work they have access to, and which techniques are used to present performance documents and display them within a given context. Under these conditions, audio-visual forms of documentation that aspire to capture the entirety of a performative moment and present it as the only true perspective on the work might disable future reworkings - certainly the opposite

also applies: this type of documents can become reference for re-performing a performance work or developing it anew. This does not mean that these documents are valueless, but that they might have to be placed alongside additional informational material.

The theories on the documentation of live performance discussed in this chapter become even more pertinent when one considers the archives of works whose performative moments are augmented by interactive technologies, works that use digital technologies to transform their audiences into participants, and works that unsettle the communal meeting of audience members in a shared space, presenting them instead with a mediated performance on their own personal screens. The following section discusses the convergence of documentation and live performance in such instances and considers what audience documentation might offer to the expanded performance work.

2.2. Digital liveness: Documentation as part of the live performance

When performance works are presented within virtual and online interfaces, or even more when they rely directly on digital technologies, audiences are involved in the live moment through processes of mediation. To be exact, the mediation of the audience includes the making and releasing of digital files as a response to and part of the performance narrative. This description includes the production and circulation of social media - posts, videos, photographs, and text - associated with the live performance experience and the production, transmission, storage, and analysis of data - timestamp, geographical, demographic, psychographic etc. - generated as an action or reaction to the live performance (chapter 4). By inducing or relying on mediated interactions, the active production of audience-generated content becomes of practical use to the unfolding of the live performance. However, in doing so, audiences also become mediatised, leaving behind evidence of how they engaged with the live piece. During the live performance the audience's reaction instantly takes the form of data stored within a technological platform. Such data can be considered both as (a)live feeds during the performance moment as well as records of the interactive input of the live performance.

In the article *Theatre as Media* (2012), Sarah Bay-Cheng examines how social media²⁴ offers audiences an opportunity to mediate their performance experience. She considers ways in which the content produced by audiences is propagated in the online environments. Bay-Cheng particularly examines how audience-generated content can provide additional tools for experiencing the work during its live process, but also how its migration between platforms might be the vehicle for the performance piece to reach an even wider audience. Additionally, for Bay-Cheng, audience-generated content allows for new ways of documenting live performance which, consequently, affect the historiography of the work. Performance historiography studies the methods used to write performance history (Bank et al., 2015, p. 8). Although it is different to documentation, it too relies on documents. As Bay-Cheng notes ‘we reconstruct the event from historical evidence, and the very characteristics of the documents themselves’ (2012, p. 27). In other words, a historiography of a performance entails ‘distinguishing between available documents and identifiable facts’ in order to ‘proceed from ‘history-as-record [...] to history-as-event’ (Postlewait, 2009, p. 27). Reflecting on Abramović’s 2010 performance *The Artist is Present*, she proposes that apart from looking at how actions are staged, a comprehensive historiography should consider how

viewers engaged with multiple forms of enactment and documentation, simultaneously, navigating the various elements individually and idiosyncratically according to access [...] and choice. (2012, p. 35)

Bay-Cheng refers in this passage to audiences having a tripartite role in the work: being witnesses of the physical performance, co-performers with their fellow spectators, and audiences of the performance documentation. What her argument also indicates is that in cases such as Abramović’s piece, the involvement of audiences results in the documentation of the performance moment. Waiting in line for their turn to sit with the artist, visitors watched and recorded one another, documenting the experience of people

²⁴ ‘Social media’ is a term that can be applied to any Web 2.0 platform or application that allows two-way communication. According to Michael Mandiberg, this has been associated with concepts such as ‘the corporate media favour “user-generated content”’, Henry Jenkin’s media-industries-focused “convergence culture”, Jay Rosen’s “the people formerly known as the audience”, the politically infused “participatory media”, Yochai Benkler’s process-oriented “peer-production”, and Tim O’Reilly’s computer-programming-oriented “Web 2.0” (2012:2). In more recent research, the notion of social media is used to describe various forms of online sociality: social media platforms are considered ‘online facilitators or enhancers of human networks’ (Van Dijck, 2013, p. 11), co-operative and sharing tools that ‘outside the framework of traditional institutional institutions and organizations’ (Shirky, 2008:20f), which are driven by ““user-generated content” or content that is contributed by participants rather than editors’ (Boyd, 2009); ‘a new topology of distribution of information [...] based in “real” social networks, but also enhanced by casual and algorithmic connections’ (Terranova and Donovan, 2013: 297).

on stage and those who were still queuing. Using their mobile devices, audience members shared a selection of their files on various social media platforms. Conversely, when people sat opposite the artist, they were recorded by their peer spectators, as well as professional photographers and videographers from the museum. In addition to the recordings by participants, the piece was live-streamed via MOMA's website, while files from the museum's professional photographer were uploaded on relevant online platforms.

A similar example is Liz Crow's *Bedding Out*, which collected remote viewers' social media input from discussions around the bed of the artist.²⁵ The project sees artist-activist Liz Crow taking her private bed-oriented life and placing it in the public arena for all to see over a 48-hour period. Members of the public were invited to participate in 'Bedside Conversations', gathering around the bed to talk about the work, its backdrop and its politics, while those unable to attend in person were invited to take part virtually, through social media. The 'BMW Tate Live: Performance Rooms' series 2012-2015 also invited remote audiences to post their comments on YouTube and Twitter during the live streaming of events.

Beyond the physically present audience, these performance works could thus be accessed from online viewers through their multiple digital manifestations. By entering the online domain through their documentation, these works invited a wider body of remote spectators to witness their unfolding by viewing and responding to the numerous audience and museum documents and by following their live broadcasting. In this vein, Abramovic and Crow's works, and up to an extent the live performances at 'BMW Tate Live: Performance Rooms', exemplify how the encountering of the performance moment is constantly mediated by, and mediated for, an audience that splits its attention between the bodies on stage and on their screens.²⁶ This clearly also applies to online audiences who can also mediate their experiences online. Bay-Cheng's analysis brings into close attention studies (see chapter 2.1.i) that view performance documentation as a legitimate extension of the work, an extension that affords an additional performance experience. However, these discussions reflect on the experience of a work only in the now of the live performance. This plays an important role in the construction of liveness, which is materialises in Bay-Cheng's article through a network of on- and

²⁵ For more information visit <http://www.roaring-girl.com/work/bedding-out/>.

²⁶ In her PhD thesis, Ioanna Zouli (2017) examines in detail how Tate employed social media for the 'BMW Tate Live: Performance Rooms' programme.

offline elements. The live moment of the performance piece, otherwise how and when one experienced Abramović's sitting, involved selecting one's role/s – physical participant, documenter or passive spectator, online audience – and means of engagement.

Bay-Cheng's analysis ultimately corresponds to Philip Auslander's most recent articulation of digital liveness. Auslander suggests that rather than an arrangement between two or more physical bodies, digital liveness is relevant to an individual's perception. His argument is founded on the observation that networked environments create the feeling that we are in 'continuous, technologically mediated temporal co-presence with others known and unknown' (2012, p. 6).²⁷ Auslander notes that digital interaction, otherwise explained as receiving and responding to digital information, is perceived as live. Digital interaction, however, is not limited between two or more humans. It can equally occur between a human and non-human agent. Thus, Auslander concludes digital liveness is 'a particular way of "being involved with something"' it is the result of 'our conscious act of grasping virtual entities as live in response to the claims they make on us' (Ibid., p. 9).

During Abramović's live performance of *The Artist is Present* the immediate availability of professional documentation and audience-produced content created an alternative, yet, equally valid way of experiencing it. In this way, the work had a simultaneously physical and digital live quality. Irrespective of the source of its creation, records of the live performance were actively involved in structuring the audience's experience. Live performance (in this case, the practitioner and physical audience coexisting in the same physical space), its recording (the audience or informal and formal means of capturing the live performance), and its documents (the files of the recording methods) were produced and activated in reference to one another. Online files, freed as they are from their 'former inherently spatial and to some extent institutional constraints' (Hoskins, 2009, p. 97), become fluid, reproducible, and networked, forming the 'key strata of our technological unconscious, transcending the social and the technological' (Ibid.). Ultimately, as this work shows, the performance as an artwork weaves a network between all these elements. Under these considerations,

²⁷ Auslander here employs Nick Couldry's notion of online liveness, which is described as the 'social co-presence on a variety of scales from very small groups in chat rooms to huge international audiences for breaking news on major Web sites, all made possible by the Internet as an underlying infrastructure' (Couldry in Auslander, 2006, p. 6).

documentation takes on new characteristics. Rather than being a parallel process whose products are experienced at a later time, documentation here becomes integral to the experience both as a recording process and as a method for knowing the work.

Linking the physical live performance with the mediated methods of its transmission in the online domain and, consequently, the experience of the digital audience, Sarah Bay-Cheng outlines performance as a mode. She further explains that performance is an activity ‘through which we assess phenomena, including digital documentation’ (2012, p. 35). By entering a digital ecology through its records, live performance is made instantly available to anyone with an internet access. It cannot, therefore, be contemplated as an isolated event whose only true form resides in the physical space and the shared presence of artists and audiences. According to Bay-Cheng, to attend a performance work is to move between its live documents and between the roles that their production, viewing, and circulation afford. Just as the artist performs an action, so too does its audience engage with the work by participating in animating the presence of the piece within the multiple stages in which it appears. That performance as an artistic entity extends beyond a physical one-off live staging, leaving traces within digital technologies, signifies its rhizomatic appearance: the interconnecting elements of the staged action and its digitally-born representations offer valid engagement points to both physically present and remote/online viewers. To approach a live performance as a constellation of interdependent parts involves seeing audience-generated content as a supplementary experiential layer. Moreover, the online content created by spectators and professionals and circulated online at the time of the live performance assembles a nexus of information that changes not only how live performance emerges but also how performance as an expanding artwork becomes known in the future, what interpretations and reworkings it affords and by whom.

Bay-Cheng proposes that to learn about a work that was so vigorously mediated online and map its history involves searching, viewing, reading, and interpreting audience-generated content in addition to the documents created by the artist and the institution. She writes that ‘in terms of specific performances we find that the recordings reveal new aspects of performance unseen by the live, attending audiences’ (2012a, p. 80). Furthermore, a comprehensive historiography entails untangling the relationships between these records while considering their precarious nature. Performance historiography should emanate, she writes, as the managing of and caring for ‘the processes by which a performance constitutes, mediates, and is mediated by networks of

digital exchange' (Ibid., p. 40), but also by tracing one's 'own engagement within those networks' (Ibid.). In this vein, a comprehensive documentation that might enable an in-depth view of the performance artwork, requires creating layers of documents according to their sources (evidential value) and their perspective (informational value). These layers have to remain open to the insertion of new material as the piece develops and disseminates across time. Bay-Cheng insists that a documentation consisting of audience-generated content supplies the fixity of the institutional archive which materialises as records that are kept away from public access. Documentation, in Bay-Cheng's rationale, attains a performative quality through the deletion, addition, and alteration of files as well as their migration onto other platforms.

2.2.i. Audience-generated content as performance documentation

Bay-Cheng considers online records as documentation and although she does not engage with archival science, she indicates the importance of permanent access to audience-generated content. In her later article *Digital Historiography and Performance*, she maintains that the consideration of audience-generated content and their curation with digital tools can 'democratise processes of documentation, reception, and future appropriation' and can expose the 'role of both historians and audiences who function simultaneously as recorders, observers, and also as participants' (2012b, p. 512). Echoing Giannachi (see chapter 1.3), Bay-Cheng considers the museum archive and digital archival structures such as social media as 'overlapping domains' (Ibid., p. 513). Most importantly, she shows how the history of a work emerges from the ways in which professional and audience documents and recordings are combined and disseminated, viewed, reviewed, interpreted and altered.

This opening up of the so-far official archive to a 'rhizomatic, networked structure where each item can be tagged to as many topics as might be relevant, engaged in any order, at any time and in any place' (Hadley, 2017, p. 11) is explored in Bree Hadley's book *Theatre, Social Media and Meaning Making*. This does not mean that physical documents in museum archives are isolated and self-contained, but it points to the blurring of boundaries between tangible documents and the extended expansion and pliability of online and digital documents. Hadley arrives at this argument by exploring the various uses of social media in performance making, dissemination, staging, marketing, and documentation. She observes that social media platforms enable

audiences' participation in the experience and the augmentation of the work in both its live (Ibid., 76) and expanded aspects (Ibid., p. 70).

Due to their constant access through pervasive technologies, social media platforms capture and simultaneously affect 'what happens in the auditorium and what is said about it in post-show talks, in the press, or in documentation and archives' (Ibid., p. 11). Yet, she distinguishes between performance works that resort to social media for enabling and recording their making practice or live performance and initiatives that employ social media as archiving platforms. Hadley recognises that social media retains a form or layer of the documentation of the work but questions them as *archives*. This differentiation lies in the precarity of social media (Ibid., p. 42); in other words, the unreliability of such platforms in preserving their content, their inclusivity of information, and users' easy access to them.

The archive, for Hadley, remains a carefully curated canon that endorses only those files and information that are deemed worthy of retention (Ibid., p. 65). However, she values social media platforms for their archival abilities and recognises them as agents 'stretching it [the archive] to include a more democratically determined range of works' (Ibid.). In other words, Hadley acknowledges the potential of social media to raise the perspective of audiences and their content to the level of institutional archiving. Further to Bay-Cheng's argument that the inclusion of live performance in online environments enables a new mode of its historiography (2012, 2016a, 2016b), Hadley observes that audience-generated content falls outside the consideration and practices of established archival principles. Nevertheless, throughout her discussion, she emphasises the usefulness of audience-generated content as a form of documentational material of a performance piece. Ultimately, what both Hadley and Sarah Bay-Cheng's writings suggest is that as the viewing and production of live performance becomes increasingly saturated with audience-generated content, new approaches in explaining, researching, analysing, managing, caring, exhibiting, and preserving these files are needed.

Together with Giannachi's notion of the archives 3.0 and 4.0 (see chapter 1.3), Bay-Cheng (2012, 2016a, 2016b) and Hadley's (2017) views arise from a consideration of the way that audiences become involved in live performance and performative artworks through the use of digital and online technologies. What all three authors implicitly interrogate is how the authorship of documents, their management, and storage differs from the canon of the institutionalised archive. Audience-generated content and online

records are now stored on digital platforms and software. These archive-like tools might fall outside the jurisdiction and practices of museums and artists. Audience-generated content might include types of information such as computational data that only technologists are familiar with. Even more so, such records are highly precarious in that they might continue to accumulate or be deleted after the end of the live performance. As the origins of these files lie with the audience, the authorship of such a layer of documentation is also linked to the activity of the digital audience.

The considerations of audience-generated content as a form of documentation - a form that is useful for revisiting and expanding the live performance in the present and the future - indirectly acknowledge that documentation can arise from amateur sources as much as from professional ones. Alongside artists and institutions, who have so far been the directors and managers of performance documentation, audiences record and propagate the live performance as part of their engagement with it. As digital users, audiences participate, albeit at times unintentionally, in the augmentation of the work and its expanded presence. They do so through the mediation of their own activity and experience as well as their interpretations and re-interpretations of the work. In this vein, Tiina Peil notes that recent practices see the involvement of non-specialists in producing knowledge. She identifies such an approach as being 'highlighted in what is commonly termed the "authorized heritage discourse" or institutionalized heritage politics' (2014, p. 259).

Joanna Bucknall and Kirsty Sedgman also write in 2017 while emphasising the value of documenting the audience experience that performance documentation, more often than not, rules out amateur voices or else the audience's perspective. No audience member can, of course, be accused of failing to document their experience, perspective, or interpretation as part of a work and/or its archive - although Bucknall and Sedgman assert that they often do so on social media. The two scholars consider and argue for the responsibility of the archiving professionals - either these are the institution or the artists - by reminding us that the documentation of performance is a discursive process and, therefore, governed by the dynamics of power and knowledge (2017, p. 118). Using as their methodological tool Micheal Foucault's invitation to examine the subject position of the person or institution that creates and manages an archive, they question the identity of the creator of performance documentation, what is their position of power, and what is their relationship with the content and the context of a documented work.

With ephemerality being the most essential and praised characteristic of live performance, the value of a work builds upon the ways it is remembered. Although documentation has been dismissed as inferior, secondary, alien to the live performance, it is also its solemn “saviour.” Such a view is shared among all performance scholars from the sheer supporters of documentation, like Auslander (1996), to the most neutral like Matthew Read (2006). Whoever controls the documentation and the archive of a performance work also controls how it remains and is recollected. Buckland and Sedgman observe, within this context, a tension between the workings of memory and the desire to sustain a uniqueness of a theatre and performance piece as a result of its liveness. Because the memory of the experience exists only as long as the audience and the cast are alive, professionals need to boil this experience down to enduring documentation (Read in Buckland and Sedgman, 2017, p. 116). Nevertheless, when praising limited access to the live performance as an end goal of a work, doing so results in what the authors term *experiential fossilisation* (2017, p. 116); taking charge of documentation as a way of imposing one’s authority over liveness.

Unquestionably, individual, collective, and institutional agendas are key influencers of how control over documentation is exercised. For example, when practitioners are responsible for documenting their work, which is usually the norm, it is inevitable that the result will be driven by their needs and their creative as well as business outlook. Buckland and Sedgman notice that in such cases when the audience experience is documented it is driven by marketing strategies and experts mostly because ‘[p]roduction has been privileged over reception’ (Ibid. p. 117) for the majority, if not all, of practitioners. Going a step further by looking into how social media posts by audiences are perceived, they unveil a bias between different voices. Sedgman explicitly writes in an older article that the affordance that audiences have to express their opinion and perspective creates an anxiety that they threaten the creative industries (Sedgman in Buckland and Sedgman, 2017, p. 120).

Buckland and Sedgman are firm in their assertion that unless they are safeguarded and widely shared, the audience’s personal memories and bodily experience ‘becomes lost to cultural memory’ (2017, p. 117).

In his 2012 book *Heritage From Below*, Iain Robertson describes individuals’ narratives of events, their preoccupation with, interpretation, and spreading of history,

as ‘heritage from below’.²⁸ The phrase ‘from below’ draws attention away from the institution so as to valorise the perspectives of the ordinary, the personal, the individual, and the amateur; it draws attention to narratives of the everyday and questions how such narratives can be employed so as to structure a dynamic process in the exploration of heritage. The concept thus refers to individual people and communities that seek out less institutional and more personal ways of exploring their own heritage. The use of the term ‘below’ might be understood as suggesting that the ordinary ought to be thought of in terms of second-rate information when juxtaposed with the nation-state or otherwise institutionalised discourse. In using this phrase, Robertson also arguably *valorises* the position of the amateur and the personal by identifying those aspects which have previously been deemed inferior as able to augment, confirm, and alleviate the traditional archives. Robertson argues that people’s perspective and their interpretation of history is valuable while he equally acknowledges its marginalised position and power.

The notion of ‘heritage from below’ suggests that heritage practices outside institutional province are disentangled from strict economic and political transactions – although this does not automatically negate that the products of these processes can be used to drive economic growth. Thus, Robertson argues that practices that use documents that transpire from and give prominence to the voice of the people can function as a cultural resource for counter hegemonic expressions. For this purpose, Robertson investigates community practices using an array of case studies that consist of tangible archives relating to historical events or communities.

Following Robertson’s research, this concept can also be applied to audience-generated content, as this also challenges how live performance is documented. Audience-generated content constitutes the direct remains of audience engagement and can take various forms: photographs and videos of the live action, textual descriptions uploaded to blogs and social media, and, equally, computational information such as location data and responses to digital cues. Irrespective of its form, audience-generated content reveals each audience member’s position within the live performance, his or her method of engagement, what they experienced and, therefore, how the piece unfolded as an individual event and was materialised as an expanded artwork. That such audience-generated content is interwoven into the digital environments within which it was

²⁸ This contrasts with the notion of ‘authorised heritage discourse’ described by Smith (2006).

created points to its existence outside of the purview of the official archival canon; a canon which expects documentation to be created by the artist or professional documentarist, and to be easily discernible and available for an immediate use.²⁹ Robertson's notion of 'heritage from below' is relevant to this context of performance documentation. If social media and digital applications embedded in theatre and performances bear the characteristics of Giannachi's Archives 3.0 and 4.0, then within these digital spaces audiences temporarily perform documentation; through the given digital medium they discover new ways of exploring the live work in addition to their own and their fellow spectators' presences within it. This is not an unmediated process, as perhaps Phelan's ideal performance work is (1993). Instead, it leaves behind a trail of digital traces. Even more so, if audience-generated content is an integral part of the narrative of the live piece, then at a future time it forms the audience's personal meta-narratives.

Latest practices around the conservation of performative and time-based artworks have also turned towards preserving the audience's perspective. Vivian van Saaze specifically argues that for works whose activation – and, one might add, augmentation – depends on audience participation, it is paramount to turn to audiences for their documentation (2015). In a similar vein, Lizzie Muller, who is also concerned with the preservation of new media art, notes that when audiences become participants as part of the work's activation, it is imperative to document their 'experiences' (2008). Looking at the Variable Media Network and the Capturing Unstable Media initiative which stress and the importance of experiential material she notes that 'there is a gap around lived experience in the documentation of artworks, but there is also, more specifically, a gap around the experience of the "non-professional" audience of the work' (Muller, 2008, p. 3). According to Muller, although accounts of audience's perspectives are partial and challenging to capture, they are useful for forming subjective accounts of a piece because they 'emphasise the role of the participants' and their place in 'interaction, systems and generative processes' of artworks (Ibid., p. 1).

Such theories heavily reflect the documentation practices of earlier participatory performances. Writing about the documentation of *Happenings*, Alan Kaprow suggests

²⁹ I will return to this discussion in chapter 3 where I will reflect on and analyse the types of performance documents that the performance collections of the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the National Theatre Archive collect and even create (chapter 3.2.). Juxtaposing these findings with the overall documentation strategies of the three performance companies this exploration will demonstrate some overarching tendencies and that artists are influenced by the structure of institutional archives.

that despite their mediation of the live event, audio-visual recordings cannot succeed in capturing the audience's experience of participating in the live act (see Dewey, 2009 [1934]). For Kaprow, photographic and video representations provide only the privileged and authoritative position of the documentarist and the artist. Since these persons are situated outside the work, such documents inevitably present the perspective of an observer rather than a participant. In distinction to these methods, Kaprow argues that *Happenings* calls for practices that embrace the pluralistic viewpoints of the people involved in the live moment. Developing a similar argument while considering the ephemeral and participatory essence of installation and new media art, Muller (2018) and van Saaze (2015) propose pragmatic solutions for tracing the live moment through lived experiences rather than external observations. In so doing, they consider the value of the anecdote alongside a professional perspective.

In this context, Lydia Beerkens et al. examine how documentation methods from the social sciences and, in particular, ethnography, can help encapsulate the interaction between artists (2012) and audiences.³⁰ Referring to the preservation practices of participative performance, Hélia Pereira Marçal also suggests that conservators should adopt the methodologies of ethnography and other social sciences in order to participate themselves in the documentation of a piece (2017). Marçal specifically refers to Vânia Rovisco's reflections on her own project *REACTING TO TIME, The Portuguese in Performance Art*. Rovisko states that disregarding the embodied knowledge of audiences 'which comes from a relation of accumulated reflexive cultural actions [...] is a flaw in the recognition of a heritage that belongs to all of us' (Rovisko in Marçal, 2017, p. 99). I find these perspectives to echo Ian Robertson's notion of 'heritage from below' in that they valorise non-authoritative perspectives.

To involve audiences in the live performance's mechanisms – i.e. to understand the meeting of performers and audiences on equal terms – is to foster co-authorship (Giannachi, 2016; Bay-Cheng, 2012, 2016b; Hadley, 2017). When combined with the discussions presented so far it follows that as co-authors in the artistic production, the

³⁰ Only recently has there been research studying audiences for conservation purposes: the project *Audience Participation in Performance-based Art* comes under the framework of the European funded New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art (NACCA), see <http://nacca.eu/research-projects/audience-participation-in-performance-art/> (accessed May 2018). For Vivian van Saaze's work, see, for example, Pip Laurensen and Vivian van Saaze, 'Collecting Performance-Based Art: New Challenges and Shifting Perspectives', in *Performativity in the Gallery: Staging Interactive Encounters*, ed. Outi Remes, Laura MacCulloch and Marika Leino (Oxford: Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2014), p. 27-41.

audience's account of the live performance should be a valuable source of documentation. Coming at this question from her immersive performance practice,³¹ Elena Pérez (2014) examines documentation methodologies that could include the audience's voice and register the experience of isolated, distant, and mobile participants. Participants in Pérez's performance projects were given a camera to record their experience. They were then invited to contribute their recordings to the website SFZero (2014, p. 83). Audio-visual files were then coupled with participants' testimonies of the live event.

Pérez's documentation strategy resembles, as she herself writes, Blast Theory's documentation of *Riders Spoke* during which participants had to cycle and record videos at different spots in a city.³² Blast Theory and Pérez followed similar approaches for documenting the live moment of their pieces: Blast Theory embedded the process of documentation within the narrative of the work while Pérez asked participants to purposefully record their experience. The documentation of both works is contingent on the files that participants generated. However, Blast Theory used purpose-built software, while Pérez made use of social media platforms. Pérez's strategy is founded on theories that advocate art's democratisation through participatory practices and feed upon articulations of the Internet as an archive; the 'vision of [a] community of documentaries' (Ibid., p. 89) where participants can expand the work through their documentation responds to the opening of the archive to audiences' meta-narratives. Additionally, her strategy dismisses the precarity of any online material.

Wafaa Bilal's *Domestic Tension* (2007) is another example of the usefulness of participants' audience-generated content in the documentation of the work. Bilal's piece was a month-long digital live performance during which remote viewers had 24-hour access through 'the internet to contact or "shoot" Bilal'³³ by handling robotically controlled paintball guns. Web cameras live streamed the space on a webpage³⁴ where people could contact the artist and talk to each other through an integrated chat box. The interaction between Bilal and spectators, as well as the latter's influence on the artist's

³¹ Instead of immersive, Pérez defines pervasive performance as a 'mixed-media event that combine(s) gameplay with performance [...] for collaborative art making in public spaces' (2014, p. 16).

³² See pages 106, 129, and 158.

³³ <http://wafaabilal.com/domestic-tension/>

³⁴ In parallel with the live streaming, Bilal recorded a short video of his everyday experience for the whole duration of the performance. He then posted these videos on YouTube where people were allowed to freely comment with their personal views and opinions. These videos are still available to watch, as is the option of posting a comment.

living conditions, was the essence of the piece. This involvement of the audience in the live work transformed the ‘passive experience of viewing art into an active participation’.³⁵ During the live performance, participants’ online text-based communications were visible for everyone to see, as was the nickname and location of each shooter. Four embedded documentation processes were in place: the live streaming of Bilal’s room, a daily YouTube video in which the artist described his experience, and audience-generated content – i.e. communication texts and shooting orders. User data can be broken down into serving three purposes: they mediated the spectators’ actions, thoughts, and dialogue, they gave a command to the software to shoot the paintball gun, and they documented participants’ engagement through their immediate display in the webpage. Since the beginning of the piece, audience-generated content was thus a point of access to the audience’s perspective and involvement.

In 2017, Rhizome’s project *Net Art Anthology*³⁶ reconstructed the website of *Domestic Tension* (2007) which included a few entries from the participants’ dialogue and the numerical nicknames and locations of the last ten shooters. Rhizome’s tactic shows an increased interest in audience-generated content since it illustrates the participatory element of the work. Pictures, videos of the artist’s reaction, and data, all show how the initial virtual space looked, what it meant to be involved in the work and engage with the artist and other spectators, and the effect of the audiences’ engagement on the artist and the work. Rhizome’s presentation of the archive of the Bilal’s work reveals its intention to present audience-generated content. Including such participatory modes of engagement in an exhibition of documentation also emphasises how paramount it is in understanding the work after its end. Without this information, the documentation of the piece lacks the very essence of the live moment as well as the intention of the artist to invite the audience to take part in the live process. This does not mean that audience-generated content can stand in as performance documentation in isolation from other forms of information around the piece, but it indicates the important role such content can play in reconstructing the work for future audiences.

Audience-generated content in the reconstruction of *Domestic Tension* (2007) as well as among Pérez and Blast Theory’s documentation experiments suggests a turn towards direct traces: materials that are the direct remains of the audience’s live embracing engagement. Files produced during and as part of the live performance trace each

³⁵ <http://wafaabilal.com/domestic-tension/>

³⁶ <http://archive.rhizome.org/anthology/domestic-tension/>

participant's experience and their role within the work. What Pérez particularly argues is that the combination of digital traces with audience testimonies provides a perspective from within the piece which might lead to more democratised archival practices.

2.3. Moving forward: Researching the archiving of audience-generated content

The discussions presented in this chapter analyse documentation as both a source of knowledge and a means by which theatre and performance can be extended in multiple creative directions. Recent discourses also consider the amalgamation of live performance with its documentation based on the use of digital technologies as dramaturgical tools. These propose that digital technologies be viewed as an alternative way of documenting live performance based on their archiving abilities. While this thesis is aligned with such articulations, it questions what practical implications this new relationship between the live performance and its documentation might have for the creation of comprehensive and long-term accessible performance archives. It assesses the value of audience-generated content as documentation, while also considering the difficulties that practitioners and, by extension, archivists might come across when archiving such material. Equally, it considers the capacities of audience-generated content – what is the purpose of retaining part of it and what information does it hold that might be of benefit to the overall documentation and historiography of the piece – and its potentials for the revisiting of the performance moment.

As traces audience-generated content emerges *from below* (Robertson, 2012). Instead of and in addition to the perspectives of trained practitioners, it has the potential to democratise the content of performance documentation. Within digital technologies audiences have agency over the production and, perhaps, management of audience-generated content – this varies depending on the privacy settings and the features of the given digital technology. Including this content in an archive might minimise or remove audiences' curatorial capacity, but it allows the presentation of multiple views. Under this consideration, the authorship of performance documentation can be shared between the authoritative figure of the artist, the professional documentarist, the museum or institution, and the audience. As Pogačar notes, digital technologies and particularly online platforms are the 'bottom-up interventions in storing, curating, disseminating and interacting with archival sources that have been given considerable space for expansion in networked social spaces' (2016, p. 67). He describes these practices as moving away from the institutionalised archive to more guerrilla-like processes; as 'a post-archive of

public intimacy' (Ibid., p. 63). While in the literature presented so far scholars argue that with the pervasiveness and use of digital technology live performance and event documentation could be an activity embedded within the experience and dramaturgy of live performance (I will expand on this in chapter 4), questions of how this information could be stored and retrieved, by whom, and for what reasons, still have to be addressed. As most discussions around digital media and theatre and performance do, such debates avoid making the link between documents and heritage, between who produces and who exploits, while they do not consider who this data belongs to, and, thus, who controls what will remain in the future.

In their article *More-and-Less-Than: Liveness, Video Recording and the Future of Performance* (2000), Varney and Fensham write that the process of analysing a performance piece is rooted in memory; it is a future act compared to the performative moment which involves recalling and revisiting the past live moment either in one's own memory or by viewing its documentation. What this signifies with regard to experiencing a performance piece through its documents is that 'we rely on the already coded narratives of individual memories (actors, directors, theatre critics, etc.), each of whose narratives retells the performance, historicizing it and representing it as discourse' (2000, p. 91). Varney and Fensham's argument highlights that the mediation of live performance is equally relevant to its reception. While the experience of the performative moment in the now is bound with the unique perspective of each spectator, so too is the experience of its documentation.

Furthermore, Varney and Fensham underline the subjective creation of any archive – I emphasise this aspect throughout chapter 1. The performance archive can firstly be created and managed by practitioners who create the documents of their works.³⁷ Various archival institutions can also manage performance documents when they acquire it as part of their collecting practice. As such, performance documents can be found in and managed by libraries, museums, and theatres, in addition to practitioners and social media platforms and digital technologies. What this means is that performance analysis and the revisiting of a performance work is frequently dependent on the agenda and means of performance professionals³⁸. It is also subject to the longevity and obsolescence of digital technologies. Although a number of theorists (Taylor, 2010; Roach, 1996; Reason, 2006) have put forward archival frameworks which

³⁷ Performance documents can also be created by institutions with performance archives and collections.

³⁸ Performance professionals here refers to practitioners, academics, students, curators, and archivists.

can accommodate the experience of live performance these revolve around photographic and audio-visual documents. The archiving of other types of digital traces – audience-generated content of the live experience – that are part of the live performance³⁹ is yet underexplored. Before examining processes for including audience-generated content in performance archives, I will attend to the ways that archival institutions collect, create, and use performance documents in the digital age. Building on Giannachi's argument that archival institutions co-exist and compliment archives 3.0 and 4.0 (2016), the purpose of chapter 3 is to understand the role of performance collections with regards to preserving and using performance documentation. In so doing, the chapter maps the types of documents that archiving institutions consider most suitable for documenting live performance and how audiences experience and access these.

³⁹ I have discussed in page 76 the example of Wafaa Bilal's *Domestic Tension* (2007) and how the performance built upon the online discussion and user data.

Chapter 3. Institutional Collections of Theatre and Performance

Museums, libraries, and archives are considered the long-term guardians of knowledge and the conservators of cultural history. As they established this role the desire to access and revisit the live performance moment after its completion has been increased. An important challenge in this regard is the fundamental difference between archiving fine art and design – i.e. the traditional subject of museums – and the documentation and archiving of theatre and performance; while art museums deal with material items which can be preserved intact across time, live performance is an event that happens at a particular point in time and has a clear beginning and end (Casey, 2005, p. 79). The archiving practices for art have been developed so as to place an artwork in the centre of the archive around which further information are accumulated. This has been explained by Briet as primary and secondary documents (2006[1951]).⁴⁰ Theatre and performance, however, are missing a central, single document around which secondary material relating to its existence can be structured; they are missing *the thing itself*.

One solution to this challenge has been to reconcile live performance to its perceived antagonist – as Georgina Guy explains, to enter ‘the art museum via its documents which can more easily be accommodated within the gallery and collection systems’ (Guy, 2016, p. 8). As Buckland (1991, p. 355-6) and performance documentation theorists argue, it is only through its documentation that a performance piece can retain its visibility after its live moment and as such become collectable and commodifiable in the broader sense (Phelan, 1993; Auslander, 2006; Schneider, 2011; Heathfield and Jones, 2012). To put it otherwise, museums have been investing in performance documents because these are the only means that enable the experience of and access to completed performance works. Although the absence of the “thing itself” might be considered problematic with regard to collecting and archiving practices, it has afforded a plethora of different institutions to engage with acquiring and cataloguing performance documentation.⁴¹

In this chapter I reflect on the collecting and recording performance practices of institutions. I additionally examine how documents of the live performance are

⁴⁰ See chapter 1.2.

⁴¹ I have discussed examples of these in chapter 3.

experienced and accessed by audiences in the physical space of the institutions as well as online. This examination focuses on five London-based theatre and performance collections – the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the National Theatre (NT), the British Library, the London Art Development Agency (LADA), and Tate⁴² – and a number of online platforms – the Digital Theatre, the ontheboard.tv, the Drama Online Library, the Routledge Performance Archive, and the Digital Theatre Plus. It is particularly informed by interviews with Erin Lee, the head archivist at the National Theatre Archive, Ramona Riedzewski, the Head of Collections Management of the Victoria and Albert Museum Theatre and Performance Collection, and Stephen Cleary, the lead curator of the British Library Sound Archive. As noted in page 18 these three institutions have been selected on their capacity to epitomize the different forms of the notion of the Archiving Institution, their primary interest in collecting and documenting theatrical performance and not performance art, their link to public funding rather than academia and private capital and sponsorship, and finally their sharing of archiving ideas through their participation in the publicly funded organisation apac (see page 16). Objective of this chapter is to outline what may be referred to as a ‘canon’ of performance archives, based on established conventions and practices.

3.1. Collecting practices

In London, there are five major theatre and performance collections. These are the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the National Theatre (NT), the British Library, the London Art Development Agency (LADA), and Tate. Each of these collections and their structure reflects the overall character, agenda, organisation, and curatorial practices of the institution that houses it.

V&A is a museum that specialises in material culture. Its Theatre and Performance Collection, which was founded in the 1920’s, intends to document the ‘current practice and the history of all areas of performing arts in the UK’ (V&A, undated). The V&A’s strategy for its performance collection is guided by its historiographical vision, which seeks to preserve the entire lifespan of a work. This is of course enabled by the fact that as a museum it has or is trying to have the capacity to ‘deal with everything’ (Ibid.). The

⁴² Smaller collections can also be found in other cities and regions of the UK. For example, the Theatre Collection of the University of Bristol, the University of Oxford, the Royal Shakespeare Company and so forth. A number of these institutions are also members of the Association of Performing Arts Collections (apac), which is a key membership body for the performing arts heritage community in the UK.

majority of documents consists of tangible items such as costumes, costume bibles, manuscripts, posters, theatre programs and memorabilia e.g. tickets. The collection has also increased ‘the inquiries of digital material’ (Ibid.) by accepting digital recordings, photographs, and stage and lightning design files of performances. As Ramona Riedzewski noted during our interview

we want anything that is sort of related to it [performance], we aren’t really picky with the medium of the file. We initially collect whatever we can capture whether it’s digitally [sic] or costume or a sword or a door of a theatre, anything. It’s really the capturing of performance arts history we are aiming at and we are not being particular with what type [of] material has been used for that purpose. (November 23, 2017, interview notes)

On the other hand, the National Theatre Archive’s material is generated through its own productions. According to the Lead Archivist ‘the mission of the archive is to document, preserve and make accessible everything related to history of the National Theatre and its ongoing projects’ (Lee, June 7, 2017, interview notes). The collection is split into three sections and priority is given to records considered of high research demand. The business archive, which is predominantly why the NT Archive exists (Ibid.), serves legal and financial purposes. This is the section that is internally funded and closed to the public. The cultural archive is dedicated to the NT’s live performances which holds ‘photographs such as technical production, rehearsal photographs and prompt scripts, costume bibles, programmes, posters, and all the recordings’ they produce (Ibid.). Finally, the third section of the archive is dedicated to documents donated by external organisations and people. Material here is miscellaneous and include for example ‘a collection of vocal coach’, (Ibid.) documents ‘about the [NT] building on South Bank’ (Ibid.), as well as the Jocelyn Herbert Archive and the Black Plays Archive. For sustaining and developing this section the theatre seeks additional funding. The NT has a versatile institutional archive creating and managing not only its own documents but also collecting performance documents from external sources. Because it is a practicing theatre, its own documentation strategies are informed by the capacity of its storage facilities, which documents are useful to its own practice and history, and which documents it considers as having research and referential merit. Lee, for instance, noted that after the NT Archive’s 15th anniversary and the realization that costume bibles lacked details useful to the theatre’s costume designers, students, and

researchers, they started producing ‘photographs, costume notes, [and] high-definition photographs of the actors in their costumes’ (Ibid.).

In line with its general practice of collecting books –the final product of a creative literary process – the British Library focuses on preserving audio-visual records of live events. The British Library Sound Archive is a collection of live performance recordings. It holds video and sound recordings of ‘fringe theatre and live art from venues including the ICA, Battersea Arts Centre and the Chelsea Theatre.’⁴³ The collection is an independent department and separated from performance-related books. Contrary to the all-embracing collecting practice of the V&A, and the focus of the NT to have evidence from all the aspects of its own productions, the British Library’s drama and literature recordings division ‘sits within a bigger department of the library which is called Contemporary British Collections’ (Cleary, June 20, 2017, interview notes). The purpose of the division is to collect audio and video recordings of ‘drama, literary performance, stand-up comedy and sound art’.⁴⁴ Thus, although this distinction is sometimes blurred, the main difference between these institutions lies in which phase of the performance they seek to preserve.

A similar type of collection is also held by the Live Art Development Agency (LADA) which was established in 1999. The organisation develops ‘projects, opportunities, resources and publications for those who make, watch, research, study, teach, produce, present, write about and archive Live Art’ (Live Arts Development Agency, n.d.c). The term live art is defined by the organisation as a ‘cultural strategy’ which includes ‘experimental processes and experiential practices that might otherwise be excluded from established curatorial, cultural and critical frameworks’ (Live Art Development Agency, n.d.). Dedicated to producing and spreading new knowledge about performance, LADA has an extensive and expanding library of publications and ‘DVDs, videos, CDs and digital files of performance documents and documentation’ (Live Art Development Agency, n.d.b). A number of these resources are organised into themed collections which either assembled or acquired by the organisation or donated to it.⁴⁵

⁴³ <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/drama-and-literature-recordings>.

⁴⁴ <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/drama-and-literature-recordings>

⁴⁵ For more information visit <http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/resources/collections>.

Tate is a museum group consisted of four galleries across the UK⁴⁶. As a contemporary art museum its performance documentation collection is ruled by its intention to enable the revisiting of both the overall performance work as well as its performative moment. Its material includes traces of performances (such as objects used by artists as part of a live piece), documents from the development of a piece (i.e. drawings, notes, and texts similar to the documents produced as part of its live process), in addition to photographs and audio-visual recordings.

Performance documents have also enabled Tate to collect actual performances.⁴⁷ What makes this performance works collectable, according to van Saaze and Lip Laurenson, is their potential to exist independently from the artist (2014, p. 31). The pieces collected by this method pertain to a particular category: they can be activated through instructions without the presence of the artist or they ‘consist of older works which, where the artist might once have performed a work, they are reframed to offer an alternative performer’ (Tate, n.d.). Much like *Happenings* the activation of these works depends on either the hiring of the audience as amateur performers - i.e. the delegate the performance to the audience - or on audiences’ participation and interaction with the work. Claire Bishop describes these performances as ‘delegated performance’ (2012). Since the artist is not required for the activation of these pieces, their collection is facilitated by the acquisition of the rights and means to (re)perform them. Such means include the instructions for their staging which are commonly transmitted in the form of texts.⁴⁸ These instructions might include the parameters of the work, such as its duration, variability, space, and number of people/performers needed, and might also include instructions on how the reactivation should be documented, any legal and health and safety issues that might arise, and more detailed instructions on props, hiring people, and the types of skills that museum employees might need in order to restage the piece. Fundamentally, what museums collect in this instance is notation that delineates the work’s live process.

⁴⁶ The term Tate was reinvented in 2000 when the organisation rebranded itself (Rellie, 2004). Further to the four galleries the brand name also encompasses the activities and ‘collection of experiences’ the organisation offers (Wolf Olins, 2011). An analysis of Tate is out of the scope of this thesis. For more information on the structure of the museum see Wolf Olins, 2011; Dewdney, 2013; Zouli, 2017.

⁴⁷ Tate currently holds the rights to reactivate 16 performance works among which are Tania Bruguera’s piece *Tatlin’s Whisper #5* presented at the Turbin Hall at Tate Modern in 2008 and purchased in 2009, Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla’s *Ballance of Power* (2007) purchased in 2009, and Tino Sehgal’s *This is Propaganda* (2002) purchased in 2005.

⁴⁸ An exception to this rule is the acquisition of Tino Sehgal’s works. Part of the artist’s instructions is that his pieces should not be documented by any means, including a written set of instructions. Therefore, what the museum acquires is an oral transmission of how to activate them.

3.2. How institutions document live performance

Despite differences in vision, in the purposes behind the institutions, and in their structure, the National Theatre, the V&A, and the British Library are actively engaged not only with collecting performance documents but equally with recording current performance productions.⁴⁹

As a producing theatre, the National Theatre Archive's established way of capturing live performances is by videoing them. As Lee noted, for every production only one show is recorded using multiple cameras. The footage is then edited to present the show in a coherent way and from different angles. As I have noted in the previous chapter archives of shows also include material from their creative and marketing aspects.

Part of the National Theatre is also the Immersive Storytelling Studio. The purpose of the lab is to 'examine how virtual reality, 360° film, augmented reality and other emerging technologies can widen and enhance the NT's remit to be a pioneer of dramatic storytelling and enable audiences to stand in other people's shoes' (National Theatre, n.d.). At the time of Lee's interview, the exact identity of the lab was unclear. As such, its documentation process followed a business-like model, which aimed at tracking spending and partnerships. With regards to documenting its works, Lee noted that

what is more valuable is having perhaps screenshots of what it looked like; having a video file and then having the photo-file and then having the text. If you have all that then you'll be able to rebuild that experience for someone in 50 years' time even if you can't access the website. (June 7, 2017, interview notes)

Lee underlined in 2017 that the Studio was still looking into ways of recording the content of its work and live performances. She stressed that the task has been assigned to the practitioners as she as an archivist is unfamiliar with the various components involved in the Studio's works. For Lee, it is important that the Studio first finds ways of storing its content before it begins recording how it all functions together. Despite the

⁴⁹ Tate and the Live Art Development Agency also collect documents of performance art and live art respectively. However, they specialize in more somatic practices.

interactive practice that might be produced using emerging technologies, emphasis is put on having audio-visual references of what the audience *sees* and on creating notations for rebuilding a work.

Alongside the National Theatre, both the British Library and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) actively record performances happening in London. Around the 1980's the British Library started making its own video recordings of 'studio-scale theatre and performance art and [...] experimental theatre' (Cleary, June 20, 2017, interview notes). The archive chooses which productions to record according to its overall collection of recordings. This eliminates West End theatre, which Stephen Cleary considers a 'mismatch' (Ibid.) and most likely to be recorded by other professionals. Indeed, the recording mission of the V&A is dedicated to West-End productions. New recordings are part of the museum's National Video Archive of Performance (NVAP), which was established in 1992. These, however, might sit next to objects pertaining to other processes including the development, marketing, and dissemination of a performance.

Despite some differences relating to which documents they seek to collect, both institutions play an active role in capturing a large fragment of the current London theatrical and performance scene. In doing so, they follow a very similar strategy: they film live performances. For Steven Cleary, this process is intended to allow future audiences to directly *see* into the past and get 'a rough idea of what it [the live performance] was like' (June 20, 2017, interview notes). Recordings are 'for the benefit of people who weren't able to go on to the show, don't know about it, don't know they're going to be interested in it yet' (Ibid.). This view dictates the perspective that recordings take. Performances are

filmed from an audience position more or less. We don't do close-ups to what people wouldn't actually naturally be able to see. That's really the only rule we have. If possible, we keep the camera static; we can't always really do that. (Ibid.)

The V&A Theatre and Performance Collection, on the other hand, edits its recordings. Steven Cleary estimated that this is because the museum has more allocated funds compared to the British Library (Ibid.). The V&A collection films approximately twenty to thirty large scale productions by prominent theatres a year (Riedzewski, November 23, 2017, interview notes).

Each of the three institutional collections of performance archives specialize in particular topics and even formats of performance documents: the National Theatre focuses on recording and structuring its own history, the British Library Sound Archive on collecting audio and video recordings of live fringe performance, and the V&A, which sees itself as the British national collection of theatre and performance, on acquiring any tangible, analogue or digital file pertaining to all the phases of a performance work (chapter 3.1). Regarding files from the live performance moment, all three institutions share the same reasoning and tactics: they consider photographs and audio-visual recordings, which they either produce themselves or acquire, as the most appropriate way of *seeing* a past event.

3.3. The experience of performance documents in physical spaces

The practices of the institutions mentioned so far show that performance is collected equally through its remnants, its recordings, and its documents. The set of material that are preserved aligns with Jess Allen's proposition that a performance can be apprehended from various perspectives including its 'creative process' (2010, p. 66). The way that audiences experience and access institutionalised performance documents is twofold: either by encountering them in exhibitions or by accessing them in the study rooms of the archive departments.

Objects that were used during a live performance and remain as its remnants as well as photographic documentation can be publicly exhibited. This method is relevant to the majority of archiving institutions. Rebecca Horn's 'body sculptures' (Finbow, 2016), for example, are on display at Tate Modern's permanent galleries. Writing about Tate's collecting practices, Acatia Finbow notes that museums perceive as the work itself or as part of it documents such as instructions on how to reactivate a performance as well as material created by the artist such as costumes, photographs, and videos (2017, p. 51). Curator Boris Groys also stresses this museum practice (2012, p. 210) noting also notes that it 'has become increasingly evident that the art world has shifted its interest away from the artwork and toward art *documentation*' (2008, p. 49, italics in original). Considering that artists like Horn have premeditated the way the remnants of their live

performances are displayed, ⁵⁰ justifies the reasons why museums evaluate and treat documentation as an art object and not only as evidence. This is, however, a unique situation that other documenting processes do not adhere to. Finbow continues that this is often the case with. Other performance collections also use tangible traces as exhibition material although they do not consider them to represent entire works. The V&A displays objects linked to the creative aspects of a work, for example costumes and stage design as well as photographs. The NT also exhibits documents from its archive, but at a smaller scale: it displays a limited number of costumes and photographs in its Lyttleton Lounge.⁵¹

Videos, on the other hand, are accessible through less public settings, by visiting the study room of a collection. This applies to the majority of archiving institutions which provide free screening rooms and research space for the public. The problem behind exhibiting videos, according to what is deduced by the interviews with Stephen Cleary, Erin Lee, and Ramona Riedzewski, is their copyright. As Lee noted, showing videos would entail ‘pay[ing] royalties to every single person involved’ (June 7, 2017, interview notes). Otherwise, the contracts of everyone participating in a performance that is recorded would have to include the possibility that the ensuing video could be publicly displayed. LADA is the only organisation that uses its DVDs to curate ‘exhibitions or as theatrical screenings’,⁵² followed by discussions and, frequently, live performances. The difference between these two methods is that the latter refers to a one-off screening of a video as part of a larger programme of events. The first is the loop playing of selected works during which spectators can visit the exhibition space at any time during its working hours. In this case, the display of video documentation follows the rationale of a museum object, in that it stays active for the duration of the display.

When a performance enters the museum collection, either through their notations that allow their re-performance or through traces and representations, it generates further documentation – particularly when it is used as part of exhibitions. This is because, as several European research initiatives⁵³ have demonstrated, the re-presentation and

⁵⁰ In the case of the work *Moveable Shoulder Extensions* (1971) for example, ‘wooden wall display brackets’ were designed by Horn ‘are included in [the] case’ (Deighton, 1997).

⁵¹ <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/exhibitions>.

⁵² <http://thisisliveart.co.uk/projects/unpacked/>

⁵³ Examples of this include Tate’s project ‘Performance and Performativity’ (2011-2012), the ongoing EU research and training programme ‘New Approaches to the Conservation of Contemporary Art’ (NACCA),

revisiting of ephemeral artworks is better served when specialists can refer to documentation of different aspects of the work. Frequently, this practice entails a system of primary and secondary documents from each of their aspects and activations, as Susanne Briet⁵⁴ has proposed (2006[1951]). In this system, to paraphrase the information scientist Corina MacDonald, the original documentation received by the artist is the primary document which is ‘situated within networks of secondary documentation’ (2009, p. 60) produced by the museum. This results in the convergence of documentation and conservation practices within museums, generating ‘secondary documentary forms, all of which serve to reconstitute, represent or prove the original phenomenon’ (Ibid.). This is pivotal for all art practices that have a close relationship and are affected by their documentation. It explains that apart from being evidence that contain information useful in preservation, documentation is ‘a crucial aspect of knowledge creation and transmission’ (Giannachi, 2017b, p. 183). Within these lines Corina MacDonald also suggests that documentation is a ‘new cultural technique’ (2009, p. 60) that draws on many disciplines and forms and is its own realm of expression. Vivian van Saaze, whose research deals with the conservation of installation art, also conceives of documentation as a conservation method, noting that it has ‘an effect on the perpetuation of the artwork in the museum’ (2013, p. 130). The ways performance documents are made available to the public and the fact that they generate further interpretations of a work shows that performance documentation is more engaged with performance as a work expanding over time (Schneider, 2008; Jones, 2012).

Within the museum paradigm, exhibitions⁵⁵ are a communication tool or else a ‘showing for a purpose’ (Belcher, 1993, p. 37); they affect the viewer in a pre-decided way. Over the last decade museums have augmented this practice with more socially engaging modes. Such methods include the interaction of visitors with the museum space and with each other, and the opening of the museum’s programmes to objects, research, ideas, and design by external professionals (Bedford, 2012, 2014). These can be grouped under the broader term of socially engaged practices. These methods include

and the ‘Network for Conservation of Contemporary Art Research’ (NeCCAR 2012-2014) at the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

⁵⁴ I have discussed in chapter 1.2 that Briet (2006[1951]) distinguishes between a central (original) document around which secondary interpretative material or documents can proliferate. In museum practices, the primary document translates into the artwork kept in the collection archive and secondary document into any relevant information about it.

⁵⁵ Dean defines exhibitions as the organising and composing of visual, spatial, and material elements within an environment that visitors can move through (1994, p. 32).

the interaction of visitors with the museum space and with each other, and the opening of the museum's programmes to objects, research, ideas, and design by external professionals (Bedford, 2012, 2014). In this context, Adrian Heathfield (2003) notes that museums have turned towards immersive visitor-engaging practices and temporary displays, recognising the need to engage their audiences in their programmes. The fascination of the culture industry with staging events was being discussed as early as 1970 when Alvin Toffler described the rise of an 'experiential economy'. Progressing in the third decade of the twentieth century, Toffler's and also Pine II and Gilmore's 'experience economy' manifests itself in the temporary exhibitions of museums followed by artists' talks, private previews, tours and late night shows, in their shops and integrated cafes and restaurant, and also in the continuously growing number of music, theatre and performance festivals. That documentation can equally be a script for reperforming a work, thus, perceived as the work, or serve museums' exhibitions attests to the need of institutions to engage their audiences in their programmes (Heathfield, 2003). Although the valuation of documentation as the work might be part of the intention of the artist, it might also problematise the future of performance as an expanding artwork.

3.4. Digital technology of new media access

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999), Lev Manovich (2001), and Mark Hansen (2004) have all argued that our modes of knowledge are subject to the technologies by which we capture, store, and disseminate information. Marshal McLuhan, whose theory has been summarised in his quote 'the medium is the message' (1964, p. 9) has been recognized as a key influencing figure of these discourses. According to McLuhan all technologies are human extensions, meaning that they are extensions of the human nervous system and senses. When a new medium is introduced, it shifts human perception and thinking by turning the attention towards the particular sense or combination of senses that is favoured. Whether the content of the new medium is new, is irrelevant to this shift, McLuhan stresses. Perception and thinking change because the medium shifts the modes of engagement with the content. McLuhan explains in this respect that '[c]ivilisation is based on literacy because literacy is a uniform processing of a culture by a visual sense extended in space and time by the alphabet' (Ibid., p. 86). This position leads to arguing that the ways humans perceive the world is controlled by the proportionate relationship between their senses and the media. If this is true, then 'the medium [...] shapes and controls the scale and form of

human association and action' (Ibid., p. 9). With the effect of media being unavoidable and permanent, humans have no responsibility over their actions, and they are constrained by the technological force of change. Under this rationale McLuhan claims that human history can be organized in sequential steps, each reflecting the introduction of a new medium.

McLuhan's celebrated treatise is one of the foundations of 'technological determinism;' a concept that media theorists either abide by (Lev Manovich, 2001) or strive to deviate from when contemplating subjectivity and the history of new media. Technological determinism is the postulation that science and technology are a self-governed milieu responsible for all, if not every, social change. By anointing them as the major source of change, science and technology are seen as evolving based on their own autonomous logic.

Lev Manovich has been highly influenced by McLuhan's discourse. In his book *The Language of New Media* (2001), where he offers a systematic theory of new media and how they affect knowledge, he unpacks a history of media as if it contains an unbroken continuity. Manovich sees a 'logic' between technological innovations or in other words a meaningful trajectory where new media rely on conventions of older media; for instance, the Jacquard loom is a predecessor of the computer. This intelligence inherent to the evolution of media leads to the naturalisation of technological progress which, in effect, supplants humans as actors. In Manovich's terms, technological progress is driven by 'a teleology of which computer based (new) media appear as the provisional end point' (Medosch, 2005, p 28). Therefore, despite Manovich's claims that, for example, cinema's realism 'is an isolated accident in the history or representation' his discourse is linked with technological determinism (Hansen, 2004, p. 36).

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin take a different stance on the history of new media, although it is immediately clear that their book *Remediation: Understanding New Media* published in 1999 has direct connotations of McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The extensions of Man* (1964). They argue that media have always been exposed to a process they call *remediation* i.e. a series of displacements in which new media reform and make old media obsolete (1999, p. 59). Bolter and Grusin claim that this reform has been and is being affected by a constant effort to create technologies that produce a virtual reality identical to the one they represent. In this vein, painting,

photography, film, 3D digital animation, and virtual reality are attempts to make the self 'one with the objects of mediation' (Ibid., p. 236).

Bolter and Grusin's theory differs from that of Manovich in that the authors make difficult for their readers to understand whether humans are the agents or the objects of technological change. In *Remediation* (1999) nothing is privileged. This is, in part, because they wish to avoid Marshall McLuhan's doctrine of media determinism due to its implications:

Nothing good can come of technological determinism, because the claim that technology causes social change is regarded as a justification for the excesses of technologically driven capitalism in the late twentieth century (Ibid., 76).

Drawing from Foucault's discourse [1989 (1969)] that historical inquiry should be the search for historical affiliations or resonance and not for origins, they continue:

We propose to treat social forces and technical forms as two aspects of the same phenomenon: to explore digital technologies themselves as hybrids of technical, material, social, and economic factors [...] Because our digital technologies of representation are simultaneously material artifacts and social constructions, there is no need to insist on any aspect as cause or effect (Ibid., 77-78).

This feature results in users embracing an aesthetic governed by hypermediacy, which is a heterogeneous space that employs multiple points of view and media. For instance, in an image created in virtual reality users are presented with multiple pictures of the same thing but from different perspectives and potentially codes. In media governed by hypermediacy, users are asked to construct relationships and networks and to assess their significance. The merit of Bolter and Grusin's reasoning is relevant to this thesis and the way the three case studies engage their audiences as I will discuss in chapter 4: through their multimodality *Flatland* (2015), *Speak Bitterness* (2014), and *Karen* (2015) solicit for their audiences' performance and engagement with a series of information they themselves produce. Further to the performance case studies, new

media, such as social media and digital technologies, shift the modes of production and encountering of documents.

With documents being integral to the revisiting and expansion of performance within research and museum settings, as shown in the previous chapter, as well as with the development of digital media, the methods of presenting such materials have been extended to the digital milieu. The four museums that are discussed in this chapter have been digitising their performance collections, segments of which are uploaded onto their websites or networked platforms. Even more so, they have experimented with digital and networked tools for creating online exhibitions of performance documents. In collaboration with the Google Cultural Institute, the NT has curated a number of online presentations of documents which take the form of photographic slideshows. LADA has also engaged with this practice. In 2015, Eleanor Roberts curated the exhibition *Live Art and Feminism in the UK*⁵⁶.

Performance replay platforms offer an additional way of presenting performance documents online. Some of these strategies reflect scholarship that sees performance as an ever-expanding artwork enabled by the uses of its documentation which can combine sets of material authored by different sources. Equally they capitalise on the archival and communicative features of online technologies.

Digital Theatre⁵⁷ is a company and online platform that records theatrical live productions. After the end of a live performance, a high-definition video is uploaded onto the interface which is available to stream or download against a fee. Another platform that offers similar services is ontheboards.tv.⁵⁸ Working internationally, ontheboards.tv embraces almost all performance practices, including dance, theatre, and musical productions. Interestingly, ontheboards.tv claims to offer *films of performances* which have been collaboratively edited with the practitioners. The terminology of the two platforms challenge what a performance recording is and what it intends doing. To use ‘film’ instead of ‘recording’ raises questions about the ontology of both terms in relation to the live and to each other. It is the understanding of this thesis that ‘recordings’ attests to the documentary content of the files as well as an unbiased presentation of the completed live performance. ‘Film’ on the other hand suggests an

⁵⁶ https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/1gLSx6pobvq_Ig.

⁵⁷ <https://www.digitaltheatre.com/>.

⁵⁸ <https://www.ontheboards.tv/about#.Wsh3HpPwYWo>.

attempt by artists and the platform to polish the performance. All in all, the word ‘film’ reveals the retouching and editing of available videos as well as the aspiration to cement such documentation in history as another artwork.

Along the spectrum of online performance documentation platforms sit the video catalogue of the Drama Online Library,⁵⁹ the Routledge Performance Archive,⁶⁰ and the Digital Theatre Plus.⁶¹ In addition to audio-visual recordings these platforms grant their subscribers access to auxiliary performance documentation, such as research papers and interviews with practitioners and academics. This content is treated as evidence on the basis of which users might construct their own understanding of the work and possibly produce new knowledge. The most striking element of these platforms is that they invoke a classificatory system. As self-proclaimed archives they target a specialist audience, i.e. performance researchers and educational institutions. More specifically, their interfaces are structured in ways that better assist the educator and scholar, rather than the artist or performance enthusiast. Documents are grouped by subject, practitioner, object form, and performance type, allowing for searches based on theoretical interests. The purpose of these performance platforms can be compared to that of museum collections: they are ‘the medium through which most art becomes known’ and within the digital economy they ‘establish and administer the cultural meanings’ of performance practices (Greenberg et al., 1999, p. 2).

Analysing performance exhibitions, Claire Bishop contemplates the value of simultaneously presenting the past, present, and future of displays. She maintains that ahistorical collections are ‘the most fruitful testing ground for a non-presentist, multi-temporal contemporaneity’ (2012b, p. 23). Although Bishop develops her argument with specific reference to the museum context, she acknowledges that ‘several tenses simultaneously: the past perfect and the future anterior’ allow for a complex temporal experience. This could be made possible by a ‘crowdsourced’ conservation model similar to the one Jon Ippolito proposes in his essay *Learning from Mario* (2010). In Ippolito’s model audiences coat the already existing professional documentation with additional layers by contributing their perspective or memories of a work. The Siobhan Davies Replay⁶² is currently the only purpose-built platform that embraces both Bishop

⁵⁹ <http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/>.

⁶⁰ <https://www.routledgeperformancearchive.com/>.

⁶¹ Digital Theatre+ is a division of Digital Theatre <https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/>.

⁶² <http://www.siobhandaviesreplay.com/>.

and Ippolito's perspective since it engages its users in the process of creating the expanding the nature of the featured performance pieces. Its interface encourages users to create online personal collections (scrapbooks) of documents which can be shared on social media. Beyond online viewing, it also prompts users to creatively deploy their access to files.⁶³ Every time a user creates a scrapbook, he or she curates the collection anew, hence, generating new links between documents. By publicly sharing these groupings of documents users reveal potential links between them and point to potential uses of this material. A new layer of documents and performance interpretations ensues from this openness to the dissemination of documents and, therefore, possible professional and amateur iterations of existing pieces are created. Even more so, in this process the amateur audience becomes a key enactor.

In her research into Siobhan Davies's choreographic style and movement vocabulary, Sarah Whatley, a key figure on the development of the platform, unpacks the development of the digital archive and how it grew over 15 years (2009, 2013a, 2013b). Whatley notes that the idea of the archive was conceived after recognising that due to its ephemerality dance had been absent from the documented history of performance art (2009). This led to identifying that there was also space to experiment with archival models that could demonstrate how digital technologies could support the preservation and wider distribution of dance (Ibid.). By providing access to previously analogue footage users are able to engage with the choreographic process and with how dancers worked in the studio (2013b). The insights gained while considering the best archival model prompted the development of the rest of the features of the Siobhan Davies Replay, including how to select, curate, and represent live performance online as well as how artist could engage with digital dance archives and reconnect with histories, reuse, reconstruct, and reconsider audiences and users (2013a).

Siobhan Davies Replay is ultimately a platform that relies on audience engagement, allowing for the constant renegotiation of heritage with the needs of its users. This networked sharing of heritage is built in-the-now and runs counter to the freezing of documents in museums in much the same way that Pérez's documentation model does, as mentioned previously (2014). Bay-Cheng's concept of performance as a network of

⁶³ The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam presents another example of such a strategy. For the museum's Rijks Studio project, 200,000 objects were digitised and made available to download free of charge. As Cameron et al. (2017) note, motivation for the project came from the urge to raise the technical standards of downloadable material since images of the same artworks can be found in poor quality online. Furthermore, Rijksmuseum encourages users to repurpose the material and produce new work.

elements is relevant here (2012). The digitisation of analogue performance documents combined with audience-generated content made available in networked interfaces challenges traditional paths and processes of collecting, presenting, and studying performance. That users are able to download, work with, rework, and share these files within their online communities leads to a perpetual expanding of the performance archive content. Instead of a linear path, performance documents follow several individual paths, frequently parallel and in some ways entwined. Practices that merge live performance with digital technology emphasise the rise of audience performance, and of active modes of experiencing. Even more, they so reconfirm performance as an ever-expanding work (Schneider, 2008; Jones, 2012). According to Jenkins et al. (2006), a participatory culture is one in which ‘not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute when ready and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued’ (Jenkins et al., 2006, p. 7).

3.5. The canon of institutional performance documentation

In this chapter I have demonstrated that archiving institutions value performance documents. This manifests in their expanding collections of performance documents, in their practices of recording live performances, and in how they use documents in their programmes. Sayre particularly argues in this respect that ‘documents, the record of the art event that survived the event’ is ‘what in effect gave it [the museum] access to objectless art’ (1989, p. 2). Within the context, documents are valuable because they enable performance to enter object-driven archiving practices.

Performance documents are considered versatile enough to sit within different types of archives. This is evident in the different archiving institutions that acquire them. Each institution nevertheless is interested only in files that fit its overall interests. Thus, museums and theatres can potentially store and safeguard almost any kind of analogue or digital object from every phase of a performance work -although theatres are interested primarily in their own work-, while libraries and online databases are restricted to items that fit into their practice of collecting the final product of a creative literary process e.g. manuscripts and recordings. How each archiving institution assesses which documents have archival value is by responding to questions about their usefulness, significance, and worth. This process entails identifying their secondary – i.e. informational and evidential – values, as I have discussed in chapter 1.2.

Several studies on performance documentation have also reflected on the archival value of performance documents⁶⁴ in the context of museums (Finbow, 2017) and artists (Wee, 2012). For museums, Acatia Finbow highlights that the secondary values of documents include the ‘artistic’, ‘cultural’, ‘experience’ and ‘access’ values (2017, p. 28).⁶⁵ The cultural value ⁶⁶ derives from ‘documentation’s claim as evidence that an action took place’ (Wee, 2012, p. 54); in archival terms this is the informational value. A document may not have any informational value about a live performance, but it may represent or trace part of a culturally valuable element. This is particularly relevant to costumes and props that trace a performance through the creative practices it entangles for its making. The artistic value reflects the ability of a document to function as an art object in itself. These are the types of documents that can be displayed within the context of an exhibition or platform. As I have showed throughout this chapter photographs, videos, costumes, and props are the documents are considered as having the highest artistic value. The experience and access values concern the ‘ways in which the performance document is used in order to facilitate [...] an engagement with an absent performance moment and an expanded performance artwork’ (Finbow, 2017, p. 79). In other words, they reflect how audiences can engage and interact with documents. Finally, Cecilia Wee (2012) and Matthew Reason (2012) suggest that performance documents also have inspiration value because a document might have the potential to inspire other artists or projects. The set of values presented here can be used to explain the types of performance documents that are collected and even created by institutions and, as I will show in chapter 5, by practitioners.

Considering that archiving institutions currently function as long-term guardians of knowledge and the conservators of cultural history, the types of documents they collect and the methods they employ for capturing live performance influence how performance remains. It is, therefore, useful to highlight that although museums, theatres, and libraries catalogue both residues (such as costumes and scripts) and representations of a work (photographs and videos), their collections of performance documentation show that they consider filming and photographing the most familiar way of capturing live performance. Indeed, photographs and videos have strong

⁶⁴ See for example Copeland, 1990; Phelan, 1993; Auslander, 1996, 2008; Reason, 2006; Jones, 2012; Schneider, 2012.

⁶⁵ Finbow also reflects critically on the ‘truth’ and ‘symbolic’ values (2017).

⁶⁶ The concept of cultural value is relatively new and has recently occupied a number of projects. For example, in 2012 the AHRC launched the Cultural Value Project while Dr Eleanora Belfiore launched the Cultural Value Initiative.

informational value as they depict an immediate image of what took place. In this sense while following Finbow's analysis of the values of documents, they could be analysed as having artistic and inspirational value. Furthermore, the tangible format of photographs and videos allows them to be displayed, accessed in reading room settings, or be consulted in order to reperform a performance.

This shared interest and emphasis shows that at its core documentation is expected to be able to depict the live performance. This convention structures, I argue, the canon of performance documentation and, by extension, the performance archive. Photographs and videos take the place of the principal document required in the institutional archive, according to Briet's articulation of documentation (2006[1951]). This archiving practice, which is linked to visual arts archiving, is not necessarily a problem as long as the live performance is theatre-based – i.e. a staged event presented in front of an audience. Practices, however, that are intimate, participatory, immersive, and interactive problematise the suitability of videos and photographs for documenting their performative moments. This is even more pressing when these types of practices unfold by mediating the lives of their audiences. Such an observation indicated that the archiving of other types of digital traces – audience-generated content of the live experience – that are part of the live performance⁶⁷ is yet underexplored. Before examining processes for including audience-generated content in performance archives it is useful to understand the contribution of audience-generated content to the live performance and, consequently, what information it might contain as digital trace. Following this, the next chapter explores three performances, namely *Karen* (2015) by Blast Theory, *Flatland* (2015) by Extant, and *Speak Bitterness* (2014) by Forced Entertainment. Through this examination the chapter analyses the role of the audience in relation to the live performances and their documentation.

⁶⁷ I have discussed in chapter 2.2.ii the example of Wafaa Bilal's *Domestic Tension* (2007) and how the performance built upon the online discussion and user data.

Chapter 4. Audience-generated content in live performance

This chapter analyses and reflects on the live moments of the three performance case studies examined in this thesis. These are *Speak Bitterness* (2014) by Forced Entertainment, *Karen* (2015) by Blast Theory, and *Flatland* (2015) by Extant. It looks at how digital technology assisted in the unfolding of each work's narrative and the role it played in how audiences led each of them. Particular attention is given to the mediated role of the audience. The chapter highlights how audiences' use of digital media is inseparable from activating and unfolding the experience of each work as a means of identifying and analysing the audiences' role in relation to the performative moment of each piece.

As this chapter will show, *Speak Bitterness* (Forced Entertainment, 2014), *Karen* (Blast Theory, 2015), and *Flatland* (Extant, 2015) are three performance-based works that unfold by using 'various media and modes (video, scenography, utterance), forms (drama, documentary, testimony) and structures (dramaturgical, architectural, spatial and temporal)', to echo here Andy Lavender (2016, p. 9). The three works are different in what they expect from their audiences. Digital technology thus plays a different role in each one of them. What they all have in common, however, is that parts of each of their live moments involve the tracing, storing, and utilising of audience-generated content in the narrative. Audience-generated content is explained through Latzko-Toth et al.'s definition of user-generated content as 'all user-related data that can be available on social media platforms' and emerging digital technologies, including both 'records of activity [...] undertaken through an online information system' (Howison et al., in Latzko-Toth et al., 2017, p. 200) as well as its metadata (author, timestamp, geolocation data, etc.).

All three case studies converge the 'space of the performance with that of spectatorship' (Ibid.) by embedding in the process of their live unfolding a digital technology. This means that audiences are able to engage with these works because their contributions to the piece are converted into digital information. During the live moment this means that audiences' experiences are mediated into textual, numerical, and locative data, which are instantly logged into the database of each used software. Consequently, as this chapter contends, in addition to contributing to the narrative and to the activation of each work, audiences also make a vital contribution to the *capturing*

of the performance. Following the theoretical discussions of documentational and archival value (chapter 1.2) and the potential of audience-generated content that was discussed in chapter 2.2, this chapter argues that in the three case studies the audiences become documentarist of the live performances by virtue of their own performance in each work and their generating of related data. It is for this reason that this chapter argues that the audience-generated content produced during the three case studies should be treated as part of the documentation of the works.

4.1. Speak or ‘Tweet’ Bitterness?

Forced Entertainment is a British theatre company founded in 1984 by Tim Etchells and Richard Lowdon. Currently based in Sheffield, the company is a cluster of six artists – Tim Etchells, who is the artistic director of the company, Richard Lowdon, who serves the dual role of designer and performer, and the four performers Robin Arthur, Claire Marshall, Cathy Naden, and Terry O’Connor. During its 33-year-long trajectory the group has created work that extends from theatre and performance to digital media, video installation, and publications. These have been staged in theatres, public sites, and exhibited in art galleries (Hickie, 2009, p. 88). When technology became more accessible, the group started experimenting with the space in which its works could be shown. The artists moved beyond, yet, without abandoning the theatre stage and into forms such as video installations (*Filthy Words And Phrases*, 1998), performance videos (*Starfucker*, 2001; *Erasure*, 2003), an internet project (*Paradise*, 1998) and interactive CD-ROMs (*Nightwalks*, 1998). Tim Etchells has also edited a number of books about Forced Entertainment’s practice (*Certain Fragments*, 1999; *While You Are With Us Here Tonight*, 2013). By encompassing a wide range of analogue and digital media, styles and elements from different art and performance genres, and by adopting various modes of presentation, Forced Entertainment’s pieces often bridge the physical with the digital space. The company started webcasting its live performances in 2008 when it livestreamed a six-hour variation of its piece *Speak Bitterness* from PACT Zollverein in Essen⁶⁸ (Etchells, 2015).

⁶⁸ Since then it has livestreamed its works *And on the Thousandth Night* (2000), *Speak Bitterness* (1994), and *12AM: Awake & Looking Down* (1993).

Starting with the staging of *Speak Bitterness* at Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin in 2014,⁶⁹ Forced Entertainment has been coupling the livestreaming of its works with the Twitter hashtag *#fespeaklive*. A hashtag is a type of metadata tag, which is used on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It is created when a user places the hash symbol (#) in front of a word or un-spaced phrase in the textual part of a post. Hashtags work as a form of networked categorisation i.e. content with the same hashtag is grouped into the same category so as to allow users to find content with a particular topic or content. They reflect media scholars' proposition that social media and their content (Ellison et al., 2006, 2011; Krämer and Winter, 2008) can be considered under Goffman's "front stage/back stage" metaphor for impression management and the enactment of social roles mentioned in page 37 (1959). Like most theatre companies, Forced Entertainment has employed social media as a marketing tool and has been using hashtags as a means of easily tracing any online content that refers to its work. However, further to the prevalent use of hashtags as a communication and research tool, the *#fespeaklive* hashtag has also played an additional role in the company's live streamed works.

During the 2014 livestreaming of the durational piece *Speak Bitterness*, as well as *12AM: Awake & Looking Down* later that year, remote audience members were able to respond to what they were watching by tweeting and tagging their tweets with the *#fespeaklive* hashtag. While the performance was ongoing the networked viewers composed tweets, which included comments and questions about the play. They also highlighted those moments of the performance that left an impression on them. Some viewers revealed the place within which they were watching the live streaming from, adding images of their own private space. A few started conversations by commenting on the tweets of other users. Several tweets repeated a sentence/confession from the script; others by mimicking the script's structure, tone, and language added a new, unuttered by the performers, confession. This spontaneous audience engagement was enabled by the existence of the *#fespeaklive* hashtag which grouped all the posts together and, in this way, facilitated a real-time conversation about the work and the remote experience of it. It is the understanding of this thesis, therefore, that although the viewers that posted on Twitter were unable to influence the live performance, their

⁶⁹ This production was part of Forced Entertainment's thirty year birthday event. For more information visit: <http://english.hebbel-am-ufer.de/programme/festivals-projects/2014-2015/30-years-forced-entertainment/> (Accessed October 16, 2017).

tweets still shaped the mediated experience of the entire body of networked audience members.

After the live event, what was initially developed as a live conversation turned into a digital remnant of the piece. The collection of *#fespeaklive* tweets on Twitter attests to the past live-streaming experience and remains as a trace of this event. In this social media platform content remains intact as long as the platform and the profile of the content's authors continue to exist, and as long as the users allow their posts to exist. The characteristics of Twitter therefore allow part of the live event to continue to live on beyond the parameters of the original performance. This is significant. By virtue of the use of these technological platforms and the modes of mediation they bring into play, part of the live moment *itself* remains as a form of documentation.

Sarah Bay-Cheng argues that the live performance moment unfolds as an ecological system of physical and digital actions. Consequently, Bay-Cheng notes that the audience-generated content does not only form part of the live performance experience, but also becomes part of the *history* of the performance as I have discussed in chapter 2.2.i (2012, p. 35). In the context of this thesis, this means that tweets can serve as valuable documentational items and as such allow for the construction of a digital historiography of a past performance while providing a record of the experience of the piece from multiple viewpoints. Guided by Bay-Cheng's argument, the following section outlines the structure of *Speak Bitterness*⁷⁰ and reflects on how social media impacted on the online audience experience.

The data used by this thesis has been drawn from the tweets, the direct recording of the physical stage, and a webcast recording of the performance of *Speak Bitterness* held at Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin on October 18, 2014.⁷¹ As such, the analysis emerged from an encounter with the informational items of the production, rather than a direct experience of the piece. Consequently, the thesis adopts the perspective of a future

⁷⁰After 2015, *Speak Bitterness* was live streamed again on February 20, 2016, from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and on March 29, 2019, from the Frascatti theatre in Amsterdam. *Quizoola!* (1996) was another performance during which remote audiences engaged in a Twitter conversation. For the context of this discussion, the 2014 *Speak Bitterness* performance was selected based on the fact that the *#fespeaklive* hashtag had just been set up.

⁷¹ *Webcast* and *livecast* are two alternative terms for live streaming. Livecast and live streaming have a direct link to the idea of 'real-time transmission' and, thus, the concept of liveness. The term *webcast* indicates site-specificity.

researcher gluing fragments of documentation together in a bid to reconstruct the past performance.

4.1.i. About the play

Speak Bitterness is a durational performance that was first presented at the National Review of Live Art in Glasgow on October 23, 1994. Since then the piece has been staged forty-nine times. Although the initial duration of *Speak Bitterness* was six hours, throughout the years Forced Entertainment developed a shorter four-hour-long version in addition to a ‘theatre’ version that lasts for ninety minutes.⁷² The piece, along with its purchasable by-products, i.e. the publication of its script in Tim Etchells’ book *Certain Fragments* (1999) and a DVD containing a multi-camera recording of its December 1995 staging at the ICA in London,⁷³ became integral to spreading the company’s prominence across Europe.

For the 2014 Berlin production, a line of seven metal desks are used in order to form a long table which extends across almost the entire width of the stage (Figure 4.1). Seven chairs behind the table indicate the number of performers on stage. A4 sheets of paper are spread along the surface of the table from one corner to the other; it is only when the performers come on stage that the audience realises that these papers contain the script. The background and the sides of the stage are covered in a blue curtain upon which the title of the piece is sewn in large white letters. The stage resembles that of a television game or suggests that a judging panel is about to take place. In the 2014 Berlin production, Cathy Naden enters the stage first, appearing behind the curtains in the middle of the stage and walking forward until she reaches her seat at the table. She stands between the second and third chair from the right and fixes her jacket waiting for the audience to silence. Naden then moves towards the right flicking through the papers on the table with her fingers. It seems as though she is trying to find the opening lines of the show. Finally, she brings a paper closer to her eyes and reads:⁷⁴

We confess to fraud and to forgery. We’re guilty of coldness and spite. We defied gravity and we walked on water. We sacrificed our career for the

⁷² <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/projects/speak-bitterness/> (Accessed May 3, 2019).

⁷³ On the company’s website *Speak Bitterness* (2014) features in three out of four project categories. It is included in the ‘Theatre’ and ‘Durational’ sections due to its adjustable duration. The work is also featured in the ‘Digital’ category among a lineage of interactive CD-ROMs and participatory projects.

⁷⁴ Bracketed text in the script are my own observations of the recording/live.

sake of our marriage. We got air-lifted to safety while others still clunked to the wreckage below. We counted calories. We make mountains out of mole pills. We asked, ‘What’s in it for us?’. We confess to road rage. We’re guilty of prejudice, chauvinism, and narrow mindedness. We listened to ‘Stairway to Heaven’ thirteen times in a row. [Audience laughs.] We made a mockery of justice. We entered our kids into beauty contests. We left our gym shoes in the taxi. We wished we were invisible. [A performer moves in the background.] We signed the official secrets act in 2001 and we never spoke again for fear of saying something that we shouldn’t. [The second performer is now in the front searching through the printed script on the table.] When we were housesitting for our neighbours, we tried on all their clothes and we ate all their food. [The second performer looks at Cathy Naden.] We let men buy us strings. We thought that ‘When Will I Be Famous’ by Bros contained a secret message just for us. We confess to predicting an economic downturn.⁷⁵

The company describes the ‘essence’ of *Speak Bitterness* as ‘a line of people making confessions from behind a long table’.⁷⁶ During the live performance, seven performers take turns reading from the sheets of paper scattered on the table in front of them.⁷⁷ The performers are well-groomed and dressed in business suits, and they address their confessions to the audience.⁷⁸ These utterances come from a list of ‘thousands of putatively scandalous and embarrassing admissions from every walk and crevice of life, from the gravely serious to the banal and forgettable to the ridiculously trivial’ (Kalb, 2011, p. 147). This list is based on the team’s personal experiences as well as the atrocities of humankind as a whole.

⁷⁵ The first 34:35 minutes of the Berlin performance can be found online on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgwAQ_-VwWY.

⁷⁶ <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/projects/speak-bitterness/> (Accessed May 3, 2019). *Quizoola!* (1996) Follows a similar structure. It is a durational piece in which two performers on stage question one another. For more information visit: <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/project/quizoola/>.

⁷⁷ Reading out loud gives the impression that *Speak Bitterness* has limited on-the-spot improvisation compared to other Forced Entertainment works. Indeed, compared to *Quizoola!*, *Speak Bitterness* is neater in all respects.

⁷⁸ Formality might be linked to the title of the piece which was adopted from the Agrarian Reform Law that the Chinese Communist Party passed in the 1950s. As part of the land reform process were the “Speak Bitterness” meetings during which landlords or employers were placed on public trial. In *Speak Bitterness* this historical reference is transmuted into a distortion of public confessions of late twentieth- and early twenty-first century Western television and digital culture. For more information about the speaking-bitterness movement see Guo Wu (2014).

Since its inception, this list has been expanded and has been read in various orders. What has remained unaltered is that each and every sentence begins with the pronoun “we”. Shortly after the performance begins, the audience gets absorbed into the script and its mantra-like repetition voices as if from an invisible yet collective subject. As time passes, audience members are unable to follow, remember, or observe the entire performance and they focus only on the content of the phrases they can associate with. With its slippery identity this “we” becomes the central navigator of the piece. Who is this “we”? Is it “them” on stage? Is it “those” who wrote the text? Or is it “us” too, the audience? The ambiguity of this “we” provides a conceptual shelter for the audience to form its own confessions and, potentially, to accept its guilt through its witnessing of the performance. In this respect Etchells writes:

As audience members we are constantly calculating our own culpability, our ownership of or inclusion in what’s owned up to, constantly wondering at the role of those next to us (live in the theatre or online) in any of these things, constantly negotiating the question of who we might be, what we might have done to whom, and with what consequences. (Etchells, 2014)

For Forced Entertainment, *Speak Bitterness* is a performance that is intended to create an intimate contact between performers and the audience⁷⁹ and to charge spectators with the responsibility of witnessing. By using the pronoun “we”, the script is freed from the performers’ subjectivity; it invites the audience to a ‘game of complicity’ as Jan Suk suggests in his PhD thesis (2016, p. 174). Since the performers address no one in particular, the ambiguity of who confesses and to whom they confess allows each spectator to participate in the guilt. While spectators sympathise with the performers, they also filter each sentence through their own personal experiences and understanding, deciding in this way what to listen to.

The way *Speak Bitterness* is intended to be experienced is grounded in Forced Entertainment’s decisions on the temporality of the piece. Lasting between four to six hours, the language takes on a rhythmical repetition and no physical activity takes place on stage. This makes it impossible to follow and observe every single confession with the same attention. The structure of the language and the long duration of the performance forces viewers to surrender to the limitations of their attention and their

⁷⁹ <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/project/speak-bitterness/>.

bodies. In this respect, durationality spills off the stage to affect the spectatorship, silently forcing the audience to cognitively participate in the performance. Even more so, the audience is free to move in and out of the theatre off its own accord. Since the auditorium is illuminated, audience members also participate in shaping the experience of the performance by drawing the attention of their fellow spectators and perhaps even the performers. In the physical theatre *Speak Bitterness*'s liveness (Reason and Lindelöf, 2016, p. 2) emerges through this reciprocal relationship between performers and audience members.

Despite the cognitive engagement of the audience during the performance, the theatre space, which separates performers from the auditorium, affects the way the staged performance can be recorded and also whether and how the audiences' experiences can be captured. In between the physical and digital spaces, however, the performance experience becomes subject to different modes of engagement. By livestreaming *Speak Bitterness* (2014), the performance (including any movement in the auditorium) enters a mixed reality space. While the mediated performance offers another perspective of the live moment, the invitation to engage in a parallel online conversation opens up the possibility for the audience to also enact their individual confessions.

4.1.ii. Intersecting live performance with social media

The 2014 Berlin theatre staging of *Speak Bitterness* belongs to a lineage of works that are webcasted.⁸⁰ As mentioned earlier (chapter 4.1), prior to this staging Forced Entertainment initiated the Twitter hashtag #fespeaklive and invited its remote audiences to join in the online conversation. This invitation resulted in 3,838 unique viewers from 51 countries and 5.1 million tweets, which reached a total of 316,162 accounts. If not all, then the majority of these almost 4,000 remote viewers experienced a *Speak Bitterness* performance that spilled outside of the video window on their devices. The activity on #fespeaklive opened up a different experiential perspective; audience members were able to talk about the text and about what they were watching, to express their opinion, post their impressions and experiences, contact one another and juxtapose themselves with one another. Even audience members that did not partake in

⁸⁰ The first live streaming of *Speak Bitterness* was held in 2008 from PACT Essen in Germany. Etchells, T. (2014) 'Speak Bitterness: Our catalogue of confessions', in *The Guardian*. Online source accessed October 23, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/oct/16/speak-bitterness-confessions-forced-entertainment-live-stream-tim-etchells>.

the online discussions were able to observe the discussions as a parallel performative activity. The staging of *Speak Bitterness* exploits the architecture of the theatre so as to separate the physically-present audience from the performers and assign it the role of witness. Its list-like script, performed differently in every live performance, opens up a number of possible roles that the audience is invited to take – as an observer and witness, but also as a storyteller of its own confessions.

Tim Etchells writes in a 2014 article in *The Guardian* that the piece strives to communicate its content outside the theatre space.⁸¹ With its online transmission, *Speak Bitterness* entered the online ecology, which promotes a circulation of ideas through users' posts and spills content from one platform into another. With its live streaming and Twitter hashtag, *Speak Bitterness* intersected the mediation of the physical production with an instant communication of remote audience members.⁸² For the digital audience experiencing *Speak Bitterness* involved navigating between the livestreaming and Twitter; it included different screens and screen windows, and perhaps multiple devices (e.g. television sets, mobile phones, tablets, desktops, and laptops). In this vein, the live performance infiltrated each viewer's private physical and digital space. Compared to the theatre, viewing a performance in one's own private space allows for movement between different spaces.

Furthermore, Twitter as a public social media platform, which allows users to easily contribute to and view the development of hashtags, provided audience members with a tool to talk about what impressed them, to reiterate the script, and to offer their own confessions in parallel with the live performance. Remote spectators' ease and familiarity with Twitter allowed for a more active element to be added to the cognitive engagement of the audience present in the theatre. Online viewers were able to watch and also contribute to *#fespeaklive* while watching *Speak Bitterness* (2014). While Twitter enabled the online transmission, it also structured a real-time space for hosting audience interactions. *#fespeaklive*, a digital site, became the intermediary and facilitator of the audience's online communication (Figure 4.2.). In other words, digital technology became part of the system of the performance and set a stage for the audience to implicate itself in the piece (Nedelkopoulou, 2016, p. 224).

⁸¹ While such a comment could be analysed as following the intention of Forced Entertainment to escape drama and to reveal their Live Art influences, it can also be regarded as teasing the structure and architecture of the physical theatre.

⁸² During the 2014 staging, Tim Etchells was following the live streaming from the foyer of the theatre.

The long duration of the performance and the overload of performers' confessions prompts spectators to choose what to pay attention to and to associate the script with their personal experiences and viewpoints. As Tim Etchells explains, the overall intention of the piece was 'that you would come and go and that you would, in a sense, make your own contract with the work' (June 23, 2017, interview notes). *Speak Bitterness* (2014) is a porous performance which allows its audience members to move in and out of the performance space, to relate the performers' confessions to their own backgrounds, and to reflect on their own personal experiences. Embedded in the structure of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) is the anticipation that the audience will cognitively react to what it said. Thus, inherent to the work is an attempt to strive for a different mode of spectating. As Fischer-Lichte puts it, *Speak Bitterness* (2014) intends to create an 'autopoietic-feedback loop' between the performers and the audience (2008, p. 39).

In a theatre, how the audience engages with the work and contributes to its feedback loop is almost undetectable; only the movement of spectators' bodies within and out of the theatre and their discussions in the foyer offer some perceptible reactions. According to Etchells, what the combination of #fespeaklive and *Speak Bitterness*'s live streaming (2014) did was to 'multiply and enhance' this invisible aspect of the work (June 23, 2017, interview notes). In other words, #fespeaklive staged and made perceptible the audience's engagement with the piece. During the live moment, the hashtag enabled the audience to note the moments they chose to observe and to share their confessions. Even more so, it enabled them to share the significance they attached to the live streaming of *Speak Bitterness* (2014). This is made obvious by user comments such as the following: 'incredible engagement' (@JasonJCrouch Sat Oct 18 22:57), 'the Internet finally made proper sense to me last night' (@whoustoun Sun Oct 19 2014, 11:24). Another user describes how the performance 'moved astounded and rocked me. Exploded what I thought live performance was and could be' (@amcchisholm Sat Oct 18 22:07). Further to conveying the immediate effects that the performance had on its audience, users also referenced its potential long-lasting influence on their lives: 'I feel like they're all still talking, we just can't hear them' (@KateWyver Sat Oct 18 22:16), 'In the pub afterwards, every line of every conversation felt like a confession to an act I had been complicit in' (@k8heffernan Sun Oct 19 00:04). Twitter users, ultimately, commented on how intimate and also communal the online experience felt, revealing the value they attached to this.

The activity of *#fespeaklive* stirred a number of theoretical descriptions. The live streaming of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) together with spectators' instantaneous production of tweets produced an interactive theatre experience.⁸³ Jan Suk attributes the networked audience's activity to a quality embedded within the production of the piece (2016, p. 174). Indeed, Etchells expressed a similar sentiment, noting that:

those works were waiting for that moment [live streaming], because it [Twitter] made possible this other layer of social interaction around them. The simplicity of the rules encourages that sort of legibility for the audience, which is very important. The other thing is that all of those pieces work on what we call short order trading, which means that there are units of information in all of those cases, but those are very small. So, in *Speak Bitterness* one unit of information is one confession. [...] It relates very strongly to what the Internet has generally been doing. There's also something about short units that makes them tradable. It's very easy to tweet one confession that you just heard. (June 23, 2017, interview notes)

In a similar tone, Gardner,⁸⁴ who titles her article *Tweet Bitterness*, describes the audience's activity as 'a parallel performance' (2014). Goffman's theatrical metaphor of selective self-presentation (1959) is helpful for explaining Gardner's description. Goffman conceptualises the 'front stage' as the place of the performance action, where performers and audience meet. Comparably, the 'back stage' is the place of the performer, where they reveal their personal identity. A number of media studies that examine how online users interact with each other use Goffman's framework (Ellison et al., 2006, 2011; Krämer and Winter, 2008). In the context of *Speak Bitterness's* (2014) live streaming, *#fespeaklive* is the 'front stage' where the remote audience performs its witnessing. During the live unfolding of *Speak Bitterness* (2014), the stage performance and the tweet performance are layers of the same experience reinforcing the engaging aspect of the piece. Remote audiences shared their moments of attention, their comings and goings in and out of the work as well as how their personal space and local time influenced or interfered with having a smooth experience. It is this networked activity

⁸³ Jan Suk observes the same with regard to the livestreaming of all of Forced Entertainment's durational works - *12AM*, *Quizoola!*, *And on the Thousandth Night*, and *Speak Bitterness* - (2016, p. 174).

⁸⁴ Contrary to Suk and Gardner's views, Schulze argues that *Speak Bitterness's* live streaming's render the online audience more passive than in the physical theatre, observing that the majority of tweets are either 'repetitions or phrases of a performance' (2015, p. 320) and images of 'where and with whom they [the remote audience] watched' the live event (Ibid). For Schulze the issue is the mediated performance and that its experience lends itself to the individual format.

and the possibilities it opens for the audience experience that drive Sarah Bay-Cheng to suggest that a performance extends beyond the physical stage to the production and circulation of its digital traces (2012, p. 33).

4.2. The performativity of data or *Karen* is (not) your life coach

Established in 1991 Blast Theory is an artist group led by artists Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr, and Nick Tandavanitj. It employs interactive technologies for creating works that sit between various art forms. According to its biographical statement, Blast Theory creates ‘new forms of performance and interactive art that mixes audiences across the internet, live performance and digital broadcasting’ (Blast Theory, 2018b). Its purpose is to explore ‘how technology [...] creates new cultural spaces in which the work is customised and personalised for each participant and what the implications of this shift might be for artistic practice’ (Ibid., p. 3). Many of the group’s works have developed as research projects through partnerships with academics, scientists, and developers. Since 1997, Blast Theory has collaborated with the Mixed Reality Laboratory at the University of Nottingham; this is one of the longest collaborations between an academic partner and an artist group. Together they have developed bespoke software to fit the needs of Blast Theory’s projects. For its research endeavours the group receives public funding from UK and EU programmes, as well as the Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation (Ibid.). Additionally, Blast Theory finances the development of new work through commissions, fees from touring and presenting its work, fees for its educational work, mentoring and consultancy (Ibid.).

In 2013, Blast Theory developed, in collaboration with the National Theatre of Wales and the support of the Mixed Reality Lab at the University of Nottingham and the psychologist Dr Kelly Page, *Karen* (2015). *Karen*, which launched for the audience in 2015, is a project that highlights and critiques how rapidly and with how little caution internet users disclose their personal information. It stemmed from the team’s own fascination with Big Data and how governments and corporations, including social media, exploit user-generated data and personal information. *Karen* (2015) is a mobile phone application which harvests its users’ data so as to then feed it back to them. The application takes its name from its main character, a freelance life coach working from home while trying to overcome her recent divorce; her purpose is to help each user

work through a few things in their lives. Over a period of approximately seven days⁸⁵ users engage with *Karen* (2015) via video calls once or twice a day. Users receive a video and respond to a questionnaire that is presented as in-app messaging. The embedded questionnaire is based on psychological profiling tests that the British military has used to evaluate potential undercover operatives, as well as the ‘Big Five Personality Test’ which evaluates one’s character according to five traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. By responding to these questions, users allow *Karen* (2015) to profile them and for the character to then give them her advice. When the story finishes, users are offered the chance to purchase a personalised report of their data through which they can then compare themselves to the rest of the users.

Structurally, the piece is a combination of drama, computer game, and a questionnaire which is embedded in the structure of the plot. More particularly, *Karen* (2015) combines elements from virtual theatre and game aesthetics that materialise in the form of a mobile phone application. Consequently, *Karen* (2015) is a hybrid piece which escapes exact genre classification; it can be described as a game, a performative experience, or an application. As such, its audience members can be referred to as players, users, or participants who undertake a particular role within a narrative.

After installing the application, the first message that appears on users’ screens is the Terms and Conditions agreement. The piece begins a few hours after that, providing that the user signs the agreement. In her first video, Karen introduces herself as the user’s life coach, stating how excited she is about the collaboration. From the moment the application launches and for a period of seven to ten days, she calls once or twice a day at various times. When the user ignores her calls, she sends notifications to call her back. The relationship between the Karen character and the player begins in a relatively professional manner, but it soon becomes clear that Karen is prying and that the boundaries between her professional and personal lives are somewhat loose. The application functions by sending videos in which Karen talks to the user. After verbally asking a question, the video freezes and the image becomes overlaid with a new screen that repeats the question in writing and provides a number of answers that the user can choose from by tapping on the screen (Figure 4.3.). Matt Adam notes that Karen’s questions were designed to ensure that the user forms part of the conversation (2017).

⁸⁵ The exact number of days depends on the dedication of the user to respond to Karen at the time of her request.

Therefore, although the videos are pre-recorded, the user may very well think that they are being generated in response to his or her own answers. The users' replies in the piece's in-app messaging service give the impression of immediacy, allowing for the character to feel real and live. In reality, the users' answers simply determine what Karen's emotional response will be. But irrespective of how the user behaves, the script remains the same.

By day four, Karen's questions become intrusive and her irregular calls become frustrating (Figure 4.4.). She calls in the middle of the night, talks about her broken relationship and asks the user to advise her on what to wear for her new date. Some of the piece's peak moments is when Karen secretly films her flatmate during an intimate moment in the bathroom and when she calls while drinking and having a cigarette outside a bar. The professional equilibrium of the life-coach-client relationship becomes gradually upset as *Karen* (2015) overshares her everyday life, gets charged by the user's responses, and becomes emotionally attached. She progressively ends up forgetting her professional stance altogether and involves the user in her life decisions. She reveals her emotional fragility until she finally decides to put her life in order and ends the sessions by apologising.

When the piece ends, the application offers to the users the choice to buy their personalised report, which is generated on the basis of their answers, for the price of £2.99. This report resembles a psychological analysis, illustrated through statistical diagrams and explanations, and shows how each individual user measures 'on psychological scales from openness and neuroticism to emotional guilt'⁸⁶ (Blast Theory, 2015) and 'how these factors were used by *Karen*' (Ibid.). Split into two sections under the headings 'Dimensions of your personality' and 'You and *Karen*', the report shows 'how you behaved and how the decisions you made affected *Karen*'. Each section includes the following subsections: 'how open are you to new and different experiences', 'what's your propensity to be neurotic', 'what is really important to you in your life right now' and 'would you respect another's right to privacy'. Here, players can read detailed information on how they measured up according to general metrics and in comparison, to the rest of the players. Graphs and pie charts relate particular responses from the embedded questionnaire to Dr Page's analysis as well as to other theoretical sources included in hyperlinks. Additionally, a subsection with the title

⁸⁶ <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/karen/>.

‘Blast Theory says’ links the players’ answers back to scenes from the application in order to explain the association between one’s answers and the performance.

In doing so, the piece reveals its underlying profiling mechanism to the players, showing how the science of psychological profiling underpins Karen’s story. The intention here is to offer a critical response to big data culture by impelling users to reflect on how their interaction with Karen influenced their profiling and to think about how corporations extract information by mining user-generated data (Ibid.). As Seda Itler writes, the report highlights ‘how data is subtly mined from individual[s] and used to profile them without them clearly understanding the process’ (2017, p. 86).

Users also have the chance to compare themselves to other players.⁸⁷ Each player’s results are drawn by juxtaposing their data with the aggregate of all other players’ responses that is presented in each personalised report. As Nick Tandavanitj explained in this regard:

When we first conceived of *Karen* the data report was intended to be the second half of the experience. What happens is that in the first part you literally engage with Karen while the second is all about reading your report, reflecting on the different questions and how the psychometric profiling is put in use by giving the opportunity to compare your results with the rest of the players. (February 28, 2017, interview notes)

Karen (2015) can only be performed by its users; without their involvement the game-performance remains inactive and so does its profiling process. As Frank Rose points out:

It’s not a movie. It’s a personalized experience that plays out on a smartphone or tablet. There is no fourth wall. [...] This story is about you. It morphs to fit the user, based on information the user supplies, choices the user makes and inferences the app itself begins to make. (Rose, 2015)

What Rose stresses here is that although the relationship with Karen focuses on her life, the real protagonist is each individual user. *Karen* (2015) sets particular rules for its

⁸⁷ Blast Theory. n.d. ‘Karen – FAQ.’ Blast Theory Website. <http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/karen/>. Accessed April 7, 2016.

players to follow and parameters that structure the relations between the individual user, the machine, and the collective body of users. In the end, it is these relations and interactions that are brought to the fore and revealed to the players through their personalised report, who finally make sense of their performing role in the game.

On the front-end of the work to experience *Karen* (2015) is to engage in a relationship with the virtual life-coach. Accordingly, on the back-end the work involves inputting the part of the application's code that requires an answer so as to calculate the player's final report. Although the embedded questionnaire gives the impression of supporting a real-life relationship, the answers-contributions of the user are what drive the application. As such, therefore, user-players are also participants in *Karen*'s story not only because they are assigned the role of activating and helping to execute the piece, but because they also contribute to the *production* of the work; their contributions are used to inform their own experience and the experiences of future players. By extension, therefore, each individual player performs for all subsequent players. Responses are not only fed back to the players themselves, they are also used to construct the greater dataset that the application runs on.

The way that data functions in this regard is significant. At the moment of the live experience, the data shared by the user are what activate the front stage of the performance. Yet as soon as *Karen* (2015) progresses to the next stage of the piece, these data become a trace of the past – they cease to have a primary function in the narrative and begin to function as a record within the data set. In this sense, the application acts as a curator, managing and selectively exhibiting user-generated content to the rest of the users who request their data report.

The generating of such traces as part of the internal processes of the piece is of particular interest to this research. The majority of performance documentation consists of the recording of performative actions presented on stage; that is to say, an action undertaken by performers and witnessed by a non-participative audience that is recorded onto a separate medium. The thesis will expand on the formula of performance documentation in chapter 5, outlining how audio-visual conventions underpin much of this work. What is important to note here is that regardless of the medium or the type of documentation, the emphasis is always placed on documenting the actions of the performer or artist. Where the audience is also the performer of the work, one would

therefore expect practitioners to be primarily concerned with documenting and archiving part of the live actions of the user.

In the case of *Karen* (2015), all of the users' answers to questions are automatically recorded in a database. In order for the application to serve its intent – i.e. to capture 'a sense of how we play (in the world of social media and infinite connectivity) but also [to provide] us with a service of sorts at the same time' (Ibid., p. 171) – it must store the personal information that it asks players to share. Otherwise, it constantly records and documents how its users respond to its stimuli – how they decide to complete its code. *Karen* is, therefore, inherently based on a self-capturing process that is possible by creating traces of its players' experiences.

4.3. The apparatus becomes the body... *Flatland*

Extant, a National Portfolio Organisation of the Arts Council of England, is the only UK 'professional performing arts company' (Extant, 2018) run by, and for, visually impaired people. Established in 1997 it is led by its Artistic Director Maria Oshodi. Its intention has been to explore new creative territories and to redress the visibility and opportunities for visually impaired artists and audiences. The company develops its own theatre works, which range from traditionally staged plays and site-specific performances, to physical and musical theatre. Additionally, Extant works in a consultative capacity as a producer, orchestrator, and observer for others' performances. It produces accessibility schemes for venues and collaborates with other theatre companies in order to 'help to create more accessible presentations of their shows for visually impaired audiences' (Oshodi, 2017, interview notes). Through its work Extant has actively contributed to the development of audio description methods for theatrical performances.⁸⁸ In addition, Extant also runs series of workshops intended to support professional artists or visually impaired adults to actively develop their creative ideas. These workshops usually follow a set of predefined ideas or targets such as "how to make visually impaired people dance." Workshops are featured on the company's website under the title "participation".

⁸⁸ One of its first projects in this respect was the production of the performance *Zeros and Nils* (2002) by the Croatian theatre company New Life Theatre (Novi Zivot), which was the first and only theatre company between 1948 and 1986 to produce work for visually impaired people in Europe. Extant enhanced the staging of this piece with a simultaneous audio language and audio description facility.

In 2015 Extant collaborated with the robotics engineer and research scientist Adam Spiers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Janet van der Linden from the Pervasive Interaction Lab at the Open University so as to examine how haptic technology might create performative experiences that both visually impaired and sighted audiences can engage with. Funded by Nesta, the team produced a Research and Development (R&D) project, which was an immersive theatrical experience that took place in a pitch-dark environment that was named *Flatland* (2015). The piece was built on the company's previous project *The Question* – this was an immersive installation developed by Extant and Dr Adam Spiers in 2010. From Extant's perspective the intent of *Flatland* was to 'move theatre away from the 'spectacle' to a more embodied experience' (Cavallo and Oshodi, 2017, p. 184). Respectively, the scientists involved in the project envisioned developing a minimalistic handheld haptic interface that would 'provide pedestrian navigation assistance via the intuitive and unobtrusive stimulus of shape-changing' (Spiers et al, 2016, p. 2688).

Contrary to Extant's previous theatre-based works, *Flatland* (2015) was an immersive experience that depended on its audience's performance. Although it integrated live actors within a dramatic narrative, each participant also had to individually explore the installation. The installation of the work was a combination of textiles and sounds carefully curated in a pitch-dark space. Visitors had to consult a haptic navigation device in order to find their way through this space.⁸⁹

Flatland (2015) was an adaptation of Edwin A. Abbott's 1884 satirical novella *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*. The narrative unfolds in the two-dimensional world of Flatland that is populated by geometric characters. Its protagonist, named 'A Square', narrates his adventures that follow the visit of a sphere from the three-dimensional world of 'Spaceland'. A Square describes his explorations of the worlds of 'Spaceland', 'Lineland' – a one-dimensional world – and 'Pointland' – a world constructed from one single point. He then attempts to impart his knowledge to the people of Flatland, but this leads to his imprisonment and the murdering of his followers.

In an attempt to translate two-dimensionality into our three-dimensional world, Extant used darkness as a way of representing the third missing dimension. This,

⁸⁹ *Flatland* took place between March 2 and 5, 2015, and around 100 people participated in the project.

indeed, compelled all participants to rely on all of their other senses apart from their vision. As Maria Oshodi, Extant's Artistic Director, and Amelia Cavallo, a core practitioner at Extant explain, the absence of light eliminates all visual cues allowing for a bodily experience that depends on other senses (Ibid.). This neatly fits in with the narrative elements of the original text. Abbott's novella contains much social critique and commentary; it describes how in the fictional world that it presents different social classes are based on the distinction between the 'Art of Hearing' and the 'Art of Feeling'. Extant's adaptation compels participants to navigate through the dark space using their sense of touch and their auditory sense. It is through such navigation that they are able to understand their role in the story.

During the live performance of the piece, only four participants at a time were let into the installation. Each participant was referred to as a 'Spacelander' that had come from a three-dimensional world. The four participants would then begin their experience together, but they would split up to explore the installation space separately. Towards the end of the piece they were joined back together for the final act.

Upon arrival the four participants would be guided into a preparatory room. An actor impersonating the Elder Square would then burst into the room and introduce himself, narrating his story and describing the world of *Flatland* (2015) that the participants were about to explore (Figure 4.5.). The Elder Square would then ask the participants to assist him with entering into *Flatland's* two-dimensional world by carrying him within a hand-held device. At this point the production team would help the audience members put on astronaut-like suits (Figure 4.6.). On a dramaturgical level these costumes translate the two-dimensional experience into something perceptible – they are supposed to protect the participants' three-dimensional bodies from being crushed in the two-dimensional world. In more pragmatic terms, the suits were fitted with some of the electronics of the haptic device, such as the radio tags that transmit the location and orientation of each participant. They were further equipped with pockets for the temporary stowing of the device and they additionally kept audience members warm (Oshodi, March 21, 2017, interview notes). As a final step before entering the installation space, visitors were instructed on how to use the haptic device and spent some time familiarising themselves with its movements and cues. Finally, participants were given a set of headphones through which, among other sounds, they would continue listening to Elder Square's voice as a means of guiding them through the space.

Pulling back one wall, the Elder Square would then reveal four separate entrances that led to four different corridors. According to Maria Oshodi these doors represented the shift from the three to the two-dimensional worlds (Ibid.). Each visitor was guided to a different doorway and was instructed to feel their way along the corridor until they arrived in *Flatland* (2015). The floor of the corridors gradually declined and the walls were twisted. As Cavallo and Oshodi note about the performances, simultaneously, ‘loud, dimensionally distorted sounds played both in their headphones and through external speakers, including under floor base from subwoofers’ (Cavallo and Oshodi, 2017, p.186). As the walls drifted apart the four participants, who had by now become involved in Elder Square’s escape, would finally enter the pitch-black space of *Flatland*’s (2015) installation (Figure 4.7.). As they reached their different position within the space, the haptic device – the Animotus – became activated.

Flatland’s (2015) environment (16 x 7 meters) consisted of four physical zone structures. Each Animotus ‘served to direct its audience member from one zone to the next, allowing them to gradually uncover the production’s plot’ (Spiers et al., 2015, p. 23). The device had a cubic form and had an inbuilt shape-changing mechanism which allowed it to be split into two vertical faces (Figure 4.8.). The lower part provided a steady base grounded in the user’s palm while the upper could extend and rotate indicating which way the participant should go (Figure 4.9.). Although the device delivered haptic cues, it needed the locative information of a user. The position of the players was transmitted through small radio tags on the costumes and their orientation was provided through a ‘wrist worn, tilt compensated magnetometer’ (Spiers et al., 2015). A centralised computer compared this information to the coordinates of the entrances to each zone of the installation and generated appropriate actuator commands. Directive instructions were then sent wirelessly to the haptic device which moved accordingly.

Together, therefore, costume and Animotus constructed a closed loop and feedback tracking system that mapped the position and orientation of each participant and indicated their proximity to a target. When a visitor reached a destination in the space the device was deactivated, allowing the voice of the Elder Square to be heard through the headset. The voice of the Elder Square introduced the location and gave instructions on how to interact with it. *Flatland*’s (2015) technological system thus required that all of the users’ trajectories and movements taken within the environment to be

automatically gathered into a database. This allowed it to transmit back to the four participants the haptic cues that were necessary for indicating where they should go.

Such activity was central for *Flatland* (2015) as it was only through the interaction with the haptic device that the performative element of the installation could be activated. The interactive architecture of the installation gave the impression that participants had agency over the performance process. Indeed, participants were free to roam within the space as they pleased. But as they experienced the space, data from their positions enabled the haptic device to send them further instructions. Soon after their transmission, these logs were turned into digital traces that showed the location of each participant and how long they remained in that place. Considering that as an immersive experience *Flatland* (2015) made it difficult to create an audio-visual recording of every participant's engagement, the participants' data is what remains as an indicator of the trajectory taken by each individual participant.

As a final act, visitors were asked to respond to questions about their experience. Trying to ease them into the process and extend the 'touching experience that they [had] been in' (Oshodi, June 6, 2017, interview notes) one of the evaluators of the project created the 'zippy table' (Ibid.). Sitting around the table each person had in front of them a zip, which was sewn into the tablecloth. When asked a question 'they responded by zipping or unzipping these zips' (Ibid.), Maria Oshodi explained. The team translated these non-verbal answers into percentages according to how high the cloth was zipped.

4.4. Live engagement: audiences as co-documentarists

What *Flatland* (2015), *Karen* (2015), and *Speak Bitterness* (2014) have in common is that their live moment invites and depends on their audiences' mediatised performance. As discussed so far, all of the three case studies shift the role of their audience members by compelling them to actively engage in their stories. Audiences' are expected to 'watch, listen, decode, cogitate, imagine, feel, hope, and desire' (Alston, 2016, p. 7) and, then, to actively interact with cues so as to produce meaning. Although this performance alters nothing in the live performance in that it does not change the narrative whatsoever, it produces by-products, which help enhance or trigger the live action. The case studies therefore capitalize on 'the potential social value of the in-person experience, which can actively engage spectators, encouraging them to perform,

and providing a sense of agency in the work’ as O’Hara writes (2017, p. 165). *Flatland* (2015), *Karen* (2015), and *Speak Bitterness* (2014) request the active engagement and observable performance of the audience. These audiences’ role is to complete the work or fill a “gap” in the work’s way of unfolding. As well as other interactive and participatory art practices, the audiences’ performance is the key component of how the three case studies are activated and experienced. To echo, here, Adam Alston, audiences are requested to ‘co-produce by doing more than watching, or by augmenting the productivity of watching’ as performers of their own experience (2016, p. 3). Within this context, audiences are both partakers and performers that enact the live moment and intentions of each work. Because in the three case studies the audience’s performance is founded on its mediatisation – that is to say, on asking them to consume and produce digital content about their experience – the audiences’ role becomes more complex. I particularly propose that these audiences are co-documentarists of each work because their engagement with each work is founded on producing traces of their own experience. These by-products, I argue, can serve several purposes of performance documentation in the now and aftermath of each work.

To elaborate, in the three case studies, the audiences’ engagement is enabled by the digital technology which functions either as a dramaturgical tool for each work or as a medium for augmenting its live experience (as in *Speak Bitterness* (2014)). The devices, software, and digital platforms that the artists embed in their works determine the type of engagement undertaken by the audience members. These tools transform the audience involvement into digitally traceable actions since audiences leave behind digital traces or, in the context of this research, audience-generated traces. Thus, audiences become prosumers further to performing in the work that they are attending and experiencing. This term prosumer is coined by Alvin Toffler in his book *The Third Wave* (1980). It refers to ‘combined producers and consumers who do for themselves what would formerly have been done for them by others (more specifically, other workers) and who fulfil their own needs by producing what they want to consume, whether that be a commodity or a service’ (Harvie, 2013, p. 50). Recent performance and theatre scholarship has rejuvenated the term in order to describe audiences that take a more active role during a live performance by simultaneously producing something for the performance while consuming it (Harvie, 2013), including livestreaming’s and social media posts (O’Hara, 2017). Engaging in a work as a prosumer allows for a certain level of customization, it provides an entirely individual experience. As such, it allows the experience of a performance to arise as a unique event for each audience

member and therefore, as O'Hara contends, it 'becomes valuable due to its exclusivity and uniqueness, and subsequently confers value onto the spectator' (2017, p. 329).

At the same time, when a live performance employs digital technologies so as to facilitate its unfolding, as Maria Chatzichristodoulou notes, a conscious self-documentation – here understood as the capturing of the live moment – also becomes part of the work (2014, p. 58). Chatzichristodoulou alongside other scholars (Bay-Cheng, 2012, 2016, 2017; Giannachi, 2016; Lavender, 2016) highlights that 'liveness and documentation collapse into one another' (Ibid.) in that the live moment is tied with the live production and instant use of documents. In support of her argument, Chatzichristodoulou provides a number of examples, including Blast Theory's piece *Riders Spoke* (2007), which collected its participants' audio-visual testimonies.⁹⁰ She also refers to Marina Abramović's performance *The Artist is Present* (2010) during which the audience participates in the work in the museum but also in the online circulation of its digital mediations. Abramović's work is also used by Sarah Bay-Cheng as an example of how digital technology has prompted a reconstitution of performance. Instead of a single isolated event, performance here embraced a wider set of phenomena including the propagation of a work through its audience's production of digital traces (2012, p. 35). In this sense, the performance work as a historiographical entity might combine different off- and online informational components. Most importantly for my argument, both Bay-Cheng, Chatzichristodoulou, Abbot and Read (chapter 2.2.i.), and Bucknall and Sedgam (chapter 2.2.i), as well as Giannachi's theory of archive 3.0 and 4.0 (chapter 1.3), view a performance work as a system that blends together its various mediations and remediations of the live performative moment in addition, perhaps, to documentation relating to other aspects of its existence.

As I discussed in chapter 3.1.ii, in her article *Tweet Bitterness*, Lyn Gardner describes the *#fespeaklive* tweets as 'frozen performance debris' (Gardner, 2014). Gardner considers the tweeting of the audience as a performance in its own right that ran parallel to the performance of *Speak Bitterness* (2014), rather than one that formed part of it. This thesis proposes that further to a way of augmenting the experience of the live streaming and of engaging with one another, the audience captured fragments of its live moment by tweeting about the performance. On the one hand, tweets that reiterated

⁹⁰ Crucially, this piece collected audience-generated content as part of its live performance and by mediatizing its audience's participation. Subsequent audience members were able to experience this content as part of their own engagement with the work.

phrases of the script and confessions by the audience constituted a textual capturing of the live performance in real time. But, on the other hand, tweets also constituted a certain curating of the content which was selected for tweeting by the audience. This interpretation responds to the intent of the piece, which is to compel the audience to actively choose what to observe, to own it and feel it. Other tweets containing photographs of screens and of the spaces in which *Speak Bitterness* (2014) was live streamed captured the environments in which the work was experienced. Commenting on the significance of such tweets, Tim Etchells notes that

Twitter timeline or set of comments on the Twitter timeline or a set of images, posted screenshots or photos of people watching the work in particular places, those are interesting fragments around the work. (June 23, 2017, interview notes)

The live performance audience was able to watch the production in the physical space in which it was staged as well as online. It could also simultaneously produce and consume online content in relation to the livestream. As such, *Speak Bitterness* (2014) needs to be understood outside the limitations of the physical stage and its mediation and to include the involvement of the remote audience in producing the meaning of the work.

Within media studies, social media platforms have been described as stages⁹¹ in which users perform part of themselves. This draws on Goffman's notion of the 'behavioural setting' (1959). Such online spaces have also been explored as exhibition spaces (Zhao et al., 2013; Iversen and Smith, 2012) since the performance of users materialises in the uploading of reproducible artefacts (Hogan, 2010, p. 381). What is useful at this point for this thesis is that both discourses build upon the fact that online platforms and emerging technologies create their content from their users' generated data. Corresponding to *#fespeaklive* is the unravelling of the interactive process of *Karen* (2015), which simulates the 'intimate and emotional space of social media' since this application 'reperforms what we do in social media every day' (Eckersall et al., 2017, p. 171–180). The authors of *New Media Dramaturgy* here refer to how social media capitalises on the content produced by their users' identity performance. In this

⁹¹ Scholars that employ Goffman's notion include Donath (1998), Schroeder (2002), Boyd (2004, 2006, 2007) who used Goffman to ground SNS activity as networked identity performance, as well as Hewitt and Forte (2006) among others.

respect, both *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) share the same mechanism – they collect their audiences’ data so as to activate themselves.

As noted in section 3.3, in *Karen* (2015) each audience response to the game’s question activates the next video. Additionally, these responses are stored in a database so that they can be used to generate a report on the players’ performance that offered back to them at the end of the piece. It is evident that *Karen* (2015) is non-existent without the engagement of its participants (Adams, 2017) and, more importantly, without the capturing of their activity. Similarly, to *Karen* (2015), *Flatland’s* (2015) technological system that tracked participants’ location and orientation helped them with navigating the space: the radio tags on their costumes and the tilted compensated magnetometer transmitted their position and orientation to the software that directed the Animotus (haptic device), giving instructions to the participants. In other words, participants consulted haptic cues that were informed by their own digital traces in order to traverse *Flatland’s* (2015) environment. Thus, inherent to *Flatland’s* (2015) performative moment was its own self-recording. In this thesis I maintain that the live performance of all the three case studies organically create traces of themselves through the products of their audience’s experience. Thus, they exemplify an organic relationship between the live moment and their (live) self-recording.

It is of value to consider the function of this self-documentation, since earlier this section noted that the three case studies shift the role of the audience from that of passive viewer to ‘performative spectator’ (Schipper, 2017, p. 191). Maria Oshodi and Emilia Cavallo note that part of the intention of the piece was to collapse any distinctions between ‘audience and performer, starrer and starree, freak and normative, sighted and blind’ (2017, p. 187). Similarly, In *Karen* (2015) and *Speak Bitterness* (2015), the audience acts based on given guidelines. Lavender’s concept of ‘theatres of engagement’ is particularly beneficial in the context of this analysis (Lavender, 2016). In his latest book, he argues that contemporary performance shifts established modes of spectatorship by engaging its audiences in the live event in the attempt to explore and reflect on political reality and the current development of history. Lavender concentrates on the latest technological innovations that have enhanced and altered spectatorship and consequently performance itself. Using a set of performance works, he contends that ‘theatres of engagement’ use modes of ‘virtuality [...] co-presence, corporeality and embodied sensation’ (Ibid., p. 15) so as to create events rather than spectacles and to

arrange them in ways that allow for the audience to be placed inside them (Ibid., p. 100).

As with Lavender's case studies, the case studies of this thesis are distinct from each other in terms of their narrative, theme, objectives, and structure. However, they all use a digital medium as a dramaturgical tool. This facilitates the involvement of audience members in the live performance, allowing the audience to respond to cues, voice its opinion, form its own additional script, co-exist with the piece, and feel the space of the performance. To employ Lavender's terms, all three case studies call on their audiences to partake in their live moment rather than passively watching it. Digital technology enables audience members to view, respond to, interact with, and activate parts of each piece and to communicate with one another. In this way, it shifts spectatorship by overcoming the divide between watching/passive and acting/active.

The engagement of the audiences is tied also to its self-recording. To enable audiences to experience these works and unravel their story, digital media capture their actions. In this respect, audiences do not just perform a part in the live performative moment unfolds, but also in how this moment is captured. The fact that information about the participants' engagement remains as a digital trace after the end of the work offers the possibility of knowing a past work by examining the audience's perspective, and potentially of learning about the live enactment of a work. This possibility is particularly useful when taking into consideration that photographic and audio-visual recording strategies might be unsuitable for capturing the performative moment. In this vein, audience-generated content might provide alternative ways of 'seeing' a performance. In conjunction with other documentational material, the digital traces of the audience's engagement i.e. audience-generated content might provide an additional layer in the archive of a piece; a layer which originates from and, hence, traces the actions and, most importantly, the experience of participants.

As discussed, digital and networked technologies have strong documentation and even archiving capacities – considering that with proper preservation they can potentially store their content for posterity. Their archiving content is what I term in this thesis 'audience-generated content'. Giannachi particularly sees digital media as archives that bridge the physical realm with digital elements by storing their users' activity in traces so as to prompt 'relational thinking in allowing users to juxtapose one with the other and one through the other' (2016, p. 21). In the sphere of the technology,

users' activity instantly becomes storable, if not archivable, content. O'Hara argues that what remains from the *#fespeaklive* tweets is yet another archival form sitting between the marketing intentions of the company, the structure of Twitter, and the contribution of its users during and after the live performance (2017, p. 250-3). Aligned with this perspective is the theory that social media is an exhibition space. Hogan, in particular, maintains that social media that collect, filter, and order their users' content have additionally the capacity to act as curators that 'mediate our experience of social information' (Hogan, 2010, p. 384). This entails that audience-generated content is material available to the platform that hosts it. Extending this argument further this thesis contends that social media and digital technologies that enable the production and storage of audience-generated content as part of their function, are viewed as temporary repositories of digital artefacts. With regard to performance works these artefacts are considered to be audience-generated content.

Sarah Bay-Cheng's publications on the merging of liveness with its documentation place this view within the context of performance documentation (2012, 2012b). For Bay-Cheng networked documents of time-based performance permit a mediated version of the work to reach the realm of the online user: documents in this context, including audience-generated content, produce not only a variable archive nor just a re-enactable score, but also a virtual performance event that can extend in time: it is (virtually) live (2012b, p. 176). Within online environments this documentation becomes the facilitator of extending the performance in time, of permitting it to remain. This remaining however, I argue, is precarious. Whether and for how long audience-generated content remains after the end of a performance is linked to the pragmatic reality of practical issues. Such issues include the longevity or obsolescence of the embedded platform or system. In addition, project-specific issues such as the longevity of users' profiles, privacy policies, and copyrights also affect the preservation of audience-generated content.

Bay-Cheng's reasoning appears to be in agreement with Chatzichristodoulou, who suggests, as I have noted in page 109, that in certain cases 'liveness and documentation collapse into each other, generating live documents and performing the documentation of liveness' (2014, p.58). While considering the implications of framing performance works as experiences with the gallery space, Chatzichristodoulou suggests that exhibitions of performance documentation are 'failing to grasp the importance of live experience as a core element of every performance practice' (Ibid., p. 52). Networked

documentation enacts a type of preservation which has the capacity to continuously generate new interpretations, encounters, and readings of the performative work and as such to keep the performance in a continuous movement into the future. Audience-generated content produced within off-line digital technologies can potentially function in similar ways as long as it is preserved accordingly. Following on from this argument, I argue that digital documents of the live performance and its experience, including audience-generated content, constitute valid evidence of the live performance event and its experience. This shifts the material that performance archives can contain and, consequently, the ways we revisit and learn about a performance. Apart from documents that present the live performance, archived documentation has the potential to include items that demonstrate the audience experience, its performance, and involvement in the work. Before considering how practitioners work with audience-generated content after their live performances have come to a close, the next subchapter will examine their overall individual documentation practices. It will particularly look at how they capture the live moment of their works, how they frame documentation, and what types of evidence they include in their archives.

Chapter 5. Blast Theory, Forced Entertainment, Extant: Strategies of Documentation

After looking at how audiences engaged with the three case studies and how this engagement produced audience-generated content about the live performance, it is essential to become acquainted with the companies' established processes of recording and documentation. This will help reveal how and why audience-generated content presents a challenge for practitioners by disturbing standard, established, or conventional documentation patterns. The chapter explores the recording and documentation strategies of the three performance companies examined in this thesis, that are, Blast Theory, Forced Entertainment, and Extant in addition to the archives and recording methods of three major institutional collections of theatre and performance: the British Library Sound Archive, the National Theatre Archive, and the Theatre and Performance Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum. As I have noted before (chapter 3) these three are disparate as the institutions that host them serve different purposes.

The chapter begins by looking into the methods employed by the different practitioners to capture⁹² the live aspect of their work and it illuminates how they manage and organize the ensuing information into coherent collections. In other words, the chapter investigates how practitioners record, as well as store, select, curate, and preserve documents. In so doing, it identifies different levels of awareness amongst the companies over which types of informational items can best represent a live performance in the present and the future. Although the chapter outlines differences in the recording and documentation strategies of the companies, it also identifies a characteristic common to all three companies: practitioners insist in capturing live performance using audio-visual recording media even when these are clearly inadequate for capturing interactive, one-to-one, immersive, experiential, and audience-centric practices. To further examine whether this interest in photographs and videos is shared by other creators and “guardians” of performance documents, the chapter delves into the practices of the three leading UK theatre and performance archival collections listed above. It focuses its analysis specifically on the recording methods of these institutions,

⁹² One of the main obstacles in writing about performance documentation is the limitation of terminology. This is evident in the use of the verbs *document*, *record*, and *capture*, which are frequently used interchangeably to mean: to create evidence of an ephemeral event/action. Although this thesis distinguishes the verb *to document* from the other two terms, it uses both *capture* and *record* to refer to all the practices that might be used for producing potential documents of performance.

since apart from collecting performance archives they are also engage in recording live performances.

As Matthew Reason has shown, performance documentation – understood here to mean the production as well as organization of performance evidence – is greatly influenced by practitioners’ rationale (2006, p. 3). The three companies under examination are still currently active. Documentation serves primarily ‘pragmatic purposes,’ as Tim Etchells notes when commenting about Forced Entertainment’s practices (June 23, 2017, interview notes). This entails that the rationale behind practitioners’ documentation practices can be based on the opinions and values of promoters, critics, researchers, historians, and so forth. All of these users of performance documents are familiar, first and foremost, with video recordings and photographs. This familiarity structures expectations around the ways of experiencing performance through its documents. In particular, they anticipate viewing a recording or reading about the performative activity of a past event. It is reasonable that these expectations impact on the recording and documentation strategies employed by practitioners, who aspire to create audio-visual and written material.

The rationale behind the collecting practices of museums and other collecting institutions is centred around the fleeting performative moment. These institutions explicitly preserve documentation from the wider field of theatre and performance. By acquiring and safeguarding performance documents, such institutions see themselves as the guardians of the history of performance. By comparing the museums’ capturing strategies and archives of performance with those of the company practitioners, this chapter outlines what may be referred to as a ‘canon’ of performance documentation, based on established conventions and practices. Reflecting on these canonical procedures, it goes on to question the assumption and expectation that live performance documentation should consist of photographic and audio-visual recordings.

Emphasis in the chapter is placed on the recording and documentation of live performances but it also touches on how practitioners capture other aspects of their work, such as the developmental phase of a piece. As the chapter shows, documents of live performances are often physically archived as part of wider collections of files that document the entire lifespan of a project allowing in this way for the possibility of recreating the work in the future. Thus, the documentary evidence for a performance

will include documents relating to proofs from its live activation, its development, and other relevant aspects of the process, such as its technological components and design.

Audiences only experience the live components of a piece, but for the practitioners, the performance-based work also includes long periods of composition and testing as well as perhaps, moments of reflection after the completion of the live performance itself. Thus, it is to be expected that the documentation of projects would be material from as many aspects of these elements as possible. For example, for projects that employ digital technologies as a dramaturgical tool, adequate documentation would include materials pertaining to the development of software and hardware and their functioning. For publicly funded projects, as for instance Extant's *Flatland*, the project team might also need to keep detailed files of internal communications in order to help report on the development of the work and their collaboration. If a live performance is activated simultaneously in multiple stages, as is the case with numerous works by Blast Theory, practitioners frequently find it challenging to record the live moment. In such cases, the absence of video and photographic documentation is often offset by information about how to reactivate the work or even fabricated documents, as this chapter will show. In examining how practitioners capture and archive the different phases of an ephemeral work, the chapter thus reveals the range of information and files that can be included in the documentation of a work, including those that can replace missing audio-visual mediations.

5.1. Forced Entertainment

Forced Entertainment's works can be classified into different groups according to the qualities of the space they are presented in; it can be broadly divided into performance-based pieces and other projects.⁹³ The performance category covers a range of works that are temporal – almost always employing professional performers. These are intended to be presented in front of a live, physical, and occasionally remote audience. Performances can comprise, following Forced Entertainment's categorisation, of durational and theatre pieces. The contrast between the two lies in how long each performance lasts or for how long the performers can endure performing on stage. The theatre pieces, as Tim Etchells explains, are the group's shorter shows. In Adrian

⁹³ These are works that are activated in different settings than those presented on a theatre stage. A more detailed account of the work of the company lies beyond the scope of this dissertation and can be found at <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/projects/>.

Heathfield's book *Live: Art and Performance* (2004), Etchells notes that 'theatre forces one to deal with the ergonomic shape of an hour and a half – the pattern 'start', 'middle', 'end' that produces a satisfactory feeling of closure'. Pieces such as *The Notebook* and *The World in Pictures*,⁹⁴ tend to be 'fixed and scripted' (Naden, 2003, p. 133), meaning that the live event is more compact and that there is little room for improvisation on stage. Durational pieces, on the other hand, are 'works (lasting) for six to twenty-four hours long in which performers improvise within a pre-arranged set of rules' (Forced Entertainment, 2004, p. 101).⁹⁵ In total, the company has developed eight durational performances, including *Speak Bitterness* which is examined in this thesis.

5.1.i. Recording as part of the devising process

Apart from the aesthetic quality and characteristics of Forced Entertainment's work, its strategy and use of documentation are also of academic and artistic interest. For the company, the process of capturing a work begins as soon as a project is envisioned or when the company is invited to create a new piece. To this end, Forced Entertainment audio-visually records all of its rehearsals.⁹⁶ Videos can provide a means of recalling the various aspects and phases involved in the development of a project and can be used to review it while still in the process of putting it together.

Recordings allow practitioners to go back to and review previous moments and decisions, reflect upon them, reactivate them, and decide whether or not to keep them in the piece. Forced Entertainment's rehearsals are best described as improvisational workshops during which the script, composition, and presentation of an ensuing work are explored and decided upon. The company uses material such as photographs, notes, texts, props and other immaterial stimuli, e.g. the memories of practitioners, to explore creative ideas. Rehearsals last for approximately six months and are grounded in the collaborative and co-creative practices of all the members (Suk, 2016, p. 23). As Cathy Naden notes, they combine elements of 'improvisation, editing, and discussion' (2003, p. 134) in addition to 'talking, analysis, and theorization' (Zimmer, 2004, p. E2). Describing Forced Entertainment's rehearsals during an interview at Arnolfini in which

⁹⁴ For more information on Forced Entertainment productions you can visit their website: <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/project/the-world-in-pictures/>.

⁹⁵ Durational pieces have indeed spanned between four, six and up to twenty-four hours.

⁹⁶ Another theatre that videos its rehearsals is Denmark's Odin Teatret (<https://odinteatret.dk/>).

Richard Lowdon discussed the creation of the piece *Tomorrow's Parties* (2011) at the Belluard Festival in Fribourg, he noted:

As with all of our work, we worked through improvisation, recording everything, transcribing “good” bits and re-improvising again. Laying the text out on a big table, watching playback of rehearsals and trying to edit not only content, but also the playful energy of interchanges between performers. Cutting one texture against another (Arnolfini, undated).

Videos thus enable the group to accurately recollect and effortlessly return to the various elements and moments of their rehearsals. Through such endless replays, the rehearsals create the foundations for new ideas. Watching the videos allows practitioners to observe and comment on past actions so as to re-enact them or strike them out. Videos, therefore, function as a medium through which new creative products are produced and pre-existing ones are further developed. Tim Etchells explains this devising practice as a visual note-taking technique. He traces the development of this technique back to when the group began borrowing VHS cameras in the 1990s, noting that ‘the video camera became a kind of notebook’ (Cleary, 2014). Practitioners can rewind rehearsal recordings to a previous action in order to observe it moment by moment, to ‘grab hold off and then work with the very particular and very fortuitous things that might happen in an improvisation’ (Ibid.).

These recordings are also used later on when the company examines what happened in the performance room and assesses what could be improved or changed and how. They also serve as sources for evaluating how the work developed. Etchells particularly notes that the videos of the rehearsals are ‘like a notebook practice’ but ‘more for our own work really’ – they serve as an immediate visual reference to the past for enabling the present and future work of the group (The British Library, 2014). Back in 1999, Etchells wrote that videos are an instrument for ‘checking to see what happened in some improvisation or another, trying to register exact combinations, coincidences, structures’ (1999, p. 68).

5.1.ii. Capturing the live performance

Creating documentation is a process that is fused into the overall working practices of Forced Entertainment. This familiarity with technologies of reproduction also spills into the company's documentation of its live works. Following the filming of the rehearsals, the practitioners also purposefully 'produce a video and photographs of each performance' as well as 'a text for each piece' (Etchells, June 23, 2017, interview notes). Integral to the company's recording and photographing strategy is its long-term collaboration with the photographer and filmmaker Hugo Glendinning.

Most of these videos are shot by a single camera which is positioned in a way that captures the entirety of the stage. Frequently, this means that part of the auditorium is also in the frame. The videos are intended to have an overview of the action in the theatre and, as much as possible, to be free from the subjective gaze of a director. The videos record all the action performed on stage leaving it up to the viewer to decide which parts or elements to focus on. In cases where a performance is livestreamed online, the group produces two recordings instead of one: a recording that captures the physical stage and another that is transmitted online. Although the second video intends to provide the perspective of the remote audience it does not draw attention to the platform on which the performance takes place or the interface through which it is broadcasted. In fact, the only additional element in the recording of the live-streaming is that it begins several minutes before the performance starts. During these early minutes the viewer gazes at the empty stage while listening to the buzz of the waiting audience and perhaps some of its movement depending on the exact position of the camera.

The nuanced aesthetics of Forced Entertainment's recordings and photographs lie beyond the scope of this thesis. What is of interest here is that the subject matter of the videos and the photographs is limited to the performers' actions during rehearsals and on stage. Performance practice, with its focus on embodiment and liveness, encourages a recording process that concentrates on the bodies and actions of the artists. But in focusing on the artists, the videos completely eliminate any engagement with the audience and ignore their engagement with the live performance, which is frequently integral to the company's works. It is interesting that Forced Entertainment captures every moment related to its own artistic practices, from the first thoughts at the inception of a piece through every different staging of the development of the work but

does not explicitly seek to document the involvement of its audiences. This is of particular interest when looking at the broader artistic pieces that are specifically designed to engage the audience in a live performance. The company's "recording fever" also invites further questions related to the practices of documenting their recordings, such as whether and how the company catalogues and preserves this material.

5.1.iii. Record management processes

Forced Entertainment is particular about how it manages its documents. In theory, as Etchells notes, all of its recordings are kept and preserved (June 23, 2017, interview notes). Recordings, photographs, as well as reports on the company's online activity and online presence (such as press mentions, articles about a particular performance or the overall work of the company and mentions of the company and its work in online conversations) are gathered and kept as digital files. The files are saved on a hard drive at the company's offices. The easy availability of this material helps the company with its communications and press related activities, particularly in the period directly after an event. Selected items are sent to 'promoters and to university libraries' (Ibid.) or are made available to 'show to potential promoters or partners' (Ibid.) as well as students upon request. But the fact that these files are kept, does not mean that they are necessarily archived in any systematic manner.

Videos of rehearsals and live performances are theoretically donated by the company to the Literary and Creative Recordings Collection of the British Library for safekeeping. Tim Etchells explains that Forced Entertainment is supposed to 'lodge all of that material [videos, photographs, texts] with the British Library' (Ibid.). In practice, however, the collection hosts just 300 videos of performances, workshops, and rehearsals, in addition to other related audio recordings, including interviews with the company's members and commercially circulated products such as DVDs and CD-ROMs. Although the recordings date back to the company's inception, they only run till the year 2000. Thus, at the time of writing, more than half of Forced Entertainment's history – 19 years – is missing from the British Library's archive. The reason for this substantial gap is the group's preoccupation with other projects. Etchells describes the gap as a 'log jam' (Ibid.). Although it is evident that the company records everything and retains everything, it does not proceed to archive it.

Etchells further explains that the bad cataloguing on the part of Forced Entertainment is because ‘every project generates hundreds of hours of material’ (Ibid.). In this respect the British Library serves as an expert cataloguer. As Sarah Gorman describes it, creating a full and in-depth catalogue of the company’s activities and history is a substantial undertaking, considering the large number of documents that need to be navigated and the ‘enormous amount of labor’ that must be ‘dedicated to documenting, recording and analysing’ its work (2015, p. 190). This thesis will return to the difficulties faced by practitioners in cataloguing the documentation of their work in chapter 6, which will focus specifically on audience-generated traces. It is important to highlight here that information overload is a problem that occurs irrespective of the medium of the documents and that electronic files can pose as much of a challenge as material ones. In fact, in the case of digital media and audience-generated content the overall accumulation of files can be even more overwhelming. While it took Forced Entertainment more than thirty years to produce the plethora of documents that need to be catalogued, it took just four hours for *#fespeaklive* to reach 5.1 million tweets.

In addition to tweets, the work of Forced Entertainment also leaves behind physical objects. Discussing the cataloguing of such objects, Tim Etchells notes:

The idea is that we give them [the British Library] the rehearsal videos and documentation of live performances in the form of video. We don’t give them physical materials, notebooks or props or ephemera. We don’t give them programs or leaflets or whatever. There’s not really a selection process [...] The rest of [the] stuff is just in boxes or in people’s private collections of stuff; its badly organized, hard to find (June 23, 2017, interview notes).

Here Forced Entertainment is shown to be aware of the challenges that their ‘archive fever’ brings about, to use Derrida’s term (1996). The solution to this overaccumulation of files was, up until 2000, to donate their documents to the British Library. The decision to lodge its records with an archiving institution indicates that Forced Entertainment acknowledges both the practicalities around information management and that such documentation can be useful in helping to disseminate its own artistic practice. While Forced Entertainment is a small company located in a small city in the North of England, the British Library with its substantial budget and resources is much

better equipped for archiving and preserving such documents. The Library also offers the company increased visibility because of its status, number of visitors, and the research initiatives it provides a platform for.

The interview with Etchells shows a level of self-awareness on the part of the company regarding their inability to catalogue the files in a satisfactory way. In fact, Etchells acknowledges that the recordings are ‘not very well’ kept and that in some cases they are ‘extremely badly catalogued [...] You’d have no way of knowing what was there’ (June 23, 2017, interview notes). This indicates that Forced Entertainment does not have a proper record management or documentation process in place – as Sant describes it (2016) – by which files are selected and organized into easily accessible and comprehensible archives.

5.1.iv. The pragmatic unavailability of performance documents

Despite the emphasis that Forced Entertainment puts on recording rehearsals, it distinguishes between these videos and what it considers to be the official documentation of a piece which is shared with external parties. Such official documentation is curated in order to be relevant to its audience irrespective of whether this constitutes to be promoters, university libraries, students, or researchers. Tailor-made collections of files are put together depending on who the documentation is intended for and the reasons behind their request for access.

Forced Entertainment’s documentation is mostly organized around ‘a video and photographs of each performance’ as well as ‘a text for each piece’, as Etchells mentions (June 23, 2017, interview notes). As he further outlines, such ‘material[s] have a kind of distribution and in a sense, they are there to represent the work after it’s no longer being performed, or to show a particular work to people who aren’t able to see it live’. Such informational items pertaining to the live performance are a ‘pragmatic’ necessity for the company if it is to communicate its work beyond the live stage, widen its academic and commercial network, and give its work longevity. This is highlighted by Etchells who notes, ‘We need to have something that we can show to potential promoters or partners. We also need [...] to choose to have something that students can access, or researchers’ (June 23, 2017, interview notes). The need for such documentation, particularly visual and audio-visual recordings and text, also reflects

how the culture industry expects to learn about a live performance. It is from such files that the history of performance has so far been constructed.

Forced Entertainment recognize that keeping records of its work is useful for the work process itself, that it is a prerequisite for communicating this work with the wider public, and that sharing such records with a wider network of people and organizations can create new opportunities for the company. The group nevertheless views the documentation of a work as always being secondary to the work itself and as being an inadequate representation of the live moment. Etchells clearly stressed this when he stated: ‘It’s important to say that none of us thinks that the documentation is a strong or authoritative representation of live work – there is always a compromise in represent[ing] it in these kinds of ways’ (Ibid.). Here, Etchells is referring both to the performance texts, which he considers ‘extremely partial’ in terms of what they can actually represent, as well as all live performance visual and audio-visual recordings.

On the one hand, therefore, Forced Entertainment puts a considerable amount of effort into creating and collecting evidence of its projects. On the other hand, it also aligns itself with a strand of scholarship (Phelan, 1993; Heathfield, 2001; Reason, 2006; Fischer-Lichte, 2008) that views live performance and documentation as being in conflict with one another. Interestingly, Etchells notes that he finds audience feedback just as useful as retrospective analysis of the video of a live performance:

I can decode a video to some extent, but it’s also useful for me to know about performances from other people, so, if I can watch a video, I will do it, but I’m not under any illusions that is somehow accurately represented.
(June 23, 2017, interview notes)

Etchells is here referring specifically to the conversations that audience members have at the bar of the theatre during and after a live performance. What is significant about Etchells’s comment is that it suggests that a true view into the live moment will not be simply found in a recording but must be accessed through the perspective of the live audience. In other words, Etchells implicitly acknowledges the benefit of what Ricoeur terms as traces in documentation (1988, p. 173). The reality of the live work for Etchells sits in a fluid space between the recording and audience reception. This continues to confirm that for Forced Entertainment documentation provides an

imperfect and inadequate record of the event. Knowing about a performance work requires that one traces its existence through the multiple channels that evidence and refer to its passing. In this vein, Etchells adds:

I suppose I worry about the whole idea of a ‘complete’ or ‘whole’ document because I doubt that such a thing can ever exist. I think for me it’s more interesting to think about layers and about fragments and maybe constellations of material, none of which is the thing. I think maybe in the interaction between those things there’s something to be found (June 23, 2017, interview notes).

Despite acknowledging the partiality of every single performance document, Forced Entertainment remains particular about how its works are disseminated after their live staging. In contrast to the controlled access to the company’s videos, photographs are openly featured on its website. Forced Entertainment have occasionally also used photographic documents as material for new projects. Examples of such works are the piece *Years 0-20* (2004) and *#FE84-14* (2014).⁹⁷ Tim Etchells has also appropriated some of Forced Entertainment’s records for his personal projects. For instance, his 2014 printed artwork *While You Are with Us Here Tonight* (2013) is a reflexive text by various authors who comment on the monologue from Forced Entertainment’s 2001 piece *First Night*.

To sum up, from its very beginning Forced Entertainment has been diligent in recording of its creative process and creating documentation of its live works. These practices entail the photographing and videoing of everything from the first inception of a project. It also includes written documentation and written texts on the individual pieces. The company uses videos of its rehearsals as part of the development of a running piece and as anchors for entirely new works. Recordings of the live performance and texts are used to initiate communication with funders, institutions, researchers, students, and the general public, particularly through the company’s website. After the end of a live piece, recordings are stored at the company’s offices with the intention to later donate the videos to the British Library where they will be curated, organized, and preserved. However, this has not happened for the last nineteen

⁹⁷ For more information on the projects visit <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/projects/years-0-20/> and <https://www.forcedentertainment.com/projects/fe84-14/>

years. Although Forced Entertainment appreciates the necessity of capturing its performance work, it does not have any adequate systematic record management strategy in place.

5.2. Blast Theory

Maria Chatzichristodoulou writes that Blast Theory sits uncomfortably in any specific category (2015, p. 232) and could be equally described as a theatre or performance group, or as an art ensemble (Ibid., p. 233). Blast Theory's projects have resulted in many different creative outputs and have spanned performance, installation, theatre, gaming, interactive arts, mobile applications, and cinema. The group acknowledges that its work is associated with a theatrical lineage on the basis that it actively engages with 'the idea of performance, the idea of a performer and an audience member having a live exchange and interaction in a particular moment in time and space' (2015, p. 232). This emphasis on live performance also comes from the interactive elements of the artists' work, enabled and determined through the use of digital technology. In his PhD thesis, Luis Manuel Campos delineates the group's practice as 'intermedial' (2014, p. 14). He argues that the majority of Blast Theory's works initiates relationships between physical and digital spaces by employing both analogue and digital technologies (Ibid.). Rather than constituting a series of linear dramatic actions, Blast Theory's projects emerge from a range of relations between the different elements of a work. Each work is a complex dramaturgical form whose performative frame is enabled by a network of multimodal relations. The group's dramaturgical strategies produce a structured environment with strong elements of narrativity, temporality, and site-specificity (Ibid., p. 26). This has led to the group's artistic practice being described as exploring and revealing the thresholds between digital interfaces, the technology that structures it, and the participant (see Giannachi and Benford, 2004, 2011; Crabtree, Capra and Benford, 2007).

As stated in the group's biography, what is integral to Blast Theory's practice is 'interactivity' or else the audience's engagement and performance in the work. Indeed, most of the group's projects are audience-centric and depend on the audience's contribution in order to be activated. Within this context Adams describes Blast Theory's work as:

an enquiry of the technological relationships established within a given artwork and within electronic and physical spaces. Blast Theory uses emergent dynamics as dramaturgical composition. (Adams in Campos, 2014, p. 26).

Blast Theory's works capitalize on the performative relationships between audiences and digital technology. At the heart of its most recent pieces – specifically, those developed after 2015 -, is a bridging of personal and social presence through the use of digital technologies (Giannachi et al, 2012, p. 3). Using networking and game aesthetics, and frequently combining live performance with actors, audiences, and purpose-built software the group's works 'establish complex relationships between physical and virtual spaces; employ networking to create distributed structures [...] establish rich temporal structures in which the artistic experience is interwoven with ongoing everyday activities' (Benford and Giannachi, 2011, p. 1).

SMS texting, GPS systems, mobile applications, and online platforms have all been used to produce experiences for the public. Digital interactive technologies are used as a platform for facilitating direct engagement between the work and participants; they enable participants to become involved in the narrative, to contribute to it, and even, in some particular projects, to share their individualized or personal experiences with each other. In other words, purpose-built software constructs digital interfaces within which participants explore and respond to the digital content and narrative of each work, but also communicate directly with each other or indirectly by viewing each other's input.

For example, in the piece *Karen*, which is examined in this thesis, digital technology enables each participant to respond to the content of the piece and to juxtapose their contribution with the rest of the application's users. Hence, digital technology in Blast Theory's work is concurrently a dramaturgical tool, which makes possible the contribution of the audience in the work, and a communication medium between participants. Since the activation of Blast Theory's works is contingent on the audience's response to the requests and content of each piece, which is communicated to them via a digital interface, audiences transform from passive onlookers to players, users, and participants.

Because Blast Theory's pieces differ in form, structure, narrativity, space, and technological components, they demand maximum flexibility in the way they are recorded. Yet, despite this heterogeneity, the group relies on a particular set of techniques that are applied to each piece regardless of its particular form and structure.

5.2.i. Capturing live performance

Annet Dekker is a net art scholar that has examined Blast Theory's documentation strategies in her doctoral research (2014). For Dekker, documentation encompasses the entire process of designing the production and collecting of documents from a running project. This process is a significant part of the artistic practice and presentation of that practice in the present and future. Building on her scholarly articulation of documentation, this thesis identifies the *way* that a live moment is recorded as also being key to questions of documentation – this is further elaborated in chapter 7. Based on her encounters and interviews with members of Blast Theory, Dekker shows how the group developed meticulous methods for capturing the entire lifespan of its projects. The final archive of each work⁹⁸ is thus formed out of multiple layers or, otherwise, of clusters of documents that are linked to the different phases of the creation, presentation, and dissemination of the pieces. In other words, Blast Theory captures information and purposefully produces documents from all phases of a project's life, including its development and live activation or performance in addition to peripheral information such as its presentation in exhibitions or reference in articles. The group has developed a variety of recording methods, depending on the phase of the project and the material being recorded. Central to such recording practices are its desire to construct and communicate its own artistic history as well as to ensure the possibility that each piece could be reconstructed in the future, according to Dekker (2014).

Before looking at how Blast Theory records the live performance of its pieces, it is worth briefly considering how the group captures its creative processes. Such an examination will show the creativity with which the company approaches the documentation of its works. Dekker refers to the capturing of the creative stage as 'documentation as process', since the records are used in the decision-making process for developing the work (2014, p. 94). Four main techniques that produce informational

⁹⁸ The archive here refers to projects that have been finished and will not be further developed.

items are used from the initiation stage up until the final presentation of the work: oral communication, photographs of whiteboards, records of interviews, questionnaires, playtests, and testing. Dekker particularly highlights that the recording of this phase is influenced by the group's intent to keep the development of a piece as ductile as possible (Ibid.). As such, the group avoids processes that limit its thinking and future development of a piece.

Blast Theory primarily concentrates on recording its decisions about the 'nature' of a running project almost until the moment of its presentation. Oral communication and conversation are viewed as ways that each artist can use in order to elaborate on ideas when working on a project. In particular, Matt Adams notes in a 2010 interview with Annet Dekker that the group follows the example of the scriptwriter Paul Schrader, who never writes anything down (Ibid.). Orality creates a space for previously unanticipated scenarios and ideas to surface and allows for that which is ill-suited to the specific project to be forgotten. What eventually remains or better what is remembered is what comes to constitute the nucleus of the piece. The ephemerality of oral conversations also ensures that all artists are given the chance to contribute equally to the development of a project. Although discussions may appear un-documentable, Blast Theory captures its most important points through note-taking. During creative sessions, the artists keep notes on whiteboards, which they then photograph before wiping off. For their own personal records, artists also write down their ideas on notebooks, but these are kept private and only the most important ideas are shared with the rest of the group.

When a piece starts to take shape, Blast Theory moves on to evaluate its progress. This is done through questionnaires, 'interviews, role playing exercises for each other, paper tests and trails through the city' (Ibid.). Moreover, as all works by Blast Theory have a technological component, the group uses testing for evaluating the functioning of the software. Testing allows for the creation of several interface prototypes and the assessing of which prototype best serves the purposes of a piece. Finally, before a public staging, the group tests the accessibility and ease-of-use of the technology by conducting trials amongst themselves and with members of the public. Participants, often with specialist knowledge, are invited to playtest and reflect on their experience during several key developmental stages of a piece. The results of all of these procedures are evaluated so as to improve the work. As Blast Theory wants to ensure that the works can be recreated in the future, it stores all of these records with the rest of

the documents that pertain to the development of a project. In the final archive of a piece, the abovementioned material is kept alongside the project's technological components, which are frequently purpose-built and which function as 'part of the subject of the work as well as the medium for the work' (Adams, in Cecilia Wee, 2012, p. 139).

Recording the live moment is important for Blast Theory since the shows' capacity 'is quite limited... [to] only a hundred [...] people', as Nick Tandavanitj clarified (February 28, 2017, interview notes). In contrast to recordings of the development of a project, the capturing of its live performance is a more complicated process. During the early stages of its practice, Blast Theory filmed the live performance which resulted in an hour-long video. This type of recording was possible 'only [for] works that took place in a single room' where it was easy to 'point the camera to the thing that was happening' (Ibid.). As Tandavanitj further explained, from very early on the group decided that those videos failed to accurately capture the energy of the live performance. The group moved away from videoing the whole live moment of its works in 1998 when it developed the project *Kidnap* (1998), which shifted its practice from the physical theatre space or found space to 'media spaces' (Ibid.). *Kidnap* (1998) was the first work of Blast Theory that 'was intended for an audience that was actually distributed' (Ibid.). The fact that the piece was only remotely viewed,⁹⁹ and that it thus mediated the stage to the personal screens of its audience members, problematized the production of a linear recording of the live moment. Because audience members engaged with the work from various venues rather than coming together in a shared physical one, there was pragmatically no position to 'put a camera in and point things out' (Ibid.). *Kidnap* (1998) was the moment that Blast Theory's works started emphasising on the audience experience structuring a live performance that is non-linear, mediated, and dispersed in time and space.

According to Tandavanitj, a seminal point for the discovery of a new way of capturing the live performance was the 1998 competition *Blip Boards* run by Cambridge Junction. The programme invited artists to produce thirty second videos that would be shown in the advert reels of cinemas. For the competition, Blast Theory shot a thirty

⁹⁹ *Kidnap* (1998) involved the kidnapping of two audience members by Blast Theory. The entire process was broadcasted live on the internet. Cameras inside the safehouse were controlled by the online viewers who could also communicate directly with the kidnappers. For more information visit <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/kidnap/>.

second advertisement for *Kidnap* (1998). This practice has stayed with the group ever since, which develops five-minute videos that provide an indication of what the live moment of a project might entail. Discussing their later project *Desert Rain* (1999), which brought six audience members together in a virtual stage,¹⁰⁰ Matt Adams remarks on this use of video documentation:

The problem here was to register the non-linear character of the piece. Therefore, the crucial question was how to bring together examples of different types of footage (and not so much which “bits” to use) so that the non-linear character of the piece would be sufficiently “presented”. (Adams, in Lycouris, 2000, p. 6)

Being well aware that their mediated and distributed audiences have diverse experiences of what a work is, the practitioners approach any video recording as a film in its own right rather than as an objective and exhaustive capturing of the live performance. With *Kidnap* (1998), Blast Theory realized that the digital spaces it created for its audiences ‘have their own processes and areas of engagement’ and, therefore, video recordings should be ‘more indicative of the kind of things that happened in the performance space’, as Tandavanitj stated (Ibid.). Instead, Blast Theory’s intent is to get the ‘atmosphere correct’ (Adams, in Dekker, 2014, p. 97) so that the video’s viewers ‘can imaginatively engage with what it must have felt like’, as Matt Adams also notes (Ibid.). For this purpose, the camera in ‘documentation videos’, to adopt Tandavanitj’s term, follows the perspective of one participant who is frequently recruited for this task. Always contemplating on the final result, the filming process involves retakes, reshooting, and extensive editing, and accompanies the recordings with ‘music that wasn’t necessarily included in the piece’ (Tandavanitj, February 28, 2017, interview notes).

The content of these videos is intended to reveal the energy of the live work, to provide a ‘sense of context to the actual audience member’ (Ibid.). When videos predate the live activation of the work, they are intended to function as advertisements to persuade people to participate in the project. They are designed to inform audiences of what they should expect from a Blast Theory piece. They also serve as content that can be handed over to sponsors and promoters and that can be uploaded onto the group’s

¹⁰⁰ For more information visit <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/desert-rain/>.

website and social media accounts. In truth, therefore, such video recordings do not constitute direct evidence emanating from the live activation of a work or direct proof of its experience. Although they indicate the potential live moment, they are fabricated so as to mimic it; they are audio-visual descriptions of what could be or what could have been. Annet Dekker refers to this type of documentation that is devised so as to communicate and explain a work as ‘documentation as presentation’ (2014, p. 96). Although such recordings do not constitute exhaustive capturings of the live moment, they still form part of the overall documentation of a piece.

While developing a capturing method that could fully record the live action of Blast Theory’s work is problematic and almost impossible, the group also collects other types of informational files which are often directly generated by the technological components of the projects. This information stems from the audience’s interaction and way that its experience is mediated through the given digital technologies. Blast Theory’s interest in capturing the experience of its audiences can be traced back to the 1990s when practitioners would distribute questionnaires as part of their shows. On one particular occasion, as Tandavanitj recalled, the answers were logged in a computer and used to create a document which was then ‘printed and distributed to the audience at the end of the performance’ (Ibid.). Blast Theory has also stored the ‘chat histories from chat rooms’ from *Kidnap* (1998), the ‘GPS data of performers and the location of the movements of one of the players’ from *Can You See Me Now?* (2001), and all the ‘text messages logs from each of the times’ they staged the *Day of the Figurines* (2006) (Ibid.). For *Riders Spoke* (2007), a project ‘where people are making recordings’, the group amassed an archive of around 15,000 recordings ‘along with all of the Wi-Fi data, because it used Wi-Fi positioning’ as Tandavanitj further noted (Ibid.). In other words, Blast Theory collects audience-generated content, which provides direct evidence of the performativity of the pieces. According to Tandavanitj, the reason for this approach is that the majority of the group’s work ‘is about people’s engagement’ and, therefore, ‘the idea is to record that engagement rather than the scripts that we produce’ (February 28, 2017, interview notes).

It worth highlighting here that the types of information contained in these files pertain either to language (e.g. text messages) or video footage (as is the case with *Riders Spoke*, 2007). Although documents from *Can You See Me Now* (2001) include locative data, this data was derived from the performers who were hired by Blast Theory

and not the audience. Although the performers of this piece were directed by remote audience members, the GPS data that is stored pertains to the activity of the performers within a city, rather than being a direct record of the participants' choices. Ultimately, the types of information that Blast Theory collects from the live performance of its works points to a familiarity with collecting visual, audio-visual, and textual evidence, and a reluctance to collect other types of information derived directly from an audience. This approach raises a number of questions that will be addressed in chapter 6.

5.2.ii. Archiving

In essence, Blast Theory purposefully creates documents as a tool for the conceptualization and development of its running projects. The documents also function as marketing tools and explanatory props, appendices to research, evidence of the group's creative methods and practice, and as instructions for reconstructing the works in the future. The variability in form, media, and modes of engagement invite the group to be flexible in its recording and documenting of each piece.

Blast Theory emphasises on archiving. The material that the group gathers from the entire lifespan of a piece is stored on computers, drives, and physical folders at its office (Figure 5.1.). As the group has stated in the past, it has, so far, archived every aspect of all of its projects, including creative notes, correspondence, publicity material, press, design work, production manuals, and so on. In 2008, Blast Theory's archive included '90 box files, 20 virtual models of cities and 900Gb stored on servers' (Blast Theory, in Dekker, 2014, p. 98). However, this is only part of the entire evidence of their work. Because the group collaborates with external partners, some of its archival material can also be found stored in different collections such as at the University of Nottingham. In particular, these files are 'logs, messages sent and received, audio recordings, etc.' (Ibid.). The reasons behind this approach relate to issues of technical and intellectual property rights which I will discuss in chapter 6.3.i.

The availability of archival material has spurred experimentation with archival structures to explore how the archives can be presented in an interesting way. This is reflected in the annual exhibition and showcases that Blast Theory participates in every year. As Tandavanitj noted:

We had an exhibition at SpaceX gallery in Exeter about four years ago [2013] where we were invited to generally show our work [...] we showcased videos, some written material that explains or talk[s] about each project, and some technical artefacts. (February 28, 2017, interview notes)

In 2010, Blast Theory also collaborated with Duncan Rowland, Dominic Price, Gabriella Giannachi and Steve Benford, in partnership with the British Library and Stanford Libraries, to create *CloudPad* (2011),¹⁰¹ an interactive archive that combined video, transcripts and annotations collected from their piece *Riders Spoke* (Benford and Giannachi, 2011). As Tandavanitj explained, this ‘was a way of drawing together some of the different strands of media [...] and play it back in different frames’ (February 28, 2017, interview notes). Based on archival material from the same work, the group, in collaboration with Jonathan Foster from the University of Sheffield, Gabriella Giannachi and Steve Benford also created the work *Riders Have Spoken* (2010). This included a selection of two to three hundred of the most compelling recordings of participants from the work. Contrary to *CloudPad* (2011), this piece was intended for public use and was presented as part of the *Growing Knowledge: The Evolution of Research* (2010) exhibition at the British Library.¹⁰²

5.3. Extant

The works that Extant produces belong primarily to a theatrical lineage; professional performers present a play in front of an audience meaning that the audience usually does not interfere or participate in the action. Since 2010, Extant has also experimented with how digital technology can enhance or even shift the performance experience for visually impaired audiences. In this context, it has produced two research projects *The Question*¹⁰³ (2010) and *Flatland* (2015), which developed out of the *Question* (2010) and is being examined in this thesis (chapter 4.3). Both of these works aimed at exploring the artistic and commercial applications of tactile feedback technology using *haptics* i.e. technology that interfaces with the user through touch.

¹⁰¹ CloudPad was based on the same team’s former archiving experiment *Digital Replay System* (DRS) which was created in 2008 and is still available to download: <http://thedrs.sourceforge.net/>

¹⁰² For more information on *Riders Have Spoken* visit <https://gabriellagiannachi.wordpress.com/2010/11/25/the-development-of-a-cloud-archive-for-blast-theorys-rider-spoke/>, <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/news-item/riders-have-spoken-at-the-british-library/> and <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/riders-have-spoken/>.

¹⁰³ For more information visit <http://www.thequestion.org.uk>.

Apart from differences in the content and in the underlying story, the two projects also differed in that *Flatland* (2015) involved the presence of a professional performer, while *The Question* (2010) did not. This dissimilarity is reflected on the way that the two projects are outlined by the company: *The Question* (2010) is described as an immersive theatrical experience while *Flatland* is identified as an immersive theatre. What is of interest to this thesis is that both of these pieces depend on their audiences' performance through the use of a haptic technology. They, thus, bring their audiences at the centre of their action through interactive processes. *The Question* (2010) and *Flatland* (2015) were the result of Extant's collaboration with computer academics from the Open University and the robotics engineer Dr Adam Spiers. *The Question* (2010) was also developed in partnership with the Battersea Arts Centre in London.

Ultimately, what drives all of Extant's work, whether it is a theatre or performance, research, or a workshop is the group of people that it engages with through its work as an employer and an entertainer. Instead of developing a distinct devising methodology as is the case of the work of Forced Entertainment, or a particular dramaturgical framework as Blast Theory do, Extant's work is defined by its cause. This cause is to bring 'a unique cultural perspective of visual impairment to broaden employment, training and consultancy through the arts' (Extant, 2018) and 'to create more accessible presentations of their shows for visually impaired audiences' (Ibid.). As is shown in what follows, this manifests itself in how and why the company captures and documents its work.

5.3.i. In search of a strategy

Out of the three performance companies examined in this thesis, Extant is the youngest. Although it was established in the late '90s, very little has been written about its creative practice or its position in disability arts and even less has been said about its recording methodologies or its documentation. For the purposes of this research two interviews were conducted with Maria Oshodi and one with Dr Adam Spiers, the robotics engineer behind the creation of the haptic devices used in *The Question* (2010) and *Flatland* (2015). Initially, the focus of these interviews was the recording and documentation processes undertaken in relation to Extant's project *Flatland* (2015). Yet, as the discussion progressed, it became important to map Extant's general practices

of capturing their work and of storing their records so as to better understand what Maria Oshodi meant when she noted about documentation that

Things have slightly shifted; they have become a bit less formalised now because we are attaching to our productions [pause] like with *Flatland* there was the academic aspect that was attached to it. (Oshodi, March 21, 2017, interview notes)

Oshodi here reveals that the documentation processes of the company have had to be adapted in order to serve *Flatland's* (2015) partners and funders. She refers to the recording guidelines that both academics and funding bodies recommended or demanded. The public funding that *Flatland* (2015) received from Nesta made it imperative that Extant, as the project lead, captured its own role within the project, its input and its interaction with its partners, the process behind the composition of a piece, and the live moment of the work. The production of evidence relating to *Flatland* (2015) was not just the result of the company's own artistic vision or its strategies for disseminating the work. Instead, it was very much influenced and controlled by the funders' demands for reports as well as the interest of the academic partners. What this particular case study lays bare therefore are the micro-pressures that are forced into the recording practice and final form of performance documentation when artists have external collaborators.

The thesis will analyse how *Flatland* (2015) is recorded and how its files are being managed and stored in chapter 6.1. In chapter 6.3, it will analytically present the effects of collaborative relationships by revisiting how Extant's partnership with academics and with NESTA impacted the wider documentation of the project and, consequently, the files that were created based on the audience's performance and its experience of the piece. For the moment, this chapter will chart the broader recording and documentation practices of the company that arise with the birth of a creative idea and end with the completion of a project.

The case of Extant presented a unique obstacle for this study that is linked to the sloppiness of its recording practices and, even more so, the messiness surrounding the storage of its works' documentation. As Maria Oshodi stated, 'When you are in your project you are not creating documents for a future archive you are creating it as part of

the live process' (Ibid.). For many practitioners, especially the artists who form Blast Theory and Forced Entertainment, capturing a theatre and/or performance piece is a lively process that initially facilitates its development and progress. While Oshodi's comment confirms that Extant uses documentation in order to aid the creation of a piece, it also reveals that Extant has neither a set recording process nor an archiving strategy in place.

Describing the processes behind the development of a work, Oshodi explained that after an idea is proposed by external artists or is internally developed by Extant, it is examined through workshops or exercises. '[I]f it feels that [the idea] has potential we then build it up in a proposal and try to raise funds for developing it into a full show' (Maria Oshodi, March 2017, interview notes). Providing that the idea is valorised by everyone in the artistic team it 'then gets summarised into a report that goes into our website page' (Ibid.). It is of interest to this thesis that Oshodi equated the online announcement of a prospective piece with documentation. Her perspective, in this respect, resembles that of Nick Tandavanitj – and Blast Theory more broadly – for whom the devising of five-minute videos about a piece is also part of its documentation.

Extant seeks to document the development of its projects by embedding some audience development work into its process. Audience research that is held after the live performance serves as a vehicle for documenting each project by capturing individual personal memories. At the core of Extant's practice is its engagement with the ways in which its regular and potential audiences that are composed both of visually and non-visually impaired people experience its work. To this end, the company asks the participants of its workshops and the audiences of its projects to provide feedback after each live performance. Throughout its existence as a practicing company, Extant has followed this practice either by orally asking people for their response after a live performance or by giving them evaluation forms to fill in. Less often, as was the case with the *Flatland* (2015) project, the practitioners have tried to align the experience of giving feedback with the dramaturgy of the piece that they are presenting.

Recording the live performance appears to be of secondary importance to Maria Oshodi, although it is not completely excluded from the interests and practices of her theatre company. Workshops and live performances are captured through visual and audio-visual recording media. According to the artistic director, Extant first and

foremost uses photography for reasons of financial constraints. As a medium, photography is flexible enough to capture the activity on stage, but it can also move between the participants in workshops. Indeed, the company collects numerous photographs from its events and performances. When Extant has a large budget for a project, it commissions a filmmaker in order to video the live action. In reality, all that Oshodi noted about the capturing of the live moment of a work was the following:

Well, we just take photographs and if we can afford it [we] collaborate with a film maker for creating a video. The video then gets boiled down to its highlights and that then is uploaded into our website. (Oshodi, March 21, 2017, interview notes).

After the recording of the live performance the filmmaker under the guidance of Oshodi edits the collected footage in a short video which is uploaded to the company's website (Figure 5.2.). 'Apart from the written process that proves to be a little time consuming, this is what happens in terms of a fast track method to document the live' (Ibid.). Considering that this is a company of visually impaired artists which targets primarily visually impaired audiences, it is significant that photography is still recognised and valued for its immediacy in capturing its live performances and freezing them in time. While images are orally interpreted to the artists of the company, they provide strong visual evidence to external partners and funding bodies.

When a project is completed, its results are evaluated by everyone who was involved in its making. The project is then 'summarised into a report' (Ibid.) that is uploaded to the company's website. Oshodi in fact treats the company's website as an archive: 'It's like a repository like a warehouse with lots of different rooms' (Ibid.). This comment suggests how documentation and, even more so, the preservation of documents is a problematic practice for Extant. When asked how the company ensures the longevity and long-term accessibility of its documents, particularly, of the bespoke software used in its research projects, Oshodi noted:

With the *Question* stuff it seems that it has all written off because it's all ancient technology now. It's all on infrared. We've got the hardware as some kind of museum pieces. I don't think they work anymore. (Ibid.)

It is significant that for Oshodi the ‘demo version’ of *Flatland* (Ibid.) – i.e. the version of the Animotus converted to be presented at conferences and talks – constitutes an alternative way of how a past work can be presented to future audiences. Unlike the photographs and videos that show what happened, the device provides a direct experience to what the original audience must have felt. This indicates that the company is more akin to other senses and that it understands the ways that documentation might involve encountering rather than seeing a past moment. On the other hand, that documentation is approached as a repetition of the initial “feeling” is a conceptual obstacle in preserving miscellaneous records of a work. Such an approach to documentation raises serious concerns about practitioners’ engagement with digital technology. In the case of Extant, it appears that the digital technology is viewed as a simple prop akin to basic hardware. Certainly, the company appreciates the historiographical quality of all technological components since they store the device used. It is clear, nevertheless, that preserving the software is something that exceed the practitioners’ skills, knowledge, and budget.

The actual reason behind the lack of attention that is given to the collection and the preservation of its documents, is the company’s lack of knowledge. As the artistic director acknowledged, ‘we’re careless and we don’t know what we’re doing’ (Ibid.). Oshodi further noted that what is kept is only the digital records of a project that are chaotically stored in computers while tangible objects such as props are most often than not discarded. At the time of this thesis’s interviews, Oshodi appeared to have become aware that their work was absent from any library or formal archive. She attributed this awareness to the recent death of one of the company’s actors. Because Extant is a small company with limited resources, Oshodi explained, resolving its archiving problems requires additional funding.

To summarise, oral communication and writing are emphasised as the best tools for capturing the developmental process the company’s works, while the recording of the live performance follows the traditional methods of photography and videography. Extant also collects feedback from its audiences, primarily in the form of audio text. Despite the accumulation of informational items, the company has no documentation strategy in place that ensures their arrangement and accessibility. Furthermore, what it considers as documentation is the online presentation of a past project, through video and text, on the website, and, where appropriate, the demonstration of the feeling that

participants might have had during the live performance of a piece. Beyond the risk of digital items becoming obsolete and, therefore, the possibility that Extant might lose its history, it is also imperative to highlight the company's propensity to use technologies of reproduction to communicate their past live works. This is of particular importance when considering that the company's aim is to improve the theatrical experience of visually impaired audiences.

5.4. Shared documentation patterns

The interviews with the case study practitioners have revealed that performance companies under examination use a variety of methods to document their projects. These methods are influenced by the practitioners' overall making practices as well as the documents that promoters, funders, and the general public are accustomed to. The interviews have also demonstrated a shared pattern or dominant documentation method. Material remains of the live performance and of the making process, such as props, costumes, design files, and software are recognized as having archival value. Only a small number of physical objects are kept by practitioners. Software, on the other hand, usually belong to and are stored by the developers and scientists collaborating with artists.¹⁰⁴ Finally, practitioners always emphasise on having visual references of the live performance.

When it comes to capturing the live moment of a work – which is the main concern of this thesis – practitioners use primarily visual and audio-visual media. Blast Theory and Extant even fabricate videos demonstrating the *ambience* of their works when it is difficult to see and record their actual live moment. Practitioners' reliance on photography and video point to conventions that derive from certain common expectations over what the documentation of the live performance should be and how audiences should learn about it in the future.

I have showed in chapter 3 that archiving institutions, irrespective of their expertise, are also keen in having videos and photographs of live performances. Not only they collect such documents, but they also try to capture the ongoing theatre and performance scene. In her examination of live artists' documentation (2012), Cecilia

¹⁰⁴ Practitioners might also develop software as is the case with Nick Tandavanitj from Blast Theory.

Wee suggests that photography – and I would add video – is the most compelling prism for the wider practice of documenting a live performance because it allows their viewer to identify an aspect of the thing the photograph has captured while it simultaneously highlights its distance from it (Wee, 2012, p. 112). Even the broader field of performance documentation studies emphasizes more on visual depictions of live performance and less on other types documents and traces. Explorations in performance documentation that examine the inextricability of theatre and performance with its documentation in online environments – these look equally at traces created by practitioners as well as audiences and suggest that the complete performance experience entails engaging with the live performance and a network of digital traces (chapter 2.2.i) – also give prominence to images (Bay-Cheng, 2012, 2016, 2017; Pérez, 2014; Sköld, 2015; Giannachi et al, 2010; Chatzichristodoulou, 2014; Giannachi, 2016). Within the institutional context, the capacity of visual depictions to display the live performance (informational value) determines their overall archival value, as I discussed in chapter 3.4. Furthermore, photographs and videos are the most useful documents considering how versatile their experience is; audiences can view them online in the websites of institutions or in designated reading rooms, they can also be exhibited and used in order to inform the reperformance of the work or to inspire the creation of new works.

The similarities in the three case study practitioners' documentation practices of the live performance reveals an expectation that audiences should be able to directly *see* what the live moment consisted of. Such techniques are appropriate for performance works that adhere to the theatre-based separation between audience and performer. Irrespective of whether the final product is a fabricated trajectory of the experience of a potential audience member or whether it is an edited or unedited recording of a staged production, the result is that it documents the audience's engagement and performance as if it was a visibly observable event. It is of interest here that a company of visually impaired artist whose practice empowers visually impaired audiences also employs such audio-visual documentation methods. It is of equal interest that despite the numerous audience-centric theatre and performance pieces that Blast Theory and the MRL have developed in addition to the large amount of audience-generated content that they have collected, the group has only ever experimented with how to structure and present audio-visual records produced by audiences as part of its work. Filming, I argue, can provide only partial information about the performativity of a piece, particularly in instances where the audience is an activator, performer, or participant whose mediated

engagement forms part of the overall experience. Even more so, for works such as *Karen* (2015), *Flatland* (2015), and *Speak Bitterness* (2014), filming, which is controlled by the practitioners, serves to present a record of the live performance to non-visually impaired viewers, but it fails to incorporate the experiences of the initial audiences. Thus, it becomes imperative to examine the practitioners' archiving approaches to audience-generated content which offers traces of the audience experience.

Chapter 6. Archiving audience-generated content

Having explored the structure and contents of the institutional archive (chapter 3), how audience-generated content was made part of the live performance in the three case studies (chapter 4), and how practitioners document live performance (chapter 5) the thesis now turns to questions of the afterlife of audience-generated content. More specifically, this chapter looks at how practitioners manage the data files gathered from their audiences' engagement and it delves into the challenges that these pose as digital traces of the audience's activity. Analysing the qualitative data collected from the practitioner interviews, *Speak Bitterness's* tweets and the researcher's own data file from *Karen's* experience, this chapter unearths two sets of obstacles – one technical and one organisational – to achieving long-term preservation of and access to the works' audience-generated content. The first two sections of this chapter reflect on and analyse these two obstacles. The final section departs from the practitioners' assessment of the value of audience-generated traces as documentation in order to propose that established structures and understandings of performance archives are counter-current to audience-generated content.

Adding to the perspectives of the three case study practitioners, the chapter also draws on the interviews conducted with the performance collection professionals.¹⁰⁵ By combining these perspectives – the first group artistic, the second archival – the chapter illustrates how certain challenges that arise in the context of audience-generated content can prove relevant when considering the tangible, visual, and audio-visual documentation of live performance. As a result of this analysis, the chapter identifies why dominant archiving methods remain unsuccessful in including audience-generated content. Examining the practical reasons behind the neglect of audience-generated content, the discussion lays the groundwork for the following chapter which proposes the need for a discursive shift in the archiving of such content.

¹⁰⁵ These are Erin Lee, the head archivist at the National Theatre Archive, Ramona Riedzewski, the Head of Collections Management of the Victoria and Albert Museum Theatre and Performance Collection, and Stephen Cleary, the lead curator of the British Library Sound Archive.

6.1. The documentation of the case-studies

As chapter 4.1 discusses, *Speak Bitterness* (2014) is a piece that follows theatrical conventions for its presentation. Professional performers enact a story on a stage in front of the observing eyes of the audience. This enables the audio-visual recording of the live performance. Indeed, with regard to the official documentation of the 2014 production, Forced Entertainment recorded two videos, one of the staged performance works, the other of its live streaming. The differences between the two videos, however, are miniscule. The recording of the livestreaming is slightly longer since it starts a few minutes before the actual live performance; it shows the empty stage and the movement of the physically present audience in the auditorium. This video also excludes the interface through which the remote audience would engage with the live piece i.e. Twitter; it shows the recorded live performance on a full-screen mode. Apart from the two videos, Forced Entertainment also kept statistical reports and a hard copy of all the tweets that included the hashtag *#fespeaklive*. Nevertheless, Forced Entertainment does not consider this information to have documentational value and, hence, it does not systematically archive it.

Part of Forced Entertainment's recording practice is to film all of its rehearsals and productions (see chapter 5.1i and 5.1.ii.). The company considers video recordings as the best material for informing audiences, which have not experienced the live performance, about its works. Certainly, the theatrical practice of the company lends itself to documentation methods that use media of reproduction. Tim Etchells, nevertheless, acknowledges that emerging technologies like Twitter, in addition to the livestreaming of *Speak Bitterness* (2014), have enabled a mediated social interaction around the piece which would previously occur only within the physical space of the theatre. Etchells, thus, notes that 'the work exists always with a kind of parallel conversation going on' (June 23, 2017, interview notes). After all, the intent of the confessional script of the piece is to involve its audience's emotional responses and engagement.

As outlined in his interview Etchells recognises that tweets are of a certain documentation value, serving primarily as evidence of audience engagement that can be used for funding and in compiling promotional reports. He also considers that tweets might form an additional documentation layer to video recordings, as will be discussed

in chapter 6.4. Forced Entertainment's marketing associates extracted the audience's tweets from the platform and printed them. As is the case when creating data files, tweets were frozen in time, bypassing their potential erasure online. This hard copy of *Speak Bitterness's* (2014) tweets can be presented to students, researchers, or funders after request alongside the video of the livestreaming and of the theatre. Despite all this, Etchells explicitly highlights that the tweets do not serve the pragmatic documentation strategies of the company. 'I understand that it's interesting to think about it [Twitter cloud] in relation to writing about the work', he notes, 'but it's not something we really collect' (June 23, 2017, interview notes). Although Etchells acknowledges that tweets afford the creation of a multi-layered documentation, a documentation that would present the work from different perspectives and material, Forced Entertainment insist that videos are sufficient live performance documentation.

Karen is also a piece with dramatic elements since it involves a professional actor performing in front of an audience. In a similar fashion to *Speak Bitterness's* (2014) online audience, participants watch the mediation of this live performance through their mobile phone application. In this case, however, this is pre-recorded. The current documentation of *Karen's* performative moment includes this video material, alongside other material such as the script and code of the application. Additionally, Blast Theory has created a four minute and forty-three seconds video, which Tandavanitj called the work's documentation (Figure 6.1.). The purpose of this video, which is available on the project's website,¹⁰⁶ is to show the ambience of the piece and what the experience of it would be like. The footage of the video is a combination of short samples from *Karen's* videos, a potential player using the application, the interface of the application, and examples of the questions and short messages from the main characters to the viewer that are not part of the actual work.

In Nick Tandavanitj's first interview (February 28, 2017) it was made clear that Blast Theory was still debating the archival value of *Karen's* audience-generated data. Two years later – four years after the first release of the application -, Tandavanitj revealed during our second interview (February 8, 2019) that the audience-generated content was still not part of the documentation of the piece. When questioned about the company's position with regard to *Karen's* audience-generated content, he noted:

¹⁰⁶ A video of the project can also be found on YouTube and Vimeo. For more information visit <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/karen/>.

We still do internal reporting on how many downloads, how many people actually get to the end, how many people buy the data report. We do that now on a quarterly basis. So, we see kind of what's happening with the app and whether it still has any kind of impact on users. (February 8, 2019, interview notes)

Although data from the work is stored by the company and its collaborators, the MRL, Tandavanitj was yet unsure of how they will be used in the future and what their value might be. For the moment, *Karen* (2015) is considered to be an archive of its own live moment whose documents are all of its users' data. For this reason, instead of extracting its data, Blast Theory has concentrated on archiving documents that trace the project's development and provide enough files to support its future reconstruction.

Flatland's (2015) entire collection of documents also consists of numerous digital files. Maria Oshodi, the artistic director of Extant, has stored all of the project's files on her domestic computer. During our second interview, Oshodi brought a sample of these files on an external hard-drive. The drive included emails, meeting notes, Skype-call recordings, internal and institutional reports, a seven-minute promo animation of what the experience would look like and a ten-minute version of a *Flatland* (2015) film, infrared photos, evaluation reports, conference presentations, audience evaluations of the project, and academic articles. These files were stored in a disorderly manner.

With regard to the live performance, Oshodi noted that apart from photographs the company recorded videos alongside a pitch video (March 21, 2017, interview notes). Indeed, the initial plan of the team was to record all participants' trajectories within the installation by using overhead infrared cameras that would assist the interpretation of the audience-generated content (Spiers, February 22, 2019, interview notes). However, as Spiers revealed, the videos of *Flatland* (2015) are 'artistically shot documentary footage' (Ibid.). Instead of recording the space from above, each video follows participants in the space and records their movements. This footage was shared between all collaborators. Nevertheless, as Adam Spiers noted, the perspective of the camera was unsuitable for his scientific analysis. His initially approach was to juxtapose the audience-generated content of each participant with the video of their trajectory, which would have been taken by overhead cameras. This method would have assisted linking

each participant's data against their access needs to an exact architectural plan. Spiers accredited the lack of these videos to the fact that the professional 'that was supposed to do the video recording was also the filmmaker' of the project (Ibid.). Oshodi, on the other hand, claimed that as a company they had to ensure participants' health and safety, and following participants within the space was the only solution to when the overhead cameras malfunctioned. With Spiers, the lead scientist of the project, being abroad at the time of the live performance, Extant was left in charge of all documentation processes. Under this consideration, I argue that the content of the videos was influenced by the company's vision of what the recording of the live moment should represent to its own audiences.

Despite the numerous files that Oshodi has stored, she was unsure of who might have the audience-generated content or where she could locate it. Spiers on the other hand noted that he had spent numerous hours trying to interpret the collected data for his own interest. In this vein, he mentioned that he has a cloud storage solution where all of the work's data are stored in addition to all the analyses he has made. Ultimately, Spiers maintained that there was no particular effort made to secure the data; only he and one other scientist, who was a scientific partner from the team coming from the Open University, have showed any interest in looking at this content.

Ultimately, the types of files the practitioners have decided to include in the archived documentation of the three case studies points to an ambivalence regarding the value of their audience-generated content. Although all the artists acknowledge the necessity of the audience-generated content to the live performative moment, they feel challenged when considering what the value of this content might be after the end of each piece and in relation to the rest of their documentation. Such a situation, furthermore, challenges the academic discourses that see audience-generated content as having documentational value (Chatzichristodoulou, 2014; Bay-Cheng, 2012; Giannachi, 2016). It also demonstrates that the longevity of audience-generated content is precarious especially for performance works with purpose-built technologies. In this vein, the attention of this chapter is directed to the parameters that guide or influence practitioners and by extension the institutions' approaches to audience-generated content.

6.2. Technical complexities of audience-generated content

As described in chapter 4 when reflecting on the live moment of the three cases studies, audience-generated content can take many forms. With regard to the case studies, audience-generated content is materialised as responses to multiple-choice questions that, during the live performance, activated a dramaturgical action (*Karen*, 2015). It is also location and orientation data, which enabled a haptic device to guide participants navigate a space (*Flatland*, 2015). Finally, audience-generated content is social media posts produced as a parallel reaction to a livestreaming (*Speak Bitterness*, 2014). With the end of the live performance the initial rationale behind generating an audience response ceases to exist. While audience-generated content might continue to accumulate in Forced Entertainment's social media¹⁰⁷ – this usually happens at a slower rate than during the live performance – for the rest of the works their completion also terminates any production of audience-generated content. For this thesis, the end of the live performance indicates a change in the essence of that which already exists; it transforms all audience-generated content from active components of the live performance into storable data files. In archival science when a record realises its function it also loses its primary value (page 30). When this happens, records enter a retention period until decisions about its secondary value are made.

The conducted interviews with the practitioners revealed that the data files containing the audience-generated content of the three cases studies present a set of technical challenges with regards to their archiving. The quantity of data is an important initial issue that affects both their storage and analysis. Because digital technologies track every single user, audience-generated content equals or even surpasses the entire number of audience members. The mediatisation of the audience's performance also frequently recaptures some of the audience members' personal information as, for example, their geolocation and contact information. This raises clear issues relating to participants' privacy and the question of whether and to what extent these files should

¹⁰⁷ The accumulation of audience-generated content can continue until the perishing of the platform, considering that the hashtag remains unaffected by the deletion of individual accounts. In this sense, it creates an ever-expanding cloud of information that can migrate between various online platforms. In this sense the create what Giannachi has referred to as archives 4.0. (p. 36). Although I align with Sarah Bay-Cheng (2012) and consider all of these tweets to be useful to the performance archive, I concentrate my attention and examination – like theatres do with regard to their productions - only on the tweets that were produce during and shortly-after the live performance.

be accessed and by whom during the aftermath of a performance work. It is also important to raise questions of accuracy here and to note that the types of information that audience-generated content contains as well as their raw format are contingent on the digital technologies that were used in order to facilitate their production. Whether examined individually or as an aggregate of data files, this content can only fragmentarily attest to the live performance. These challenges are presented and discussed in the following sections.

Finally, it is useful to note that when this research project examined the three case studies each of them was at a different stage of its lifespan. The R&D installation of *Flatland* (2015) was a five-day event held between March 2 and 7, 2015. *Karen* (2015), on the other hand, which was first released in March 2015, was and still is at the time of writing, a downloadable application from the android applications' store and from iStore. Finally, while *Speak Bitterness* was first presented in 1994, it was the live-streaming of performance pieces in October 2014 and February 2016 that invited remote audiences to engage in a parallel dialogue on Twitter. Access to each case study's data files and documentation varied from unrestricted (tweets) to partial (*Karen*, 2015) and to none (*Flatland*, 2015). As will be further discussed, these different levels of access are ultimately symptomatic of the challenges that each group of practitioners has to confront.

6.2.i. Information overload

Chapter 4 has shown that the three case studies invited their audiences to engage with the live performance by reacting to digital cues or creating online posts. In *Karen* and *Flatland* (2015) all participants' involvement produced data. These consisted respectively of responses to a multiple-choice questionnaire and geolocation data. In *Speak Bitterness* (2014), a great number of remote audience members tweeted about their mediated experience; their tweets reached an even greater number of social media users that were not watching the livestreaming.¹⁰⁸ Despite the different participation numbers, all three performance companies met with a plethora of audience-generated content.

¹⁰⁸ As explained in chapter 4.1 the audience's online engagement was the result of Forced Entertainment's marketing strategy, which invited remote viewers to contribute to a parallel online discussion about the live streaming.

With 3,838 remote viewers from 51 countries, a total of 5.1 million tweets were generated during the live streaming of *Speak Bitterness* (2015); a total that reached 320,341 additional accounts. What can be observed from the online hashtag is that rather than providing a linear presentation of what was communicated among the remote viewers, the tweets display a network of auxiliary information -this proves problematic to follow in the hard copy. Many tweets have been retweeted, liked, or have acquired additional comments. A small number of them also contains images and videos. Unravelling the storyline of a single tweet, thus, requires an exploration of how the tweet relates to a particular moment during the video, while also considering the constellation of links created with other users and potentially platforms when twitter accounts are synced with other social media.

#fespeaklive presents an overabundance of information because of the large number of tweets generated during the live performance and the complexity of information the tweets contain. As such, managing and analysing the tweets in ways that would be meaningful for the documentation of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) would require task-specific software, personnel, and time. Forced Entertainment is a company that places ‘performance in the centre of [its] process’. It uses its resources to develop and disseminate its work rather than to resolve such documentation challenges. This approach is evident in the company’s past decision to entrust the archiving of its audio-visual recordings to the British Library.

In contrast to *Speak Bitterness* (2014) whose audience-generated content was the result of a fruitful coincidence rather than a direct dramaturgical element, many of Blast Theory’s works depend on audience-generated content. The company has even used audio-visual audience-generated content for experimenting with modes of documenting and archiving live performance.¹⁰⁹ Such experiments however were possible because, as Nick Tandavanitj noted, ‘the capacity of their shows is quite limited’ with ‘only a hundred [...] people having the chance to experience it’. With participation numbers remaining low, the amount of audience-generated content remains manageable. In this regard *Karen* (2015) presents a challenge for Blast Theory; within four months since its release audience participation exceeded the initial goal of 3,000 downloads by 7,000

¹⁰⁹ As, for example, in the subordinate projects of *Riders Spoke’s* (2007) *CloudPad* (2011) and *Riders Have Spoken* (2010).

users. Three weeks after *Karen's* (2015) release more than 3,500 people had downloaded and completed the application,¹¹⁰ of which 1,295 had purchased the personalised report (Adams, 2015). Blast Theory has handled the accumulation of data by expanding the capacity of the dataset from 200 to 17,000 and, finally, to 18,000 players' accounts (Tandavanitj, February 28, 2017, interview notes). These actions demonstrate that digital technologies, including social media, require a constant update and maintenance as their users multiply.

Karen's (2015) software, nevertheless, has an embedded selection process that allows the deletion of older players' accounts. Tandavanitj noted in this regard that the decision to implement this selection process was 'more of a pragmatic thing... of being able to update the aggregated dataset' (Ibid.). Although the live management of audience-generated content differs from its archiving, it shows the importance that the processing capacity has when dealing with such content. Erased accounts and their associated data, are temporarily stored in the dataset's backups, as stated in the 2016 'User Access Data' privacy policy section of *Karen* (2015)¹¹¹. After twenty-four months of inactivity, a user's personal identification information is also erased.¹¹² What remains is non-identification information which includes answers to questions, the times at which the application was accessed, behavioural and technical feedback, and geo-locational data if a user had given their permission for their tracking; these data continues to inform future players' reports.

Considering the maintenance and the management requirements of the dataset and its backups, it is no surprise that Tandavanitj argues that 'data collection requires more programming and coding [...] than paperwork in order to ensure things' (Ibid.). He highlights that both technical and human resources are key in these procedures. Consequently, the small size of the company and the development of new projects hinders the archiving of *Karen's* (2015) data. This shortage of resources is partly resolved through Blast Theory's collaboration with the Mixed Reality Lab at the University of Nottingham.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ These numbers refer to downloads from the iOS Store.

¹¹¹ Still effective on 19th November 2018.

¹¹² Personal identification information is generated 'when users register in the App, respond to [the] survey, fill out a form, and in connection with other activities, services, features or resources' that Blast Theory make available in their App Store as well as their registered name and email. I will analyse privacy policies in relation to the case studies documentation in chapter 6.2.iii.

¹¹³ I will analyse the organisational challenge that collaborative relationships entail in chapter 6.3.i.

What *Karen* (2015) and *Speak Bitterness* (2015) exemplify is that practitioners are confronted with an overload of information due to the number of sources, their size, the volume of content, as well as the complexity of information. The term information overload was popularised by Alvin Toffler in *Future Shock* (1970). It denotes situations in which the plethora and complexity of information exceeds the cognitive (Gross, 1964) and technological processing capacity of decision-makers (Simon, 1971, p. 40-41). Optimal decision making therefore requires the availability of specialised resources, including the cognitive resources of decision makers and equipment (Roetzel, 2018. P. 6).

6.2.ii. Format and types of information

As live performance is most often an ephemeral act, practitioners' recording methods focus on capturing the live event in a way that strives to create an accurate representation. Most established approaches to live performance documentation consist of either photographic or video documents, and less frequently of oral and textual descriptions of the live performance. To a large extent, collections and exhibitions of live performance documentation feature documents with visual content. They display videos, photographs, and text-based notes. Museums might also exhibit tangible remnants used in the live work like props and costumes (chapter 3.3.). Such items demonstrate that the live event took place, they represent the presence and contribution of the artist – either in the form of their vision or of their corporeal presence – and, finally, they provide evidence of what the live audience witnessed. Despite their distinct dramaturgical practices, Forced Entertainment, Blast Theory, and Extant as well as the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the National Theatre, which record live performance and collect, archive, and exhibit performance documents, all abide by these established documentation practices.

The most pertinent example of these visually-oriented documentation strategies is that of Forced Entertainment, which videos everything it does on stage and in the rehearsal room. Although it believes that videos are different to the live performance, Forced Entertainment considers filming to be the most accurate capturing method. The understanding that what needs to be documented is the live action presented on the stage is integral to the company's approach to other types of documentation. Forced Entertainment, therefore, corroborate the understanding that performance

documentation should provide visual proofs of what the live staged performance looked like. However, the opening of the live performance of their durational works to online audiences and to their live parallel-to-the-work discussions transforms their works from theatrical productions to layered and participatory experiences.

Following this observation, I argue that constructing such live performance's documentation only of visual representations is no longer a sufficient method.

Tim Etchells stressed that audience tweets are a 'vast cloud of absolutely intangible materials [...] fragments and maybe constellations of material none of which is the thing' (June 23, 2017, interview notes). It is widely accepted that no form of documentation can replace the live performance. However, as Auslander argues documentation is an integral component of theatre and performance, if they are to remain (2008, p. 31). Therefore, the digital traces that some works de facto generate could be considered as artefacts for preservation in the same vein that tangible traces such as costumes and sets are.

As Extant's artistic director Maria Oshodi highlighted, the company records its live performances only when the project's budget permits it. When financially possible, it 'collaborate[s] with a film maker for creating a video' (Oshodi, 2017, interview notes). It then publicises edited highlights of the recordings on its website alongside a written description. Yet, Extant always photographs its live performances. Because its mission is to enable visually impaired people to make and experience live theatre and performance, Extant provides a compelling example of how documentation of the live event has been established as primarily being based around visual evidence. Following this observation, I argue that digital traces deriving from a live performance, such as *Flatland's* (2015) audience-generated content, can provide other ways, perhaps haptic or auditory, of experiencing the documentation of a work.

Audio-visual documentation methods are ultimately rooted in theatre practices which present the same content for all audience members on a single stage. Traditionally, staged performance works separate viewers from professional performers and restrict any interaction between them. In such context, technologies of reproduction are indeed the most viable method of capturing a still or moving image of the performance moment. That both Extant and Forced Entertainment's making practices are rooted in this theatre practice – despite their experimentation with new media technologies –

explains their familiarity with photographic and video documentation. The audience-generated content of *Flatland* (2015) and *Speak Bitterness* (2015) therefore posed a fundamental challenge for the two companies both in terms of its live use as well as its archiving.

I contend that part of this challenge was due to a lack of comprehension of the nature of the data. Discussing the audience-generated data of *Flatland* (2015), Maria Oshodi acknowledged: ‘There are all sorts of things that I don’t understand. There are lots, I don’t know what they are’ (Ibid.). Oshodi conceded that anything related to digital technology is outside her field of knowledge; compared to words – and by extension images -, which she understands yet cannot see, data are incomprehensible. Furthermore, when discussing the processes of data collection and ways of analysing them, Oshodi pointed to the technical reports and articles published by the computational partners¹¹⁴ rather than explain them herself. It is evident that despite Oshodi’s leading role in the conception, dramaturgy, and delivery of the live performance of *Flatland* (2015) she is only familiar with traditional types of documentation (i.e. written reports and audio-visual documents).

Videos, photographs, and text can present a straightforward representation of how a live event unfolded, but in the case of *Flatland* (2015) the data are numerical and technical; they only acquire meaning when considered in relation to other components of the project. Adam Spiers explained that the devices worn by participants recorded the coordinates (location and orientation) of every position they took within the installation (February 6, 2019). Using these data, a software sent cues to the haptic device, the Animotus, which guided the participants through the dark space. ‘The actual data files are just pages of numbers’, Spiers noted (Ibid.), providing some context to Oshodi’s incomprehension.

At the end of the project, Spiers created an additional software that interpreted the raw data in a meaningful way for his own research. Part of the challenge involved accounting for the way the haptic device guided participants within the pitch-dark environment of the installation. This led the times the device switched on and off as participants reached one of the four points in addition to how successfully and rapidly it

¹¹⁴ Adam Spiers, Sarah Wiseman, and Janet van der Linden, the scientists involved in *Flatland*, have all published academic papers that analyse the data from *Flatland*’s audience participation.

responded to the cues from the radio tags and the magnetometer (Figure 6.2.). Examining the function of the device necessitated the reconstruction of participants' journey within *Flatland* (2015) by using their location and orientation data. Each player's data aggregate has been programmed in a way that it demonstrates in a map the route that the player took within the installation (Figure 6.3.). This map was achieved by overlaying the data onto an architectural plan of the installation space.

The extent of the technical challenges involved in the interpretation of the data that were collected from *Flatland* (2015) and *Speak Bitterness* (2015) shows how important it is for artists to have knowledge of the exact nature of audience-generated content and relevant technical support. Extant and Forced Entertainment, and other practitioners that have recently started to employ new media technologies as part of their practice are in need of specialists that can manage and interpret audience-generated content that is produced and captured during and as part of the live performance through audience's use of a digital technology.

Contrary to Extant and Forced Entertainment, Blast Theory is an example of a company that has repeatedly created performance-based works that are immersive and participatory using digital technologies. Because most of these pieces by Blast Theory do not have a single stage and might not consist of a specific event, the group focuses on documenting its creative process and technical components.¹¹⁵ Regarding the live performance (see chapter 5.2.i.) Blast Theory fabricates videos of what participants' live experience might look like. They have however explored ways of revising and organising audience-generated content into comprehensible archives. Despite having collected different types of audience-generated content from their multifaceted works such as SMS texts, these experiments concern only video recordings. This focused experimentation shows that Blast Theory are more interested to preserve files that provide visual evidence of the live experience. Tandavanitj interestingly described these files as 'default media' (February 28, 2017, interview notes). This phrasing indicates how dominant the habitual use of photography and video are in documenting performance strategies. Indeed, default media are easily accessible and cost-effective. Not only their use, but also the interpretation of their products requires little effort because the information that photographs and videos present are effortlessly discerned

¹¹⁵ An exception is the project *Kidnap*, which, nevertheless, was a single event transmitted to remote audiences who could not interfere with the action. For more information visit <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/kidnap/>.

by everyone who see them irrespective of their knowledge of and expertise in theatre and performance. To put it otherwise, audio-visual documents directly communicate their subject matter to their audiences without the need for their content to be deciphered further. As a way of keeping these considerations into account, this thesis will adopt from this point forward the term default media in order to refer to media of reproduction and their products.

Despite their long engagement with digital technologies, the data generated by *Karen* present a similar challenge for Blast Theory as the tweets and haptic data did for Forced Entertainment and Extant. Tandavanitj explained that *Karen*'s audience-generated content has meaning only within the time limits of the experience of the piece and as long as 'the technology is still available' (Ibid.). When transferred into data files and examined outside of the *Karen* (2015) interface, the audience-generated content loses its meaning. Because of the nature of *Karen* (2015), which requires that the answers of its players have to be statistically analysed, Blast Theory has created a reference document which sits alongside the dataset and accounts for every single entry. As Tandavanitj noted, this plan 'explains each of the data items that's recorded, the context to which it's asked, what are the options from which players can choose their answer, and how they were coded' (Ibid.).

Karen's audience-generated content is stored in json files¹¹⁶ – this is separate from any other documents such as the application's videos. Each file contains one player's data which are split into four sections. 'Scales' includes the question and the value of the answer (Figure 6.4.). 'Sessions' show numerical values of the times at which each session started and ended (Figure 6.5.), while 'geo' shows the latitude and longitude of the player at a particular date and time (Figure 6.6.). Lastly, 'aggregate questions' groups together data on how many players answered each question and the percentage of answers. Tandavanitj emphasised that 'even though you can still open the file and read the document you can find blurring holes in understanding what [...] was recorded or how it was recorded' (Ibid.). Data files are text-based and thus human readable. However, the information they carry are meaningless outside the application of *Karen*, without re-interpreting them into reports, or without juxtaposing it with additional references e.g. the questions asked.

¹¹⁶ A JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) file is primarily used for transmitting data between a web application and a server. JSON files are lightweight, text-based, human-readable, and can be edited using a text editor.

To sum up, the discussions with the practitioners of the three case studies show that they audience-generated content of their works challenge the idea and practice – this is analysed in chapters 3 and 5 – that live performance documentation should provide straightforward image-based or textual evidence. Indeed, participatory, interactive, and immersive performance practices that rely on the mediatisation of the audience experience are far more complex than what can be accounted for through solely visual and text-based means. The digital traces that these practices produce are composed of every participant’s audience-generated content, which is itself determined by the technology used for its production. When this content is stored in a non-pictorial format it can challenge current established documentation practices. This means that in order to extract information from audience-generated content further analysis might be needed; a useful example to this is Adam Spier’s reconfiguration of *Flatland*’s data into maps.

6.2.iii. Issues with data containing personal information

In addition to the issues raised by the overabundance and format of audience-generated content, archiving also poses a number of privacy concerns about how audiences’ personal information should be accessed and used. According to the recent Data Protection Act 2018 or European General Data Protection Regulation¹¹⁷ personal information is ‘any information relating to an individual, whether it relates to his or her private, professional or public life. This incorporates information such as a name, a home address, a photo, an email address, bank details, posts on social networking websites, medical information, or a computer’s IP address’.¹¹⁸ Using digital technologies – whether a publicly available social medium or a purpose-built technology – the three case studies’ practitioners accumulated data that may have contained some of the information covered under the European GDPR. Following the passing of such regulations, it became imperative that the processing and storage of audience-generated content should adhere to the necessary legal requirements. It has to

¹¹⁷ In the USA personally identifiable information or sensitive personal information is defined as information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify, contact, or locate a single person, or to identify an individual in context. According to Schwartz and Solove, privacy law in the US emphasises ‘redressing consumer harm and balancing privacy with efficient commercial transactions’ (Schwartz and Solove, 2014).

¹¹⁸ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 27, 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (Text with EEA relevance) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>) Article 4 of the Regulation.

be noted that these do not restrict the mining and exploitation of data, but they oblige transparency over their use as well as the deletion of a user's data upon their request. As will be discussed, such limitations have an impact on what data can be stored and, consequently, what data the archive of each work can contain. The selection of data that is kept determines the knowledge that can be further produced, as I have discussed in pages 24-25 in relation to Foucault's analysis of the archive (1989 [1969]).

Speak Bitterness (2014) presents a seemingly uncomplicated case since the #*fespeaklive* tweets are subject to the privacy policies that Twitter sets for its content. According to the social medium's regulations the entire platform can be viewed by anyone with an Internet connection – this is in contrast with other social media such as Facebook where users have absolute control over who sees their content, although Facebook collects everything. What this meant is that any personal, identifiable or not, information that is disclosed in tweets as well as their authors' profiles can be mined and archived by anyone. The same openness that allows Twitter's content to be public also makes it precarious. Composers of tweets are able to hide and delete both their tweets and their profile, while Twitter has the ultimate control over which information is public.¹¹⁹ That the platform assigns control over all of its contained tweets to itself and its users means that the longevity of audience-generated content relating to an artwork is also governed by the same principles. Despite all this, each social medium sets its own privacy policies, which might put restrictions over the visibility of their content. Privacy policies influence the degree and the ways of mining and archiving of audience-generated content.

Flatland (2015) and *Karen* (2015) present two different cases because their practitioners developed the digital technologies that they embedded in each work. The practitioners were, thus, able to design project-related privacy agreements. In both projects, the audience-generated content includes types of audience members' personal information. It has to be noted that in each work, this information was collected for

¹¹⁹ For example, between 2006 and 2017 Twitter provided 'all [of its] public tweets on an ongoing basis' to the US Library of Congress for archiving them (Library of Congress, 2017, p. 1). This action did not require the consent of users. The archiving of Twitter was terminated in December 2017 on the basis that a) the nature of tweets have changed in volume, content, and size shifting the initial agreement between the library and Twitter b) the initial aim of this agreement to archive the emergence of Twitter has been achieved after archiving the first twelve years of the platform and c) the fact that since social media are established the Library can bring 'its collecting practice more in line with its collection policies' (Library of Congress, 2017, p. 2). These arguments resemble the challenges that practitioners face with archiving audience-generated content.

different purposes and through different processes. In the case of *Flatland* (2015), this was the result of targeting and inviting a particular audience to the live performance, thus, at the R&D stage the collection of audience-generated content was unrelated to the function of the haptic device. Because the project involved testing how successful the haptic device was in guiding people, the project team invited participants with different levels of visual impairment as well as performance and technology professionals. This allowed the researchers to observe how each group experienced the device and to give specialised feedback, but it also resulted in cataloguing each participant based on some personal information, including their name and accessibility needs. *Karen* (2015), finally, collected personal information – e.g. geolocation, timestamp, email – so as to monitor each player’s engagement and to ensure that each player’s report would be personalised. Each activation of *Karen* (2015) generated only one report. In this case the collection of personal information was integrated to the work’s intention.

Both groups of practitioners communicated to their audiences beforehand how they intended to manage the audience-generated content and the personal information they collected. Blast Theory did so through a Privacy Policy agreement integrated in the application while Extant through consent forms. The terms of these policies affect the archiving of audience-generated content. They, moreover, demonstrate practitioners’ intentions and rationale behind their documentation and what is ultimately documented in performance that solicit their audiences’ performance, engagement, interaction.

According to Tandavanitj, Blast Theory assessed its approach to *Karen*’s (2015) data management as soon as they started developing it; they defined what its ‘principles were in terms of the data, ways of storing it, with whom it could be shared, what is going to happen with it, and who owns it’ (February 28, 2017, interview notes). They then embedded an agreement which outlined these decisions in the application and which participants had to sign before they were able to activate the piece (Figure 6.7.). The agreement began by detailing the types of information that the group considered to be personal and specified those that did not breach any privacy concerns by using the US term ‘personally identifiable information’.¹²⁰ This section explained that within the context of the game, personally identifiable information was taken to include any data

¹²⁰ Personal identification information includes that which is provided ‘when users register in the App, respond to [the] survey, fill out a form’, and data generated ‘in connection with other activities, services, features or resources’ that Blast Theory make available in its App Store, including players’ registered name and email address. I will analyse privacy policies in relation to the case studies documentation in chapter 6.2.iii.

generated ‘when users register in the App, respond to [the] survey, fill out a form, and in connection with other activities, services, features or resources’ (Blast Theory, 2016). Geolocation data was also included in this category, provided that user-players had enabled location tracking services on their device. Answers provided to *Karen’s* (2015) questionnaire, on the other hand, were considered as non-identifiable information since they consisted of responses to multiple-choice questions. In order to ensure that personally identifiable information was kept secure Blast Theory had allocated a server, as explained in chapter 6.1.i, which was able to differentiate between the two sets of data and handle each one accordingly.

It was not in the group’s interest to exploit any personal information for purposes other than research, as Tandavanitj highlighted when he affirmed that they ‘don’t share personal data’ with unauthorised people (February 28, 2017, interview notes). In fact, he added, ‘most people in Blast Theory can’t actually look at any personal information of the players as it is locked away’ (Ibid.). Because practitioners were obliged to follow the GDPR, players were able to access their own data and to influence their storage. *Karen’s* (2015) user-players could access their own identifiable and non-identifiable personal information if they lodged a request with Blast Theory within twenty-four months since they had last activated the game. Each user-player was ‘completely free to see everything that we record in the course of the game and [...] request for it to be deleted’ (February 28, 2017, interview notes) Tandavanitj stated. This option to erase one’s data gave user-players a level of control over the content of *Karen’s* (2015) database -the information that structured all personalised reports. Deleting however a user-player’s data alters the aggregate of data that informed all subsequent individual reports. Ultimately, Blast Theory *delete* all personal identification information after twenty-four months of all user-players’ inactivity (Blast Theory, 2016).

That the artists conceal and eventually discard personal information shows on the one hand their awareness with privacy laws and on the other that the identity of *Karen’s* (2015) participants is of peripheral importance to the archived documentation. Even though the audience’s performance is necessary for activating *Karen* (2015) and for issuing its reports, its archive excludes the people that were actually involved.

Flatland (2015) offers yet another example of audience performance, content production, and privacy policies. Its audience-generated content included participants’

coordinates, which were recorded as location and orientation data. In this case, the digital technology did not register participants' identifiable information. Nevertheless, the broader collection of documents included participants' contact details, accessibility needs, and feedback since attending the live work was possible only by invitation. Data from each participant's route within *Flatland* (2015) were linked to particular individuals and all the associated information about their levels of visual impairment or any other disability. Indeed, the official report contains information on participants' age, gender, and familiarity with darkness (Figure 6.8). As the report notes: 'In total 14 audience members were visually impaired, three people cited additional disabilities and one wheelchair user attended: a total of 17% audience with disabilities' (van der Linden et al., 2015, p. 54).

With regards to ethical considerations, Maria Oshodi noted that it was the academic partners that ensured that data collection abided by the relevant ethical regulations:

Did we ever discuss this between us as a team how we would manage any kind of ethical considerations for the evaluation? No. I don't think so. I think they went through the usual kind of academic testing protocol which was to have the consent forms and that was it. (Oshodi, March 21, 2017, interview notes)

Oshodi again made apparent Extant's unfamiliarity with data processes emphasising on the perspective of privacy policies.¹²¹ Participants, Oshodi continued, 'signed an agreement when they came to participate. That's what the academics made sure that we had in place because we were buying their time and their bodies. We were buying everything with their signature' (Ibid.). Oshodi presented herself to be clearly aware of the existence of and the necessity for participation agreements, but she dismissed them as academic bureaucracy. The fact that she described the project as buying its participants' time and bodies, treating these as purchasable products, suggests a rather commercial understanding of the relationship between the audience's engagement and audience-generated content; an approach which is in contrast with that of Blast Theory. This understanding, I suggest, repeats similar models of emerging technologies, including social media and mobile-phone applications that mine their users' data in

¹²¹ In the previous chapter I discussed that Extant is unfamiliar with the format and content of data.

exchange for their free services. Such an alignment can be critical when considering the ethical or educational impact that an artwork might envision to achieve.

Flatland's (2015) robotics engineer, Adam Spiers, was more attuned to the ethical sharing of data based on the sensitivity of the information requested by participants – although he was not involved in the devising of the consent forms. During his interview Spiers clarified that audience-generated content and personal identification information were logged into two different spreadsheets. This allowed data to be ‘de-identified.’ (February 6, 2019, interview notes). It, consequently, afforded the possibility of being ‘able to release the data’ to potential researchers (Ibid.). Comparing Spiers’s comment to Oshodi’s reveals a difference between scientists and practitioners’ rationale and awareness regarding privacy of information and data access. For scientists, audience-generated content is primary research data, it is useful for analysing a project and potentially for enabling new ones. Having been trained to protect their participants’ privacy they anticipate any access regulation to data. For practitioners like Oshodi, who are familiar primarily with copyright rather than privacy policies, data can be understood as a by-product of their work. Such an understanding might lead to neglecting the sensitivity of the information practitioners’ might collect and handle and, consequently, assign control over their work’s documents to their scientific partners.

To a certain extent, *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland's* (2015) privacy policies can be compared to the handling of documents containing personal information by museums. At the V&A, for instance, Ramona Riedzewski, the archivist and conservation manager of the Theatre and Performance Collection, clarified that information such as people’s phone numbers or descriptions of their character that might be included in rehearsal books or notes is inaccessible to the public. She explained:

When you look at some of our catalogues [...] it might say we have three folders and then it might indicate that a particular folder is closed. That basically means that that’s where we have all the confidential data. We usually put a timespan of 80 years assuming a life span is hundred years roughly. (Riedzewski, November 23, 2017, interview notes)

Because institutions are bound by the GDPR, all personal information is inaccessible. This, however, does not mean that it is not preserved; it means that it becomes public

only after eighty years since the creation of the document. Personal information relevant to the entire cast of theatre and performance workss is considered important and it is long-term preserved. This is at odds with both companies i.e. Blast Theory and Extant, which store participants' personal identification information only temporarily. Although I am not suggesting that user-players' personally identifiable information should be necessarily stored, it is useful to highlight these different approaches to preserving different data, and their impact to the performance archive. User-players in *Karen* (2015) and participants in *Flatland* (2015) partook in the way each live performance evolved, they were active contributors to the shaping of their own experience and, in *Karen's* (2015) case, of all subsequent user-players' experiences (chapter 4.2). Deleting information linked to audiences, I suggest, demonstrates an imbalance between how professional performers and how amateur participants are perceived to contribute to a performance piece. Practitioners might use participatory, immersive, and interactive practices that build upon audience-generated content without considering these as information worth of archiving.

Furthermore, although privacy policies apply to the audience-generated content of the case studies they do not necessarily apply to audio-visual documentation which is a common documentation practice. I have discussed in page 158 that participants' trajectory within *Flatland* (2015) was recorded and photographed with infrared cameras. Contrary to audience-generated content these are stored by Extant as part of the documentation of the live performance. *Speak Bitterness's* (2014) videos also contain some the audience's movements. Finally, although it might be impossible to film *Karen's* user-players and the personally identifiable information might be prohibited to archive, Blast Theory has archived the audience-generated recordings of its project *Riders Spoke* (2007). The company not only considered those as important documentation of the piece but, in 2011, it displayed them at an exhibition at the British Library.¹²² This, I suggest, shows what material is ultimately understood as documenting a live performance.

To conclude, when audience-generated content is produced as part of the live performance and its experience, its management is modulated by privacy policies. This

¹²² I am referring here to Blast Theory's project *Riders Have Spoken* which was 'a playful graphic and audio archive of recordings from *Rider Spoke* [...] developed by Blast Theory with the support of Horizon Digital Economy Research' (Blast Theory, 2011). For more information visit: <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/news-item/riders-have-spoken-at-the-british-library/>.

shows that it is necessary for practitioners to know about and abide by relevant policies. It is helpful for them to have data management skills and it is imperative that they understand and follow current data protection regulations. Such regulations, however, affect how audiences are presented within archived documentation by concealing or deleting their information and, in so doing, they impact on the documents that comprise the performance archive. In this sense, regulations might run counter to the canonical practices of protecting sensitive information in institutional archives, according to which personal details and descriptions are released to the public after eighty years. They might also run counter to established documentation practices that use default media in order to record participants faces and other personal information that might be observable, such as their accessibility needs.

6.3. Organisational challenges

Thus far, this chapter has reflected on the technical obstacles that audience-generated content raises for practitioners. The quantity of files and information, the various file formats that each new technology generates – which might record a fragment of the live performance in a technical, numerical, or textual way – and the privacy policies that each company must create or abide by require solutions. If they aspire to include audience-generated content in their archives, practitioners must invest time in experimentation, find specialised resources, and acquire technical skills themselves if employing technologists is impossible. As Tandavanitj noted:

One of the things we've learnt with *Karen* is that data collection requires more programming and coding rather than paperwork in order to ensure things... you have to do things very cautiously. (February 28, 2017, interview notes)

There is an interplay, therefore, between technical obstacles and the idiosyncratic organisational structures of each performance company. Such structures determine how practitioners collaborate and communicate with their partners, how they share information between them, and the level of trust between the artistic, technical, and conceptual teams, all of which affect how issues are resolved and which performance documents remain. Equally important are a company's financial resources and the ways these are allocated between the different aspects of each project. As a practitioner's first

priority is usually the development of new work, companies' budgets often fail to cover experimentations with record management and archiving. Ultimately, as this chapter shows, despite clear technical and organisational obstacles, what might drive the neglect of audience-generated content is that practitioners are overwhelmed by the amount of resources, time, and effort needed to experiment with new forms of documentation.

6.3.i. The impact of collaborative relations

According to performance scholar Judy Mitoma (2004), artistic collaboration describes the co-creation of a work through art practices. This involves groups of artists working together for the common purpose of producing an artwork, a performance work, an exhibition, or research. A non-hierarchical contribution is frequently implicit in art collaboration, meaning that all partners share common goals and understandings but acknowledge their distinct knowledge, media, and perspectives (Asker in Barbour et al, 2016; Wasser and Bresler, 1996). Central to art collaborations is the exchange of information, the sharing and fusion of unique artistic practices, and the sharing of research processes (Burnaford et al., 2001; Mitoma, 2004; Wasser and Bresler, 1996). Thus, trust and communication are core qualities in leading a successful and fair partnership. Collaborations with technologists or academics are based on the common consensus of sharing resources such as finances, people, and knowledge in order to develop a project. The essence of such partnerships is that all parties mutually benefit from the realisation of their goal and from working with each other by supplementing each other's expertise (Saltiel, 1998).

With the continuous evolution of technology, the development of artworks and projects that employ new media technologies requires that practitioners acquire a level of technological expertise. Performance companies whose overall practice intersects art with digital technology frequently employ programmers and digital media producers as permanent members of their team. More commonly, practitioners resort to independent researchers, academics, or institutions in order to develop and utilise purpose-built software and hardware. Collaborations with academic research centres, therefore, serve a dual purpose: access to technological knowledge and access to funding. How artists and their partners define their collaborative relationship impacts not just on the development of a project, but also, as I will show, on its afterlife – its documents' copyrights, distribution, management, archiving, and storage.

Frequently, successful collaborations lead to long-lasting partnerships. The partnership between Blast Theory and the Mixed Reality Laboratory (MRL) at the University of Nottingham is one such example. Over the past twenty years it has produced twelve works that employ digital technologies. Together, artists and scientists have developed and used bespoke software as dramaturgical tools for live performance-based works. In a recent interview celebrating their alliance, Blast Theory acknowledged that ‘their development as a group of artists working with technology has been made possible by’ this collaboration (Blast Theory, 2018). Likewise, Steve Benford, the director of the MRL, stressed the reciprocal benefits of joining forces with Blast Theory, saying that ‘without the collaboration with Blast Theory we wouldn’t have been able to work practically in an artistic performative context’ (Ibid).

The practical advantages of collaborating with the MRL, include giving Blast Theory access to funding opportunities, technological equipment and new media technologies, to specialised technological knowledge and knowledge from other disciplines. As Matt Adams affirmed in his latest interview with Steve Benford:

You’ve helped us learn a tremendous amount about research as a process. The resources that the University of Nottingham has and the funding relationships we’ve been able to forge are a critical part of it too. The relationship has enabled us to work at a level we would never have been able to work at, and it’s given us access to technology we never would have had access to. It’s also enabled us to explore and play with technologies [...] Virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR) and augmented reality (AR) are things we wouldn’t have had the opportunity to experiment with, or learn from, had it not been for our relationship. (Ibid.)

Tandavanitj also acknowledged the MRL collaboration as being instrumental in the group’s progression and orientation. He specifically noted the importance of each party benefitting from the partnership and the clear provisions in place to ensure this. Although Blast Theory has often been ‘the driver behind software development,’ the legal owner of any technological products has always been the MRL which grants the artists ‘a license to use it’ (Tandavanitj, February 28, 2017, interview notes). In Tandavanitj’s interview, Blast Theory is portrayed as the instigator of projects and,

therefore, the creative copyright holder. Nonetheless, the MRL is the owner of the technology. It is significant that Tandavanitj also implied that the division of these rights is based on the interests of each party. Tandavanitj explained that the MRL was ‘very keen on owning the software’ (Ibid.) and he, thus, distinguishes between Blast Theory’s creative interests and the MRL’s technological territory and potential commercial opportunities. As the website of the MRL states, and Nick Tandavanitj confirmed, the research group is ‘fully committed to transferring knowledge from the MRL to industry through collaborative projects and commercialisation activities’ (Ibid.). Ultimately, when working together Blast Theory and the MRL function as a unit with common goals trusting each other’s expertise.

By extension, the nature of this collaboration determines the future of *Karen*’s audience-generated content. Tandavanitj suggested this when he noted that partners are yet to reach a decision on a documentation strategy. ‘We haven’t really had the opportunity to sit down and consider how we could actually document what it is like for people,’ (Ibid.) he affirmed.¹²³ Of interest here is how Blast Theory and the MRL’s different areas of knowledge affect their cooperative relationship and their goals. According to Tandavanitj, because *Karen* (2015) is an ongoing project subject to further discussions and decision-making none of its data will be released to external researchers – this is an additional condition to the application’s privacy policies. The team and particularly the MRL’s intention to work with *Karen*’s data is evidenced by Michelle Coleman’s appointment as a PhD researcher. Coleman who studies ‘digital and hybrid gifting within cultural industries such as museums, galleries and performance arts’ used *Karen*’s audience-generated content in order to investigate the episodic nature of the work and the temporality of its user-players’ engagement.

Flatland (2015), like *Karen* (2015), emerged out of a collaboration between Extant, the Open University, which led the project, and the robotics postdoctoral researcher Adam Spiers, who was situated at MIT at the time. As already noted, *Flatland* (2015) was a continuation of the project *The Question* (2010) which was also produced by Extant in collaboration with Adam Spiers. Spiers traced his first meeting with Maria Oshodi back to when he was undertaking his postgraduate and doctoral degrees between 2005 and 2007 (February 6, 2019, interview notes). During the development of *Flatland*

¹²³ Indeterminacy indicates that the team does not consider audience audience-generated content as material with archival value, as will be discussed in chapter 6.4.

(2015) , Oshodi and Spiers had been working together for almost ten years. Although both Extant and Blast Theory's collaborative relationships are long-term, they differ to that of Blast Theory and the MRL in that Spiers was an individual partner bringing no additional funding while the MRL is a well-funded research centre. This means that Spiers's resources were limited to his access to laboratories by virtue of his research position. Reflecting on his geographical remoteness from the rest of the team, Spiers highlighted that working at the MIT labs gave him access to a top-quality 3D printer (Ibid.). Nevertheless, it is evident that Spiers's assets were limited when compared to the human and technical resources as well as the expertise that the MRL brings to its partnership with Blast Theory.

Oshodi noted in terms of the relationship with Spiers that his geographical distance during *Flatland*'s making caused problems in communication and, as a result, in the development and application of the haptic device (Oshodi, March 21, 2017, interview notes). Spiers also observed that the distance hindered the testing and final application of the haptic device, including the meticulous capturing of *Flatland*'s (2015) live moment (February 6, 2019, interview notes). He particularly implied that rather than receiving a detailed and exact report on which part or which procedure had failed, the feedback that Extant gave him during the testing phase of the device was often inadequate, ambiguous, and limited to statements such as 'it didn't work' (Ibid.). Spiers added that he had been expecting to receive 'videos of people testing' the device (Ibid.). This, he explained, would have provided a thorough view of how people interacted with the device and assisted him in working with the collected data. However,

either there were no videos or there would be hours of footage that [...] I didn't have the time to go through hours of footage looking for interesting things. (Ibid.)

Furthermore, in addition to the overhead video footage Spiers noted that he was expecting to receive an architectural drawing of the installation. He highlighted that although the overhead recordings were part of the agreed documentation plan, 'the person that was supposed to do the video recording was also the filmmaker; which resulted in the film taking priority for them (artistic team) over the static cameras' (Ibid.). This contradicts Oshodi's account that the cameras were malfunctioning. Additionally, Spiers mentioned that the data from *Flatland* (2015) shows that 'people

would turn off the devices, the operators would take out people's devices at different times' or 'turn the system on and off again and [...] again' (Ibid.). Both Oshodi and Spiers attributed these complications to the geographical distance of Spiers. Certainly, the fact that *Flatland's* (2015) core scientist and creator of the haptic device was leading the testing and application of the technological component of the project from afar meant that certain details could have been overlooked, especially since, as Spiers himself pointed out, 'everyone was so stressed out with what's going to happen with the performance' (Ibid.).

Without dismissing the impact that the technologist's distance had on the project, this thesis argues that the complications described above might have had deeper causes, including possibly a mistrust between the collaborative partners. Oshodi, for instance, noted that Spiers had been sceptical over whether participants had been given the right instructions in his absence. She added that when Spiers read the actor's technical script, he confirmed that everything had been appropriately explained to the audience. The fragility of this collaboration is reflected in the official Nesta report of *Flatland* (2015) which states: 'We also learnt that the distinction between creative team, technology partner and research partner creates artificial barriers which are not helpful' (van der Linden, 2015, p. 59).

One of the consequences of such disagreements was that after the termination of the project issues of archiving were never resolved. While discussing the storing of the value of the audience-generated content of *Flatland* (2015), Oshodi recalled how her academics partners had 'released their share to us as a company in order to be able to use documentation for our own purposes' (February 6, 2019, interview notes). This confirms that Extant should possess and be allowed to use audience-generated content without its partners' permission. In a second meeting, however, Oshodi purported to be ignorant of Extant's rights of using audience-generated content. She claimed that the data was under the jurisdiction and interests of the scientific partners of the project adding that 'all that information is internal, and I don't know where we stand on sharing that' (Jun 6, 2017, interview notes). Interestingly, Oshodi claimed to be puzzled over her own and her collaborators' rights over *Flatland's* (2015) data. However, to accept that Oshodi remains ignorant over her contracted rights would be doing an injustice to Extant's meticulous practices of documenting project meetings and keeping a record of

the development of the artistic aspect of the project through the accumulation of collected notes and photographs respectively.

Commenting on this, Spiers affirmed that all partners have equal rights to every document of *Flatland* (2015). In particular, he pointed out that the audience-generated content was initially logged in a laptop and is now stored in his personal cloud and Dropbox accounts. Spiers added that as far as he is aware, himself and Sarah Wiseman – a computer interaction specialist and one of *Flatland's* (2015) embedded researchers – are the only partners that have looked into *Flatland's* (2015) data. Although a personal storage solution shows an unequal access to audience-generated content this is due to each collaborator's interests, knowledge, and skills. Rather than being ignorant of her rights, therefore, Oshodi is indifferent to the existence of this audience-generated content presumably because it lies beyond her areas of expertise and her creative practice. Under this understanding, it is expected that only the scientific partners of *Flatland* (2015) have been using and, consequently, managing the project's data, as Spier mentioned.

Flatland (2015) was funded by Nesta, which provided a clear articulation of each partners' province and rights. Each partner's role, responsibilities, rights, and copyrights were outlined in contracts, which also included details of how information was to be shared. As Oshodi notes:

there were contracts. It's about sharing information between the partners, being able to go off [on] our own directions and similar points and stuff. There are legalities around it. There are permissions that need to be sorted, I guess. As a performance company we own a certain percentage of the technology in terms of IP and royalties, we own some kits, we own the idea of *Flatland* as an immersive performance. (February 6, 2017, interview notes)

Despite any legal bindings, trust between the partners was weak. I derive this observation from Oshodi and Spier's often contradictory statements as well as Extant's insistence to take notes of everything that happened during the project and record all meetings. Oshodi acknowledges the value her collaborators brought to the project, but at various instances she highlighted the intensity and difficulty that their relationship had:

There were a lot of fall outs between the different people involved in it. Particularly, in the relationship with the engineer, who was located in another country. (Ibid.)

The interviews with Oshodi and Spiers reveal levels of miscommunication between the artistic team and the scientific partner. One can appreciate that this was the result of a number of factors, including limited human resources and collaborators' geographical distance which indeed delayed an immediate action to unprecedented obstacles. Additionally, I also identified a gap in the practitioners' technological knowledge that led to a division between the artistic and technological development of *Flatland* (2015). This same gap persisted in the recording and archiving of the project.

As with *Flatland* (2015), in the case of Blast Theory's collaboration with the MRL, it is the latter that processes and manages *Karen's* (2015) audience-generated content. For practitioners, data control and protection are considered to be demanding and time-consuming tasks. Tandavanitj noted, for instance, that with *Karen* (2015), data management proved to be 'a steep learning curve' (February 28, 2017, interview notes). One of the differences between the two project teams, however, is that Blast Theory and the MRL decide and find solutions to the future of their projects' documentation together. This approach is rooted in a mutual appreciation that both partners have things to learn from one other. As Matt Adams stated in his recent interview (Blast Theory, 2018), Blast Theory has 'learn[t] a tremendous amount about research as a process' (Ibid.) through its collaboration with the MRL. Perhaps, what has led to this different attitude and approach is the different temporality of these collaborative relationships: Blast Theory has been partnered with the MRL for many years and over a number of different projects, while Extant and Adam Spiers have only worked together on two related works. This must certainly have affected the trust put in each partner's abilities and expertise, which can only be built over years of working together. Crucial to this is the realization that technological and artistic elements must be developed in parallel in a true collaborative spirit.

To conclude, this section has reflected on how relationships between collaborative partners might affect the way that audience-generated content is managed after the end of a project. Trustful partnerships can lead to shared resolutions and the preservation of

documentation, although the specific allocation of files might follow contract clauses. Moreover, mistrust in a partner's knowledge, in conjunction with a lack of familiarity with emerging technologies and funding deficit, which will be discussed shortly, engenders neglect and the possible material decay of documents.

6.3.ii. Funding and documentation

The overabundance of audience-generated content, its various types, formats, and links to live performance indicate that its archiving is project-based. However, archiving audience-generated content is not only currently unsystematic, but also not recognized as a question to consider when setting up a project. Finding solutions to the technical problems described in chapter 6.2. requires experimentation which is conditional on resources. Practitioners' scarcity of knowledge, time, and technical equipment frequently leads them to following conventional documentation strategies or neglecting unfamiliar types of documents as in the example of *Forced Entertainment* and *#fespeaklive*. In this regard artistic collaborations can result into dividing documents according to each partner's knowledge, skills, interest. Nevertheless, they can potentially help partners share resources such as funds. The teams of *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) were able to access project-specific sponsorship in order to support their goals. In this chapter I analyse how funds were allocated for developing *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) and argue that the ways individual practitioners and project teams manage their assets impacts on documentation and archiving processes.

Flatland's (2015) primary funding came from the Digital R&D Fund, supported by Nesta,¹²⁴ the AHRC,¹²⁵ and by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. During the development of the project this £125,000 grant was supplemented by Extant's own budget, Access to Work, and the Open University's 'Higher Innovation Funding' (van der Linden et al., 2015, p. 51) (Figure 6.9.). Because the primary source of funding was public organisations, the team had to generate reports at various stages of the project. The purpose of these reports was to provide evidence that the project was meeting its goals and those of its sponsors. *Flatland's* (2015) reports included details of all technological and creative progress in addition to budget management, as Oshodi explained. A final report was published online after the end of the project. Following

¹²⁴ The National Endowment for Science Technology and Art.

¹²⁵ The Arts and Humanities Research Council.

their sponsors' regulations some effort was taken to record the live experience of *Flatland* (2015) using infrared photographs and videos. Despite Nesta's involvement in the project and practitioners having discussed how *Flatland* (2015) should best be captured,¹²⁶ there is no track on how the team decided to organise the project documents. Even if archiving the project using a particular method had been agreed this was never implemented according to the discussions with Maria Oshodi and Adam Spiers. When discussing the project's budget, Oshodi maintained that they 'had to stick to what the technology was intended to do' (February 6, 2017, interview notes). Creating documentation of the piece was, it seems, beyond the immediate needs of the project and the sponsors' interest. However, according to Adam Spiers and as discussed in the previous section, the videos of *Flatland* (2015) had a creative touch – rather than showing participants route as recorded from suspended infrared cameras they follow participants within the installation. Recording in this sense served primarily practitioners' needs and the understanding that live performance is better documented using technologies of reproduction.

Despite their different sources of funding, the financial aid received for *Karen* and *Flatland* (2015) was similar; in both cases the funding covered the costs of the development of the work, but it did not incorporate any documentation costs. *Karen*'s (2015) funding came from The Space – an organisation funded by Arts Council England – and the support of 539 backers on the Kickstarter crowdfunding platform who invested a total of £17,559 in the project. *Karen* (2015) had already been under research and development for two years at the time of the Kickstarter campaign with development up to that point having been funded by Blast Theory itself and the National Theatre of Wales. Crowdsourcing funds covered the 'minimum amount of development time required to deliver a finished version' of the application, as Anne Rupert writes in Blast Theory's guide to crowdfunding (Rupert, 2014). Once more, questions of how the live performance could be documented and how the collection of documents – including audience-generated content – would sit within this body, are not reflected in the project's budget. Referring to the possibility of a systematic documentation of *Karen* (2015), Tandavanitj noted 'we haven't really had the opportunity to sit down and

¹²⁶ I discussed in the previous chapter that the collaborating team had agreed to combine audience-generated content with infrared videos taken with suspended cameras. However, due to a malfunctioning on the day of the performance the Production Manager had to video participants by following them within the installation.

consider how we could actually document what it is like for people’ (February 28, 2017, interview notes).

In the larger picture, documentation and archiving are processes that suffer even when funding is allocated to support the overall work of practitioners. Forced Entertainment, Blast Theory, and Extant are all publicly funded by the Arts Council of England. According to the latest Arts Council National Portfolio, between 2015 and 2018, Extant received £357,000, Forced Entertainment £766,181, and Blast Theory £402,472. (Figure 6.10). The funding requires that artists inform the Arts Council of the development of their work by providing relevant information:

Throughout the lifespan of your grant, we will monitor your performance against the Arts Council’s goals, as well as the Creative Case for Diversity, management and governance and financial viability. (Arts Council England, 2018, p. 3)

As a result, funded practitioners direct their financial resources towards developing the work that has been agreed upon with the council and towards engaging more audiences. To show evidence of their progress they produce reports about their ongoing work and ‘information about how many people are watching when they’re watching and how much social media activity they instigate’ (Etchells, June 23, 2017, interview notes). Embedding digital technologies as dramaturgical tools in live performances can assist the development and monitoring of audiences. Under this model, funding schemes promote paying attention to how audience-generated content can function as statistical evidence. Nevertheless, I argue that they overlook, since they do not anticipate the archiving of projects, the wider value of audience-generated content as digital traces of live performance.

As discussed in chapter 6.2.i., resolving the archiving of audience-generated content requires effort, time, and resources. For smaller companies that ‘don’t have lots of resources to keep up with things’, like Blast Theory, as Tandavanitj explained, any experimentation with new phenomena is a slow process (February 28, 2017). Limited financial assets restrict the amount of time and effort that can be dedicated to finished works. This is because practitioners have to first work towards developing projects that can maintain their income, expanding their audiences, and in order to fulfil the

requirements of their funding schemes. If these schemes do not cover the documentation and archiving of projects, resolving documentation obstacles of digitally enabled participatory, interactive, and immersive performance practices will remain of secondary importance. In principal, practitioners' overall funding should be able to cover the entire budget of a project, including its documentation and archiving. If projects are deemed worthy of public funding based on their artistic and cultural merit and social impact then certainly it must be worth documenting them for posterity. Nevertheless, as observed earlier in *Flatland's* (2015) report and as discussed with artists from Forced Entertainment and Blast Theory, documentation is left unresolved even in project-specific grants. As a result, practitioners insist using their established methods.

As a process of curating live performance documents into archives that can be preserved and accessed over a long time (Sant, 2016), archiving requires technical and human resources. Funding is therefore crucial in determining both the documentation and archiving strategies of a project – if funding is scarce then these are overlooked as practitioners will direct their attention to developing new work. This becomes even more pressing when projects include informational material that practitioners are inexperienced or unskilled in managing such as audience-generated content. In such cases practitioners must outsource the technical know-how and dedicate significant time in experimentation. Since in the examples of these three case studies the projects were publicly funded one would expect that documentation would have been a compulsory component of their grants. However, as already discussed, neither Forced Entertainment nor Blast Theory or Extant had the appropriate financial support. The concern that arises here is that funding bodies overlook the importance of providing the means to document publicly funded projects, including those that are deemed particularly original or having a strong social impact.

6.3.iii. Commercial and research opportunities

Adding to this discussion of whether funding schemes cover the costs of documenting live performances, it is also worth noting that apart from art works in their own right *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) were academic research projects. The development of new software and devices opened up the possibility of further research and of commercialising outputs. Since collaborative relationships entail that all parties benefit

from participating in a project (Saltiel, 1998) the opportunity to work with, develop further, or sell the technological components of a performance piece could guide the access to data and its archiving.

The haptic device of *Flatland* (2015) offered such an opportunity.¹²⁷ According to the Nesta report, it was hoped that *Flatland's* (2015) findings would 'enable shape-changing interfaces to be adopted as a valid form of haptic communication' (van der Linden, 2015, p. 58). Within this context, Adam Spiers disclosed that his post-doctoral employer, Yale University, anticipated that the apparatus could be used in games such as 'Pokémon Go or for Apple navigation' (February 6, 2019). Discussions with Nintendo were unsuccessful, which led Spiers to further note that any potential for commercialisation would require further development of the device. Moreover, both Maria Oshodi and Adam Spiers explained that *Flatland's* (2015) audience-generated content was the primary data for evaluating the device and for producing scientific publications.

Access is certainly not synonymous to archiving audience-generated content or part of it. The involved partners share between them all research outputs which Extant collects in their drives. These outputs have come to replace the actual audience-generated content as the artists are unfamiliar with data processes while archiving it is left unresolved. This creates a paradox. *Flatland's* (2015) research publications bring the work into new spaces and contexts and as such allow it to become an expanded artwork (Bedford, 2012) – a view that Maria Oshodi endorses. At the same time the material that enables this expansion is not considered valuable enough to be archived. Following these two contradictory observations I argue that research interests, alongside scarcity of funding and turbulent partnerships, might result in separating the audience-generated content from the rest of the documentation.

¹²⁷ *Karen's* data were also used in research and particularly for looking at 'the way people interact with the piece [Karen] and what their experiences [we]re' (Tandavanitj, February 28, 2017). In 2016 a PhD student, Michelle Coleman, was appointed to study at the MRL and have Blast Theory as her industry partners. Her project's case studies included 'the production archives and the user logs for the *Karen* app' (Coleman, 2017). *Karen's* privacy agreement restricts sharing audience-generated content outside the research partners (chapter 6.2.iii) and, therefore, inclusion into an archive that could become public through its institutionalisation; something that is not present in *Flatland's* case.

6.4. How practitioners assess the long-term value of audience-generated content

This chapter has discussed the technological and organisational factors that influence how audience-generated content is managed by artists. It has observed that information overload, the format that information have, and the privacy policies that ensure the ethical management of audiences' recorded input, all challenge or even deter practitioners from seeking solutions for archiving the audience-generated content of their works. Moreover, the quality of the collaborative relationships between a project's partners in conjunction with restricted funding and the potential for commercialising opportunities might also delay the implementation of documentation processes. Interviews conducted with practitioners have also revealed that they may be unfamiliar with the technological components of their projects and the recordings they produce. Even more so, practitioners do not consider audience-generated content as having relevant informational value for their practice.

When questioned about the potentials that *Karen's* (2015) data could have as archived material, Nick Tandavanitj highlighted that the possible experiential trajectories within the application are limited. By collating all the data together, a visualisation of the body of the experience would be possible. Tandavanitj, however, doubted that this would lead to something interesting (February 28, 2019). Showing a similar disregard for the capacities of audience-generated content, Maria Oshodi conceded her right over *Flatland's* (2015) data to the academic collaborators who, at the time of the interview, were 'looking for an original take just so that as far as journals and conferences are concerned it's going to have some application' (March 21, 2017, interview notes). Tim Etchells's perspective is also typical in this regard; he stated that he 'wouldn't really see the Twitter cloud around those works as... not in any pragmatic sense, it's not documentation for' Forced Entertainment (June 2017, interview notes).

The attitudes of these practitioners echo those of the British Library, the National Theatre, and the Victoria and Albert Museum for which audience-generated content does not seem to have substantial documentary value – substantial to the level of exploring strategies for archiving it. Stephen Cleary from the British Library acknowledged that the cultural weight of videoing a live performance is stronger than that of finding ways to meaningfully preserve audience-generated content. He added

that ‘we have to balance the resources that we’re putting towards something with its potential, let’s say, research value’ (June 20, 2017, interview notes).

Admittedly, since the development of more sophisticated technologies of reproduction, practitioners as well as institutions have become accustomed to using recording devices as a means of capturing their work. With photographs and videos representing the core evidence of a live performance, it may be expected that artists would be ambivalent about the informational competency of audience-generated content. Contrary to this dilemma, however, is the approach taken by the media scientists that were involved in *Flatland* (2015) and *Karen* (2015). Apart from having the expertise to examine and exploit audience-generated content, technologists and academics, as illustrated above, also recognise the value of these forms of information in the aftermath of the live performance. Adam Spiers, as noted before, created a software that transformed audience-generated data from *Flatland* (2015) into maps. These efforts to store and care for these data files reflects his awareness of their long-term potential. Similarly, the MRL has brought on a PhD researcher to be involved in the examination of user experience in the *Karen* project.

Scientists’ efforts are in stark contrast to the attitudes of practitioners, who routinely neglect audience-generated content on the basis that it is incompetent performance evidence. This reasoning is reflected in Etchells’s contemplation of the *#fespeaklive* tweets:

I understand that it’s interesting to think about it in relation to writing about the work, but it’s not something we really collect. I would definitely think of it more as a sort of echo. It is like another thing generated by the work.

(June 23, 2017)

Etchells, who advocates of a pragmatic approach to documentation – files need to be collected and preserved for devising purposes and for communicating the work of Forced Entertainment – maintains that audience-generated content is not considered as documentation. For the company, as this thesis has already shown (chapter 5.1.), documents consist only of items that can ‘represent the work after it’s no longer being performed, or [...] show a particular work to people who aren’t able to see it live’ (Ibid.). Despite Forced Entertainment’s intent to actively engage its audiences in its live

performances and despite its fascination with the discussions that erupted around and during the company's live performances, Etchells's phrasing here reveals that for the practitioners the live performance still exists in isolation from its audience. I.e. Certainly, this could be considered the case in a purely theatrical live performance during which the audience is held separate from the live action on stage. However, as Sarah Bay-Cheng has argued, in the online ecology that is driven by social media this is hardly the case (2012, 2016, 2017).

It is not the purpose of this thesis to disqualify the documentational value of default media. On the contrary, as Annet Dekker argues, videoing a live performance is perceived as valuable when trying to 'show the experience it [the work] evokes in the audience' (2018, p. 43). However, Dekker highlights that registering the non-linear character of works is a difficult task to accomplish using video technology. When one examined the most appropriate documentation methods for participatory, immersive, and interactive works which are activated by mediatizing and capturing their audiences' experience, visual representations are presented as insufficient or even unsuitable for providing a well-rounded set of information about the live moment. For instance, since visual representations show the biometric¹²⁸ information of participants, *Flatland's* (2015) videos can only be watched by the developing and designated research team. This is because giving access to anyone outside this group of people would breach the regulations set for protecting the participants' privacy. Even more so, videos exclude particular audience groups, and particularly the visually impaired audience that Extant tries to reach, from having access to the documentation of the work. In such instances, I argue that the use of audience-generated content might be a better means for showing the dynamics of the live moment by providing traces of participants' interactions with the haptic device and installation.

To conclude, further to the pragmatic challenges that might lead to the neglect and destruction of audience-generated content, in this chapter I have shown that practitioners find it difficult to recognise and understand the usefulness of preserving audience-generated content in the aftermath of a live performance. Etchells, however, describes audience-generated content as traces left by the moment of activation. He notes with regard to *Speak Bitterness's* (2014) body of tweets that it 'isn't the

¹²⁸ This is described as 'personal data resulting from specific technical processing relating to the physical, physiological or behavioural characteristics of a natural person, which allow or confirm the unique identification of that natural person, such as facial images or dactyloscopic data' (GDPR, 2018, 4, §14).

performance work, but it is generated by and in response to it' (June 23, 2017); it is thus an 'echo' of the work. This research aligns with this view, arguing that audience-generated content is digital traces of the live performance and its experience. Because audience-generated content holds information about the performance participants and their experience, it has the capacity to demonstrate a different aspect of the live performance. Moreover, although the need to analyse this type of material is considered an unnecessary inconvenience by practitioners, it also demonstrates the potential of audience-generated content to open new ways into the experience of performance documentation. Under these considerations, the next chapter reflects on and analyses the archival value of audience-generated content by looking into their capacities and potentials. In so doing, it proposes the recontextualization of the performance archive towards structures that can support a blending of visual representations and audience-generated content.

In *Art and the Aesthetic – An Institutional Analysis*, George Dickie asserts that, ‘there cannot be an instance of creativity without an artefact of some kind being produced’ (1974, p. 49). The product of the creative praxis is, in other words, the thing that substantiates that praxis; it gives it form by placing it within time and space, by ascribing to it meaning and purpose, and by acknowledging its creator. For live performance this artefact is its documentation. Because live performance happens temporarily, documentation ‘allow[s] performance to be known, discussed and seen [...] beyond the moment of its creation’ (Reason, 2006, p. 3); it makes possible for audiences to engage with the performance as a work across time. From this perspective, which is set after the completion of a project and its recording, documentation is the evidence that demonstrates the various aspects of the performance piece, including its live moment. As such, documentation ensures the possible reactivation of a theatre and performance piece as well as its memorialisation in academic study and art history, and the inclusion in exhibitions of performance documents. Documentation, therefore, is used for revisiting, re-enacting, and propagating the performance work over time.

Throughout this thesis I have discussed two types of documentation. The first type refers to the information produced and used during the development, staging, dissemination, and evaluation of a performance work. The function of the records produced during this stage relates to practitioners’ day-to-day practice. In this type of documentation, I have also categorised the audience-generated content that is organically produced by a digital technology during and as part of the live performance. The second type is relevant to the collection of documents that remain for posterity; this I have termed *archived documentation*. This type of documentation is formed after assessing the archival value of all records created during the development and presentation of a performance piece after its completion. Its purpose is to meaningfully curate selected documents into archives.¹²⁹

This chapter builds on the value of and need for performance documentation. It revisits the types of documents that the case study practitioners and institutions predominantly archive and questions their adequacy with regard to the case studies. The chapter looks particularly at the secondary values (informational and evidential) of the

¹²⁹ Toni Sant emphasises on this aspect of documentation in his book *Documenting Performance* (2017).

audience-generated content of the case studies. As explained in chapter 1.2. these refer to the long-term potentials and abilities that a record can have and are set by individuals ‘other than those for whom the records were originally created’ (Ham, 1993, p. 7). Secondary values are further divided into evidential values – these are the evidence that a document contains about its creator and their activities, functions, policies, or operations – and informational or historical values – the information a document encloses about other people, organisations as well as its own function (see my discussion at page 31). As I, additionally, mentioned in chapter 3.5. (page 99), several performance scholars have categorised the secondary values of documents into the ‘cultural’, ‘experience’, ‘access’, ‘artistic’, and inspirational values (Wee, 2012; Reason, 2012; Finbow, 2017). Such a classification is based on how artists and institutions use performance documents.

By identifying the secondary value that audience-generated content might have, I essentially look in this chapter at the potentials it has to research and to the historiography of the works it originates from. The chapter also analyses how the archiving of audience-generated content can positively affect the future of a live performance and expand it as an artwork. As a consequence, it responds to how audience-generated content captures and represents the live quality of theatre and performances that were facilitated by their audiences’ engagement. The chapter equally shows how audience-generated content is the representative of the archival feature that a performance piece might have on the basis that it is the content of its embedded digital technology. For achieving these aims, I reframe audience-generated content as traces and more particularly as digital traces of the live performance. Through this reconfiguration I valorise audience-generated content and argue that its archiving is advantageous, if not paramount, to knowing the live performance as a holistic event. I also postulate that this process is even more important when trying to preserve a comprehensive history of a participatory, immersive, intimate, and interactive practice that involves creating an organic relationship between the live performance and its documentation by mediating the audience-experience. Drawing from this argument, I ultimately propose that designing and thinking of archival solutions that can integrate audience-generated content is instrumental but also project-specific.

7.1. Default media and the documentation of digital liveness

The design and creation of performance documentation for the archive is as much influenced by practical parameters as it is by classical understandings and expectations of the types of documents it should contain. In chapter 5.5, I showed how all three case studies' practitioners consider photographic and audio-visual media – i.e. media of reproduction – as the most suitable means for capturing and presenting live performance. This thesis has also used Tandavanitj's quote 'default media' (p. 152) when referring to media of reproduction. The term is representative of the familiarity of practitioners and even of institutions, as showed in chapter 3, with using photography and video in order to document the live aspect of their works. 'Default media' indicates how cameras are indisputably perceived as the most appropriate, easiest, and the most common documentation tool. Undoubtedly, doing documentation with default media is useful for providing an image of the live performance.

Arguably, the trust and value attributed to videos might come at the cost of not adequately considering alternative ways of capturing a live performance. This thesis has stressed that the importance given to default media reflects a compulsion on the part of practitioners - and of institutions – to value visual representations above any other form of documentation. For Rebecca Schneider, this compulsion derives primarily from the way that theatre and performance is understood in the first place. 'In privileging an understanding of performance as a refusal to remain', Schneider asks, 'do we ignore other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently?' (2011, p. 98). Within the context of this thesis, the expectation of performance documentation to present visuals precludes practitioners from considering audience-generated content as constituting documentational material of the live performance, in other words, as having archival value. I suggest that this expectation is rooted in the formulation of the notion of the live performance from the juxtaposition of the latter's ephemerality to the permanence of documentation. Live performance, Phelan, Heathfield, and Fischer-Lichte argue "happens" while documentation captures, mediates, records that same happening (pages 45-46). Thus, the documentation of the live performance is expected to be a form of representation.

For purposes of clarity I briefly summarise here the practitioners' documentation methods with regard to the three case studies that were analysed in chapter 5. Forced Entertainment have audio-visually recorded both the physically staged and the online streaming of *Speak Bitterness* in 2014. Videoing is in fact carried out for all of their performance works and where relevant for all their live streaming. The files that were produced from *Speak Bitterness* in 2014 were stored in external hard drives with the prospect to be donated to the British Library. Extant also used video and photography to capture *Flatland* (2015) carrying on in this way with the methods they have developed for their theatre-based pieces. However, pictures and videos showing participants interacting with the installation are inaccessible since facial features and visible disability needs – that is to say, participants' biometric information – are classified as personally identifiable information. Aware of this restriction, Extant created a fabricated video that shows the experience through the eyes of an imagined participant. Blast Theory also used the same tactic as Extant for *Karen* (2015); they edited a video that combined together parts of the videos of the application with footage of the experience of a fictional user-player. The content of both documentation videos, hence, depicted what was expected that a participant would have experienced or, as Nick Tandavanitj said, it showed the ambience of the live performances.

Practitioners' approach to the documentation of the three case studies shows the value that practitioners put in default media. Practitioners and audiences alike are aware that fabricated videos are a simulation of what took place. Despite their artificiality, videos are treated as documentation on the basis that they are representatives of what the live performance may have been and looked like. In this sense, fabricated videos are endowed with informational value. I argue that the validity of the information they present is linked to their authorship. Because fabricated videos are created by the artists, whose work they represent, they are accepted as being truthful representatives of the live performance.

What they show, nevertheless, is what the artist conceives as worth transmitting to the future. Derrida, who describes the archive through the conditions of its construction, writes that its formation depends on the methods and subjectivity of the first archivist (1995, p. 55). As I have highlighted in page 26, Derrida's position indicates that the creation of performance documentation depends on the artist's own understanding of what types of information are necessary for the dissemination of his or her practice.

Within this thesis the documentation videos that practitioners create are understood as capturing artists' intent and, in so doing, they bear information not only about a particular work but also about the artists and, as such, their understanding of documentation. Persisting in creating documents that somehow demonstrate the live performance, even when it is out of the reach of the camera lens (*Karen, 2015*), shows that default media are considered as the most appropriate documentation means. The effortlessness with which videos and photographs present information and the ways that they can be accessed by audiences, provokes their documentational power. Their dominance in the practices of performance practitioners and institutions, however, is evident of the perception that performance documentation should depict the past live performance. As Matthew Reason has indicated, such a performance is rooted in the belief that a live performance needs to be seen in order to be known (2006, p. 83).

Default media serve perfectly the objective of seeing the live performance after its completion and their use originates in performance practices of a theatrical lineage. They are able to record the actual live performance and replay it to a future audience only under specific conditions: when the live performance unfolds in a way that a live audience can observe it, thus, when its audience and without requesting or affecting its reaction. For this thesis it is important that video and photographic practices construct a documentation that reanimates the live action for the observational gaze of an audience. They assume the perspective of an audience or witness, i.e. they show what a spectator would have seen if able to observe the participants. Notwithstanding video and photography – as well as notations that give instructions on how to re-perform a piece (chapter 3.1 and 5.5) – are convenient tools for capturing a live performance and for creating documents that picture it, they are not adequate enough or even suitable for every performance practice. The abilities of default media mean that they are frequently unable to consider and, thus, to document the substantial differences of the performance pieces that are being recorded. This especially applies to works that are founded on their audiences' interactivity, participation, and immersion like the types of works that are examined in this thesis.

The audiences' engagement in the three case studies, and particularly its mediatisation, was integral to how the live moment was activated and experienced. The liveness of these works was constructed through what the audience did and how it derived meaning from what it encountered, how it acted and reacted to the digital cues it

received, and what its mediated experience facilitated. I showed in chapter 4 that *Karen* (2015), *Flatland* (2015), and the livestreamed *Speak Bitterness* (2014), were works that solicited their audiences' contribution. More particularly, the live experiences of *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) were enabled by the ways that each embedded digital technology responded to the data and information – geolocation data, answers to questions, and location and orientation data – that its audience produced. Even in the case of *Speak Bitterness* (2014), which involved the broadcasting of a staged play that followed a theatrical tradition, the online tweeting of the remote audience members created an additional networked environment for experiencing the work. Consequently, I argue that the live quality of these works was formed through each audience's experience (Auslander, 2012, p. 10). More particularly, it was a cycle of audiences 'grasping virtual entities as live' and responding to the 'claims they make' (Ibid.) (p. 56).

The ways that the mediated audience was engaged with the case studies during their live performance was obscured from the camera lens (*Karen*, *Speak Bitterness*). Moreover, visuals might be an inappropriate way of capturing the audience's engagement and performance, but for these three works they were inadequate for presenting the live performance to future audiences; for instance, the videos and photographs of the participants of *Flatland* (2015) are protected by several restrictions and privacy policies as they contain sensitive information. Considering these observations and the fact that the live experience of the case studies was interlinked with the production of audience-generated content, I maintain that videos and photographs could only partially capture the role that the audience had during the three live performances. Instead of presenting their contribution to the live performance, visuals only depict their actions. As such, although these documents are useful for indicating what was to be expected from audiences, they also misrepresent the nature of the live performance. This is because default media can only witness but cannot maintain the core participatory and interactive elements of these works. What photographs and videos, however, successfully show is that although the audiences' performance and active engagement were integral components of the case studies, their documentation remains a conundrum.

Practitioners' use of default media in the documentation strategies of the three case studies reveals the dominance of classical archival structures with regard to theatre and

performance. Following this observation, I emphasise in this thesis that the uncontested use of default media impedes the possibility of experimenting with the structure and contents of their archived documentation. This leads to neglecting and potentially disposing other types of documentational material, thus, regarding information like audience-generated content as waste. That being so, embracing photographs and videos as the ideal documentation tools prevents finding new ways for presenting and knowing a past live performance. Consequently, in order to alter how performance archives are shaped, it is paramount to alter the status of audience-generated content and to map its archival value and potentials.

7.2. Audience-generated content: the digital traces of the live performance

I have termed audience-generated content the born-digital by-products of the audience experience that are produced by the mediatisation of the audiences' actions (Ellison et al., 2006, 2011; Krämer and Winter, 2008). Audience-generated content is organically created during and as part of a live performance. During the running or staging of works that foster digital interactivity, participation, and immersion audience-generated content is the catalyst for the performative moment; in archiving science this initial function of audience-generated content is termed primary value (p. 30). In chapter 4.4, where I reflected on the live performance of the three case studies, I particularly identified that the audience-generated content of each case study serves and enables a particular function during the live performance. Through this examination I demonstrated how the live quality of these works emerges by establishing the symbiotic relationship between live performance with the documentation of the audience's engagement following the writings of a number of performance and media scholars (Bay-Cheng, 2012; Pérez, 2014; Sköld, 2015; Giannachi et al, 2010; Chatzichristodoulou, 2014; Giannachi, 2016). Essentially, the live performance of the three case studies requires its audiences to 'grasp[ing] virtual entities as live' (Auslander, 2012, p. 10) and to respond to the 'claims they make' (Ibid.). This shows that each work becomes live because its audience perceives the virtual cues it receives as well as the data and content it produces – i.e. audience-generated content – as live. Following this observation, I argued that audiences are equally the participants of the live performance as well as its co-documentarists (p. 104). Taking into account these observations, here, I argue that in order for documentation to be able to demonstrate this contribution and active role of audiences it has to preserve its traces.

After the completion of the live of each case study, practitioners treated the audience-generated content that was left behind as waste. In fact, they retained it for research and marketing purposes for their academic partners, albeit they excluded it from their archives. When outlining the historical types of archives, Gabriella Giannachi regards archives 0.0 (p. 34) as a collection of material that it is frequently mistaken for waste in archaeological excavations (2016, p. 2). She continues by writing that despite their rudimentary nature these objects can potentially convey a memory of the past. Hence, waste might lead to reconstructing the meaning of a past event – Michael Buckland (1991) also shares this view (see page 30). In other words, Giannachi replaces the literal viewing of a past event with tracing it through its material remains. At the same time, she notes (p. 36) that digital databases collect and catalogue ‘differing, often subjective, values, including as ever, also obsolete materials and waste, that was capable of somehow augmenting the user’s sense of their own presence’ (Ibid., p. 12). Within this context, the audience-generated content of the cases studies can also be seen as the waste that each live performance created. Even more so, this waste and the meaning that can be extracted from it can be valuable in reconstructing the live performance after its completion. Within this context, the head of conservation at SFMOMA, Jill Sterrett, suggests that waste can be useful when trying to map the life of a work as well as its audience’s engagement (Sterrett in Dekker, Ibid.). Following this, I suggest that the audience-generated content of the case studies is useful documentary material. Nevertheless, because the term “waste” implies something outdated, unwanted, and unusable I propose that audience-generated content be reconceptualised as traces of the live performance.

Ricoeur’s theory of the trace (see pages 30-32) is helpful to reframe audience-generated content as digital traces. As I discussed in chapter 1.3, Ricoeur describes the trace as an entity or an apparatus. He notes that it is either a cognitive phenomenon, such as a memory or a material object – tangible props and costumes left behind after the completion of a live performance are particularly relevant to this categorisation, as for example the Animotus from *Flatland* (2015). Irrespective of their materiality and form, traces enable the event that they originated from to be rendered into history. Thus, the trace, as understood by Ricoeur, is the force that guides the formation of any archive and its documentation while also valorising it. All the types of audience-generated

content collected from *Karen*, *Flatland*, and *Speak Bitterness* reflect this description of the trace.

Moreover, the notion of the trace, signifies a historical practice that is based on examining the marks left from the past in order to unearth or reconstruct their origin. In this way, Ricoeur's perspective aligns with Giannachi (2016) and Shank's (2008) proposition that looking into a completed performance work entails an excavating process similar to that conducted by archaeologists. That the documentation of an ephemeral artwork can strongly benefit from the presence of digital traces is evident in its material traces and particularly the performance collections and the archives of the V&A, Tate, and the National Theatre. Museums, as I have showed in chapter 3.1., intentionally collect a small number of objects used during a live performance. Tangible performance traces are either used as artworks in their own right or are structured around a set of documents that map a performance piece (see chapter 3.3.). Traces in this sense encompass alternative ways of doing and using performance documentation. Respectively, I argue that audience-generated could enable a revisiting of the performance piece that would involve tracing – rather than seeing – its live audience engagement.

Videos and photographs that are created by practitioners and institutions serve a particular objective relevant to the propagation of the practitioners' work and the writing of history. To put this within archival terms, their primary value is to have archival value; they are designed so as to function as proofs of a particular performance piece as well as to communicate the artists' aesthetic positioning to future audiences.¹³⁰ In other words, such visuals are created independently from the live performance and its experience. Furthermore, their archival value can be analysed into various secondary ones. Videos and photographs present information of the live performance (informational value) and its making practice (artistic). They are also easily presented to future audiences through a variety of display methods as, for example, the viewing rooms in archival institutions and online platforms (experience, access).¹³¹ Writing in the field of computation science, Romele and Severo describe that digital traces point to a completed trajectory, an action, or the execution of a process within a cybernetic

¹³⁰ Not all photographs and videos are archived. Depending on the filming technique footage from multiple cameras can be edited into a single video. This might result in the deletion of unused footage.

¹³¹ I have reviewed and analysed how performance documents are currently experienced and accessed in chapters 3.2 and 3.3.

environment (2016, p. 8). Digital traces are otherwise evidence of human and human-like activity that is instantly logged and stored digitally (Howison, Wiggins, & Crowston, 2011). Instead of being designed in order to record an event, they are the direct symptoms or remains of the audiences' performance and their live experience, thus, essentially they are remains of the live performance itself.

To acknowledge and handle audience-generated content as digital traces entails questioning their archival value and considering that erasing it also erases knowledge about the work it originates from and/or the people that created it. Moreover, the presence of audience-generated traces in documentation, I argue, can complement the dominant audio-visual methods and can aid the creation of a holistic view of the performance piece by demonstrating its context and its digital live quality. Engaging with audience-generated traces and extracting meaning through their analysis can also provide alternative, yet, pivotal ways of knowing a past live performance that can complement default documentation media. Most importantly, it provides the material that demonstrates that the audiences that left them behind acted as co-documentarists of their own experience during the live-performance. In the following sections I examine what the audience-generated traces of the three case studies could offer to the aftermath of the live performances.

7.2.i The historical and cultural value of audience-generated traces

While considering the audience-generated traces of *Speak Bitterness* (2015), *Karen* (2015), and *Flatland* I have reflected on their archival value. In this section I particularly analyse their historical and cultural values. Within this thesis I understand this set of values as referring to the information that a document contains and how important this is to research and the broader production of knowledge.

With regard to *#fespeaklive*, the data deriving from its statistical analysis of how many people watched the live streaming and where they were located, were used in funding applications and discussions with promoters and collaborators. For Forced Entertainment, tweets aided the marketing of the live streaming, which attracted more remote audience members, as well as the marketing of the entire work of the company. Secondly, the marketing analysis of tweets established the proofs that were requested by sponsors in relation to the number of people that were engaged with the work of Forced

Entertainment during that year. The company, thus, gained both economic and cultural capital from its audience's tweeting during the live streaming of *Speak Bitterness* (2014).

Each tweet represents a fraction of a single user's spectatorial experience and, even more so, it attests only to a very specific moment of individual participation. When tweets are, however, examined as a group of interconnected material they prove to be useful in a number of ways. The data that can be retrieved relating to the tweets' authors as well as the ways that the tweets were used by the company verify tweets' evidential value. In this sense, the *#fespeaklive* tweets provide segments of the work's context – they show who, when, where, and how engaged with *Speak Bitterness* (2014) during its 2014 staging and livestreaming. Additionally, tweets capture the intention of the piece by showing which parts of the live performance attracted the most attention. Hence, they contain historical information about the improvisation of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) and its script. The *#fespeaklive* tweets reveal the in-the-moment digital reverberations of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) showing which parts of the work appealed to the audience the most and why. When approached as a collective body they form a network of information and access points to the work (Bay-Cheng, 2012, p. 37) that the video cannot provide.

Etchells, as I have showed in page 91, noted that the livestreaming and its coupling with conversations in Twitter allowed the experience of the remote audience, including its reflections on the piece, to become visible to everyone. Under this observation, I argue that tweets not only demonstrate a historical moment of *Speak Bitterness*'s (2014) activation, but also a pivotal moment in its mode of presentation. From a linear production, Twitter helped *Speak Bitterness* (2014) to actively engage its online audience in a virtual-reality space. Little has changed in the staging of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) over the years,¹³² however, its means of presentation have evolved in order to integrate and disseminate its live performance within networked environments. I have discussed in chapter 4.1.ii. that tweets demonstrate the significance that the live streaming had for the remote audience. Meghan O'Hara writes in this respect in her study of the *#fespeaklive* hashtag that tweets offer 'a valuable insight into the ways in which

¹³² Apart from the text that remains the same, the improvisational style of Forced Entertainment's work means that every live performance is different. Additionally, over the years the performers have slightly changed for example Tim Etchells is now the artistic director of the company rather and does not perform.

an experience makes a spectator feel is often more impactful than the reality of its material conditions' (2017, p. 312). In this sense, I argue, that tweets carry important information both about the staged performance – i.e. its script and presentation – as well as its changing circumstances. Tweets structure a part of the mixed reality milieu that was created by livestreaming the performance using a social media platform that connected remote viewers with one another. In this sense, they have broader cultural value that relates to how this particular work developed in the age of social media. When acknowledged as traces tweets can become beneficial to research that maps the broader implications that emerging technologies have in theatre and performance. Considered in this way, they have a strong historical as well as cultural value for the piece and the overall practice of Forced Entertainment.

Flatland's (2015) audience-generated data also have informational value that I consider paramount for the archive of the piece. This is evident from the analysis of the audience-generated traces and how they were combined with the findings from participants' round-table feedback in order to shed light into the function of the digital apparatus – the haptic device and tracking system – and its application in a cultural experience. Such an examination led the team to write in their official Nesta report that 'the use of technology in the artistic pilot interpretation of *Flatland* was conceptually successful, highly stimulating its audience and producing a range of important developments regarding synthesizing the art and tech' (p. 52). Considering that *Flatland* (2015) was a R&D project that was the continuation of an older work – i.e. *The Question* (2010) -, its audience-generated traces are paramount for further developing its artistic aspect as well as its haptic device.

Even more so, as its transcription into maps demonstrates, audience-generated traces carry important information about what happened inside the pitch-dark space of *Flatland* (2015). As I have noted before, participants' videos contain their biometric information that are deemed as personally identifiable and cannot be made public. According to the copyright laws that museums follow (see chapter 3) these audio-visual recordings could become accessible in eighty years' time. This means that currently the only available documentation of *Flatland's* (2015) live moment is Adam Spier's maps of participants routes and their presentation in academic papers. Based on how paramount audience-generated traces are for "knowing" *Flatland* (2015), I suggest that they contain irreplaceable information which has unique historical value for all parties

of the collaborative team. Finally, considering that *Flatland* (2015) is the only technologically enabled project devised by Extant as well as the only project of its kind from the disability arts scene, its audience-generated traces is of utmost cultural importance. Archiving and preserving *Flatland's* (2015) audience-generated traces could enable more research to be conducted around the use of haptic technologies in theatre and performance and the development of projects that can dramatically reform the performance experience of visually-impaired audiences.

Equally to the other two case studies, *Karen's* (2015) audience-generated content has both informational and evidential value for its archive. Since the application collected data from the device, the location, and the times each user-player engaged with *Karen* (2015), the audience-generated content provides detailed information about each user-player. More particularly, analysing the collected audience-generated traces can show the level of user-players' engagement and to what degree *Karen* (2015) managed to infiltrate their everyday life. With regard to user-players' answers, audience-generated traces demonstrates how the content of the application was gradually shaped. Considering that all personal reports were issued based on the juxtaposition of an individual user-player's data with the aggregate data of all the previous user-players, demonstrates that during the running of *Karen* (2015) the audience-generated content is of paramount informational value to its software. Following this observation, I furthermore argue that this value is maintained even after the completion of the work. This is because the audience-generated content can outline its own gradual accumulation and, thus, it can show the development of *Karen* (2015) as a database. In other words, the audience-generated content has the ability to frame and to provide the context of the function of the technological component of the performance piece.

7.2.ii. Documenting function

As I have discussed in chapter 1.3, scholars such as Shanks (2008), Giannachi (2016), and Mylonas (2016) maintain that part of the function of digital technologies is to store their users' activity. Digital technologies are explained as being interactive sites where their users can mediatise their everyday engagement by generating content that has performative capacities. Connecting the notion of the trace with such ideas that see digital technologies as having archiving features (Taylor, 2010) leads to also interpret the embedded digital technologies of the three performance case studies as archives

whose subject matter was the mediatised audience-generated content. Key component of the works was, thus, to mediatise, collect, use, and communicate their audiences' engagement and experience.

For the three case studies, digital technologies solicited their audiences' engagement, which they captured and stored. The purpose of this function was to collect this material and feed it back to the audience in the form of an experience. This is primarily evident in *Karen's* case whose software collected and arranged its user-players' input in a meaningful way and in order to provide them with a personalised report. Although *Karen's* process resulted in a product, the use of Twitter during *Speak Bitterness* (2014) and equally the technological apparatus in *Flatland*, served similar intentions. In *Flatland* the Animotus and its supporting mechanism mediatized and stored participants' journeys so as to help them navigate a space without repeating the same movements or making sure that they would not run across one another. According to these functions it can be deduced that the digital technologies embedded in these three works were performative repositories: they utilised the audience-generated content as their archived component in order to focus on and disclose what was gained for both audiences and creators. Digital technologies undertook documentation tasks, such as tracking, recording, and storing their audiences' input. Even more so, the technological components of *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) interpreted the data they collected themselves.

As with most digital technologies, including those that Giannachi (2016) terms as archives 3.0 and 4.0 (p. 40), the nature of the digital technologies embedded in these works is precarious. In order to remain for posterity, they have to be actively archived and preserved. Nick Tandavanitj interestingly noted within this context that there is no need to include the content of *Karen* (2015) in Irchived documentation. He established his opinion on the fact that the work is already an archive in its own right (interview notes, 2017). Maria Oshodi and Tim Etchells also disregarded the audience-generated content of their works on the basis of being a symptomatic by-product – audience-generated content might be traces of the live performance, however, it was produced without the artists' intentional effort to document their work. According to these positions, this thesis infers that what practitioners commonly acknowledge as valuable documentation of the live performance during its unfolding might also be assessed as unwanted and unusable waste after the completion of the work.

In the process of archiving the various components and records of their works, I have discussed that practitioners, who are knowledgeable about technology, consider more productive to annotate and preserve the software that enables the live performance in addition to some visual representations. Preserving software is appreciated for ensuring that the reproduction of a similar performance experience will be possible in the future, as Annet Dekker has also shown through her term ‘documentation for re-creation’ (2018, p. 45). This approach reveals a paradox; *Karen* (2015) as well as *Flatland* (2015) and *Speak Bitterness* (2014) – based on its integrated tweeting feature -, have also been framed as archives or as having archiving qualities. This is because they requested, traced, and collected their audiences’ engagement as I have explained throughout this thesis. Under this consideration, I see the preservation of the software without its content as being inadequate to the task of ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its archiving features as well as of verifying it itself as a database. If this quality is paramount during the running of the works it should also be considered as paramount for creating a comprehensive documentation that would fully demonstrate the function of the software.

Wolfgang Ernst writes in relation to the data that are retrieved from the Internet that archives ‘are a function of their software and transmission protocols’ (2014, p. 84). This means that data realise the archiving nature of the networked archive – in Giannachi’s (2016) terms the networked archive would correspond to archives 3.0 and 4.0. Data in this sense is the information that demonstrates by reproducing the actions that the software has undertaken. Therefore, following Ernst’s rationale, tracing a software’s history could also involve tracing its performance. Considering that the objective of *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) as well as the facilitation of a parallel online dialogue during *Speak Bitterness* is founded on mediatising and using their audiences’ engagement means that they constitute themselves through their audience-generated content – or as archives (see page 179). Within the field of video games’ conservation, which is also heavily dependent on software, Olle Sköld maintains that documenting players’ experiences and the broader sociocultural aspects of games provides the context of their ‘archived software and hardware, thereby making them more valuable and useable by future users’ (2018, p. 37).¹³³ Ernst and Sköld’s arguments correspond

¹³³ Sköld particularly argued that all sociocultural aspects of videogames – these he explained are unrelated to the videogame artefact and include but are not limited to game culture, cultural and social

here to those formulated by Dekker and Sterrett. Together they frame the significance of archiving the audience-generated content of the three cases studies for conservation and even for historiographical purposes.

Discussing the conservation of net art, Annet Dekker argues that the process of repairing a net artwork involves creating a new version, which results in discarding all its previous ones (2018, p. 117). She continues, however, by arguing that computer programs can perform in various ways despite the fact that they cannot interpret things like a human (Ibid. p. 147). This performance of software, Dekker writes, should be considered as a 'network of interrelated components, both on-and offline, both overtly mediated and immediate to various and dispersed recipients. What we encounter in performance (and what we may seek to historicize later) is a network of constitutive parts' (Bay Cheng in Dekker, 2018, p. 147). Apart from conserving the software of a net artwork it is, therefore, important to conserve elements that can indicate or trace its performance. Dekker's position is influenced by that of Jill Sterrett, the head of conservation at SFMOMA, who argues that traces are useful in tracing the life of an artwork (see page 184). A conservation strategy that relies on performance documentation can particularly assist the reconstruction of works whose software has become obsolete. Considering that practitioners either lack the resources and expertise required for conserving their work – a particular example, here, is the case of Extant who are inclined to neglect the technological software – or even the copyright to the software itself, I argue that archiving audience-generated traces becomes a necessity.

Reconstructing an artwork by assembling and interpreting its traces – which Dekker has described elsewhere as 'a marker of a presence, something copied, outlined, or overwritten' (2014, p. 171) – resembles the procedures followed by archaeologists when examining material traces (Ibid. p. 117). Implanting material from the various aspects of a work, such as traces of the audience experience and interaction, can lead to situations where the reactivation, conservation, and presentation of a work involves a constant negotiation of its documentation. In this vein, traces can provide new ways of understanding the constituents of an ephemeral and interactive artwork, how they functioned and how they related to one another. When following this open approach, the

aspects including experience, play, and community social life and activity - should be documented (2018, p. 26).

audience-generated content of the case studies becomes a carrier of information ‘whose significance is [...] valued in a ‘not yet’ context’ (Dekker, 2018, p. 118).

While the archiving and preservation of the software of the case studies can ensure their future reactivation so that new audiences can experience them in a similar manner, the archiving of their audience-generated content can facilitate the preservation of their development as interactive and expanding databases or archives over time. For instance, the audience-generated content of *Karen* (2015) evidences the expansion of the dataset as the work progressed and became known. Its interpretation could, for example, trace back its performance in order to map the revolutionary history of the personalised reports. Similarly, the tweets of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) demonstrate the function of Twitter in relation to the live performance as well as how it was developed – especially if we consider the tweets that refer to the live performance long after its staging – as an archive of the work overtime. Finally, with regard to *Flatland* (2015), Adam Spiers analyses of the audience-generated content has already demonstrated how it can be used in order to evaluate and reflect on the function of the haptic device and its localisation system (see page 150). In other words, audience-generated content shows how the digital technology collected the audiences’ mediated experiences and how it expanded as a database.

What is fundamentally afforded by incorporating traces of the software’s performativity apart from ensuring its longevity, is the different futures of documentation and equally the possibility of reconsidering how we learn about a past work. The example of how Spiers used the audience-generated content of *Flatland* - (2015) – as well as the ways Blast Theory has used audience-generated content in the form of photographs in order to create the project *Riders Have Spoken* (2010) and *CloudPad* (2011) – already highlights these potentials.

7.2.iii. The creative capacities of audience-generated content

An example of how audience-generated content can foster experimentations with archival structures is Blast Theory’s *Riders Have Spoken* (2010) and *CloudPad* (2011) that I have discussed in page 132. To briefly summarise, in 2011 the company and its then team of academic collaborators – i.e. the MRL at the University of Nottingham and Gabriella Giannachi from the University of Exeter -, experimented with arranging all of

the documents of the work *Riders Spoke* (2007) in a way that could facilitate ‘the synchronised playback and mash-up of cloud-based media entities such as video or audio files, as well as webpages and photographic materials, together with layers of user annotations’ (Giannachi et al. 2011, online).¹³⁴ This resulted in *Riders Have Spoken* (2010). Additionally, the team curated the audience-generated content of the same piece in a way that would be engaging for an audience i.e. *CloudPad* (2011). These two projects demonstrate the potentials of audience-generated content to provide alternative ways of accessing and experiencing documentation. Even more so, they demonstrate how an archaeological process of excavation and tracing can be used in order to know about a performance piece – I discussed this potential in the previous section through the work of Annet Dekker.¹³⁵

It is evident based on the projects mentioned above that Blast Theory have employed audience-generated content in innovative ways. Nevertheless, Nick Tandavanitj insists that as traces the audience-generated content from *Karen* (2015) has limited capacities claiming that they would perhaps be useful only for data visualisation projects. There are two main reason underlying his viewpoint that are relevant to the types of content of the data as well as issues of the participants’ creative freedom. Compared to the documentation from *Rider Spoke* (2007), which is composed of videos by audience members capturing their individual contributions to the work, the audience-generated content from *Karen* (2015) contains geolocation data and responses to a multiple-choice questionnaire. Notwithstanding the numerical type of data and the restrictions that this appears to pose, I suggest that these data have secondary value since their offer to performance researchers a view into the audience’s performance. The potential for such data to be used in research is evidenced by the appointment of the PhD student, Michelle Coleman, by the Horizon Centre for Doctoral Training (see page 162).

Contrary to Tandavanitj, I argue that exactly because of their numerical format this data contains a potential for use that is absent in the normalised performance documents. Tandavanitj’s approach continues the tradition that the documentation of live performance should offer representations that render the past event viewable by

¹³⁴ <http://dh2011abstracts.stanford.edu/xtf/view?docId=tei/ab-154.xml;query=;brand=default>.

¹³⁵ Gabriella Giannachi (2016), Michael Shanks (2008) and even Foucault (1969), Derrida (1996), and Ricoeur [2008 (1998)], all point to similar producers with regard to the production of knowledge and the construction of history.

replaying or by demonstrating it. While I agree that data visualization¹³⁶ is a valid means for representing *Karen's* (2015) past occurrence, I contend that it is just one of perhaps many other ways of doing interpreting audience-generated traces. For example, the retaining of *Karen's* (2015) dataset could assist a future display of the project based on the reports or how the dataset expanded and developed over time. Audiences could potentially experience the game in fast-forward at the end of which they could receive a printed personal report. Although this version of the report would not need to be stored, the closing dataset of *Karen* (2015) would be paramount in its production on the basis that it would provide the denominator for the analysis of an individual's answers. In this sense, the audience-generated content of *Karen* (2015) have the capacity to support the creation of exhibition or access software with strong artistic elements. Further to having informational value, digital traces of the audience experience could, thus, inspire the creation of new projects.

Adam Spiers's usage of *Flatland's* (2015) audience-generated content is a prime example of how numerical data can function as archaeological traces of the audience's performance and can inspire the production of new creative and research outputs. Spiers maintained that audience-generated data might provide ways of discovering all the possible trajectories of the participants. As was the case with *Karen* (2015), the central narrative of *Flatland* (2015) remained unaffected by users' activity. The variability of the experience was limited to four entry points and different possible trajectories within the installation space. Yet, each participant was free to wander around that space, using their senses to navigate and map out the area with the aid of the haptic device. Therefore, each participant's journey was unique. Part of the liveness of the piece was built on participants perceiving the movement of the haptic device as live and on physically responding to them, to echo here Auslander (2012). As discussed in chapter 6.2.ii (page 150), Spiers used the audience-generated content from *Flatland* to produce maps of the routes taken by each of the participants. These maps were created as part of his evaluation of the haptic device, however, they can equally provide visualizations of participants' live experience of the piece.

The audio-visual documentation of *Flatland* (2015) that was produced despite the failing of the suspended cameras and the sensitivity surrounding participants'

¹³⁶ Visual Complexity is an online repository dedicated to research and artworks that explore the visualisation of complex networks. For more info visit <http://www.visualcomplexity.com/vc/about.cfm>.

information, unsettles assumptions about how a live performance should be captured and by whom. The recording of participants by following them around during their immersive experience could also be criticised for failing to capture moments from the other participants that were present at the space. Adam Spiers has particularly commented on this issue relevant to the video documentation of the live work by saying that the footage he received was inconsistent (see page 164-5). I have also explained that the sharing of these videos might violate participants' privacy by capturing their biometric information. *Flatland* (2015) compensates for these restrictions by logging all audience-generated content that is constituted of data of participants' orientation and location. Digital traces are certainly regulated by the practicalities of their numerical format. Numerical data are arguably unexciting to the untrained eye since they are indecipherable without other references that can indicate their relevance and help interpret them. Even more so, as in the case with *Karen* (2015), these data can be easily seen as meaningless since their function – or primary value – ceased once the participants completed their route. Spier's interpretation of the audience-generated content of *Flatland* (2015) into maps reverse this understanding because they demonstrate an alternative way of experiencing the documentation of the work and, thus, of learning about its live performance.

Traces in the form of numerical data have to be reshaped into meaningful and decipherable information for the non-specialist audience, including frequently the artists. Irrespective of their form, because audience-generated traces are scattered fragments for an untrained eye, it is necessary that they are organised in coherent presentations. *Flatland's* (2015) audience-generated traces could also be reprogrammed to replay the haptic cues that the participants received, creating a haptic-based archive of the work. It could, furthermore, be combined with participants' feedback in order to create audio narratives of their roots. In consequence to the examples of Blast Theory and *Flatland* (2015), I argue that archiving of audience-generated traces with the aim to analyse and interpret them could provide new ways for revisiting the live moments of the piece. In this sense, tweets from *Speak Bitterness* (2014) could stretch beyond the platform. Such a perspective requires that one considers the tweets a resource for new ways of seeing into the past rather than the end product of the audience's activity. The vast potentials of tweets can be found in the field of digital art and the appropriation of audience-generated traces by visual artists – as for example in the work of Jonathan

Harris's *We Feel Fine* (2005),¹³⁷ Amalia Ulman (2014), Richard Prince (2014), as well as the piece *Cached* (2019) by Sackler Centre for Arts Education¹³⁸. Archiving the audience-generated traces of performance works could aid the current uses of performance documents and augment the perspectives from which we learn about past live performances. Contrary to photographic and audio-visual documents, which are based on the perspectives of the artist and the documenter, thus, they adopt the position of an observer, audience-generated traces, such as *Flatland's* (2015), are able to outline the perspective of participants.

The limited ways that I have presented so far with regard to using the audience-generated traces of the case studies correspond to Schneider (2011) and Bedford's (2008) views that documentation can expand live performance (see chapter 2.1.i.) in order to allow it to remain differently 'through the retelling, the recitation of the documentation' (Ibid., p. 42). Fundamentally, audience-generated content has the capacity to be cast into new formations and in this way to shift and assist the revisiting of a live performance. Its rendering into something new in addition to the creative and research experiments that are required to enable it, ultimately, demonstrate that audience-generated traces are a fundamental component in the production of knowledge apropos of interactive, participatory, and immersive performance practices that utilise digital technologies as their dramaturgical tools.

Plenty of artworks are founded on the manipulation, choreography, representation, and re-animation of data, bringing 'it to life and see[ing] how data can be experienced, how we can feel it rather than analyse it' (Freeman, 2016).¹³⁹ In this sense, the

¹³⁷ This work is a database of online utterances of human feelings. In setting up the database, the software searched the world's newly posted social media entries every few minutes for phrases containing the phrases 'I feel' and 'I am feeling'. It then recorded the full sentence, up to the period, and identified the 'feeling' expressed (e.g. sad, happy, depressed, etc.). The result is a database of human feelings that can be accessed and sorted using a series of interfaces, such as demographic slices, or responses to particular questions (<http://number27.org/wffbook>).

¹³⁸ *Cached* uses an algorithm to quantify, interpret, and profile a user's online activity. The Cached Collective was comprised by Clément Bouttier, Ryan Dzelzkalns, Jon Flint, Vytas Jankauskas, Joana Mateus, Aline Martinez & Felipe de Souza. For more information visit <https://www.hivers.fr/hive-2/projects/cached/>.

¹³⁹ In the early '00s that Hal Foster described archival art as seeking to work with and make current information that might have been lost, forgotten, or misplaced (2004, p. 4). Foster argued that this art practice is interested in 'obscure traces' with artists being drawn 'to unfulfilled beginnings or incomplete projects—in art and in history alike—that might offer points of departure again' (Ibid. p 5). The late '00s and early '10s saw the expansion of Foster's ideas to include digital works: in 2007, Victoria Vesna, introduced the term 'database aesthetics' to refer to the way in which 'archives and databases offer artists a vehicle for commenting on cultural and institutional practices through direct intervention' (p. xi). The *Big Bang Data* exhibition held in 2015 at Somerset House in London¹³⁹, was one such celebration of more than 50 artists.

appropriation of a performance work's data might serve the purpose of reactivating or remembering the initial live piece – this is more likely when the artist using the data is the same artist who created the initial piece – or might simply imply the past performance. In the context of performance documentation, the creative appropriation of data might indeed move away from an actual representation of the initial performative moment. This process is in no way different from the outcomes of archival research and archival art that uses tangible documents. If audience-generated traces were able to provide only a depiction of the live work, it would repeat the same principles as the dominant documentation strategies that use default media. What audience-generated traces have to offer to the documentation of theatre and performance is founded on their distinctness to the canon. Rather than finding ways to ruminate on the function that produced the data, the creative methodologies of using data might constitute the sought-out objective of their existence.

In 2013, Vivian van Saaze and Annet Dekker created an archive of Emio Greco and PC's work *Extra Dry* (1999). Their aim was to recognise 'the variability' of the work and 'the significance of interdisciplinary collaboration' by considering the work a 'creative process rather than end product' (Dekker, 2014, p. 115). Van Saaze and Dekker observed that documentation provided the 'means to make visible links and relations between various elements of a performance piece, making connections between elements or giving voice to people they might otherwise discard' (2013, p. 108). The collected documents were split into information, which included interviews with various stakeholders, and several sub-categories based on the content of information¹⁴⁰ (e.g. context, work, parameters, etc.) as well as an appendix with technical plans and cues. Although van Saaze and Dekker structured this documentation with the intention to support the reconstruction of the piece, they also provided a comprehensive view of how to include tacit knowledge in the performance archive. Most importantly for this thesis, they demonstrated how archived documentation can be an active interrogation tool that continuously instigates discussions and reactivation/reperformances rather than a fixed object of a completed ephemeral event. Following their example, I argue that similar approaches would also benefit the archiving of performance works that organically produce audience-generated content. Because the individual potentials of such works are yet to be explored, including digital traces of the live performance ensures that the possibility that the aftermath of

¹⁴⁰ For a detailed overview and analysis see Wijers (2010) and van Saaze and Dekker (2013).

performance piece has alternative futures. Rather than producing and curating documents that can show the finished live action, artists and performance collections would benefit from the creation of models in which digital traces sit alongside photographic and audio-visual documents as well as software, scores, scripts, etc. Such an approach will allow for a holistic account of each performance work.

7.3. Re-contextualising performance documentation

So far, I have discussed and analysed the archival value of audience-generated content/traces in relation to the three case studies, including its historical and cultural value; its potential capacity to enhance the revisiting of the past performative moment and, finally, its potential to contribute to research regarding the study of audiences and performance studies and practice. It is the variability that their form, amount, and links have that gives audience-generated traces the ability to contribute to archival research and, even more so, to performance documentation practices. This variability demands that the process of documentation and the employed record management techniques be unique for every work. In the section that follows I address the broader conceptual implications of audience-generated traces and the value that they hold for the performance archive. I argue that, as digital traces, audience-generated traces reveal and potentially approximate the fragmentary and intimate experience of the live performance thereby challenging the performance documentation canon. I, additionally, show how such information might be unsettling the authorship of the performance document and by extension the performance archive.

7.3.i. From performing for the live work to performing for the archive

Since audience-generated content constitutes a direct trace of audiences' performance, experience, interaction, and engagement making room for it in practices of documentation might open up a deeper, first-hand perspective into how audiences used the digital technology - and were used by it - in order to engage with/in the live performance moment. While the live unfolding is an ephemeral event, its documentation is likely to be used by museums (see chapter 3.2 and 3.3) as part of their exhibition programmes or their broader initiatives that give public access to archives. In addition, documentation can be used by other artists in order to, for example, get inspiration for their own practice, develop a new work, or in order to recreate a

modified version of the initial piece. Because the form and format of performance documents might be altered through these processes, their origin is expected to lay closer either to the artist, since this will reconfirm them as the creator of the work, or the museum/archive, because these institutions are regarded as objective in their narration of history and culture. Therefore, in arguing that audience-generated content augments the audience's experience and involvement by valorising it beyond the live moment, it is worth briefly addressing issues relating to the authorship of performance documentation and its relation to audiences' performance.

In *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (1985) Rosalind Krauss argues that the anxiety surrounding the question of an artwork's authorship results in the embracing of a culture of originals that 'has no place among the reproductive mediums' (1985, p. 156). She develops this argument in order to reflect on the mediation of live performance in documentation. Krauss's idea is equally applicable to audience-generated traces which envelop the multivalent experiences of participants rather than repeating the perspective of the artist, the institution, or the 'passive onlooker'. Ideas of originality and authenticity in relation to art have long been contested and Krauss challenges them by arguing that they are bound to 'the shared discursive practice of the museum, the historian, and the maker of art' (Ibid., p. 162). Krauss here refers to how archiving institutions, which have emerged and been formed by collecting visual arts and material culture, have influenced and even fostered the compulsion to perceive and describe the initial observable performance event as the only original event, the work itself. Doing so comes at the expense of future repetitions and reproductions of a performance piece that are thereby devalued (Ibid., p. 160, 162). In this sense, her argument corresponds to Schneider (2011) and Bedford's (2008) suggestions to consider the different futures that performance can have through its documentation. Following these theorists, I argue that when a single live performance is retained as the only original of the work it results in archiving documents with regard to the live performance that can present it as such. Within this context, artists and institutions' photographic and audio-visual documents that present a performance work as an event with definitive beginning, middle, and end confirm this perspective.

Audience-generated content has the potential to unsettle this dominant way of learning about a past performance by seeing it. As digital traces of the audience experience audience-generated content offers fragments of the work itself that have to

be pieced together so as to provide a comprehensive ‘picture’ of the whole. In addition to this, such content also subverts the notion of a single, authoritative origin. The performance documents that can be found in archives and collections is perceived as being anchored in such an origin. They are the products of default media and they are tied to the viewpoint of the professional documentarist, the artist, or the expert museum. In archival terms the origin of the document – its authorship – is articulated in terms of its evidential value: this is the information that a document contains in relation to its creator as I have previously explained. Here, I analyse what the evidential value of audience-generated content – the information that it provides about its creators – and its correlation with the unfolding of the performative moment, can offer to performance documentation with regard to its authorship.

Audience-generated content originates in performance practices¹⁴¹ that can be participatory, interactive, including the interaction of the audience with virtual entities, or simply asking the audience to perform an action as the means of activating a series of events. As digital traces of such processes it is one of the most fundamental components of works that intentionally integrate digital technologies into their live performance and invite their audiences to mediatise their own experience. Because of this particular relationship it has with how the live performance unfolds, the inclusion of audience-generated content in the archive is a way of acknowledging the audience’s contribution to that live moment and, thus, the unique way a performance work unfolded in that particular time and space.

The activation of both *Flatland* (2015) and *Karen* (2015) relied on the mediatisation of their audiences’ experience and their immersive and intimate performance. Similarly, in *Speak Bitterness* (2014), the remote audience’s active spectatorship assisted in how the piece was disseminated and experienced within a virtual environment. The audiences of these works were, thus, expected to become the activators of and participants in the live performances. Although audiences appeared to be free to exercise their agency, in reality they carried out predetermined tasks (as can be clearly seen in the examples of *Karen* (2015) and *Flatland* (2015) and even by the implicit

¹⁴¹ As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, audience participation is a widely discussed term and has been used in the conceptual development of a variety of other art practice terms, such as relational aesthetics, immersive (Machon, 2013; Frieze, 2016; Alston, 2013, 2016) and post-dramatic theatre (Lehmann, 1999), and socially engaged art (Bishop, 2012; Harvie, 2013). Defining the exact characteristics and differences of these forms lies outside the scope of the thesis, but I am, nevertheless, interested in the role and function of the audience at the moment of the live performance and its presence in the work’s archive that remains accessible in the long term.

invitation of *Speak Bitterness* (2014) to propagate its script). Part of these fixed task was to use the digital technologies embedded in the works and the restrictions these brought into play so as to structure all mediated actions and reactions based on the work's intention. Audiences' contribution, thus, served as the missing piece of the puzzle that was required for the live performance to fulfil its objective and intention. Within the context of this thesis these processes are seen as exploiting the audiences' involvement on the basis of structuring the live performance and its experience.¹⁴²

The exploitation of audiences becomes more visible in documentation. As Jessica Santone writes in relation to the documentation of participatory performance, 'the method of engagement they promote conceals political consequences, so that these are only visible belatedly as documentation of the work circulates' (2014, p. 31). Many performance practices such as delegated, immersive, and socially engaged performance capitalise on audience engagement as a means to activate or augment the performative moment. Despite this characteristic, their audience's contribution and presence is often excluded from documentation.¹⁴³ With regards to the three case studies, I highlighted at the very beginning of this thesis (p. 16) that their activation or a part of their live experience requires the audience to perform in certain ways. In particular, in chapter 4.4. I discussed that the different ways that the three audiences engaged with their experience of the live performance moment. However, audiences did not alter in any way the narrative or set up of any of the three works, but rather carried out given instructions (*Karen, Flatland*) or mimicked the performance on stage inside a totally different medium. Thus, in principle the three audiences were performing. Since the three audiences offer no input to the live works, I have consciously avoided describing the audiences' engagement and have explained that they borrow their characteristics from Claire Bishop's 'delegated performance' (2012). Delegation, the act of entrusting to the audience the act of performing part of or the entire live performance, Bishop writes nevertheless, happens only temporarily, with the artist returning 'to select, define, and circulate its representation' (2012, p. 111). Bishop is a strong supporter of documentation and contends that visual and audio-visual recordings are vital forms of survival in time for works with participatory elements since the live moment is unique

¹⁴² Claire Bishop (2006, 2012), Jen Harvie (2013), and Adam Alston (2013, 2016) have each written extensively on how participatory performance practices exploit their audiences despite their seemingly democratised processes.

¹⁴³ Tino Sehgal's banning of any form of documentation of his participatory works is a perfect example of this. Sehgal's works depend entirely on audience participation, yet their contribution is nowhere to be seen. For more on the documentation of Tino Sehgal's work see Carpenter, 2014; van Saaze, 2015; Park, 2016.

and unrepeatable and so are any of its future reactivations (Ibid., p. 98). However, she underlines that the document might become an extension of the live performance as artists devise it and edit it so that it ‘conveys a larger set of points about social conflict’ (Ibid., p.101). In this manner the line between democratised performance practices and audience exploitation becomes clearer. Audiences are expected to become the activators of and participants in the live moment of a work that requires a level of social engagement. Although audiences are not involved in the devising of the work, their contribution is paramount in the development of the live moment and, even more so, as I demonstrated in section 7.2.ii., in the function of the embedded software. When the history of such participatory performance practices is constructed from the authoritative viewpoints of the artist and the institution, it excludes the very purpose and ways of the unfolding of the live moment. From this perspective, institutions and artists’ photographs, edited audio-visual records, descriptions, and written instructions undeniably attest to or show the unfolding of the live performance. In doing so, they connect the performance as a live and mediated ephemeral event with the creative intent of the artist. Default media primarily establish artists as the singular ‘author’¹⁴⁴ of the work. Finally, current practices that encompass audiences’ contribution by recording it, do so as if the intention of partaking in the live performance was to be observed by an external audience.

Discussions within the context of the conservation of other ephemeral art practices – in particular of time-based artworks, such as installations, net art, and new media art – have also been preoccupied with how to document and archive the audience’s performance. As I analysed by discussing the work of Annet Dekker (2014, 2018), documenting interaction can be beneficial for the conservation of the software of net artworks (p. 190-1). Practices that strive to do so, can retain the performative quality and intent of software. In so doing, they can ensure that when the software become obsolete there are material traces left behind that can lead back to how it functioned. In line with Dekker’s argument a number of scholars underline the importance of

¹⁴⁴ On rare occasions documents of a performance work identify the videographer or photographer as its creator. For example, documentation held or produced by the V&A, the National Theatre, and the British Library list the entire production team. This means that in order to publicly exhibit these documents institutions have to acquire permission from everyone that contributed to the work. Barbara Clausen discusses this approach by considering Babette Mangolte’s work, an artist and acclaimed photographer of 1960s and ’70s performance in New York. She reflects on Mangolte’s recognition as an artist and her distinguished photographic practice (Clausen, 2014), noting that her records have ‘fed into the cultural memory of an entire decade’ of other artist’s works (Clausen, 2010). Nevertheless, Clausen asserts that despite Mangolte’s contribution, ‘the final choice of which image would be diffused at the time, remained with the artist’ (2014, p. 5-6).

documenting the audience's experience when considering the performative moment or exhibition of a work within different contexts. In particular, different spaces shift the presentation and experience of a work by determining how audiences access it and by regulating the way an audience behaves around the piece (Rees Leahy, 2012). Within the context of this thesis, the most prominent example is the case study of *Speak Bitterness* (2014). As I have analysed throughout this thesis, the embedding of Twitter in the live performance of Forced Entertainment's piece invited a remote online audience to express and communicate its mediated experience. This was in deep contrast to the physical audience, which had to comply with the rules set by the space of the theatre. Lizzie Muller (2008), who examines the documentation of media art installations, also emphasises that the documentation of audience experiences might reveal the interaction, the system and the processes of the work. Muller suggests that this type of documentation is of paramount importance when considering that artworks that utilise new media technologies are more likely to create experiences rather than objects as other visual art forms do (Ibid., p. 3). For Muller the ultimate method for collecting the audience's perspective is by conducting interviews (Ibid., p. 4).

Attesting to the important presence of the audience in the documentation of artworks that are experiences, information scientist Piotr D. Adamczyk (2008) also valorises audience interviews by suggesting that ethnographic methods should be used in human computer interaction (HCI) in order to capture user experience. It is useful to point out here that in contrast to audience-generated content, which is a direct trace of the performance activity, interviews are subsequent reflections on the performance moment. Thus, they are influenced by the background, expertise, and personality of both the interviewer and interviewee as well as the interaction between them (van Saaze, 2010; Beerkens et al., 2013). Despite that these arguments engage with *recordings* of the audience experience rather than its direct traces, they affirm the importance of embracing and reflecting the audience perspective on the archive of performative works. By extent, it could be argued that they also assess audience-generated content as valid, valuable, and essential archivable material.

In participatory, interactive, and immersive performance practices that are digitally enabled, as for instance the case studies of this thesis, the audience's role is more than an embodied ephemeral act that is observed by, yet, another audience – whether live or through documentation. The use of digital technologies engages audiences in actively

producing and consuming content and data.¹⁴⁵ Whether the audience's involvement is entirely digitally enabled (as in *Karen* and *Speak Bitterness*) or it emanates from the mediatisation of the audience's physical movement¹⁴⁶ (as in the case of *Flatland*), audiences are expected to engage with the work in order to experience it fully. In so doing, audiences become *prosumers*. I invoked this concept in chapter 4.4 (p. 121), but I would like to briefly return to it here. Prosumers produce what they consume. By producing digital content or traces, mediated audiences produce for themselves the experience they anticipate. To bring this notion into the context of this thesis, prosumers produce the liveness that the work promises to deliver. If audiences are understood to be not simply participants, but additionally the prosumers of their own live experience – creating the experience they consume – then their activity must be recognized as producing viable performance documents. In addition to providing insights into the unfolding of the piece, the presence of audience-generated traces can articulate, thus, the contribution and presence of the audience in the live unfolding of the work.

7.3.ii. From observational recordings to internal remains

As discussed in chapters 3 and 5, a wide set of material can be performance documents. In chapter 3.5., I explicitly reflected on the fact that in the dominant performance archive, which is associated with institutional practices of collecting visual art, the documents that are considered most crucial are usually photographs and/or videos of the live performance as well as other performative moments – i.e. rehearsals. More rarely, and often only as a result of explicit demands by the artist or particularities of their practice, products of default media are replaced with text-based documents. In this vein, performance documentation consists of evidence that either portray or describe the moment of the live performance or give instructions on how to reactivate it. Props, costumes, critiques, and other tangible traces of a performance might also form part of the documentation where appropriate or available. However, it is the understanding of this thesis that for the institutional archive these are often simply auxiliary documents.

¹⁴⁵ Although content is data, I use both terms so as to include both visual as well as haptic cues.

¹⁴⁶ Under the conceptual umbrella of 'digital labour' (Fuchs, 2013) it could be argued that *Karen* (2015) and *Speak Bitterness* (2014) require the physical involvement of their audiences. Even more so, in both works, the audience-generated content carries information about the time and geolocation of these audience-creators. Although this information might be visible in the documentation or might inform the revisiting of the live moment, it is the physicality of the audience that I would like to emphasise here as a quality that is visible at the time of the live performance – a quality that might directly affect both the individual as well as the collective experience of the live work.

Attention is primarily given to the creative practice, the intentions of the artist, and their viewpoint.

Depending on its agenda and subject matter, every institution follows its own archiving principles. While the British Library collects photographs and videos of performance works, the National Theatre and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) acquire, in moderation, the entire spectrum of performance documents. Irrespective of their differences, all institutions prioritise photographs and videos not only by collecting them, but also by producing them. Similarly, all three performance companies considered in the case studies produce videos of the performative aspects of their works – a practice that, as I have shown, might frequently result in fabricated films. In addition to outlining these pragmatic examples that favour documents produced by default media, the fixation with *seeing* the past is evidenced by the numerous discussions in performance documentation (see chapters 2.1, 3.4., and 5.5). These debates make clear that the photograph and, by extension, other default media, have structured the way that performance is viewed and documented in terms of a dialectic of presence and absence.

The archival and cultural authority of these documents arises out of a combination of three specific factors: their temporal relation to the live moment of performance piece, their authorship, and, by extension, their impartial capturing of the event – these characteristics are, paradoxically, present even when documenting how an event *could* or *would* have played out. Photographs and videos that enter the archive are initially records that are created – or are presented as having been created – in parallel with the very moment of the unfolding of the work. Their relationship to the piece can be contrasted with that of a script for instance, which, although part of the work, is created in advance of the live moment. Likewise, critical reflections and audience feedback postdate the live performance. Visual and audio-visual representations claim their archival value based on their contemporaneity with the work and their ability to retain and reproduce an image of what has disappeared and been lost forever. Such reproductions serve to assuage a certain anxiety over the ephemerality of theatre and performance¹⁴⁷ by making visible the action that has become invisible. These attributes apply to the video documentation created by the companies of the case studies, including the fabricated videos produced for *Flatland* (2015) and *Karen* (2015).

¹⁴⁷ This can be seen, for example, in Phelan's anxiety that documentation destroys performance by changing it into 'something else' (Unmarked 146).

Nevertheless, in reproducing and affirming the primacy of the live moment, which nonetheless unfolded through the mediatisation of participatory, immersive, interactive practices, these videos also indirectly undermine it.

The origin of visual and audio-visual representations of live performance – the fact that they were created by the artist, by a recognised documentarist, or by an official organization, and that they are housed in official and institutional archives – legitimises and accredits these documents, allowing them to be perceived as truthful, authentic and authoritative, providing proof of the occurrence of a past event. In this vein, the informational value of such documents – the facts that they present with regard to a past event – is reinforced by their evidential value. The relationship between the creator or author of the document – whether artist, documentarist, or organisation – and the work itself, therefore, also plays a vital role in valorising the document as archival.

Photographs and videos of the live performance assume two viewpoints: that of the photographer and that of the audience. By depicting the action of the live performance, they aim to reproduce the viewpoint of the initial audience, including in the case of audience-centric works. What they also inevitably do, however, is to present the performance as a closed-off objective event that the audience simply viewed from the exterior as a voyeur. The experience of a live performance remains, of course, a subjective and often intersubjective process. To borrow Gay McAuley's words, performance 'is multi-focused, multi-"voiced", made up of many different sign systems using many different channels of communication', while 'film, video, and photography all impose the single perspective of the camera's eye on this multiplicity, while the camera also "sees" much less than the human eye' (1994, p. 186). In other words, performance as a work combines and integrates a variety of media, including text, sound, image, video and bodily performance. The way that these combinations and integrations are materialised, and the aesthetic result that they produce 'are part of how theatre is understood and defined' (Elleström, 2010, p. 28).¹⁴⁸

Rather than continuing to repeat the narrative of ephemerality that views performance as something that disappears after the live moment, in this thesis I have

¹⁴⁸ Theatre is described by Elleström as extremely multimodal because it integrates different forms of media and Elleström's theory of multimodality distinguishes between basic and qualified media. Chapple and C. Kattenbelt (2006) have also described theatre as a hypermedium 'that incorporates all arts and media' (p. 32).

sought to question the dominant documentation practice of practitioners and institutions to video and photograph live performances for posterity. The attempt to provide an objective or general representation of the performative moment involves making choices over what to record, which position to record it from, and which viewpoint to assume. It equally also excludes other material, other positions and other viewpoints, as, in fact, any archival praxis must do so. Privileging the image – visual and audio-visual representations – created either by the artists themselves, by an institution, or a professional documentarist effectively dismisses variable connections between the different media used in a performance piece. This is particularly relevant in the case of the fabricated videos created by Blast Theory and Extant, which not only show the perspective of an imaginary audience member, but subsequently also result in the creation of a new artefact. For McAuley, photographs are less complete than a video; they allude to the fragmentary nature of the live performance as they provide a partial perspective of the work (1994, p. 187). Still, archives that include photographs created only by artists and institutions, especially archives that could have embraced some audience-generated traces as a way of showing the multivalent perspectives of audiences, follow the same representational logic as the video.

It is not the intention of this thesis to invalidate photographs and videos. These exact same types of documents can also be audience-generated traces as, for example, in Marina Abramović's 2010 performance *The Artist is Present* (2010) and the documentation project of Elena Pérez (2014) on which I elaborated in chapter 2.2. In fact, the recent studies of Bay-Cheng (2012,), Chatzichristodoulou (2014), Pérez (2014), and Giannachi (2016), which I discussed in chapter 2 and employed throughout the thesis, explore such cases. What I deem necessary to highlight here are the limitations of prioritizing default media over all other types of records. I, furthermore, stress the importance of recognizing that audience-generated content can be a vital documentational layer that can reinforce rather than unsettle the archival intentions and perspectives of both artists and institutions.

In photographs, as in videos, emphasis is placed on the performance as a work that unfolded in the past, with little to no attention given to the audiences' engagement, despite this being an essential component of works that are contingent on their mediatization. When such documents do acknowledge the audience, they do so from the perspective of, yet another, observer – as if the audience was performing for another

audience. As I examined in page 191 video can be helpful when exploring ‘the experience it [the work] evokes in the audience’ (Dekker, 2018, p. 43). However, this does not register the non-linear character of participatory, immersive, and interactive performances. Digital technologies may return the participant-audiences’ contribution back to them by producing an object – e.g. *Karen’s* (2015) report – that they can take with them. However, the relationships formed between the participants, the digital technology and the artists are deeper than what can be observed through a default medium. As the traces of the mediatized activity itself, audience-generated traces offer future users of the archive a view from *within* the performance moment, demonstrating the activity of the individual audience-performer, including, where appropriate, their personal experience, impressions, physical journey, view and so forth. Audience-generated traces hold information about their creator’s mediatised actions, which differ according to the platform and the structure of each piece.

Admittedly, not all works that produce audience-generated traces need to preserve such data as part of their archive. Neither does it mean that all audience-generated traces are needed in the archive. What I maintain is that artists, institutions, future researchers and, by extension, the audiences of the live performance and the users of the archived documents will benefit from the recording of at least a select part of it. As Hélia Pereira Marçal argues in relation to participatory performances, the ‘mechanical gesture that populates the entire performance can only be conveyed through understanding its execution in bodily practice’ (2017, p. 102). On this respect, audience-generated traces can provide insight on multiple levels. Discussing the long years project *Making the Invisible Visible*, Hook et al. write, for example, that ‘documentation could be used to help participants remember and reflect upon what they had done, learned and experienced, and how they had changed during the series’ (2015, p. 2587). In other words, audience-generated traces could be used as a way of encouraging participants to further identify, comprehend, and reflect on their own experience and, perhaps, the effects it had on them. Such documentation could, moreover, help artists reflect on their own practice from other viewpoints, as it provides the means to understand how participants engaged with and responded to the work. Audience-generated traces produced during durational performance works could also illustrate changes in the participants’ engagement. Similarly, when collected from various iterations or activations of the same work, they could shed light on the different experiences of

varying audiences and show how changes to the context and structure of the performance affects the work.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, and particularly in chapter 4 where I analysed the live performances of the three case studies, I have demonstrated the ways that digital technologies and audience-generated content are shifting the relationship between live performance and its documentation. Taking this organic relationship into consideration, I questioned how audience-generated content might be altering traditional ways of documenting and of archiving theatre and performance when it is examined as digital traces of the live performance. Despite this potentiality, the reality is that few artists have the capacity to work with the digital traces that their works leave behind and, even more so, to experiment with how to archive them in meaningful ways. As this thesis has extensively evidenced and argued, the design and the execution of performance documentation occurs, more often than not, in accordance with the conventional structures and systems of institutional performance archives. Notwithstanding the emergence of digital and networked media that offer new recording features, the institutional archive of theatre and performance remains a place of arrest and “stillness”, as Giannachi rightly claims (2017). While experimentations with digital and networked technologies as dramaturgical tools prompt a reconsideration of how documentation operates in the now of the live performance, they also invite a consideration of how the traces of their mediatised interactions can be preserved for posterity.

This thesis has demonstrated an unease with regard to the archiving of audience-generated content. Its aim has been to explore how practitioners document projects whose live unfolding and audience experience build upon audience-generated content. For doing so, it looked at the function of audience-generated content during the live moment of three theatre and performance works (chapter 4). The thesis then examined whether and how current documentation and by proxy archiving practices reflect the theoretical assumptions that valorise audience-generated content (chapter 5).¹⁴⁹ Despite the fact that the practitioners and the institutions that this research has engaged with consider such material as the digital traces of the live performance, the thesis found that they are also reluctant to include it in the official – archived – documentation of their works. By reflecting on the discussions with Tim Etchells (Forced Entertainment), Nick Tandavanitj (Blast Theory), and Maria Oshodi (Extant) as well as with Erin Lee

¹⁴⁹ In so doing, the thesis converged discussions from the field of performance documentation (Bay-Cheng, 2012, 2016; Chatzichristodoulou, 2014; Pérez, 2014; Giannachi, 2016), new media studies (Beerkens et al, 2012; Dekker, 2014, 2018; van Saaze, 2015; Muller, 2018).

(National Theatre) Ramona Riedzewski (Victoria and Albert Museum), and Stephen Cleary (British Library Sound Archive), I deduced that the neglect of audience-generated content is a consequence of a lack of available discursive and practical frameworks. In particular, chapter 6 mapped a variety of technical, organisational, and conceptual challenges that problematise the experimentation with archival structures that could support the preservation of audience-generated content. The importance and the value of audience-generated content is evident through its use in many areas of study, including politics (Rainie et al., 2012), healthcare (Reavley and Pilkington, 2014), and business (Gopaldas, 2014) (Sloan, Quan-Haase, 2017, p. 14), as well as a few performance documentation projects (Benford and Giannachi, 2010; Pérez, 2014). These last projects, including Dr Adam Spier's experimentation with the data collected from *Flatland* (2015), that are frequently driven by artists and supported both intellectually and financially by researchers and their grants, demonstrate the potentialities that audience-generated traces have with regards to acknowledging the contribution of the audience.

In the everyday world, user-generated content, or else digital traces, is 'an increasingly important resource that helps internet companies know users, gain insights about customer preferences and design news products and markets' (Flyverbom and Murray, 2018, p. 9). Following this fact, the benefits of archiving audience-generated traces can be easily associated with the targets that are driven by the continuous prosperity that artists are asked to achieve by the creative economy, as all the three case studies' practitioners have shown with the most prominent example being that of Forced Entertainment. Without omitting the importance of artists to provide evidence of the outreach of their works to their sponsors, it is instrumental to note that this market-driven approach that can - and has so far - obscure the potentialities of audience-generated traces as archived performance documents. In order to call attention to the broader archival value of audience-generated content, I analysed in chapter 7 the full spectrum of its capacities and potentials in the aftermath of live performance. Additionally, I looked into how it might contribute to a theatre and performance work's documentation so that the piece can become an expanded artwork in time. Ultimately, I maintain here that audience-generated content can be an invaluable starting point for acknowledging the audience as an active performer and documentarist. Audiences have been framed as partakers and performers in works where they are asked to 'co-produce by doing more than watching, or by augmenting the productivity of watching' as

performers of their own experience (2016, p. 3). When such works use digital technologies as dramaturgical tools to facilitate such engagement they also document their audiences. In so doing, they have the advantage of addressing arguments around the un-traceability of the audiences' involvement in live performance; they can become the means for examining the documentation of various types of participation in theatre and performance.

The principal lens that has guided the argument of the thesis has been the notion of the trace as delineated by Paul Ricoeur (1986, 2004). This philosophical perspective has been coupled with the computational term of the digital trace (Ellison et al., 2006, 2011; Krämer and Winter, 2008) as well as with the notion of waste in net art conservation (Dekker, 2018) and new media studies (Shanks, 2008; Giannachi, 2016). The concept of the trace has aided, on the one hand, the resemblance of audience-generated content with the tangible traces of performance works such as props and costumes. On the other hand, it has assisted with describing such material as equivalent to archaeological remains, which by nature solicit a process of re-assembling in order to reveal information about their origin. This holistic concept of the trace has ultimately helped frame audience-generated content as paramount, fragile, and easily neglected digital fragments of the live performance.

This thesis has further argued that audience-generated traces provide the connecting tissue between the different media used in a performance piece; they offer insights into how the audience perceived a live performance and what its affective response was. Thus, it has demonstrated how the digital liveness of a work can be founded on the mediatisation of its audiences' experience materialised. As a consequence, the thesis has maintained that including audience-generated traces in the archive of a theatre and performance piece acknowledges the important role played by the audience during the live performance and, additionally, affords new potential avenues for revisiting the past event through the production of new artworks and software. Ultimately, audience-generated traces might fulfil a re-contextualisation of performance documentation by shifting the attention away from what has been lost, made absent, and unseen to that which the archival process produces.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ This can be seen, for instance, in Phelan's anxiety that documentation destroys performance by changing it into "something else" (Unmarked 146).

Most importantly, in this thesis I have worked around a particular set of case studies. These works undoubtedly have their own limitations and affordances as well as their special challenges, which are not shared by every art/performance work that has similar characteristic or by all artists working in the field. Even more so, as I have already discussed, audience-generated content might come in different forms – photographic, audio-visual, text-based, numerical, etc. – which can have various connections to the work. Whilst I selected *Speak Bitterness* (2014), *Flatland* (2015), and *Karen* (2015) as examples, it has not been my intention to generalise the outcomes of their examination. I have insisted that the storing and archiving of audience-generated content, including whether this should include everything or simply a portion of the data, depends on each individual project and its nuanced multimodal conventions. I, therefore, conclude this thesis by suggesting that there is space for further research both practically and conceptually in relation to the arguments that I have presented. Drawing from the challenges that the interviews have highlighted I focus on the need to change the funding policies for theatre and performance and future actions that could aid the archiving of audience-generated content and its research even further.

8.1. Supporting documentation projects

The companies that developed the case studies which are examined in this thesis as well as the archiving institutions are all public funded organisations (see Figure 6.10). At the same time, throughout the thesis I have discussed the projects *Riders Have Spoken* (2010) and *CloudPad* (2011) by Blast Theory as examples of how audience-generated content could respectively be presented at audiences of performance documentation and could be archived (chapter 5.2.ii.). Both of these projects were interrelated and funded by Horizon and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.¹⁵¹ Additionally, I have referred in this thesis to other archiving projects such as that of Wafaa Bilal's *Domestic Tension* (2007), which was part of the broader archiving endeavour *Net Art Anthology* conducted by the publicly funded US organisation Rhizome (chapter 2.2.i.). This brief synopsis of the financial support that organisations and projects receive highlights the importance of funding bodies with regard to archiving. Experimenting with the

¹⁵¹ For more information about the project *Riders Have Spoken: Designing and Evaluating an Archive for Replaying Interactive Performances* visit <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/riders-have-spoken/> and <https://gabriellagiannachi.wordpress.com/2010/11/25/the-development-of-a-cloud-archive-for-blast-theorys-rider-spoke/>. More information can also be found in Chamberlain et al., 2011; Oppermann et al., 2011; Giannachi et al., 2010.

management of different forms of documents requires a concentration of resources and labour that is frequently inaccessible to practitioners. Within this context, arts funding can allow practitioners to find room for archival projects, projects that might not bring in any immediate revenue, but that ensure that evidence of all aspects of a work remain for posterity.

Analysing, interpreting, and managing born-digital files requires building new software. Archiving audience-generated content in this way demands allocating time, sourcing the appropriate experts, and finding the necessary technical equipment and funds; Extant is a representative case in this regard. I have noted in page 148 that Maria Oshodi acknowledged that Extant is rather ignorant not only about audience-generated content, but also about documentation, record management, and archiving processes. She highlighted that the company lacks the know-how in relation to archiving and preserving its works' documents. Most importantly for this thesis, she emphasised that it lacks the appropriate knowledge that is required when working with data. Under these observations, it is unsurprising that the company relies on its scientific collaborators for preserving any data-like material while it allows the technological remains of its past works (e.g. *The Question*, 2010) to deteriorate. This approach is also relevant to Blast Theory, who collaborate with the Mixed Reality Lab for developing the software of their works and archiving projects. It could additionally be argued the same applied to Forced Entertainment on the basis that it sources a marketing company in order to analyse its audience-generated data. Ultimately, the practitioners and the performance collection specialists that were interviewed within the context of this thesis have all noted that there are untrained in audience-generated content and big data analysis and interpretation. Such a lack of knowledge, in addition to the insufficient funds for outsourcing any technological expertise, tends to result in carrying on with classical documentation methods without questioning their appropriateness or the consequences of disposing potentially useful documents in relation to a particular performance piece.

Jen Harvie discusses the impact of policies to artistic practices. She argues that 'political, economic and social mandates to foster creative economies are increasingly casting art practice as economic practice and the artist as entrepreneur' (Harvey, 2013, p. 62). Referencing the Arts Council England's document *Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy* (2011) at length, she finds that the expectation that artists be entrepreneurial harms culture in three ways: 'One, it insists that art prioritizes self-

interest and individualism. Two, it requires art to acquiesce to creative destruction as an apparently inevitable by-product of innovation... And three, it obliges art relentlessly to pursue productivity, permanent growth and profit' (Ibid., p. 63). Being profitable allows artists to work independently from the state's artistic inspirations – I discussed that the involvement of Nesta in *Flatland* (2015) dictated the making phase of the piece as well as the dissemination of its findings. However, it also drives artists to develop more sellable work, which might lead to neglecting the other cultural values embedded in their practices. For Harvie, promoting such economic values also encourages self-interested and profit-driven attitudes towards art which intensifies inequality.

In the UK's current economic climate artists are increasingly asked to become more and more entrepreneurial. A strong example is the funding application from Arts Council England, whose resources come from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) – the government body responsible for the promotion of arts across the UK. One of the requirements for artists applying for receiving more than £100,000 is to submit a detailed audience development and marketing plan.¹⁵² This is intended to help artists increase their income (Arts Council England, 2018, p. 4). Included in the marketing plan is market research: 'gathering information about audiences to help you focus your plan and reach as many people as possible. This could be through surveys, focus groups or even using academic research as a guide' (Ibid.). When writing these plans, artists are requested to include their audiences' views about their works. These requirements apply to digitally enabled projects such as immersive/interactive arts and game-based art.

As publicly funded practitioners by the Arts Council of England, Forced Entertainment, Extant, and Blast Theory are obliged to frequently present their entrepreneurial practices and their progress in terms of the inclusivity, access, personalisation, and sociality of their works. They must provide evidence of how they intend to use their received public funds, including 'evidence of excellence [...] and artistic assessments', as well as to self-evaluate their progress every three months ¹⁵³ (Arts Council England, 2018, p. 17). In order to meet the criteria of their agreements, Forced Entertainment, Blast Theory, and Extant must also demonstrate the projects they develop each year. By embedding digital technologies into their projects, they ensure

¹⁵² https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Information_sheets_Audience_development_marketing_Project_grants_170518.pdf.

¹⁵³ <http://dh2011abstracts.stanford.edu/xtf/view?docId=tei/ab-154.xml;query=;brand=default>.

that they can capitalise on the mediatisation of their audiences and include participation numbers in their reports to funders. Audience-generated content is analysed and reported in their audience development schemes as a way of supporting their funding documentation. In this sense, audience-generated content is used in sponsorship applications, it enables the development of ongoing marketing and communication strategies, and, less frequently, it allows practitioners to develop research partnerships. Despite these implementations, which can be a side-primary value of audience-generated content, practitioners do not have the means to catalogue and preserve audience-generated content long-term as this thesis has evidenced. scholars and archiving institutions have equally highlighted the importance of finding the resources and the funding for supporting projects which experiment with the archiving of digital information.¹⁵⁴

In chapter 7, I emphasised that as material remains of the audience engagement with(in) the live performance, audience-generated content might provide additional perspectives and layers of information. Such layers could potentially be used to create a dialogue between the intended unfolding of the work and its actual happening (Jones and Muller 2008) by coexisting with photographs and videos. Practitioners' desires and efforts to ensure that their work is remembered and registered within art history provides a strong impetus for the documentation of their projects. However, their everyday concerns lie with progression of their creative careers and their survival; experimenting with the composition of their documentation is more often than not a matter of secondary importance. This is not to say that practitioners are uninterested in leaving behind a comprehensive legacy and meaningful archives. On the contrary, they spend time, energy, and part of their resources – when possible - in producing and gathering material, revisiting it, and sometimes even reworking it. That the documents of a performance piece can comprise its archive is celebrated; yet, they are also a derivative result of a recording process that is conducted by professionals and is parallel to the live performance. Unless artists are provided with the financial means and the technical resources – often through collaborations with experts – their documentation and archiving processes will remain uncontested despite the variety of forms that their

¹⁵⁴ During their creation of a 'documentation model' for Emio Greco and PC's *Extra Dry* 1999, Vivian van Saaze and Annet Dekker (2013) highlighted the lack of technical resources and, more specifically, of funding for enabling the next step of their concept: a multimedia and online technical interface. Additionally, in 2007 the director of the Metropolitan Museum stated during the international conference Issues in Conservation Documentation that 'what is really left is for us to come up with [are] the will and the resources to begin the process' (Montebello in Dekker, 2014, p. 101).

work takes. In this context, public funding plays a significant role – it can either be a catalyst for development and experimentation or a deterrent.

Whilst I passionately advocate the value of documenting the audience experience, I also want to draw the attention to a cautionary postscript. Developments in technology – including social, portable, and locative media – offer new opportunities for the audience’s voice and opinions to be documented. However, high-quality experiential documentation will always need significant hands-on production and curation in order to be searchable and usable (Muller, 2014, p. 200). Whilst these opportunities deserve close attention, experimenting with new forms and developing new models requires significant resources and funding.

8.2. Documentation models

In chapter 1.1., I analysed that for Foucault (1969) and Derrida (1996) the process of archiving something determines that thing as important and valuable to such an extent that its archiving becomes a necessity. What is selected and kept for posterity is what the creators of the archive perceive as being important. Equally, what is kept in the archive is also what its future audience will perceive as important. Under this consideration, I argue that resisting the archiving of audience-generated content is based on an implicit evaluation of established performance documentation and archival processes as adequate for supporting practices that use digital technologies in order to solicit a type performance from their audiences as well as the accelerating processes of mediatisation that these depend on. This results in a devaluing of documentational and creative methods, which might originate in the traces of that embedding of emerging digital technologies as dramaturgical performance tools, as ways of accessing the past or looking into the inner workings of a performance work. Certainly, the agenda of institutions, including their capacity to cater for particular types of documents as informed by their need to produce experiences, is central to this understanding as are artists’ resources, time, knowledge, intent, and project specific contracts. Under this argumentation, this thesis maintains that audience-generated content conceptually challenges performance practitioners and institutions because it manifests itself as the direct opposite of their dominant documentation practices, which attempt to present the live performance only through visual representations. Understandably, in order to start experimenting with archival models and finding solutions to current obstacles,

audience-generated content must be acknowledged for its archival merit, potentialities, and capacities – a pursuit undertaken in this chapter.

As discussed in chapter 1, ‘the archivization produces as much as it records the event’ (Derrida, 1996, p. 17). Because the process of archiving something reconstitutes it in a permanent form, whatever is excluded is expected to be eventually destroyed or at least forgotten. As precarious entities derived from equally precarious environments, the audience-generated content of networked technologies is no exception to this rule. Although audience-generated content is generally considered material that is permanently stored, its long-term existence is uncertain as it depends on a plurality of factors. Nevertheless, Derrida emphasises that ‘archival technology... [determines] the very institution of the archivable event’ (Ibid., p 18). In other words, what can be archived are only items that the structure of the archive can support. Beyond the ways in which the form of the archive determines how the past is understood and presented, the very process of retaining something shapes its discursive futures. The structure of the archive and even which collection the archive will be held in when housed by an institution, all dictate how a potential document will be dealt with by archivists and by those who wish to use it as a source of knowledge.

Recent years have seen some interest in the development of documentation models for theatre and performance that envision to apply to all types of practices, including dance, participatory, delegated, and digitally enabled live performance. Art institutions and organisations often take the lead in setting up these research projects.¹⁵⁵ Such models are concerned with the entire lifespan of a performance piece and are influenced by the agenda of the museum that leads the investigation (e.g. Tate). Large initiatives have actively contributed to research around performance documentation by producing best-practice models, however, they have mostly standardised their results based on institutional needs. In the context of smaller organisations or artists’ documentation strategies these processes are often difficult to follow. Even more so, the variety of performance practices and their individual needs, including the different types of

¹⁵⁵ The most recent initiatives include the three-year Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research’s *Network for Conservation of Contemporary Art Research* (NeCCAR 2012-2014) and Tate’s projects *Performance and Performativity* (2011-2012) and *Collecting the Performative* (2012-2014). The latter concluded with the development of *The Live List* (2014), which is a list of questions relating to the parameters of the work, its relationship with the institution or collection, its production, its audience, and even questions of documentation. Within the context of her doctoral research and following Tate’s list, Acatia Finbow developed the *Live Art Documentation Template* (2016). This was driven by the ‘different value perspectives held by the different departments within Tate who might use it’ (2017, p. 264).

audience-generated content and the various ways that it relates to the work, requires that we develop, experiment with, and analyse different archival interfaces. That the documentation and archiving of performance works that leave behind audience-generated content should be project-based can be seen as a limitation. Indeed, this is relevant to the process of developing a general model that could be used for interpreting and presenting every performance artwork. Interpretation and analysis of audience-generated content, however, are processes pertinent to the work of historians (Foucault, 1969; Derrida, 1995; Ricoeur, 2008 [1998]) and archaeologists (Shanks, 2008) rather than of documentarists and archivists. Thus, I conclude this thesis by highlighting that further research on the archiving and preservation of audience-generated content is needed before delving into the ways of presenting it.

8.3. Final note

Archived videos and photographs taken by artists, professional videographers, or the institution that hosted a live performance convey the authority of the specialist. This authority is established through their link to the artwork or their conceptual expertise in a specific artform and its documentation. At the same time, self-archivization¹⁵⁶ arises out of the practitioner's choice to manage and control their own reputation and legacy; an entrepreneurial act, which complies with the expectations of entrepreneurial economy. The archive is a stage upon which value systems can take shape, and in the case of audience-generated content this comes at the expense of the participant. Since, as I have shown in chapters 1, 2, and 6, the archive is a means of knowledge production, the absence of audience-generated content from the archives of performance works that depended on it leads to the omission of valuable information. Echoing Ian Robertson, one might say that audience-generated content is a form of documentation 'from below' (2008). Such practices build counter-hegemonic perspectives based on the intimate and unacknowledged engagement of the audience, an audience which is integral in the production of the work's unfolding and meaning.

In researching project-specific reasons relating to the archiving of audience-generated content a number of questions have been raised. These include questions

¹⁵⁶ It is worth remembering that the majority of practitioners' documentations are produced by themselves, though there are instances in which they collaborate with institutions such as the Live Art Development Agency, Tate Research, or the British Library and academic departments such as the Mixed Reality Lab (University of Nottingham).

regarding how and when audience-generated content should be shared, and who should have access to the raw files (professional and/or public users). This thesis also suggests that audience-generated content has the potential to become the foundation for new work through programming, or for new archival models and systems. What issues should then be taken into consideration in relation to privacy, policy, ethics, and resource allocation? Such questions become even more pressing in an era in which online corporations build their wealth upon their users' generated data. Perhaps theatre and performance and its strategies of documentation can become a means of resistance to dataveillance and the market exploitation of big data. While this may sound futuristic it is imperative to consider how audience-generated content is stored, managed, archived, and used as well as how it is controlled and accessed.

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/50faf548e4b000014e7843f0/t/5115cae6e4b0a31c035d8d31/1360382694962/SWSWorkbook.pdf> (Accessed online 29 Oct. 2018).

Appendix

Illustrations

Chapter 4



Figure 4.1. Screenshot from Forced Entertainment's performance *Speak Bitterness* at the Hebbel-Am-Ufer, Berlin on October 18th 2014 (Forced Entertainment (2015) *Speak Bitterness (clip) Berlin, 2014*. [video] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgwAQ_-VwWY [Accessed 20 Sep. 2019]).

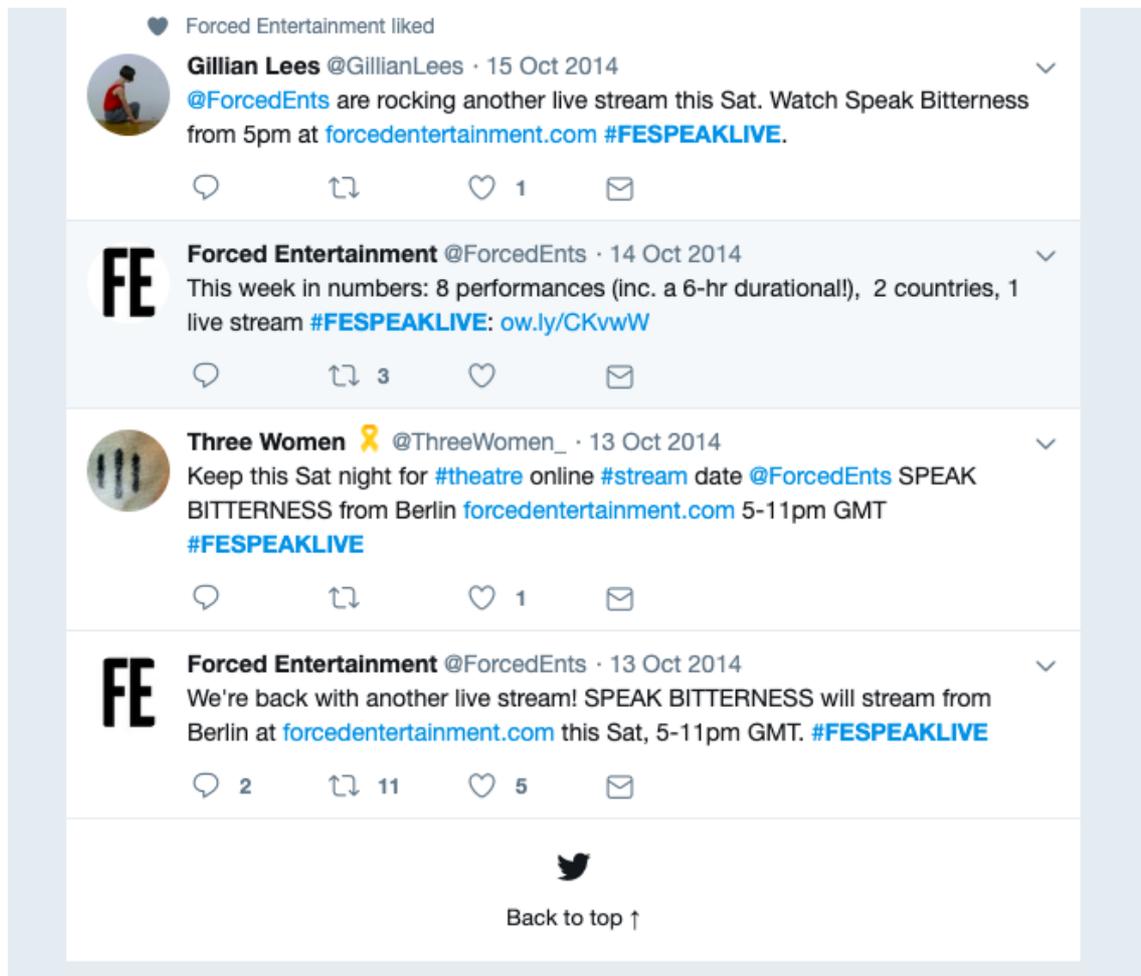


Figure 4.2. Screenshot of #fespeaklive (Twitter [Accessed 15 January 2016]).

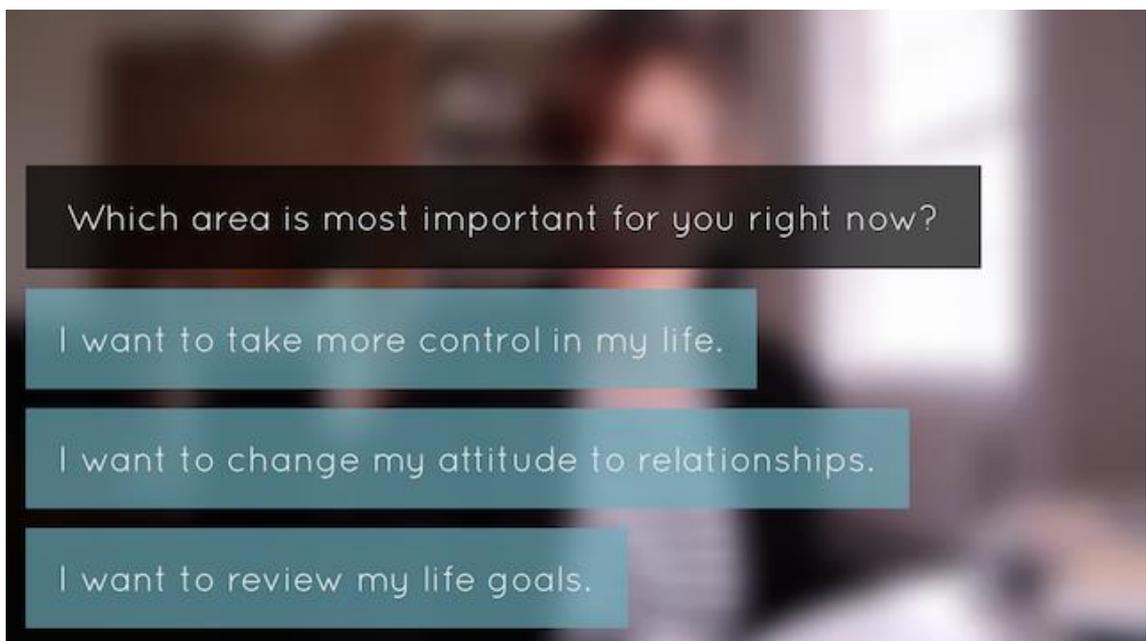


Figure 4.3. Screenshot from the multiple questionnaire of *Karen* (Blast Theory, *Karen*, 2015).

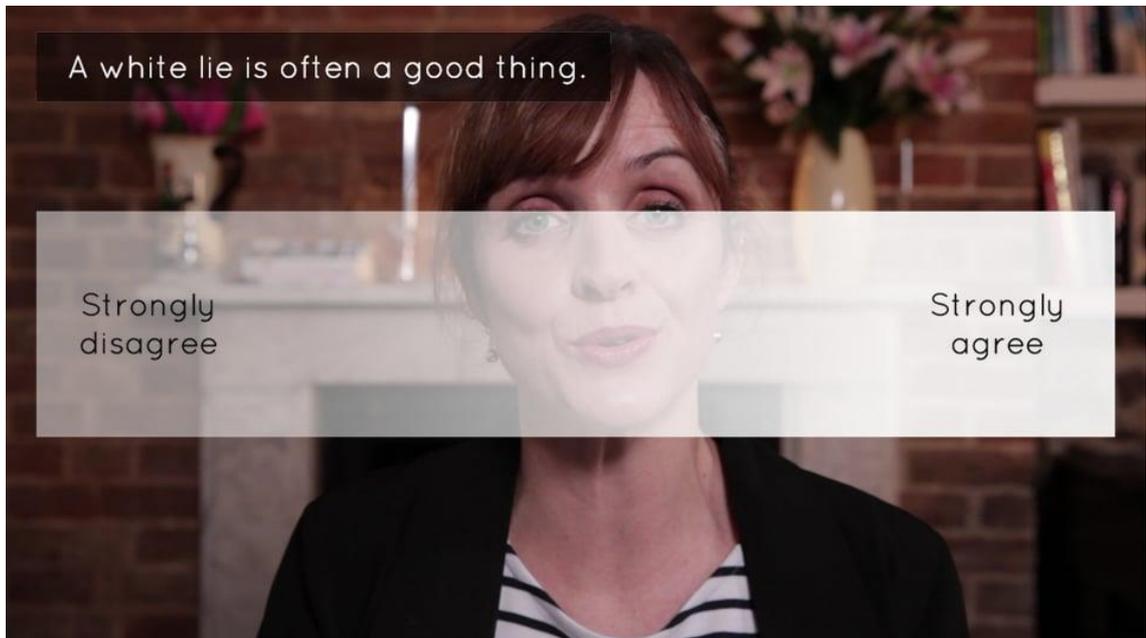


Figure 4.4. Screenshot from the questionnaire of *Karen* (Blast Theory, *Karen*, 2015).



Figure 4.5. The Elder Square explains his mission to participants in *Flatland* (Blast Theory (n.d). *Karen* [video] Available at: <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/karen/> [Accessed 20 Sep. 2019]).



Figure 4.6. Training participants to use the Animotus before entering *Flatland* (Extant, [online] Available at: <http://flatland.org.uk/gallery/> [Accessed 20 Sep. 2019]).



Figure 4.7. Audience member in a section of the *Flatland* environment (Spiers, 2018).

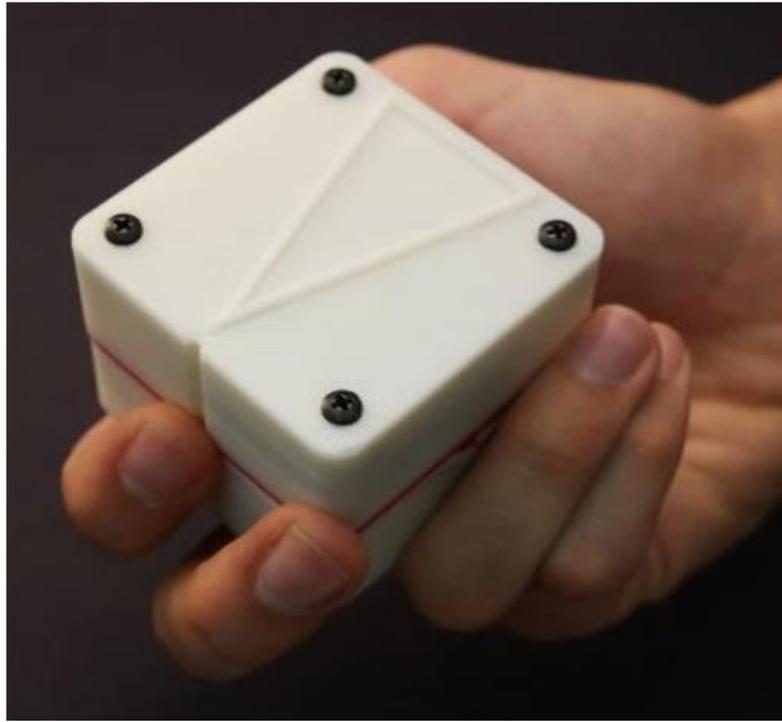


Figure 4.8. The Animotus held in a user's hand (Spiers, 2016b).

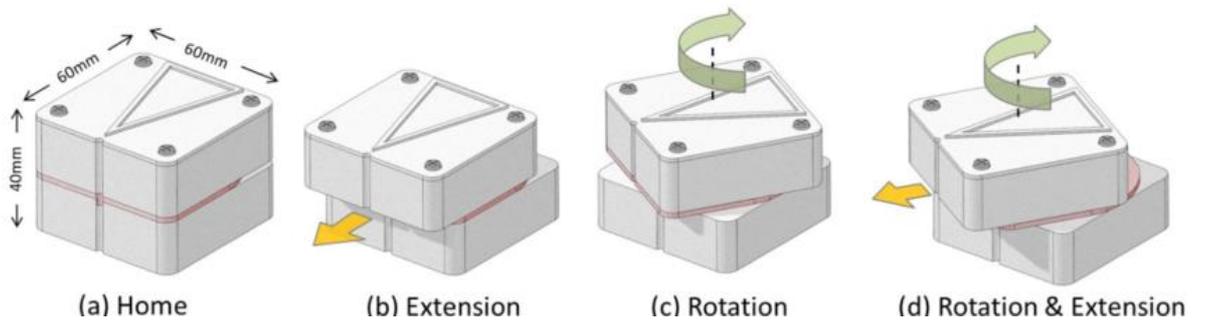


Figure 4.9. Articulation of the haptic device via rotation and extension DOF (Spiers, 2016b).



Figure 5.1. Nick Tandavanitj in front of the archive of Blast Theory, February 8, 2019 (© Georgia Kolokythopoulou).

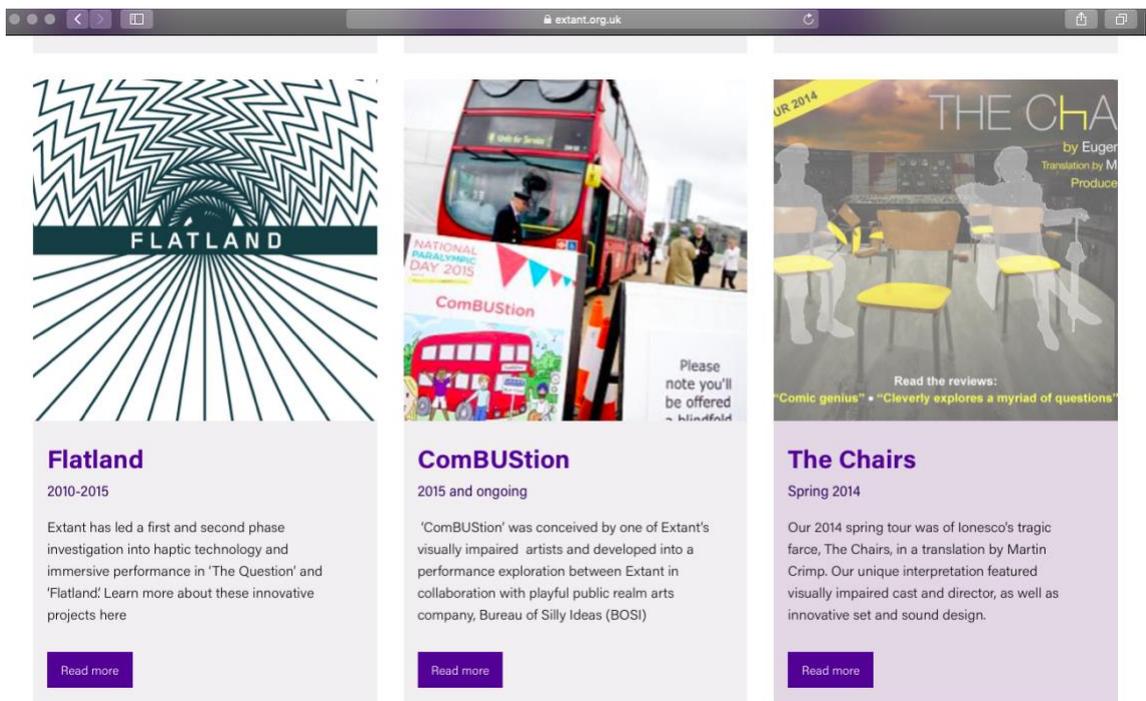


Figure 5.2. Screenshot of the Productions section of the website of Extant.

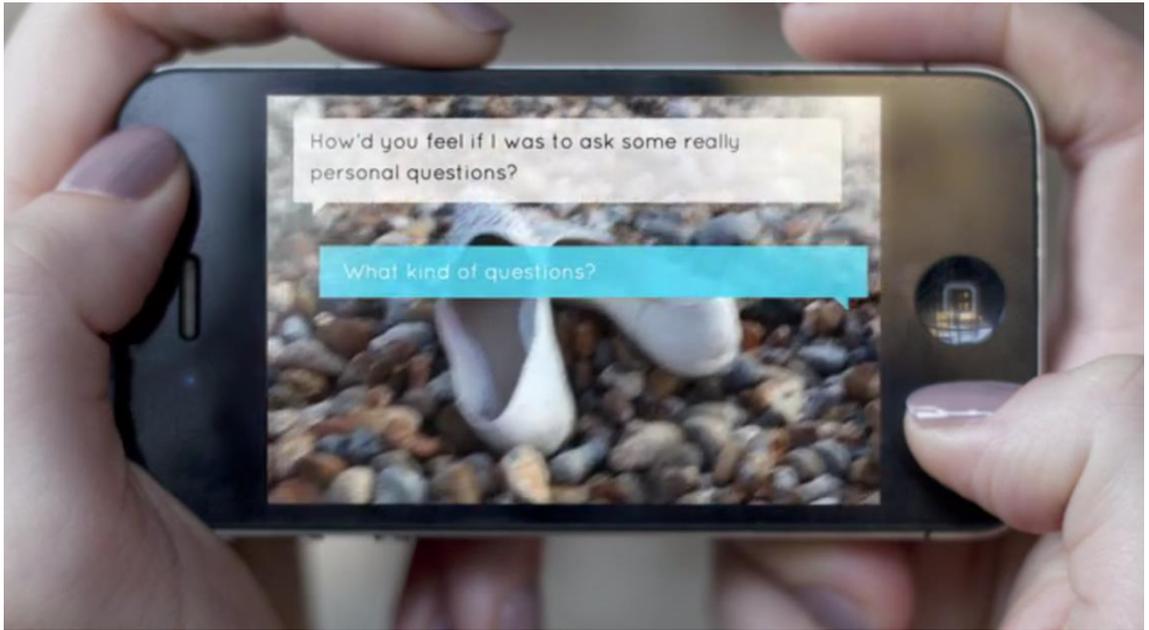


Figure 6.1. Screenshot from *Karen's* documentation video (Blast Theory (n.d). *Karen* [video] Available at: <https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/karen/> [Accessed 20 Sep. 2019]).

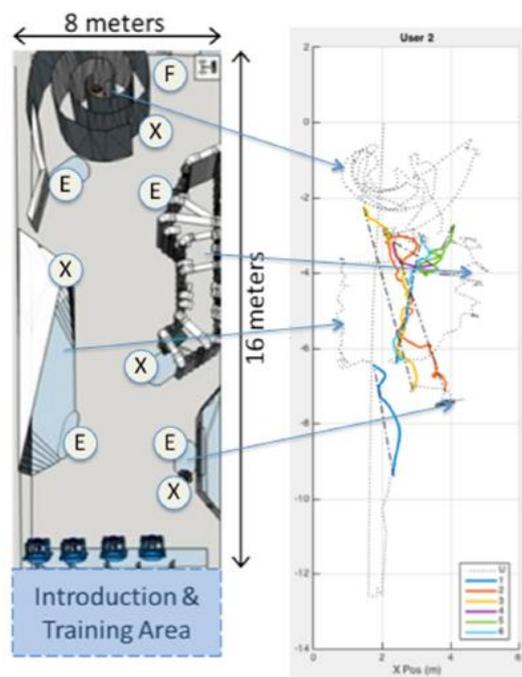


Figure 6.2. An over-head view of the performance space (left) and the path a participant took through the space (right) (Wiseman et al., 2017, p. 6).

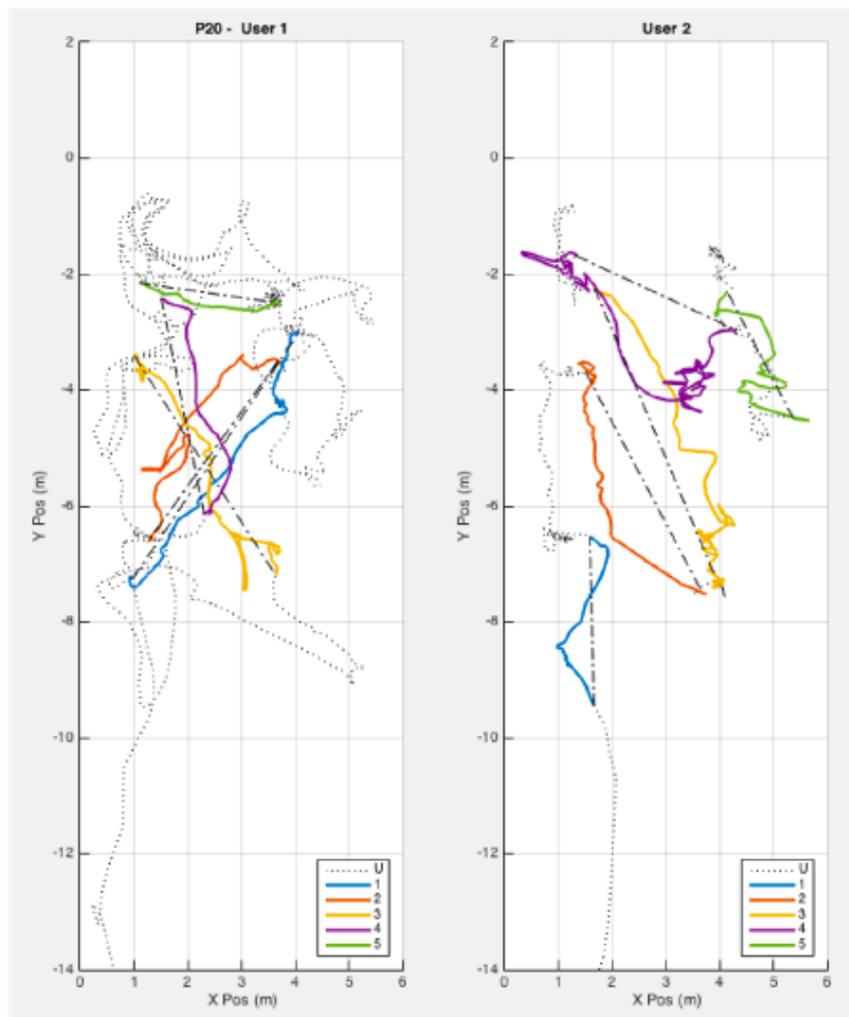


Figure 6.3. The paths of two different participants within *Flatland* (Wiseman et al., 2017, p. 10).

```

{
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    {
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      "sum": 4,
      "questions": [
        {
          "name": "MR02",
          "text": "I try to think good thoughts no matter how badly I feel.",
          "value": 2
        },
        {
          "name": "MR01",
          "text": "Although I'm sometimes sad, I mostly have an optimistic outlook.",
          "value": 2
        }
      ]
    },
    {
      "name": "KscaleFeel",
      "sum": 6,
      "questions": [
        {
          "name": "FeelT5",
          "text": "I'm worn out.",
          "value": 2
        },
        {
          "name": "FeelT4",
          "text": "Yes - let's get going!",
          "value": 2
        },
        {
          "name": "FeelT2",
          "text": "Fine",
          "value": 2
        }
      ]
    },
    {
      "name": "GratefulEngage",
      "sum": 2,
      "questions": [
        {
          "name": "GratefulFeel",
          "text": "I don't know what to feel.",
          "value": 0
        },
        {
          "name": "GratefulDo",
          "text": "Yes.",
          "value": 1
        },
        {
          "name": "GratefulReminder",
          "text": "Don't worry, I'll remember.",
          "value": 0
        },
        {
          "name": "GratefulAsk",

```

Figure 6.4. Screenshot of the 'scales' section of the raw data of Georgia Kolokythopoulou's interaction with *Karen*.

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    },
  ],
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      "time": 1487684894,
      "id": 1,
      "historyType": "startSession"
    },
    {
      "time": 1487685014,
      "historyType": "endSession",
      "id": 1
    },
    {
      "time": 1487689222,
      "id": 2,
      "historyType": "startSession"
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    {
      "time": 1487689537,
      "historyType": "endSession",
      "id": 2
    },
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      "time": 1487750767,
      "id": 3,
      "historyType": "startSession"
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    {
      "time": 1487751128,
      "historyType": "endSession",
      "id": 3
    },
    {
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      "historyType": "startSession"
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    {
      "time": 1487807742,
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      "id": 4
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      "historyType": "startSession"
    },
    {
      "time": 1487879222,
      "id": 6,
      "historyType": "startSession"
    }
  ],
}
```

Figure 6.5. Screenshot of the ‘sessions’ section of the raw data of Georgia Kolokythopoulou’s interaction with *Karen*.

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],
"geo": [
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    "lng": -0.09574600011742562,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:15:05.742Z",
    "timestamp": 1455884106
  },
  {
    "lat": 51.50529035194276,
    "lng": -0.0946429229163155,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:27:58.786Z",
    "timestamp": 1455884879
  },
  {
    "lat": 51.512482952483815,
    "lng": -0.0932622797728844,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:29:44.067Z",
    "timestamp": 1455884984
  },
  {
    "lat": 51.50471902651911,
    "lng": -0.08691725844716205,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:30:25.921Z",
    "timestamp": 1455885026
  },
  {
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    "lng": -0.09287170733886733,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:31:09.013Z",
    "timestamp": 1455885069
  },
  {
    "lat": 51.504978526188516,
    "lng": -0.08760774985364975,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:33:55.158Z",
    "timestamp": 1455885235
  },
  {
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    "lng": -0.09176893141172603,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:34:51.119Z",
    "timestamp": 1455885291
  },
  {
    "lat": 51.5071292716693,
    "lng": -0.09086592983225808,
    "date": "2016-02-19T12:35:32.927Z",
    "timestamp": 1455885333
  }
],
```

Figure 6.6. Screenshot of the ‘geo’ section of the raw data of Georgia Kolokythopoulou’s interaction with *Karen*.

Personal identification information

We may collect personal identification information from Users in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, when Users register in the App, respond to a survey, fill out a form, and in connection with other activities, services, features or resources we make available in our App. Users may be asked for, as appropriate, a name and email address. Users can always refuse to supply personal identification information, which may prevent them from engaging in certain App related activities.

Non-personal identification information

We may collect non-personal identification information about Users whenever they interact with our App. Non-personal identification information may include the type of device, the time a User accesses the app, technical information about the App's use, as well as User response to psychological, behavioural and other types of feedback data. We will collect non-personal information, such as geo-location from Users, only if they allow access to such information in their phone settings.

How we use collected information

We may collect and use Users personal information for the following purposes:

- o To personalise the User experience: we may use User information to understand how Users use the services and resources provided in our App and to customise User experience of our products and services.
- o To improve our App: we may use User feedback to improve our products and services.
- o To send periodic emails: we may use the email address to send User information and updates. It may also be used to respond to their inquiries, questions, and/or other requests. If the User decides to opt-in to our mailing list, they will receive emails that may include company news, updates, related product or service information, etc. If at any time the User would like to unsubscribe from receiving future emails, we include unsubscribe instructions at the bottom of each email.

We may collect and use Users non-personal information for the following purposes:

- To understand how our App is used: we may use information in the aggregate to understand how Users as a group use the services and resources provided on our App.
- To do research: we may use anonymised data for researching User journeys and interactions, as well as self-report psychological and behavioural information. We may share this information with App research partners, funding partners and at future conferences and presentations on an ongoing basis.

Figure 6.7. The Privacy Policy embedded in *Karen* (Blast Theory, *Karen*, 2015).

Age range	
20–34	43%
35–49	40%
50–64	15%
Over 65	2%

Gender	
Male	46%
Female	54%

Figure 6.8. Table of *Flatland* participants' age range (van der Linden et al., 2015, p. 54).

Item	Grant £	Other £
Project management and artistic direction	12,730	1,500
Technical development including fabrication, transport and testing, costume and eTextiles	43,764	6,000
Research	27,250	
Pilot installation: venue, build, materials, actors, creative team and crew	30,549	5,310
PR, marketing and documentation	9,650	
Accessibility and travel	1,057	2,578
Sub total	125,000	15,288
Grant total		140,288

Figure 6.9. *Flatland*'s resources and costs (van der Linden et al., 2015, p. 51).

<i>Applicant Name</i>	<i>Portfolio funded in 2015-18?</i>	<i>TOTAL Portfolio funding 15/18</i>	<i>Portfolio o grant 18/19 - £</i>	<i>Portfolio o grant 19/20 - £</i>	<i>Portfolio o grant 20/21 - £</i>	<i>Portfolio o grant 21/22 - £</i>	<i>TOTAL Portfolio o grant 18/22 - £</i>
Blast Theory	Yes	134,157	134,157	134,157	134,157	134,157	536,628
Extant	Yes	402,472	134,157	134,157	134,157	134,157	536,628
Forced Entertainment Ltd	Yes	255.394	249,500	249,500	249,500	249,500	998,000

Figure 6.10. Extract from Art Council of England's 2018 list of National Portfolio Organisations 2018-22 (Arts Council England, 2018b).



Figure 7.1. Mark Smith @msmitter, *We wondered what the hell to do next. Anyone else find themselves just staring, dazed, at one of these? #FESPEAKLIVE*, 18 October 2014 [Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/msmitter/status/523597330453655553/photo/1>].



Figure 7.2. Jim Harrison @BigJimLD, *Hugo behind the lens @hugoglendinning #FESPEAKLIVE*, 18 October 2014, [Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/BigJimLD/status/523517733334700033/photo/1>].

I. Interview with Nick Tantavanidj – 28th February 2017

NT: The work we make is often either performance or performance based. Clearly in many cases it is hard to stage the experience as it often involves a lot of technology, people or resources. Frequently, the capacity of our shows is quite limited; only a hundred of people may have the chance to experience it. Documentation is, hence, very important to us. Even back to when we were making works that took place in theatres or, to be more accurate, that took place in physical venues and locations we were quite particular with our documentation strategy, which was to create five-minute videos. It sounds very bold or very silly - not that we haven't recorded entire performances in the past. The result was an hour-long video and the process was fairly straightforward. These recordings were applied only to works that took place in a single room which allowed the camera to always point at the thing that was happening. It was mostly quite an easy job. However, we found that those videos weren't as watchable as we would like. Observing a live performance has a very different energy compared to watching something on a screen. Fairly quickly we moved from trying to share videos of entire performances to creating documentation that was more indicative of the kind of things that happened in the performance space. We started concentrating on specific moments or energies that occurred during a performance and tried to animate them through editing and cutting. The scope became to present a sense of the overall ambience of the room or the work in general. And also appreciating that video is a medium in its own right. You can actually hold people's attention in a very different way when you're showing them a video. The seminal point for us was 1998 when we did the project *Kidnap*. It was the first project that was really intended for a distributed audience. It was very much about looking at media spaces rather than presenting something in a physical theatre space or a sort of found space. One of the first material that came up in that project was the opportunity to make an advertisement for cinemas. There was a commissioning program called Blipvert, which was run by Cambridge Junction. They invited artists to make thirty-second videos that would be shown in the advert reels in cinemas. So, we made a very simple thirty-second advert showcasing *Kidnap*. Part of the reason why *Kidnap* was important to us was because we realized that digital spaces have their own processes and areas for engaging with audiences. We realized how significant those areas were for our particular way of engaging with our audiences. Our

documentation methodologies this condition made us understand that when we were making a work in which the audience engaged with it in a digital space then there was going to be no room to put a camera in to point things out. And it also reminded us that video has its own language and its own framework, which orchestrate how we as spectators watch it. From the Kidnap piece onwards and since around the early 2000s we started collaborating a lot more with Nottingham University for our mobile based projects; projects where the audience members aren't actually participating in the script, but they are dispersed, having, as such, diverse experience of and about the work. Since then, the strategy we have adopted, and we continue to have, is to document the piece through video, but treat the recording as a film making process in its own right. Most of our documentation involves people going through an experience. We, however, do retakes or reshoot or reframe parts of the video always contemplating on how it will look in its final stage, how all the takes will work together in the end. We approach it more like a five-minute sort film rather than an authentic record of individual experiences. There is no objective experience in our work, anyway. There are always multiple experiences, and so it's actually a very subjective process. So, in the same manner, we'll often put soundtracks to our videos. We may even use music that wasn't necessarily included in the live piece because the video is about revealing the energy of the performance or creating the drive to participate.

GK: Do you apply the same technique to the digital interfaces of a piece, for example the way a work is being experienced online or virtually or the writing of the code?

NT: We probably have two or three videos that represent the virtual experience such as the documentation of *Can You See Me Now (CYSMN)*, which was in 2001 and the documentation of the *Day of the Figurines (DOTF)*. During the project *CYSMN* the audience actually sat in front of a computer desktop. In our video we included footage of people sitting in front of computers playing the game in order to give a sense of context to the actual audience member. I think with *DOTF* we shot some footage of someone texting as they went around the city. Both of those cases, however, are fictional setups. Our intention was to portray what the audience was doing while it engaged with the project. These videos are a means to talk about what the audience's experience looks like from an observer's perspective.

GK: Id audience-generated content something that you keep in your archives, even for a short period of time?

NT: In our earliest work, back in the early '90s, we created projects in which certain things resembled what you mentioned in your question. For example, we used to include audience questionnaires as a part of the show [...] These were afterwards captured in a single document, which was printed and distributed to the audience at the end of the performance. For projects that are more digital, for example in *Kidnap*, we kept chat histories from the chat rooms, while in *CYSMN* we recorded all the GPS data of the performance as well as the location of the movements of one of the players in addition to the chat logs and the audio streams. All these records allow us to actually replay certain games. For *DOTF* on the other hand we have kept text message logs from each time we produced it. The logs have been used as part of research studies with the University of Nottingham. For *Riders Spoke*, a project during which people were creating audio recordings at specific locations in the city, we left with an archive of something like 15,000 audio records, along with all the Wi-Fi data from the Wi-Fi positioning platform.

GK: If I am correct, you actually created the *Cloud Pad* and the *Riders Have Spoken* project based on the documentation of *Riders Spoke*.

NT: Yes. However, *Cloud Pad* and *Riders Have Spoken* are actually two different projects. *Cloud Pad* was a version of archiving, created in collaboration with Duncan Rowland from the University of Nottingham. It was a way of drawing together some of the different strands of media that were used in *Riders Spoke* at the same space where you could assemble time synchronizing data and play it back in different frames. *Riders Have Spoken*, however, was actually less about replaying data and more about finding an engaging way to listen to the recordings. Out of all the recordings, I think we chose 200 or 300. We then constructed an interface, which was essentially a detailed drawing of the city. The user could scroll around the drawing and click on the windows that were placed on specific locations and hid one audio recording each. The map was not city specific, it rather mixed recordings from all the places we presented the piece. In that way *Riders Have Spoken* is quite permissive; it doesn't have a data-centric approach, it essentially includes only the participant-responses that we liked. It was a way to put together all the recordings that we enjoyed listening at.

NT: Since we were talking about *Riders Spoke*... that was a project made at a point when YouTube had just started becoming a popular platform for hosting user-generated-content while people had just begun vlogging. We were intrigued by the banality of the content uploaded on YouTube and we wanted to invent our own user-generated-content platform that would actually allow people to talk in a genuine and intimate way. Originally, however, we conceived of *Riders Spoke* archive as being available only at the time period of the event. Archiving participants was part of the dramaturgical process of the production and the archive was available only during the live. It was the quality of the recordings that urged us to produce *Cloud Pad* and *Riders Have Spoken* as a way of accessing this material in the future. We really struggled with how they could work... they weren't part of the original conception you see. *Riders Spoke* is a piece whose experience, up to a level, feels intimate and quite exclusive because the participants in order to record their personal memory had to go out and cycle around the city alone... And we didn't want to simply put all the recordings online and make them openly available because that would have conveyed a different meaning about them and would have changed our, as the onlookers of the archive, relationship with them. The formats that we came up with, the best that we could do to try and find a sort of (can't hear the recording). In contrast, for the projects *Compliant* and *A machine to see with* we again kept logs of all the kind of co-orchestrates that happened, and people were indeed invited to make some sort of recordings at different points in each of them. What differs is that both of these two pieces didn't exist as an archive. They were actually both about that specific moment of interaction and engagement. All material that was left behind and that we kept allows us to modify, if we wish to, how we would do it in the future. It becomes part of our knowledge of how the project works, whether it works and a resource to investigate how people interacted with it. I suppose that is closer to an art documentation approach in the sense that the digital archives that we have been left with are interaction logs or analytical data, if you might say, describing how participants used the website or interface. It tends to be more focused on the question 'Did it work?' which is very common to ask in those types of projects. But then I suppose the most recent one in those terms is *Karen*.

GK: Could you talk a bit about the documentation of *Karen*?

NT: I suppose there are two things. The first is that we've never made a five-minute documentation video for *Karen*, partly because we haven't really had the opportunity to sit down and consider how we could actually document what it is like for people. We could employ the same strategy we used for *DOTF* and *CYSMN*; create a fictional user and present them as playing *Karen*. In that perspective *Karen*'s documentation is unresolved. In terms of the actual data parts of it, we just started working with a new PhD student from the university Nottingham, Michelle Coleman. Part of her research will be to study *Karen* and we will hopefully respond to some questions regarding the way people interact with the piece and what their experiences are. Apart from the data study I believe there is going to be a qualitative study where we will actually interview players.

GK: Have you developed any plans of how they could be assembled into documentation, how they would sit within an archive?

NT: I think the obvious part is the data report. When we first conceived of *Karen* the data report was intended to be the second half of the experience. What happens is that in the first part you literally engage with *Karen* while the second is all about reading your report, reflecting on the different questions and how the psychometric profiling is put in use by giving the opportunity to compare your results with the rest of the players. We recently updated the data report, so the dataset is much bigger. Originally, we were only using about 200 people from the original as a sort of the aggregated data. Now the dataset should contain more like 17 to 18,000 people.

GK: So, in a way you do have a selection process despite the fact that you have expanded the capacity of the dataset...

N: It was more of a pragmatic thing... of being able to update the aggregated dataset. Obviously with *Karen* people respond to quite revealing or intimate questions. For this reason, we have something like a server structured in place that tries to keep that kind of information secure and also to separate between personal data that is personally identifiable information, the psychometric profiling data, and the geo-location data that are being recorded. Being an artistic group involves quite a steep learning curve when it comes to becoming a data controller or a group that is responsible for looking after individuals' personal data. It's a demanding position. We are not a big company, so our

resources are limited, forcing us to move rather slowly. One of the things we've learnt with *Karen* is that data collection requires more programming and coding rather than paperwork in order to ensure things... you have to do things very cautiously.

NT: In the data report there is no intentional selection of information from our side. Ideally the report will always update itself and will always aggregate data from everyone that plays *Karen*. The mechanism is to give way into the archive by placing each individual in relation to it, meaning that it shows you your own data in relation to the overall data collection. It is already intended as an archive of and for people who played it, to see themselves in relation to everyone else who participated. Another way that we aspire using it is by relating it to our ongoing interest on how people engage with these types of experiences. That's where our work with Michelle is kind of going; to look at the HTI properties of how people engage with mobile experiences that utilize video, how do they engage with the character, what do they feel when they play... those kinds of things.

GK: Do you consider the videos of *Karen* as part of the overall experience of the documentation? Are they for you already an archive or archival project?

NT: In the sense that the second half of the data report is about exploring how the player is situated in relation to the greater body of all players' data that is produced, then yes [...] What I hope that comes across in some of Kelly's writing in *Karen*'s data report is that sense that when we take mind Briggs tests or personality tests online we often treat them as being magically authoritative, somehow defining our identity and who we are, but there is a side tweak [...] the context within which you pose a question defines the answer. We wanted to express some of these concerns. We wanted to show that there is no objective piece of archival data, which says that, for example, all of the people who play *Karen* are neurotic despite what the scale actually indicates. [...]

GK: Is there a process you follow for ensuring the longevity of documentation?

GK: That's tricky! At the moment, we are in the process of looking at the documentation of the projects we developed during the '90s. We obviously saved all the related files, as you tend to do when you archive stuff. However, even the Word-processed files of our scripts are becoming obsolete, basically, because we were using

an old apple program at the time. So, now, we are trying to translate everything into PDFs. On the other hand, performative works or videos are default media. I mean that, for instance, audio recordings are usually mp3s and these are still audible. With data preservation, I suppose there are two sides of the same coin. Firstly, the databases and data are saved in backups. On the other hand, however, there is the difficulty of interpreting what they actually were and what their meaning was. We have a reference document that shows what each column in the database is and what it signifies. With *Karen* we have a data plan, which explains each data item that is being recorded, the context within which it is asked, the options from which players can choose their answer, and how they were coded. And this sits along the actual dataset. Quite a lot of these things only make sense within the specific time limits of the performative experience or while the technology is still available. Sometimes when you open an old file, despite the fact that you can read it, you may have gaps in understanding what was being recorded or even how it was being recorded.

GK: I understand you are involved in exhibiting documents of your work. Could you possibly tell me more about how your mixed reality pieces have been exhibited so far?

NT: We had an exhibition at SpaceX gallery in Exeter about four years ago where we were invited to generally show our work. We have also been touring *Karen* as an exhibition piece. She has appeared in ZKM, Tribeca and a few group exhibitions. In SpaceX we showcased videos, some written material that explains or talk about each project, and some technical artefacts. In terms of presenting an actual data archive, I think that *Riders Have Spoken* is the closest we've come so far. The large version of it with the big city drawing however, I would say that it had nothing to do with live data. It was rather about creating something that was engaging. *Cloud Pad* on the other hand has never been shown as part of an exhibition; it was more like an expert tool, a way of exploring the data for those wanting to explore it rather than including it in a public exhibition of our work.

GK: What exactly do you showcase from *Karen*?

NT: We have a version of *Karen* that plays without pauses. It doesn't play in *Karen*'s real time, like when you download the app on your phone and sit through. The video is a set of sessions we thought would make sense together. I think it's the seventh and

eighth episode. It basically leaps through it and it doesn't reset so as to allow people to start half-way through or to experience both those two sessions. It's intended more as a teaser, for prompting people to download it. The video is accompanied with a description of what it is and information where to download it from. Sometimes we also present it with some of the working documents we have since we were developing it, some of the books that were used as reference material, the specific psychometric scales and their history. I believe they give some sort of context. We also show working scripts, which are annotated with all our messy notes. And those are aimed at providing an insight into our intentions for creating *Karen*.

NT: It's more an entry point to the game rather than a piece of work in itself. It intends to get people to play *Karen*. I don't think it works as a stand-alone experience; it talks about an experience as opposed to being an experience in and of itself. [...]

NT: In our practice everything revolves around who the user is, what their particular interest is, and what their expertise is or... a visual arts audience is very particular and... I think visual art is a space where we've always struggled with. Often because the narrator is omitted or there is no sense of being led by someone or something. If we go back to the argument about trajectories, visual art requires probably a totally open space where people are free to move around. For us, up to now, it has been difficult to find the key into how people actually behave in those spaces, and to be able to speak to them in a way that is sophisticated enough. Visual artists often have a very particular language, and we are not visual artists really. On the other side if we are referring to how we can make work for spectators who are archivists, historians or people who are not expecting to see a visual art show, but to see an experience or to experience what has previously taken place, I think that's much more plausible. The key is to formulate interesting questions that we can then address to spectators. If at some point, we decide we are interested in exhibiting *Karen* in that kind of context there is much we could do. Because *Karen* is so multisided there has been discussions for example about how it might have impacted people's personal lives or whether people believed *Karen* was real or whether the players are interested in others' experiences of the game. [...]

NT: One thing with *Karen* is that its touring is addressed to a very different audience from that of our other works and this actually means that... it becomes a means to make a first contact with the piece especially since *Karen* is still in the app store. The moment

we take it down or we stop supporting it then, I think, will be the point of considering the purpose of showing *Karen* in an exhibition. [...]

NT: Within each question in *Karen* there is only a limited number of answers. [...] Potentially you could portray and draw all the branches of all the experiences and to find a visualisation that will show you how many people answered in a particular way or even to follow an individual experience from start to finish. But how interesting that is... I would have to go back to the question of whether it's authentic or not. Ultimately, there is a body of experiences, which you might try to encapsulate within the data that was recorded. [...]

GK: Could you talk a bit about privacy policies with regard to participation in your work?

NT: We have a privacy policy with *Karen*. The first thing we set out was our ethical approach or better say what our principles were in terms of the data, ways of storing it, with whom it could be shared, what is going to happen with it, and who owns it. Those things went into our privacy policy, which states that you are completely free to see everything that we record in the course of the game and you can request for it to be deleted. We are not gathering the data for some commercial data exercise. It is to potentially see how it is actually recorded. We will give you a copy of your raw data if you want to see that. [...]

NT: In terms of ownership... there are all sorts of questions around ownership of data, of web-platforms, media. We have actually been very lucky in our collaboration with the University of Nottingham. They have given us reuse licenses for the software that we've used with them. In term of the raw data of *Karen* we don't share personal data. Most people in Blast Theory can't actually look at any personal information of the players as it is locked away. In our terms and conditions when you first launch the application, we ask if we can share an anonymised form of the data, essentially the interaction logs. We have also developed a way of obfuscating the geolocation records, so it doesn't share where you were when you were using the application. We strip all contact information and then we ask if we can make that available for research with our partners. Yes, I think we have been quite lucky with our collaborators. In general, because we have often been the driver behind software development. For projects that

we didn't collaborate with a university we normally own the software. I don't think we have actually open sourced any software. That's because most of our software is a sort of patchwork and bits put together. When we first started working with our main software partners, mainly universities, they were very keen on owning the software, but granting us a license to use it. That was a limitation but since then they have really changed. They are currently much more interested in doing open sourced projects. In some of the research collaborations we are currently involved in, the projects are already open sourced. For instance, I think we use equip2, which is a framework produced by the University of Nottingham is open sourced. The specific applications that we built are often very proprietary, they are rarely reusable, I think. I think making software that is open sourced requires a very different approach. I know coders often proud, or not, of their code. To be publishing that kind of stuff you have to be a lot proud of it.

II. Interview with Maria Oshodi – 21st March 2017

GK: Could you talk a bit about *Flatland*'s records?

MO: We've got loads of those kinds of files. The researchers that were working on the piece are still chomping, and chewing over it, and spitting it out in various forms. [...] There is loads of anecdotal data from the evaluation that was the first point of analysis and referencing and writing up the reports. [...] The next block is what was stored in ubisensor, which was the tracking system and how it tracked the movement of the audiences through this experience. [...]

GK: You mentioned you have a video of *Flatland*. I read about a similar project you made in the past, *The Question*, which I believe is the predecessor of *Flatland*. Is that right?

MO: Yeah. *Flatland* is the second generation.

GK: For *the Question* I came across an article that said you had a CCTV in order to monitor what was happening in the room and guarantee the health and safety of participants. Was that also the case for *Flatland*, because in an article Amelia Cavallo mentions that the technicians entered the space and guided her back to the...

MO: Well, no they were there but they weren't working. So, we had the production manager with night vision goggles on for health and safety. Are you asking about the cameras in terms of collecting data or are you...?

GK: Apart from the infrared photos of *Flatland* found online is there a video?

MO: We've got quite a lot of pictures and we've got documentation on videos and we've got a pitch video. So, it depends on what you want it for.

GK: Could you talk to me about the costumes of *Flatland*?

MO: We created the costume because the venue was freezing cold and we wanted the audience to be in that space moving quite slowly for 40 to 45 minutes. There were three reasons we developed the costume or uniform. One was to keep participants warm, two was to use it as a dramatic tool, so all audience members felt that they were on the same team getting on this big adventure, and then also it helped to have pockets and areas on the participants' body where the device could be stored when people wanted to use their hands.

GK: This device transmitted information of where each participant was in the space. Something like a GPS?

MO: It was like an indoor GPS, like a localisation system. The Ubisensor is a tracking system, participants had to wear a magnetometer on their wrists to give a sense of the direction they were facing. They were tags on the uniform and those were the tags that the ubisensors picked up. There was some software that was programmed to connect the ubisensor to the device. I can give you the report to read on the technical elements. I can't respond exactly because I'm still confused on what exactly was communicating with what, but everything in the end was connected. The device was a cube and it had a section on the top that either slide forward and told to move forward or it swivelled 30 degrees left or right in order to instruct the user to turn left or right and it also went back to the cube shape when participants had reached their destination.

GK: Do you as a theatre company and practitioners have any documentation strategies in place that you follow for all your productions? And apart from that, do you have a methodological strategy for creating archives for your pieces?

MO: Loosely the idea is that we'll do some research and development around a performance idea. Then if it feels that it has potential, we then build it up in a proposal and try to raise funds for and develop it into a full show. That show then will be evaluated by everybody that was involved and then that information is... it gets summarised into a report that goes into our website page. So, we kind of share our practice in that way. But things have slightly shifted, they have a bit less formalised now because we are attaching to our productions... like with *Flatland* there was the academic aspect that was attached to it, so there was a rigour to the evaluation. It wasn't only written up as a report for NESTA, but also as papers that are now being published or presented in conferences. On another level as a company we've got as a strategy to attach to all of our productions some audience development work, which aims at increasing the numbers of visually impaired audiences that attend the venues that we tour to.[...]

Z: Apart from the creative process, do you have a specific way of documenting the live part of your performances?

MO: Well, we just take photographs and if we can afford it collaborate with a film maker for creating a video. The video then gets boiled down to its highlights and that then is uploaded into our website. Apart from the written process that proves to be a little time consuming, this is what happens in terms of a fast track method to document the live.

GK: Have *The Question* and *Flatland* have altered the way you think around audience documentation and the documentation of the live performance?

MO: No... Err... It's hard to say because there were very specific or particular... the whole thing about *The Question* and *Flatland* was that the strapline was that we wanted to reposition the action away from the stage, which as you know is separated and mediated by sight and bring it into the body of the audience. Because of that it necessitated a very different approach from us. Ultimately, when you are working in a

conventional way, which is where we stepped back after *Flatland* it's not as really necessary to document and capture what the audience experience in that regard. In *the Question* and *Flatland*, the audience members were almost the performers, the actors. However, when you go back to working in a traditional way where the audience seats in their seats it becomes so passive. You are almost thinking about them as numbers. [...]

GK: The audience-generated data you have collected from Flatland does it have any other kind of value to you?

MO: Well, it became really valuable. [...] In the basis of how people responded, you know, I'm desperate to take the work into the next level. That wasn't an end in its own right, it was the beginning of a dialogue. That dialogue opened all sorts of possibilities, which is very frustrating not to be able to respond to. [...]

GK: What kind of data did you collect from the device?

MO: There are trajectories in a map... [...] there are maps, there are routes, you know. There is all sort of things that I don't understand. There are lots, I don't know what they are. There are things that came, from tables and stuff that came out of it. And then, there are words that I understand, you know the verbal sort of feedback from the audiences and then there are percentages. [...] There is loads and loads of stuff. Loads. I mean there are designs from the designer...

GK: Is there a possibility that participants could claim their data?

MO: They could, but they signed an agreement when they came to participate. That's what the academics made sure that we had in place because we were buying their time and their bodies. We were buying everything with their signature.

GK: How does ownership with regards to the documentation work?

MO: I have to look at the contract, because there were contracts. It's about sharing information between the partners, being able to go off to our own directions and similar points and stuff. There are legalities around it. There are permissions that need to be sorted, I guess. As a performance company we own a certain percentage of the

technology in terms of IP and royalties, we own some kits, we own the idea of *Flatland* as an immersive performance; actually, I don't know how much we own of that because we haven't trademarked it or anything. We've got... You know, we'd be interested taking the idea forward in an artistic way. The academics are still generating their own papers. [...]

GK: If you wanted to take *Flatland's* documentation a step further, if, for example, a museum was interested in obtaining the documentation, would all collaborators have to agree to this?

MO: It depends what that means. We do want to own *Flatland*. [...] I need to look at the contracts because as far as the academic side is concerned, they released their share to us as a company in order to be able to use documentation for our own purposes.

GK: Are you referring to the technical and the creative aspect?

MO: Apart from that, I think it's also the use of the documentation of the experience as well. That was the thing that validated the technology.

GK: Do you mean evaluating the technical perspective?

MO: They do evaluate the technical perspective, but then they started to move into writing papers from the human interaction point of view. They started talking about the characteristics of the technology and how an audience, for instance, would relate to the technology as a character and how that is different from just being a mere kit that was being tested in a lab context. I think each time they are looking for an original take, to confirm it's going to have some application. [...]

GK: Do you retain records that have captured errors

MO: Only to prove what the involvement was and how difficult it was. The difference working with technologists and academics and how failure is integrated into their process... it's not commonly given that much space within the artistic process, not at least in our type of artistic process. That is the only value I find in keeping recordings of situations of failure. The project was not easy at all. There were a lot of fall outs

between the different people involved in it. Particularly, with the relationship with the engineer, who was located in another country, wasn't an easy one. Having a representative in the UK who then ended up having problems with. The relationship was breaking down and we had to work and get that sorted out. It felt like, for me looking back, all of that developmental work and the failures felt like they were reflected on the team a lot of the time. It's very interesting because we worked very hard. We had very good people who were all working really hard together in a very, I think, ambitious project. People were based on different countries [...]

GK: What happened during the live when participants decided to do something different from what you intended them to do, to follow their own instincts or initiative?

MO: They did. Quite a lot of people did what they wanted to do because sometimes the device wouldn't work. They just got fed up and they just went on and did their own thing. And they didn't want to be told what to do. [...]

MO: The designer was very restricted in what she could design, because of the budget, because we had to stick to what the technology was intended to do were, which were to work with regards to what we wanted it to do. In *the Question* the device had been a detector, so it had been used to, you moved around the space and it responded. When it was near something it would change its shape and then you sort of knew where you were. But this device was a guiding device, like a dog, you know. And so, with the change with the shift of emphasis on the technology and then the connection with the tracking system the whole thing - because it was a NESTA project - it was all about the technology [...] [it is a] dominating thing particularly when it's not working and the engineers and everyone is scraping among themselves, you never know when you'll get this thing done. [...] Because the technological element was dominant the designer had to create a set that would ensure that this very sensitive apparatus was not going to be interfered whether she made that was something too high it was going to interfere with one of the sensors... [...] When people came in, they said that they were expecting more. And I would have liked to have given that to them, but we couldn't because we had to make everything work. If I had the chance to do it again it would have been an opportunity where the technology might have been only a part or not even be in it at all. [...]

GK: DO you have any archiving or preservation plans for *Flatland*? [...]

MO: No. With *the Question* stuff it seems that it has all written off because it's all ancient technology now. It's all on infrared. We've got the hardware as some kind of museum pieces. I don't think they work anymore. I don't know. If you asked Adam, he would have something, I guess. I don't know. I don't know if we've got for... For *Flatland* we have got everything in a hardware, because we've got a laptop... we have a demo version of it in a laptop. But as for ubisense, I mean that's probably, I mean, we've got the kit... here... somewhere. So, I don't know what to say really.

GK: So, you hadn't planned a scheme for the preservation of *The Question*, but you haven't planned anything for *Flatland* either. Is that because there is the possibility you will present it again in the future?

MO: Oh, no. Maybe because we're careless and we don't know what we're doing. But I think that preservation was to have the demo version, which we call *Finding Flatland*. It is a little pop-up version of the initial piece in which you blindfold some users and have the device connected to a laptop. It works in a sort of rudimentary way, but it's got a sort of a feel for it. [...]

GK: DO you have any of *Flatland*'s hardware, costumes, props?

MO: No, we don't have any of that. All got dump. And also, the actual, what was quite unique about it was this, it was site specific in that instance, in that we used a church. [...]

GK: If you were to imagine an archive of *Flatland* which of its records would you keep?

MO: [...] It would be interesting if it was something like a pod or a telephone booth or like a box that you went into. It would give you a kind of, it could actually be really interesting to create a kind of a... cause part, it's actually interesting part of *Flatland* at the very end we tried to recreate something called an anechoic chamber which we did a bit and it was meant to be similar to the one that we experienced at the OU where the sound was totally dead, you know. And it would be quite interesting if it was a space

like that which you could go into and lock it, seal it somehow and create a dark even if it was just, you know, a few meters or something. Cause I think when you are in that kind of darkness you become disorientated whether the space is small or big and then there were also... I don't know maybe show some sort of video or something... maybe a platform for a bit of the immersive experience as well as information in the more conventional sense, to be able to be fed back. [...]

GK: Have you thought how you would store *Flatland's* records?

MO: That's a very interesting question actually because, you know, I don't think about documentation or archiving at all. [...] it's very much an afterthought it's not something that is part of the picture going forward. I think because things are difficult to get off the ground you are just thinking about the main things at the beginning, you know, rather than how it's going to survive afterwards.

GK: I suppose you just keep everything and then if it survives...

MO: If it survives it survives. I was thinking about other stuff that we've... I supposed it's just scraps of things that are preserved on our website. We just create pages for things we have done and they're just there. The website is this labyrinth. It's like a repository like a warehouse with lots of different rooms. [...] This is our space (points to the room) and we don't have any storage; we have to make cleanouts and make decisions of what we keep and what we don't. So, often the 'hardware' from stuff if it can't be folded up and stuffed into a corner gets chunked out.

GK: Do you think *Flatland's* audience-generated content having any value apart from being used in research?

MO: I don't know. We wrote a report for NESTA at the end of the project and it got published in their website. I think that whole NESTA digital R&D initiative is all kind of rapped up now. I recently got an email which is about them archiving that website. I think it's now completely housed by the Arts Council. It doesn't even exist in its own right anymore. I mean I'm not sure but that's what I guess it's a long-winded answer to your question. That's where it's been disseminated and shared if anybody is at all interested in it. [...]

GK: What about data privacy policies??

MO: The way in which we evaluated... There is report that talks about the future thinking of *Flatland* and that has a section that shows all of the social media activity, what was going on. The NESTA report summarises, and slightly sanitises, the process, but it's certainly gives a very interesting overview of everything. Also included in that, you will see that the research team tried to create an evaluation device which was in keeping with the themes of the installation. It was a collective way of the participants' feeding back straight after the experience with this sort of, I call it a zippy tablecloth. It was basically a way in which they would ask questions without participants saying anything. They responded by using these zips on this table to give sensory feedback and create that in sound. They monitored the feeling before getting into discussion and the discussions were carried out collectively around the table. The four participants that had been in the space, that gang of four that came out were evaluated together. I know all these might not be answering your question about the ethical use of the data. Did we ever discussed this between us as a team how we would manage any kind of ethical considerations for the evaluation? No. I don't think so. I think they went through the usual kind of academic testing protocol which was to have the consent forms and that was it. People could vote with their feet as well when they walked in and we had one incident where the participant had a blast of the experience and wanted to leave straight away and didn't want to take part in the evaluation process at all. She asked for her body back and she got it back. She quoted that it was like Auschwitz, but that was really extreme. But she was in tears and obviously she had strong reaction. [...]

III. Interview with Maria Oshodi – 6th June 2017

MO: The idea of *Flatland* is something that a very different experience that was personal and it was kind of augmented by their own individual response to what it was that they were experiencing and when. A part for this then... I guess somebody would be precariously experiencing it through somebody else's experience, which it was never really set up to do. [...]

MO: I was thinking what documents I should bring and then I ended up copying the whole folder because I don't know what it is that you want. I was looking at it all and as

I was looking at each document it just brought back the enormity of the project. It's vast in terms of the people involved, the thinking, the processes, the... you know everything. I can go through it with you and you can just get a sense of the project. And that was the real experience of *Flatland* not the input. The input is almost the public face of it, it wasn't the three years or whatever it was that we were working on it. That is the thing that in a way we would like archiving. [...] one of the researchers who was evaluating the project was trying to find a way to have some sort of device that would be akin to the experience of the people that had been in the installation and not just come out and respond to questions that we were asking. Something that would continue to be an extension of that touching experience that they have been in. For that purpose, they created the zippy table at the end of the piece. [...] When you talk about of somehow following the experience of one person, there are so many different types of responses. There wasn't one average person and that's why I feel uneasy [...]

(Maria presents the folder with *Flatland's* documents)

[...] this is the folder with all the images and films. We've got a 10min version of a *Flatland* film. We've got an infrared film of the project. We've got another 7min promo film on it. We've got a weird sketch up idea about some futuristic versions of it. [...] Milestones, these are some of the documents we had for our NESTA reporting. As part of the ongoing process we had to create insights every quarter or something. [...] We had to do a whole data strategy content for gathering information. Then we had a grants agreement that we had with NESTA. This is one of our insights. This is a contract between us... That is part of the final reporting document. That's a project plan. [...] Halfway through the project the engineer created a review of all the tracking systems [...] That's an internal company report [...] The other insight, that's on from the Open University. NESTA had a particular reporting template that we had to follow, and that is what that is. That's just an executive summary of when we had to do the final report. This is from the marketing team that we had working on the project. That's just one collection of things, but... [...] We would just write notes on absolutely everything that we did in this total simple way. I think this is one from our creative meetings, that's from a big team meeting that we had. We had a particular production meeting. Skype meetings are the most private meetings [...] after the project was over, we had a dissemination where we invited a lot of people in. That's another insight. These are all versions of the actual application forms, but we don't need to read though those. These

are auditions with actors. That's a conference that came afterwards. There was a testing at the cube, and he wanted to sensor at the times that maybe he could copyright it. The characters that were in *Flatland*. The contact list of the company. We had various sub-groups within the team, the creative team, the technical team, the research team so there are all kind of notes from the various meetings of each team. The device training is... when we created *Flatland*, we had a whole installation which was were the audience would learn how to use the device. That wasn't part of the creative script, but part of the technical script and we wrote that separately. It's interesting because recently the engineer asked for this because he wanted to match it to, you're talking about maps from the journeys of the participants, that's only very recently been analysed in a paper that Adam wrote. Because Adam was in the US he wasn't here, he thought that the information that have been given to the audience in order to get around *Flatland* was pretty basic. Then I sent him this technical script to say that 'No, no, no. We actually worked on it quite extensively with the actor to make sure that he got all the nuances right'. He could see then that what was being told to the visitors matched what he wanted them to know to be able to navigate the space. He was able to see that their journeys were not compromised by having more information. We don't need all these. All these digital things are... I think this might be a picture of the... That's just an image I think of the venue. [...]

When you are in your project you are not creating documents for a future archive you are creating them as part of the live process. That seems like it is embedded in all this, but it is a big job to go through each file and say, 'In the meeting of the 15th May 2014 we said this'. Doing it all in retrospect... How do you start to work out that? [...]

MO: This is a 3D animation. It simulate how you would move through the space, using the device. But it was an imagined... and it was created by a filmmaker who had been in the *Flatland* [...]

MO: You can read the internal company report if you want to. It does give an insight. I think when people read it, they can really understand in a way what they haven't to before about what was going on. Even on the board the updates where sanitised. There where specific complications during the life of the project that were unique. It wasn't just because it was a complicated project these things occurred. We'd probably have

problems anyway but there were certain sets of things that happened that just added to that. [...]

MO: The AHRC was one of the three institutions that gave money to *Flatland* [...] These are all academic speeches. I'm trying to see what he's attached to it because he has attached the paper. [...] I need to get his permission to see whether he can send it - that's why I put it separately- because he only shared them with research collaborator because he has to. We had this grungy agreement that we will let each other know what's going on. [...] This is one of the papers that looks all the logs that ubisense created of people around the space. All that information is internal, and I don't know where we stand on sharing that. From that he's written this paper [...] If you want to start digging deeper then I need to start asking directly them... You can also find things on research gate. [...] I know we all shared that information. I'm sure that I've got it somewhere; the raw data. I need to look for it. It's not in this pen. I just picked some things but that's something I'll have to... that's what I mean that it's going to take a lot of my time digging things out and I'm slightly concerned about. If I can't find it then I'll have to go to him, and speak to him about it, then he has... so there's lots of all that going on. That's just the way it is. [...] In answer to your question about the maps, I think that's raw data whether you can interpret it I don't know that. It's particular digital information that has come out of that tracking system that I don't know if it's something that you can interpret. [...] I can look for that because I know they sent through all those logs because they all got sucked out from the machine and then the data was available to us, but it took as a long time to actually do something with it. There were other things like the interface... [...]

IV. Interview with Tim Etchells – 11th May 2017

GK: Could you possibly tell me a bit more about what happens in terms of documentation at Forced Entertainment from the creation of a piece, its development, the live staging and what happens afterwards with those files that you generate?

TE: I suppose one question is about context. In terms of documentation that we would share widely, we produce a video and photographs of each performance. We also produce a text for each piece, although of course any text is extremely partial in terms of what it actually represents. We'd see the text as a registration of words spoken, with

a few pointers perhaps regarding action or sound – so only scratching the surface really. [...] Those things we send to promoters and to university libraries. We also let students see them if they contact us. So those materials have a kind of distribution and in a sense they're there to represent the work after it's no longer being performed, or to show a particular work to people who aren't able to see it live. We're pretty pragmatic. It's important to say that none of us thinks that the documentation is a strong or authoritative representation of live work – there is always a compromise in representing it in these kinds of ways. For me, with regard to other people's work I think I like to see it live, if I can't see it live, I watch video. I can decode a video to some extent but it's also useful for me to know about performances from other people so if I can watch a video, I will do it but I'm not under any illusions that is somehow accurately represented. I think we take the same approach. It's pragmatic. We need to have something that we can show to potential promoters or partners. We also need to have something that I think... to choose to have something that students can access or researchers. Then in addition to that we video a lot during rehearsals, but that's stuff we don't tend to distribute. That is more for our own work really. It's like a notebook practice. [...]

We keep them all and in theory we lodge all of that material with the British Library. They have at least 20 years' worth of that. This is a log jam in us delivering more recent projects to them because we're too busy with other things. [...] One of the problems is there's a lot of it. Every project generates hundreds of hours of material. And it's not very well... in some cases extremely badly catalogued on our side. You'd have no way of knowing what was there. In other cases, it's better qualified. I mean logged, organized by date or something. [...]

TE: We only livestream very specific works. Basically, the durational performances and the Shakespeare project. With the durational pieces that means *12am*, *Speak Bitterness*, *Quizoola*, *And on the thousandth night*, only those four. We live stream them for two main reasons. The first is that when we created those durational pieces – 6 and 12 hours long - they were made under the expectation that the audience can come and go. There was a porousness to the pieces, there was no expectation you would stay the whole time, there was an expectation that you would come and go, and that you would make your own contract with the work, moving freely between the 'artwork' and the outside world. So, it deformed a lot of the structures that are normally there in theatre. And we used

to talk about the public occupying a fluid space between the artwork and the bar, where people could go and have a drink, talk to friends and then come back. So, in a sense livestreaming just seems to multiply and enhance that fluidity, which was always a part of those works. The second reason that we livestream the long works thing is that they have a very strong live dynamic, quite different than that of a regular theatre work. ... Because they're improvised within a framework there's a sense that one can watch them, in a way that's like watching a sporting event; in the sense that the rules of football -you don't know what the result is going to be and the same for me in *Speak Bitterness* or *Quizoola* or any of those pieces. The rules are clear, but what exactly will happen isn't known by anybody, not even us. This is a sort of live dynamic thing happening in those pieces that for me really lends them to live streaming. [...] The obligation now or the sense that funders and other people are enthusiastic about everything being available all the time online... I really don't like it. We also take the livestream down immediately. The pieces don't stay online. I think that's important for us: There's the sense of an event, a moment in time when something is happening online, and you have to be there. If you are not there and it is finished, you can't see it. [...]

TE: What is interesting to us is that when we livestream those works there is an in-parallel conversation happening where people are commenting on, quoting, sending screen grabs, sending photos of themselves watching - forming this rough virtual conversation community around the event that's happening. It doesn't change what we do. All of those works were first performed before any of the technologies that we're talking about were really in place. I often say now that I feel like in a way those works were waiting for that moment. Because it made possible this other layer of social interaction around them. I don't think it changes what we do although we do play into that in the sense that people from Forced Entertainment will tweet into those conversations. If I'm not in something I will tweet. There's a participation in that conversation. [...]

GK: Do you think that the role of the audience has changed?

TE: A new space has opened up and that creates new possibilities for the audience. When we were doing those live long performances in the past there would always be a parallel conversation. It's just that it would be happening in the bar or in the corridor of the venue or wherever. It wouldn't persist. It would be ephemeral like the performance

itself whereas now of course because there's this conversation online then that conversation persists in a digital form, at least as long as the technology lasts. I'm not sure that it's really something new. There was always this conversation - it's just that this conversation, this other community around the performance now exists in a dispersed geographical sense which wasn't possible before. [...] It also persists. Months afterwards you can still find those tweets if you're inclined to do so, which obviously isn't the case when you're talking at the bar. There are some differences there, some new things, but in essence the work exists always with a kind of parallel conversation going on.

GK: Do you think there are particular characteristics of these productions apart from the duration that enforced this kind of conversation with and in the audience?

TE: One is that they exist by a very simple set of rules which means that as an audience member very quickly understand what they are doing, and you very quickly have the means to understand what a particular move in the game of those pieces might mean. Thinking about *Speak Bitterness* it's clear that it's a game of confessing. [...] The simplicity of the rules encourages that sort of legibility for the audience, which is very important. The other thing is that all of those pieces' work on what we call sort of short order trading which means that there are units of information in all of those cases are very small. In *Speak Bitterness* one unit of information is one confession. 'We ignore the alarm clock' is a single unit and the performers are involved in trading those things on stage. Because the short units' change is constantly happening, and I think that's an internet thing as well. If you read about game design and this idea of sort of constant flow... in social media for example the constant notifications are, in a sense, hooking you into a very high cycle of new data. Twenty five years ago when we were first doing *12am* you would see people get up to go and then they would stand in the doorway and you would see thinking 'What's he going to do now?' and someone would come with the cardboard sign and would stand and then he would see that one and then you'd see them see another person just finishing changing and coming into place and they would move into place and they would see that one and then they'd see another person. You would literally see people standing in the doorway trying to leave but sort of hooked into this cycle of new information and the playfulness of that. That's something all of those pieces share. It makes it very suitable for that Internet context. It relates very strongly to what Internet generally has been doing. There's also something about that short units

that they're tradable. It's very easy to tweet one confession that you just heard or one screenshot of one of the *12am* characters. It's interesting that when we get *12am* which is the one where they have the cardboard signs, people were much more trading screenshots from it because it's not a verbal piece. There was a lot more screen shooting. That was you know born out of the piece. Those qualities make those works play specially into that context. [...]

TE: The performance leaves this trace that is generated by the audience. That trace isn't the performance, but it is generated by and in response to it and that trace lingers. In a way, for me, it's parallel to something like: you do a performance, mostly people see it and don't write anything down, but a bunch of people do write things so the performance in that sense also generates traces like in the newspaper, in a magazine, on a blog. There's the event and then there's this generation of sort of textual materials sometimes photographs which circulate with their own life and their own persistence. Different than the work itself. For me the cloud of tweeting or Facebook messaging and other things and blogging around those long shows occupies a similar position to that. It's collected in one place now, but I think of it as an echo.

GK: Have all these shifted either your concepts of or practice of documentation, your ideas or strategies around documentation as artists?

TE: Not really. Like I said at the beginning, we document for very pragmatic reasons to do with letting promoters, festivals and other people know about what we're doing if they can't come and see it; Help people to study or write about the work and in that sort of a funny way we say for archive meaning we have a copy of it, but I don't know why. Whereas I wouldn't really see the Twitter cloud around those works as... not in any pragmatic sense, it's not documentation for us. In that level of study, I understand that it's interesting to think about in relation to writing about the work, but it's not something we really collect. I would definitely think of it more as a sort of echo. It is like another thing generated by the work. I wouldn't say it is the work itself.

GK: What about its impact?

TE: You're right it's an evidence of an impact [...] It's a sign of a certain kind of engagement. The fact that those works have been very successful in galvanizing a sort

of online community and a dispersed audience has been something that we've been very excited about and which we do communicate to funders and other people as evidence of a certain level of engagement and activity around what we do. And on that level, we are very much collecting information about how many people are watching when they're watching and how much social media activity is there and so on and so forth. We are reporting that to the Arts Council and anybody else who's putting money into projects of ours.

GK: Could it possibly be that those tweets may form or may be objects of that kind of artistic proliferation of documentation in the future?

TE: Yeah maybe. I would say my writing around FE practice I think is not unusual that I pick up some trace or artefact from the past. Whether that's a transcript of a text from a performance or it's a memory or an anecdotal sort of fragment about a particular performance or presentation. I could imagine that at some point in the future the Twitter timeline or set of comments on the Twitter timeline or a set of images, posted screenshots or photos of people watching the work in particular places, those are interesting fragments around the work. As such I could imagine drawing on those to write something or to reflect on the work somehow. To backtrack slightly I been sort of saying 'There's the work and then there's this sort of cloud of responses or things that are triggered by it in some way generated by it in some way' and I've trying to sort of hold those two things very separately. The reason for that is that we concern ourselves, I concern myself very much with making the object, the performance in the centre of this process. I think about the object very much as something that generates other activity whether that's mental work in the audience's head, tweeting, sending screen pictures to each other, talking. All of that second layer is important, an objective of making performance in the first place. One could of course take a more inclusive and say that in a sense all of these things become part of the work. There's an initial proposition which is the live streaming of Speak Bitterness and one could say that everything gets wrapped up in the end. There is the stuff authored and done by us in a particular sort of form and that generates all of these other things. It totally makes sense to me to study or to think about all of that as a whole. I am aware of our direct responsibility for the middle of that – our authorship, our work on the generative process at the heart of that... What other people do around – as audience, as receivers and responders - we're not in control of.

People can tweet all kinds of things and that's great. But I don't have to sign to that. It's a process that gets kicked off by the work.

GK: Where exactly can we trace the truth of documentation in relation to the live performance? Do you think that the truth, for instance, of *Speak Bitterness* as a project is in all records which means that the audience tweets should be included?

TE: That's interesting. In a way the parallel for me would be... when we presented SP for the very first time in 1990, people were coming and going, there were conversations in the bar, in the room itself there were shifts in atmosphere and tone and all of those things are pretty much lost. I don't think there's a recording of that first one. If one wants to talk about it, they can only really talk about the text and maybe the accounts from people who were there but mostly the performance is lost as data I mean it's just gone. Whereas in the case of the most SB live stream we have the entire thing as a recording, and it would probably be possible to trace the Twitter activity in that time period (and any other contemporaneous sort of writing you can find) and match one to the other. In a certain way there's a lot more that is recoverable that one could study and look at. The difference perhaps has to do with recoverability, in that what was purely ephemeral in the old days (pure performance) is now available as different forms of capture - six-hour video and six hours of Twitter timeline - if you want to just boil it down like that. You're right that for people watching live stream are both watching the video, the image and the sound, but they're also experiencing some of them the Twitter conversations. In a way that conversation becomes a close parallel track to the work in a very real way. They're simultaneously making that dinner and talking to their mom on the phone and answering the door to the gas man and doing stuff or going on the bus into town. There're many stories we know of people watching those works in relatively unusual and ordinary sort of situations. Yes, so that all becomes part of their experience of the work. In the live streams here's an interaction between the watching itself and the context of watching – just as there is with television, radio, and the Internet in general. There is a greater degree of porousness and dialogue between the work and other contextual elements. Maybe one way to think about that is to think that the work is the same, but the room it's in has changed. The semantic space that it occupies, the social sort of space of mediatisation that it occupies has changed and that of course does things to the work that are outside of our control. I mean I like that. I think that the work was waiting for that. [...]

TE: The quality of Twitter is that there's a live commentary on all and any aspects of what you do. People will say if they are thrilled or amused with what you're doing or if they find it boring or if you fuck up. They will say so. That's just a condition of being in that space, I think. Obviously, it's mostly with a lot with the live streams. [...] it's a space that you don't control. You have to let that go. [...]

TE: It has a different kind of presence, but in a sense that's the condition of working now where it's very easy for people to add this layer of material around the work on the Internet. [...]

GK: There is an overflow of information and I'm wondering if the records that you gave to the British Library is a way to push that kind of overflow to an organization that can probably sustain it. If there are things that you throw away and how you evaluate what to discard.

TE: The idea is that we give them the rehearsal videos and documentation of live performances in the form of video. We don't give them physical materials, notebooks or props or ephemera. We don't give them programs or leaflets or whatever. There's not really a selection process except to give them those things and not others. But that's what that collection is; it's video and sound. That's what they want. The rest of stuff it's just in boxes or in people's private collections of stuff is badly organized, hard to find. We only try to ensure that those very particular materials that we hold go to them. So, if somebody really wants to study the making of the pieces then that [the British Library collection of video documentation from performances and rehearsals] will be the place to start. As I said before it's so badly catalogued and without me or somebody else to talk through those material, I'm not sure what sense they would make. [...]

TE: [In terms of an archive] You could probably think about these different layers of material which exist in different places and which in order to have a whole view of something, or a view from multiple perspectives or layers, you might want to gather all of those things. [...] There's no primary object, there's no object that really has that kind of precedence even [i.e. no source script, no notebook with a comprehensive outline of a work in advance of its creation], certainly not in terms of the creative process... [...] I think not only that all of those things are like the traces, Internet and social media and in

print and all the other places that there are traces, there's the object itself, there's recording of one kind or another, but there's also this sort of vast cloud of absolutely intangible materials that can go on, exchanges between the artists and between the artists and the audience also. [...] I think for me it's more interesting to think about layers and about fragments and maybe constellations of material, none of which is the thing. I think maybe in the interaction between those things there's something to be found. It's still interesting to me that you know you're pointing out that layer of residues that come out in social media as another place in which the work leaves a trace. The things that you're saying about that being a live contemporaneous sort of writing. [...]

V. Interview with Erin Lin – 7th June 2017

EL: The archive here started officially in 1983. Before that people had sort of unofficially been keeping stuff in their offices and their cupboards. In 1983 the board chose to set up an archive. Back then we were based down in Oval which is actually where the costume hire store is now and the rolling stacks of the archive. We originally started down there and transferred to this building in 2007 so that we could become part of what the NT was doing, get closer to the main site. The mission of the archive is that we document, preserve and make accessible everything related to history of the National Theatre and its ongoing projects. We are the National Theatre's archive. We're not the National Theatre Archive. [...] we very much focus on National Theatre content. The archive is split into three different sections; the cultural archive which is everything to do with shows -that's kind of what you'd expect to find and that includes all of the photographs such as technical production, rehearsal photographs and prompt scripts, costume bibles, programmes, posters all the recordings etc. We've recorded everything from 1995 on wards and we get the NT Live recordings as well and all the press cuttings of the stage manager reports. To us there's a lot in that and that tends to be what people want to access most so it's fully catalogued, and that catalogue is online, so you can look it up. We also have what's called a performance database which you can access online. That tells you every show that we've ever done along dates of those shows, venues, and then every cast member and every creative involved. It's a really good online resource that anyone can access from anywhere in the world without having to email us and ask. So that's sort of all the cultural side. We then have the business archive which is predominantly why we exist. We are here for financial legal reasons; for business sustainability of the NT and that's probably why we're completely

internally funded. We are here to make sure that the NT has all of the backup and audit trails, all those kinds of things that it should have which has more to do with records management; if you've heard of records management as opposed to archiving. The business archive is huge and goes right back to 1963 when we were founded. The business archive tends to be closed to the public purely because it includes sensitive information, but it can be open to people if they need it for research, for publishing or something like that. We do of course have a process that they go through to do that. Finally, the third section of the archive has to do with external collections since we don't actively collect as we don't have a purchasing budget. Nevertheless, lots of people donate to us such as staff members from the early days when we were at the Old Vic. So, things may include... we've got a collection of vocal coach, I've got collections from people who were board members about founding the NT and we also have two collections about the building on South Bank; that big architectural building which was erected in 1976... lots of information about that. Then the largest collection we have is of Jocelyn Herbert who was our first theatre designer, which came to us a couple of years ago. All this mean, all the external collections allow us to view the NT through different prisms and they allow us or a researcher to have a different perspective on certain productions or what it was like to be a staff member or be on the board. They give a different feeling of the NT. Then we also have the collection that is about the movement of the National Theatre which started in the mid eighteen hundred. That's all fully catalogued. There is a lot of stuff in particular with the cultural archive. We've got films dating right back to '63 and so every production we've ever done we will have content on. [...]

GK: I was wondering if there are differences in your documents according to both the phase they belong to and the purpose they serve.

EL: We have bits of all of that. You know it's not like we focus on one particular phase. The hardest to collect tends to be the creative process because a creative process is very difficult to document. [...] trying to implement a documentation process on [a new cast] is quite hard and also something that they are probably not interested in while trying to put a show on. It is really challenging but it is something that we are working to do more and more and as part of my own research which is related to my role in how we document the process of what happens in the rehearsal room; what the process is when the director goes with the playwright, that kind of thing. [...] We do try and do that, we

do keep a lot of rehearsal notes, a lot of their work in progress is documented in prompt scripts as it comes from stage management. They tend to bundle together a lot of the notes with the prompt script. You have a lot of documentation about discussions that happened around the rehearsal process, the changes that they've made. We also keep what's called rehearsal diaries which are written by the staff director. Those are written weekly and that's basically writing up a rehearsal process of what's happened in the room. [...] The thing is that we don't really know what a show is going to be like, so we obviously have to program the documentation process maybe three or four months in advance when actually a show will only go into rehearsal four weeks before its first preview. So, it's very difficult to know what's happening in that rehearsal space and which can impact on a lecture series you're going to give or something like that. [...] at the moment there's no documentation process that only happens for the archive. We're just trying to capture what is already there. Then in terms of the live performance we take recordings of the show. [...]

EL: [We record] usually one live, but it depends which show it is. Normally it's one show. We do an edit of the weight camera shot. But then if it's a production like 'Lost Without Words' which was on a few months ago and where everything was different every night since it was an improvised production, we recorded every night. [...] With the NT Live we only get the NT Live recording. I would like to push to get archive recordings along with the NT Live recordings because they are quite different, but it is a matter of cost. [...] We record the shows and then we also have photographs, costume notes, high-definition photographs of the actors in their costumes which didn't happen before. That actually started because of the 15th anniversary gala that we did where we brought several of the productions back and so I had to send all the prompt scripts, costumes bibles back to the main site of the costumes they've been made. I think they realized that what they were keeping wasn't quite as good, as detailed as they thought it was. The note taking, high-definition photographs of all characters in costume as well which is which is new and really useful. Then I suppose we don't have any audience feedback. We don't have a way of doing that. We are sort of in discussion with marketing about whether we even want to start thinking about documenting what happens with social media. Currently I think there's a monthly report written of interesting tweets that have come out of productions and that's maintained by the social media officer. We also keep very detailed statistics on usage of our websites, of our exhibitions and those kinds of thing as well which helps us to know what's popular and

what isn't. That includes engagement with podcasts and with videos that are put on YouTube and that kind of things. We get an idea of what's used and what wasn't. Then in terms of what happens to a show after its being at the NT, that's a kind of a mixed... it depends on what happens. War Horse is a good example. War Horse started 10 years ago (it seems like a long time) and it's changed hugely since it was on at the end of the year. So, we do have new original content from that production. We will then be sent every subsequent prompt script, costume bible things like that. We all get every copy of the program, so we can keep up to date with all the different cast changes. And we also have an original recording from 2007 and then we also did an NT Live broadcast from The New London Theatre and so we have that as well which was done in 2015. We've got those two recordings which are very different and show how that's developed. Then the script changes quite markedly when it goes on tour to different countries and so we will be getting that content into the archive too. But it's difficult because they don't archive it until the show is completely finished, which means we've only got the 2007 stuff because it's so different and it's not useful anymore. The rest of it will stay with the NT Productions to look after it. Only once it's finished-finished we'll get everything into the archive. [...]

EL: there is a lot written by academics and how archives should be, but without being particularly helpful if you're an archivist, let's put it that way. So, they're not always particularly practical or logical if you're actually trying to do on the ground. [...] we have a system called CAM. [...] That software allows you to catalogue a performance. In an archive you normally catalogue content you don't catalogue a thing that happened. Thus, we've got a performance front page which allows you to enter information about productions you put in and what the show is, and you can then see what sort of performance it is. [...] And Then you can actually attach rules to that production, so you can create a separate role, sort to say, and then it becomes the butch as Hamlet for instance. You can attach that to Hamlet and then you attach Benedict Cumberbatch's individual name authority file to that role. That means that if you want to search Benedict Cumberbatch it will bring up every single role that he's done and every performance that he's been in. A sort of way of interlinking a database to make sure that everybody links to everything else. That's what's accessible on a website. If you go onto our catalogue and if you search by production that's what you're seeing. [...] There's something else called AUStage which is probably if you've heard of it. That's the Australian Open source performance database like an imdb for the whole of Australia.

[...] AUStage are launching something called Live stage, which is a worldwide version of AUStage and that's something that's starting to get traction in the UK, and something called the Association of Performing Arts collections (apac). [...] CAM costs a bit 2,500 pounds a year. It means that lot of people, institutional members or individual members are not going to be able to pay that for a cataloguing system. Live Stage looks great. Rambert, the dance company, is currently using live stage as their performance database. [...] it's quite difficult at the moment to upload CAM export files in to live stage, particularly because everybody else who's got the cam performance database will have used different fields within the metadata. What it means is that you can't upload it straight into Live Stage because everybody's detail won't match. [...] Nobody's really working consistently because we've never had to. I think there's quite a lot of work still to be done on that. In terms of how we actually catalogue content we catalogue by provenance, by department that creates the content. That's really quite basic.

GK: Can you see the content in CAM?

EL: Well no it doesn't take assets. No, it is purely a catalogue. Yeah. You can add digital assets but it's not very good in doing that.

GK: How do you keep those?

EL: Digital assets are kept on our server. So, we have a server which is backed up and archived. And any assets... depends what they are. Most of them are organized by production so you have a production collection folder and then every production is arranged alphabetically and then under each production there is a ten-folder structure: program, production photos, rehearsal photos, media, costume all that kind of thing. Then in each one will be any born-digital assets that we have or any digital content that we've digitized in house. That's all kept in there. Most of that once it's in those folders, if it has a camera reference number it will be named with its camera reference number.

EL: Lives stage is only a document of the performances. It doesn't have content in it, but it will tell you where the content is. [...] Archives hub is similar and also the Black Plays Archive which we manage here is a union catalogue and that is a catalogue of every first production, first professional production in the UK of plays written by black British or African or Caribbean playwrights. [...]

GK: You mentioned you're starting to discuss about audiences, documentation, documents... Can you see all that sitting in NT archive? How do you think that would change the information that is already there?

EL: I don't think it particularly would. I think it would just be something extra that we take in. I would be more concerned with the format that it came in and how we make sure that that is preserved and accessible in years to come. So, for a project that we did 'we are here because we're here' which is a big project, a public project that ran last year and uses Storify to bring together a lot of the important tweets... what I mean is that we don't know if Storify will be accessible in 50 years' time. It is more about making sure that that content that we get in... you keep all of that sort of contextual information, but in a way that is accessible in the future and so it has to be in an open source document format, so we can access that in the future. I didn't really see that. That is something that would complement the archive; our collection policies are quite broad. Anything that tells you about a production and its reception is obviously relevant.

GK: But when something is in Storify or Twitter the content might change...

EL: They curated it and saved it in pdf.

GK: Any kind of differences any kind of comments that may occur in a later time are not something that are integrated?

EL: It depends what social media want to do as part of their documentation strategy because it could be that we want a snapshot of what happened during the project and we don't want somebody's reflection on it four years later because that's no longer part of the project. [...] Also, it's massively to do with the capacity of that staff department. Do you want them chasing around tweets for projects? I think it all depends practically what is useful to have because we keep - if you think the press reviews which are sort of the old fashioned audience reception- we keep all of the press reviews, but if something was printed 10 years later about something we probably wouldn't put in the original file because it wasn't published around the same time. That may well go into a general press file of something where the NT was mentioned in the press in this year -there's a folder for that. [...]

GK: What's the general duration for which you keep track of...

EL: Social media haven't decided on the strategy, so we don't know yet, but for press it will be for the duration of the run and then probably a couple of months ahead. [...]

GK: With productions that incorporate some kind of digital technology, how do you keep that information in the archive and how do you include the software when there is one?

EL: It really depends on what it is. Who was in charge of it? How aware they are that they should keep it. Is it software designed only for one production? How difficult is that going to be for us to keep it accessible? With Wonder.land it is the sound and video department who managed that, and they have sent all of their files to us to be kept, but they are obviously in formats that may not be accessible in the future. It is something that we do keep but then it depends whether that's going to be accessible in the future and if anybody will want to access it. [...]

EL: There is an issue with the digital content across the board but that's why we have digital preservation strategy and policy here. When you are a large institution you should be more able to make sure that certain things won't happen.

GK: I've noticed that you can access some information from productions. Do you avoid having content online due to copyright issues?

EL: Hardly anything in those archives are copyright; programs, program covers are a copyright, but content isn't. Posters are mostly copyright but not always and the rest of it pretty much is on our copyright.

GK: Is the same case with recordings as well?

EL: Yeah. You can look at everything in the research room, because all the contracts say that but there are no equity agreements for NT live. That's why you can't show anything. Any time you did show it you would have to pay royalties to every single person involved. You'd also need to agree that with the equity in any other union. So

that's why that does not happen. [...] Doing NT live is fine, the actors have that in their contract, that's an agreement. With the archive recordings, similarly it's in their contract that an archive recording will be made and be deposited at the archive and will be accessible in the research room. All has to be spelled out that that is accessible at one place. Do you know about One Demand into On Demand system? That obviously had to have long negotiations with equity because it is a free platform to provide access to the NT Lives for schools for free whenever they want. That's in addition to any contact they would have written for their own NT Live. That was a long negotiation that had to happen with equity in order to meet those agreements. It took a long time. That is free access and we don't make money from it. So, if we ever did want to make money from it, we would then have to pay everybody.

GK: Do you think that archiving and documentation should be separate roles?

EL: It's tricky. Archiving and records management are two different parts of the same profession. Archiving is about things you want to keep forever, for records management you have to keep for particular attention period. It can be a different person, but you need to be a pretty large team to have two members of staff doing that. Records management is more for financial, legal aspects. It tends to apply to slightly different departments. So, for production departments there isn't a law that they have to document stuff under a retention schedule, they are more stuff we want to keep forever whereas retention schedule is for finance, it's for HR, Health and Safety, Axton reports things like that. It can be different people, but the reason it isn't here is that we're a small team but also once something comes out of its retention period you then get to decide 'Does this go in the bin or does it come into the archive as a piece of interesting material to be kept for posterity?' It is useful having that as a same person because you can make that decision. In reality it's very difficult to implement retention periods just because of the sheer amount of work to have to go back things and say, 'Oh it's been seven years'.

GK: Does that happen in performance documentation as well?

EL: Not really. We don't. I suppose you could argue you might delete some of the budget, but we don't, we keep all of it.

GK: If you had a performance that embedded a technology as part of its live process and generated a numerous audience-generated content, do you think that the archive opens up to questions of selection or is keeping everything still a sustainable approach?

EL: Part of being an archivist is about getting rid of stuff. It's almost as important as keeping stuff. Making that decision is quite difficult and I think it would really depend on a case by case basis about what it was and why you were keeping it. If a sample for some reason couldn't give the feel of what it looked like, then you'd probably have to keep everything. But you need to make a call as to how useful keeping everything would be as opposed to the expense of keeping it. And that's whether taking up digital or physical or digital space and everything costs money. So, it's sort of deciding what is it vs. how much of our time and money is taking. It would probably be a case by case basis and I will always make that kind of decision with the head of that department. [...]

GK: Is that a bigger issue for digital documents or for physical documents?

EL: It's kind of equal to be honest. I would rather everything was paper because then at least you can see it and make sure it's okay. People outside of our profession really underestimate how difficult digital content is. It's ridiculous. [...] A lot of people think we can digitize everything and then content is fine and safe. It's absolutely not safe, it's far safer in a paper format. Each of them has a lot of problems. Obviously, paper has issues too. We've already filled our basements. We're storing with external storage and digital has digital preservation issues. [...]

GK: The NT has also started the Immersive Storytelling Lab. Exactly because it is immersive. I wonder how you are aspiring to deal with the documentation of their pieces.

EL: It's a bit of a nightmare and nobody has really solved that problem. We're still dealing with it on emails. [...] They keep a very detailed diary of what they're doing. Since they're involved in so many projects they work really differently to other departments. They work a lot on partnerships [...] A lot of the things they're developing may never come to fruition or might come out but not be a NT project [...] At the moment it's very unclear about what its identity is and where it's going. It's quite hard to know what we should be keeping. They're starting to document their actual strategy,

their spending and partnerships that they have, but when it comes to actually keeping the content that's something that they have said they are looking into for us because they are the ones that know what software they're using and so they can say 'Well you know it's in this format or in this format.' [...] what is more valuable is having perhaps screenshots of what it looked like; having a video file and then having the photo-file and then having the text. If you have all that then you'll be able to rebuild that experience for someone in 50 years' time even if you can't access the website. It may be a case of how we separate out the different features in order to have some idea of how that works even if we can't keep the experience. It's similar to computer games. To what extent do you have to build the environment to support those computer games? [...]

GK: If you can imagine an experience that has a plot where every member of the audience engages with only one particular part of it according to the decisions they make during the live, do you think that for its documentation you would try to eliminate that element or capture all audience trajectories, the whole thing?

EL: Yeah. Yeah. I mean I suppose we would be capturing the process of making it as well. Where I presume that would be wire frames of that user journey. I presume that would be part of the process of how that show was produced. So, I imagine that would be captured in the planning.

EL: Ah! Digital content is a nightmare. [...] The recent lounge. That is an archive space front of house. It's purely archives exhibitions that went into that space. And it was originally designed as a digital library. That was originally the idea. This was like six or seven years ago. Somebody would come in and watch our production front of house in a similar way as they would do while sitting in the research room. That's what that space meant to be and then morphed into... well you'd be sitting four and a half hours front of house where it's quite loud watching something. Then it changed into becoming a digital lounge; somewhere that you can engage with the archive from front of house. It morphed into what it is today, the lounge where we have exhibitions which are completely curated from the archive. The space has a dedicated wi-fi network which means that we can show archive content that is rights restricted. According to contracts rights restricted content can only be viewed in the archive research room. If we advertise the lounge as a satellite research room, we can show rights restricted content. That's why it is a wi-fi restricted network. We had exhibitions in there... very difficult

putting exhibitions front of house because the archive is very static, and we definitely had a push to make it look not boring as front of house [...] We have had digital content in every exhibition that we've done [...] and always included audio or video content, which goes down really well. What doesn't go down well is the purely digital content that you access on your own iPad or your phone [...] it's not obvious that the digital content exists. [...] iPads are in the space which people do engage with if they're there for an interval or something like that. And that digital platform basically allows you to see everything you see on the wall is in the digital platform plus more, you'll have more texts, more photos, more videos that you access in digital content. It's not being used particularly much [...] people will engage more with physical content that they can look at. The videos and the interviews do go down really well. Lots of people listen to them we see them engaging with it. That's great. It also allows us to say a lot more. If you have a video or you have audio. We did try augmented reality in the exhibition and didn't go very well. Nobody wanted to download the app and they just weren't particularly interested [...] We were thinking at the time that could replace having the digital platform so that the digital content and the physical content where one and you'd experience it altogether. Didn't really happen. I think it's because people didn't want to download the app because that's a barrier to being able to do it [...] It is hard to find who to promote exhibitions to especially if they're not particularly repertoire related. [...] What we are doing is successful in running events on site and they are very popular, but we've yet to sort of get the digital content right. What we're going to do for the exhibitions at the moment is that we are going to start posting them on Google art and culture. [...]

VI. Interview with Stephen Cleary – 20th June 2017

SC: We've got something like three hundred videotapes of Forced Entertainment up to the year 2000 from when they began which was around 1984. Some more recent material, some audio recordings as well as probably several versions of *Speak Bitterness* performed at different places. We also have an audio recording of a day-long symposium all about Forced Entertainment from 2002, and another from 2004. I think the most recent piece of documentation we have from Forced Entertainment ... it probably will be a live show at Battersea Arts Centre. We're going to video Forced Entertainment, I think probably later this month, very shortly, the show they've got now at Battersea very soon, Dirty Work And before whatever the last thing was... [...]

SC: We got the video files. We probably haven't got any documentation of the surrounding context for that. The library also has a Web archiving program. It might be an idea for me to explain that. [...]

SC: The sound archive is a part of the British Library, a department of the British library officially called Sound and Vision. So, we're concerned with moving image as well. The precursor for the original institution from which the sound archive grew was called the British Institute of Recorded Sound and it was founded in 1955. [...] So, for the part of the sound archive that I'm concerned with which would be, in the loosest possible sense, drama and literature, location recording of plays began in 1963 with the opening of the National Theatre. But there seem to have been recordings made before that because there is one made at the Mermaid Theatre, London, in 1961 which amongst other performers includes the poet Sylvia Plath reading just one poem. [...] the British Institute of Recorded Sound changed its name the National Sound Archive. It was incorporated in the British Library in 1983. [...] the way the sound archive is organized is by curatorial departments, as far as collection development goes. [...] When about it comes to what we can do we are inevitably limited by what resources we have. [...] the part that I work in which is concerned with drama and literature recordings which is me and Eva del Rey, that's a two-person department. [...] I think we can kind of surmise that they selected the National Theatre because this is probably where the writers of plays [...] A year after, they started recording Royal Shakespeare Company productions in London. Then probably about 10 years after that, sort of the mid-70s, they started recording at the Royal Court Theatre. So, all these venues produce a slightly different kind of work. [...] Parallel to that there are all sorts of [...] recordings of literary festivals, poetry readings [...] this is all informed by what technology was available. [...] probably during the 1980s the drama and literature section started making video recordings, very basic video recordings, of largely studio-scale theatre and performance art, I suppose. Experimental theatre at, let's say, the ICA - or they had an arrangement with the ICA where somebody would film at the ICA and deposit a copy at the National Sound Archive. [...] we do our own video recordings and they're still very basic. It would be a mismatch to go to some West End theatre even if they would let us and try and video Oklahoma or something like that with one single camera. So, we don't really do a lot of West End theatre. However, if we're doing something that's more studio scale there's not such a mismatch and often, we think these shows probably aren't going to be

recorded by other people - although nowadays I suppose with iPhones and so that's not as true as it was.

GK: Are the agreements some sort of copyright with regard to recordings?

SC: Well historically for all these location recordings of performances the recordings were made on the basis that the material wouldn't be circulated except to researchers for consultation on the premises without further permissions being sought. So that applies just as much today as it did in the 60s. [...] To make a copy of these recordings available to third parties we need the permission of everybody who has a copyright interest unless they've signed it off which they won't have done. That means all the actors, any musicians, composer, anybody who can be heard on it, and the writer of course. For that reason -this is basically copyright legislation- we can't easily make these materials available either on request or via the Internet. Especially when a little bit of time has gone by it's even more difficult to find that people -often there is quite a few people involved that are hard to trace. [...] If we're making a recording in this studio [...] it is a lot easier. We give them a form and only one person has to sign it and then they may give the right to make copies available or they may not. We can do that. Retrospectively it's very difficult to keep up with multiple parties involved. And that same thing applies if we go to Battersea Arts Centre [...] those sorts of recordings often exist under the same restrictions; anyone can come to the library, can view these videos, but if they are living in Scotland or Australia then unfortunately, they are out of luck [...] It's copyright legislation. We're a state subsidized institution. [...] We have to go by the rules. [...]

GK: What is your opinion about the purpose of the video recording and its position within the British Library?

SC: I think this grew out of the audio recording program of theatre. [...] It can still work as an audio recording. I suppose it's a writer's play. I think at some point, as far as our documentation of contemporary performance was concerned, it must have become obvious -probably that's a bit before my time- that certain kinds of dramatic performance - let's say experimental theatre, for the sake of calling it something - did not translate so well to an audio-only record because there's a whole visual angle as well that you won't get. So, I think that's probably why and also because apart from that reason it is a different type of contemporary work so it couldn't be ignored, but it

couldn't be recorded in the old-fashioned way as when recording something at the Royal Court and retain any sort of coherence I suppose.

SC: We tend to think of what we're doing in that area as... creating a document that can give somebody an idea what it was like. It's filmed from an audience position more or less. We don't do close-ups of what people wouldn't actually naturally be able to see. That's really the only rule we have. If possible, we keep the camera static; we can't always really do that. It's for the benefit of people who weren't able to go to the show, don't know about it, don't know they're going to be interested in it yet. It gives you a rough idea. It's one type of documentation that somebody who is researching - where the subject might be a particular group of performers or something - might be of use to them as part of the bigger picture. So, if you think of the 1970s and try to visualize that time, you're not going to find hardly any video because portable video wasn't available to people. You might find still photographs, might find a few reviews. Oral history becomes quite an important part of the picture here. [...] Theoretically you would think a video will give you a rough idea of what happened, maybe more than a still photograph on its own [...] We are aware it's not the actual thing, yeah, of course.

SC: [...] We do some interviews as well but what we don't do is long oral history interviews. So, there's another section within the sound archive called Oral History. [...]

GK: Apart from those interviews that happened for that project, you don't receive any other files, maybe secondary documents?

SC: There's two different categories really. If we were to record a play or performance, we pick up any related literature that might be around. e.g. a programme, theatre programme, there might be a brochure about a festival or something like that, ancillary documentation like that. There may also be material that would be harvested by the UK's web archiving program that might relate. [...] There is the material we would go out and generate ourselves or collect ourselves. When it comes to unpublished recordings that's different because some archives may be mixed- media anyway. If you think of the archive of the performer and director Neil Bartlett and writer who donated his personal archive to the British Library a couple of years ago: that included videos; included audio cassette tapes; it also included a lot of manuscript material so in that case

it's... well that's basically a mixed-media archive and it's not really a case of one type of material.

[...] What we do with location recording is sort of rough and ready really. There're no frills. We go and do it and then if there's ancillary documentation we will pick it up, but we don't have the resources to be able to do something like film rehearsals or interview cast members or people that might have devised the show or something like that because we do something and get onto the next thing. Anything like that would have to be a special project so it might be something that a PhD student might want to organize or administer, or any other external collaborator might want to do, or a company might do this sort of thing themselves. There's some rehearsal material in the Forced Entertainment collection, but it's not something that we really have the resources to do. The things we do, we do a fairly wide range of activities. We have to balance everything against 'Well if we do this then we can't do that'. [...] Battersea Arts Centre does a lot of fringe and alternative theatre in London. [...] we can't actually do everything because sometimes there's nobody available and so on and so forth. We don't really try and gauge what future audiences might be interested in or might find useful. That'd be very difficult. Some things we don't do because other people do them, for example, the Victoria and Albert Museum does have a theatre recording program, and they video record bigger shows and edit things properly. [...] we just have one person, go in a cab somewhere and do it. We have one camera. We don't post-edit it at all. [...]

GK: Have you been asked to document immersive productions where audience members become participants, or have you been offered documentation from a performance like that?

SC: Well we've been asked not to do something like that. That was *The Masque of the Red Death* by Punchdrunk which was Battersea. [...] The audience members were around the building, there were things happening everywhere and they all wore these masks. And we were asked not to do that because if somebody is wandering around with a hand-held video camera, they sort of spoil it for everybody else. I'm not aware of documentation of that particular show. But they did give us a free ticket to go and see it. We have videoed various promenade-type performances so it's not really immersive [...] we just joined the crowd then with a video camera and mingled in. [...] So that's pretty much what somebody would have experienced in terms of the limitations of the video

camera. There are shows that are not just necessarily in a traditional theatrical space that we document, but... I don't think hand-held video looks that great, but we do it. [...]

Z: What about online documentation, for example the tweets I mentioned before with regard to Forced Entertainment's *Speak Bitterness*? Is it something that someone from your team is looking at?

SC: We have a Sound and Moving Image catalogue and we can put PDF documentation on that catalogue. In theory there's nothing to prevent us from putting a PDF document containing all those tweets next to -if we have it- a recording of a show. What the Library does have is a UK web archive. There's the UK web archive and then there's the slightly separate legal deposit web archive. So, the UK web archive goes back further, and this was created to archive selected websites with the permission of the owners and then these resulting snapshots -as they call them- which were taken every six months or so, something like that, would be archived and would be viewable by everybody. Tweets, I don't know. I'm not sure how much a part of this Twitter is. [...]

SC: If we were to archive Twitter feeds it would probably fall more into the province of the UK web archiving team since in the sound archive, we are traditionally AV based. If it was part of a bigger project we might be involved, otherwise it might fall between two stools or fall under the web archive's activities.

GK: Do video documents conform to the library system?

SC: I'm not the best person to ask about it though. That would be the head of AV cataloguing. [...]

GK: To go back to Neil Bartlett's archive. You said that that's a mixed-media archive. Is it within your responsibilities to curate that?

SC: No. It is divided between different areas. The sound archive sits within a bigger department within the library which is called Contemporary British Collections. [...] so do contemporary literary and theatrical manuscripts. [...]

GK: So, in order to find it I would have to go to different...

SC: There isn't really a one-stop shop at the moment. But that is the idea. Eventually we'll just have one great big amalgamated catalogue, but it's not really there yet. [...] We do collaborate with other departments - don't get me wrong. It's just that we don't ask them everything about everything they do.

GK: Do you curate exhibitions with sound archives?

SC: Well all the exhibitions that take place in the library will be supported by audio and video material. [...] this upcoming sound exhibition will be the first time that we are going to concentrate primarily on the medium of sound. [...] Just as the Library is willing to loan objects, physical objects, under certain conditions for external exhibitions, we're willing to supply sounds under license based on... As you probably know there is not just one form of copyright. There's ownership and then there's the creative rights, intellectual property rights. Then there's the recording copyright which is owned by whoever pressed 'record' on the machine. [...] There are two or three copyrights so just because something is in the archive doesn't necessarily mean, as I said earlier on when we began this recording, we have the right to give it to a third party. There are other rights to be cleared. Exhibitions are part of what we do here on fairly frequent basis.

GK: Have you ever collaborated with artists in the sound archive to make something out new of it?

SC: It's happened. We had two artists-in-residence under the Sound and Music organization's Embedded program. [...] One of them was looking at older wax cylinder recordings in the main I think and doing something contemporary with them - doing something contemporary with that old equipment. He recorded contemporary poets performing in front of a great big horn onto wax cylinders. [...] The other artist did something else in sound that was more in the area of world music, I think. It's the same problem. Copyright is the way that we disappoint people or make it difficult for them [...]

SC: We don't collect everything anyway. If you think of the British Library printed books division, printed books are backed up by a legal deposit act so anybody who

publishes a book in the UK is obliged by law to give a copy to each of the six legal deposit libraries. There is a policy of at least trying to be as comprehensive as possible. There is no legal deposit for audio materials. In certain areas that's more of a problem than others. If you think of the huge volume of material that's released that you might categorize one way or other as popular music, for example, through all these different. That's a really huge challenge. In our area, Drama and Literature, the commercial sector material is not quite such a challenge because there is not so much of it. We can try and keep up more-or-less with what's released. Maybe perhaps we are missing quite a lot because we're not aware of everything that is made available on the internet. We are certainly open to collecting anything that we know about, and anything that is made available by theatre companies who may distribute their own material; Blast Theory for example released their own DVDs or Forced Entertainment or the straighter theatre like recordings that are published on DVD of shows at the Globe Theatre for example. [...]

SC: The stuff we generate ourselves is incredibly selective because there's just so much activity. So, all we can really do is try and represent different genres as best as we can give the limitations of our resources. [...] I think we'd be happy to accept a big package of different kinds of materials all related to one show or one performance, but it's not something that we have the resources to do ourselves. [...] I don't think we've had an approach like that. [...] So usually we sort of say maybe via a producer or a venue 'Can we come along on such and such a day and video your show?'. They tend to say yes or no, but they don't always seem to take a huge amount of interest in it. Sometimes they're quite pleased. [...] With everything we do we have to balance the resources that we're putting towards something with its potential - let's say - research value [...] if somebody says, 'I've got half a dozen video files of these shows we did when we were in Yorkshire -or wherever that might be. Would you like them for the archive?' we'd probably just say 'Yes, thank you very much'. If they say, 'I've got a hundred shows', and we've not heard of the company and they don't really seem to have much of a profile, we might have to think 'If we invest time and money in doing all things we need to do, cataloguing, the additional storage etc. in this material, it might mean we can't do something else that...' Eventually we have to try and weigh up the cultural weight of these different things and what we think we should be doing. It's not really a hard-edged scientific systematic approach. We don't really get a huge amount of offers like that, that we have to say no to. [...]

GK: How often do you go outside and record performances like the offers you make to theatre?

SC: We mainly base things on relationships with either venues who are known for a certain kind of work or with organizations who are known for promoting a certain sort of work. We try to spread our resources across different types of work. [...] We still have Battersea (Arts Centre). We would find it difficult to make a relationship with another venue that did fringe theatre, alternative theatre. That's the way we think about it. If there's something we are really conscious of not doing, then we'd think about trying to plug the gap there. It will be a type of work rather than a particular artist or a particular show. It's really about trying to not really have a heavy editorial hand at that micro level. We don't often get asked to go and video-record things. We do get asked occasionally. That would depend on our schedule. If nobody's available, then we can't do something anyway. If it's something that's complimentary to the collection in some way, we might do it. [...]

GK: What are the difficulties for preserving all the digital material in the sound and vision collection? I mean there is certainly a difficulty of preserving the tangible material, but what about the digital?

SC: The difficulty of preserving the tangible analogue material is the cycle of the obsolescence of formats. Eventually certain 'players' won't work anymore. You won't be able to get the parts. [...] Our preferred archival format for audio is a high-resolution wav file. At some point that will be replaced by something else, but by then we should be in a position to migrate all these files to the new format relatively easy. I've got no idea what that might involve but we'll be doing it in huge bulk. I think the National Archives keeps a sort of database of platforms of formats and what's compatible with what. So, somebody in Technical Services here is keeping an eye on it. The sound archive is a member of the International Association of Sound Archives which is constantly producing technical documents about digital preservation. I think at the moment the digitization of analogue materials is a the more pressing concern. [...]

SC: But as a postscript to what I just said, video is even more of a headache than audio. Audio is relatively straightforward compared to video because there seem to be in many more technical issues and... I'm not sure there's an agreed international archival standard

for video anyway. [...] in 10 years' time the monitors will be totally different. All sorts of problems there. [...]

VII. Interview with Ramona Riedzewski – 23rd November 2017

RR: We also have born-digital material in our collection. I would see AuStage as something very different. So, AuStage is that information about what happened, when and where. [...] Stage actors or producers or directors are under-represented online and it's really hard to find relevant information easily. The only way is to dip into fun pages like Facebook. So, my mission has always been to try and create [...] a point that they can go and find out what shows have been produced, who have they worked with, what have they done, if there is a pattern, if professionals had a break [...] It's the sort of big data, and this is what AuStage does for Australia. [...] My plan is always to make sure that we can link the digital to our physical collecting holdings. However, our collecting holdings themselves are physical as I've showed you, but we're also increasing the inquiries of digital material. We have lots of recordings and digital photographs. We haven't quite cracked on acquiring designer files. A lot of designers now work digitally [...] Everything is done digitally, and it's all done for a purpose, that is, to put a show on. How do you capture that? I would say that we have not quite managed that yet, but that's the next big thing I'm working on. [...]

RR: I guess the way to look at performing arts archives, the way we look approach them is from the perspective of the show. Yet, how do you capture the show? It's intangible heritage. You can't. It's an experience. It happens in a certain space and time. So, for us, the way we approach it is... we want anything that is sort of related to it, we aren't really picky with the medium of the file is. We initially collect whatever we can capture whether it's digitally or costume or a sword or a door of a theatre, anything. It's really the capturing of performance arts history we are aiming at and we are not being particular with what type material has been used for that purpose, especially in the V&A. I think because we are a museum we have 'museum' archives. I guess we're one of the lucky organizations that can deal with everything... short of... or we should be. Digital collections are a real challenge. For example, one of the collections we create ourselves is the National Video Archive of performance. We have a unique agreement with the unions for filming shows. We started this operation in 1992 so way before NT Live or Opera House Live. It's based on the same idea except that we do only one

recording from each show. Then of course researchers can come here and watch it. [...]
We have recording since '92. We changed our recording practice in 2010 and went from tape to digital recording. So, we're recording digitally since 2010 and we have digitized all of our analogue ones. We now have about 500 recorded shows. We don't film every show because it costs a lot of money. We maybe record 20-30 a year. Each show is now a digital file, which doesn't really take up any physical space but it's a collecting item. It has its challenges. At the moment we literally give people DVDs to watch, which is very outdated at this point in time. NT has a streaming platform in a meeting room, and I think three or four machines where people can sit in front and use. We haven't had the infrastructure in place in order for it to be secure. We don't want people to download it and we can't just put it on the Internet. [...] A lot of people struggle with that idea, but I'm not allowed to put a digital file on a website. [...]

GK: You need the consent of all participants of the show, right?

RR: Yeah, and more. I have to get the union to sign it off. It's complicated. At the moment where we are at... we are able to do recordings and people can come in and watch them. We also do a lot of screenings in museums, schools and in general public screenings. One of the big next things is how do we can guarantee ongoing preservation of those file. If you have a piece of paper, you put it in a box and it's probably going to be there for the next 200 years. With the digital file you can't do that. [...] We're trying to collect the intangible heritage of theatre and performance so that in 200 years' time people will realize who Benedict Cumberbatch was for example. It's a bit of a mission and it's a big challenge because it means we need to be an expert and be aware of how to deal with every type of material that might come across. [...] Obviously, there's a lot of confidential material which we can't get access to [...]

GK: What is confidential?

RR: I can give you a very good example. Every night in every show the stage manager keeps what we call a 'bible'. Now almost every night in every show they write a report where they note down the time, how the interval was, any incident that happened. In the 70s and 80s and 90s before data protection was introduced those were very honest accounts. They sometimes included things such as 'We had a fight in the audience' or 'The so and so actor turn up drunk' that lead actor might still be alive and it might have

been the case that only one or two people knew that incident. That's where, for example, lots of confidentiality comes in. A recent acquisition we made in 2011 was Josie Rourke's files. She was the artistic director of The Donmar Warehouse. She does a lot of freelance work and she has a very particular way of working using quite beautiful notebooks. Everything goes in those notebooks including all the personal contact details of actors. Of course, she works with high profile actors. Email addresses, telephone numbers are all in there meaning that we can't make them accessible to the public. We have people from newspapers coming in here and I don't want them to find people's phone number. I can't. I'm not allowed to reveal this information. [...]

RR: When you look at some of our catalogues [...] sometimes what you will find in production files [...] that a particular folder is closed. That basically means that that's where we have all the confidential data. We usually put a timespan of 80 years assuming a life span is hundred years roughly. That people mentioned in the files are at least of adult age, so 18 19 20 and then we give another 80 years. We tend to close things for eighty years from the date of the creation. [...]

GK: That are interactive performances where the audience puts personal information.

RR: [...] if it is filmed meaning it's then out there, and it's clearly identifiable. You want it to be identifiable. [...] [people] don't realize that an archive is very current. Because of digital material you have to be ahead of it. I'm not saying we are necessarily, but we are very aware of the challenge, we work with relevant companies, we are acquiring digital material. What we usually struggle with is emails, artistic directors' emails and things. In the past we would have just acquired them in paper form but now emails are very easy to lose... [...]

GK: Have you ever received an archive that's very complicated such as an archive from a performance that had an interactive element?

RR: Digitally complicated yeah, but not when it was interactive with the audience. [...] This was challenging for us when we received their archives because we work on Windows while pretty much everything, they have is digital and the only thing that is papers was the finance and marketing stuff. Most of the creative material, the creative process of how he puts the show together is all digital. So, we acquired quite a lot of

digital material which we tried to tackle, and we succeeded in dealing with this digital component. Do have a look at the catalogue and see if it makes sense, basically it says that the digital material is not available due to access and similar reasons. We say we have it, but you can't really see it. If somebody requests to come in and look at it, we'll try and figure out something. It's a real challenge because we have computers and public access computers -most people come in with their laptops, but we don't want them to watch the material on their own laptops because they are easy to download and then... it's a digital file, it's so easy to chuck it on the Internet. You have all the copyright issues to deal with then. Once you part with a digital file you completely lose control. A physical you can keep an eye on. [...]

RR: I think what we need and its part of the next developments: [...] to create a sort of digital research suites. [...] In the back end we have a catalogue and that links to the digital parts and our internal systems. In our new place we will try to marry those up so that we will provide full access for certain stuff. There will be a sort of user version which will go past the wall so that people can look at it on designated machines where they won't be able to download or upload it. [...] It's that sort of AV material that we want to make available with the right technology and computers networks so that there are secure and can be looked at.

GK: Did you receive any kind of software that they might had created?

RR: No, because we don't really need it since the files were word documents, excel spreadsheets, PDFs. Then there's recordings in mp form. [...] in ten years' time somebody comes and says 'Oh, I'd love to recreate it'. Where do you start? Say the company, I'm not saying it will happen, but say the company may not exist at that time and someone desires to re-do the show. Now, say you are the producer and start looking online. I'd love them to come to something like AuStage which I will here rename to 'live stage' where you will be able to see all the information about Desh: 'where' 'when' 'where it toured' just to get a bit of research done. Then you'd have all your creative people were involved. [...]. You'd do a bit of research, which would be at home online through a platform where it would locate that e.g. the V&A has the archive. This is the way you'd look at an online catalogue which you can do yourself. At that point maybe, we will be able to make some photographs available online maybe some of the posters. [...] in order for you to view all the stored AV material you would have to come to us in

person. You would come to the physical V&A, at our new house... [...] It's all about opening up. Everything is so digital these days that people go back to the analogue material. I think there is a reason why people love vinyl. It's interesting when we have people here, I'd say maybe 30 and under when we do research skill sessions a lot of people say 'Oh, my God, I can touch this,' or 'You have all these'. [...] Generally, when people recreate shows they don't tend to use the original material. People don't use the original costumes, but they're inspired by the original and want to do a truly original hundred years later for example. [...] Ultimately, it's about getting the bodies through the door or to some sort of facility ideally where they can spend money, buy coffee, relax and come back. With the mission of the V&A is also to inspire new generations. [...]

GK: What do you think about the incidents such as certain Forced Entertainment productions during which remote audiences' tweet about what they are watching online? Could you consider tweets as a document of the performance or a document of how the experience was manifested or recorded?

RR: As a collection we would wonder how we were going to record the experience, but I guess the reason why I am a bit more relaxed about it is because the marketing team of companies are responsible for logging any important interactions. [...] I suspect that their press teams and marketing teams obviously monitor their social media accounts very heavily because there is a strategy usually behind it. [...] I suspect all the work they'd done to monitor and to respond to it will be in their business archives because obviously we have production material but there will be lots of internal e-mail, notes, memos, press cuttings they probably also do weekly round ups on what was covered and how. I suspect while it might not be the Twitter, but they will we might have a little bit of code. We will have the core things captured in the archive. [...]

GK: Do you think that kind of interaction or the experience of the remote audience is something important?

RR: It is. I have to say, I'm not sure how to capture it. It's a tricky one. Let's say 200 years down the line they will question our current methods. However, I guess if you leave something for the future that can attest to the live performance that happened e.g. at the Barbican, but also shows that it was live streamed I guess it would be something

captured at a company level. That would in some extent reflect on the audience reaction, but not really on the actual audience sitting at home. Would you really want to capture that and wouldn't by doing so interfere with people's private space?

RR: A lot of companies use Facebook Live now; it is really popular. [...] There is a certain level of privacy, most people know that when you comment somewhere others can trace the comment back to the username. How much more does anybody need to know about that process? [...]

RR: The way we always look at it, and this is where I always feel I need to justify why... lots of people think archiving is an easy thing and indeed some of the principles are incredible basic, but there is reason to madness and there is a big picture. After my training it has taken me three or four years as a professional in order to understand the complexity of how you take things out of a company and what moral and ethical obligations are, how the archivist needs to deal with data protection, what is actually of lasting value. Value is actually a really big question. We need to ask if we really need to keep everything for posterity. There might be one or two people who might be interested in this one thing, but we also need to see the bigger picture as archivists.

GK: What would you term as valuable?

RR: It's a hard one. There is a core bit we would've always aspired to collect. For instance, if we work with a company it would be something like their annual accounts, all the big things like the artistic director's correspondence, the diaries and then anything related to... literally a bit of every production. So, for every production we like to see why they chose it, how did they start pulling the creative people together, the cast. Then obviously the actual show, if we have a recording it would be great otherwise photographs, press cuttings, posters, flyers. This is the core bit of material you would always want as a minimum. Then sometimes you expand. Sometimes we get these really random things. [...] Sometimes we have to resolve in that selective approach. [...] If I'm being honest sometimes researchers may have lots of ground ideas and sometimes you may have to guide them towards the right direction in terms of the practicality of things. Sometimes we just have to make decisions because if we don't, we just going to get everything that can be kept. [...]

GK: Would you approach the material of/from a production as an archive and how would you distinguish between documentation and archive?

RR: I don't think we think this way to be honest. I don't think that way. The thing is that the word 'archive' is a bit of err...(groans) For me, it's often difficult to link the theory of archives and documentation and the practice of it. I don't think there is a successful definition of what is documentation and what is archive. For archivists an archive is based on provenance. It comes from one source, it's something once kept for a specific purpose which at some point stopped being used for that original purpose and, thus, moved to the next stage. What you do with that file/information has a lot to do with what we call appraisal. There are a lot of theories of how much of a family per a collection you keep, which could be anywhere between 10 percent to everything, but tends to be 30 to 40 percent by the time you're finished. In terms of documentation, I guess that's part of the process. For me, you never create an archive, an archive establishes itself naturally. When theatre companies do their day to day job, they create documentation, they create documents, they collect information, they collect research material. Then at some point they have accumulated so much that they don't have the space to keep them anymore. That's when they approach us to create an archive. An archive evolves quite naturally as part of day to day work. Once it's taken out of usual day to day original purpose it becomes the archive that you identify as something meaningful that can be used to access and extract information for new purposes than the ones for which they had originally been created. [...] It's a process actually.

GK: So, an archive is when documentation has been cleared from 'noise', or less valuable files and preserved for posterity from a professional individual or body.

RR: Yes, when it is put in an organization when the public can access it. Yes, that is when something can be termed as a real archive for me. [...] Archive can mean so many different things to different people, for example the concept of the living archive. [...] I think for everyone who practically works in the field, an archive is the result of a process. It's a life cycle. Originally, when companies are doing things they are like ongoing documents, they are records and this is where records management comes in. Generally, archivists when they are trained, they are trained in records management and archiving. The goal is to guide organizations and individuals to create meaningful records in line with their professional profile which has of course to comply with

legislation. Archivists are trained to make decisions on what is needed to be kept for the future, for legal reasons and for posterity. To ask and respond in the question 'What do we need to keep?'. What stays moves on and becomes the archive. [...]

RR: ... many people come into our reading room and use it as an inspiration. We have academics, researchers, family historians. We also have a lot of people from the industry coming in. We have actors who look at past performances; especially when they prepare for auditions, they use the reading room to see what other people have done. There are often designers coming in to look at previous inclinations of a show when they are doing a revival. [...] The galleries of theatre and performance at the main museum where we contribute like any other department of the museum to the massive exhibitions. We want people to go away with inspiration, so the museum is about inspiring new generations. When we curate exhibitions, our real aim is to look at it creatively innovatively and to approach subjects that may have not been explored so far or do things differently. [...]

VIII. Interview Dr Adam Spiers – 6th February 2019

AS: The *Question* came first and then *Flatland* was built upon that with many things that we learned about while developing the *Question*. Both were challenging projects to work on. *Flatland* was even more challenging... well... for *the Question* we have very limited budget and in *Flatland* we had distance. It's a big issue you know. I moved to America just as we got the funding. There was quite a bit of difficulty with that as well. Because the funds were still limited for example, I never saw *Flatland*, I never visited the installation. It's interesting what you say about documentation because everything I know about *Flatland* is through documentation that was made on site. I would have preferred if things were documented more based on what I found out later that I wasn't aware of. Since *Flatland* I've written some papers. There were things I was discovering during writing and I was 'Ah, I never knew that happened.'

GK: Can you identify which things were important for you to have been documented?

AS: For example, I have done a lot of analysis on participants' motion in the space - there were certain things people were saying that weren't matching up with the drawing that I had of the space. It turned out that that drawing was actually inaccurate. I never

knew you that. No one had told me. Obviously there was no video that was representative inside the space. I guess there was lots of kind of artistically shot documentary footage, but for me... I would really like an overhead camera view of everything to know what's going on. Something to compare the log files to. Sometimes unusual things happen in the log files. Generally for an experiment I would have a visual camera back up that I could then look through and see what actually happened in real time - not in terms of data, but if this person stopped; if they collided, did the sensor go crazy? From that I could try to work out what happened. Without that kind of log, it was quite difficult to interpret the data.

GK: Did you discuss these documentation methods with the team?

AS: The problem is that the map I'd be given, as I said, was incorrect. That map was only a drawing. If you imagine a blank piece of paper; I just have a path that goes around it. I don't actually know what's in that space. The way the data is recorded is just from the devices that people wore; they streamed out data to the server. That's just logged it. The actual data files are just pages of numbers. Then I write code that interprets that, and then that gives us a visualisation of data that's easier to look at. To extract something meaningful from that... I had to create new software. With that you can watch a dot of someone moving around the space, but without knowing what's in the space. It's very hard to make sense of that. [...]

AS: I did all the analysis after the live. There were also some frustrating things because I wasn't there, and I wasn't running it. Occasionally people would delay turning on the logging software. Sometimes the devices would be turned on at different times. I can see this in the data, but there was no record of why this happened. Things like that were quite kind of difficult. It took me much longer to go through the data than I would have liked just because there wasn't there as much rigor in the data logging as I would have hoped for. You may have seen some of the other papers I wrote about developing *Flatland*. These were based on lab-based navigation studies. We had people in a very simple empty space, much smaller, basically my office. They had navigation tasks. That tested how well the navigation device worked. In those cases, I collected the data I tried to influence the person and then I created code to recognize its movements. Because that involved one person and I was the one activating the system I could tell exactly when the device had become active. In *Flatland* it was much harder, and I had to do

some detective work to find out when things had been activated. Even more, I had to work a lot to find out who was blind, which was really something I hoped it would have been recorded. It took me quite a long time to figure that out.

GK: I thought that you had that information for every participant based on the consent form they signed.

AS: Yes, but it wasn't entered into a database that I could access. I had to ask people and then try and work out which people... because not every performance had a visually-impaired person. I had to work out which performance involved which people and what their level of disability was because the consent forms weren't available to me. It was pretty difficult getting through that data. [...]

GK: Is storage something that has been pivotal in terms of what was collected?

AS: I think storage during the performance was done locally on the laptop and then it was sent to me for analysis. I don't think there was much planning for long-term storage. Currently I've got it backed up on Dropbox. That's a cloud storage solution. That's how I stole my data anyway. No particular kind of efforts were put into place with *Flatland*. As far as I'm aware I'm the only person who looked at that data. Sara looked at some of the data. She was on the project as well. She had a very different analysis compared to me. [...] She would have a copy of the data as well. I don't think we thought that anyone else would be interested in it. [...]

AS: I think we knew the basic analysis of it would be pretty straightforward. One of the things I did, for example, was to work out if someone was moving from one location to another location how efficiently did it happen. This is what we turn it into the scientific publication. You take one person and look at four results. These four paths show the efficiency. Maybe it's random, maybe it's consistent, maybe there's a trend, but then we did that with 100 people. Then you start to get lots of data [...] that's when you start getting statistics. The basic analysis of the data which is looking at the position of the person in an x and y coordinates and their orientation is quite easy to visualize. You just have to draw all their paths as they go around. That's when I started realizing that occasionally when I did that people would walk through a wall in the map that I had. That led asking the rest of the team 'How is this happening?' Then they told me 'oh, we

actually got rid of that set of pieces', and 'this one was there'. I appreciate that it was a very busy time with lots of things being built, and that these things were overlooked when people communicated the data to me.

GK: Do you have sufficient documentation of what happened during the live?

AS: I think an accurate architectural drawing would have been good. Ideally, I would have been able to visit and make a drawing myself. Take a laser measure and make a drawing. What would have been really good would be to have overhead video. The plan was to record what was going on, but it didn't work for some reason. I think the person that was supposed to do the video recording was also the filmmaker. That film took priority for them rather than the static cameras. That was certainly a shame because it would have been very useful for us and other people as well. [...]

GK: In terms of copyright... for example can Maria access the data?

AS: Yeah. If she asked me for the data, she would have it. If she asked Sara, she would give it to her as well. I think the data is open for sharing within the group. If external people were to ask for it, I would probably check with other members of the team and then I would be happy for them to have them. I would hope that members of the team would ask for my consent as well. I think it's actually in the contract that we need to check with the other members before channelling the data in that way. Certainly, by publications we've been very open with each other about what we're publishing... sending drafts around. [...]

ZK You said that the collaboration was quite difficult. Do you think that that affected the documentation process of *Flatland*?

AS: Yeah. I mean we discussed it, but I think that everyone was so stressed out with what was going to happen with the performance. I can see why it got overlooked. Ideally, I would have been there to work on this. [...] It's always easier to do things if you are there in person. You can do things how you want and communicate things to other people. Obviously, things get lost in communication so I can see why Yannis and Sara wanted cameras in the space. I think it's just kind of accidental that things didn't get documented the way we hoped. During rehearsal demonstrations... actually I found

that a bit difficult because I would build these devices and then send them to the UK so they would get tested. Sometimes I the feedback would be 'it didn't work' and 'It was okay.' But what didn't work? There are many components to it. I also hoped that from the videos of people testing it out I would get an idea of how people tested it, but either there were no videos or there would be hours of footage. I didn't have the time to go through hours of footage looking for interesting things. I think a rigorous documentation of the testing process would have been pretty helpful to me as well. Not for keeping in the archive or sharing, but just to kind of know what was happening.

AS: I designed the device and tested it in the US. Prototypes were sent to the UK and they were tested out at events, something like workshops. I had an assistant who would try and run the device at some of the workshops. I think once they said that they hadn't been given that much time to set up, so the actual testing was done only with two or three people. At the time there were problems when someone was holding the device too tight that caused it to overheat. There were some components that were assembled in the UK; some of the electronics were plugged in together. For example, I would order batteries - you can't send batteries internationally - to my assistant in the UK who was then attaching them to the devices. We had some spare parts printed in the UK, but I don't think they were ever used.

GK: Did Nesta set any rules on how to document stuff or what kind of data you had to give them back or release publicly?

AS: We had requirements for submitting reports quarterly. Nesta were quite demanding, but then... It was a bit frustrating because we weren't sure where our resources were going. It took me a long time to write the technical aspects of these reports. Then you would get no feedback. [...] In terms of the data I don't think they had too many requirements. We had contractual requirements which were a little bit difficult for us. They were quite funny about me going to the US. They weren't sure if they could honour the contracts with me taking the funding to the US. We ended with a strange situation where I had to create a company based in the UK that they would pay the fund into. For me as a researcher, it felt almost illegal. It felt like I was embezzling funds. There was a lot of bookkeeping that I did to make sure that everything was okay. There was some kind of contractual agreement which were very formal with. I wasn't used to do such things with my former collaborators. That took a lot of resources and time. It

was it was an interesting experience because I am an engineer and a scientist. I'm definitely more of a person who likes to build things than do business. I felt I was spending quite a large amount of time on bookkeeping while I'd rather be spending that time building things. Although my relocation caused some difficulty in terms of the collaboration, it definitely meant I had a lot more resources. I wouldn't have been able to design a device of the same standard, if I stayed in my position in the UK; the 3D printing process wouldn't have been as open and if I had to buy my own 3D printer it would have been far worse quality than the one that I had available at Yale.

GK: How did you end up collaborating with Maria?

AS: I think Maria approached my undergraduate advisor. So, when I finished my undergraduate my final kind of dissertation project a device which helped blind people navigate. [...] I think Maria had read about that. She got in touch with the professor who then got in touch with me. She visited the university and we got talking and then after that when we decided to try to find some funding. *The Question* came about by us getting that funding. [...] I used my funds to hire a couple of other people to work on that with me. One was a puppet designer. He came up with the Lotus design which worked really well. [...] We had a pretty stressful time towards the end of that. [...] the device in the *Question* was really built with the last minute. [...] *Flatland* was with built upon that. [...] The device that came out of *Flatland*; I'm pretty happy with that device. It has been presented at many conferences and people ask me about it quite a lot. [...] it works outdoors as well. People seem to be pretty good at navigating with it.

GK: Was there any commercial interest?

AS: Yeah that was a little bit. My professor at Yale thought we might be able to do something commercial with it. He got us in touch with the enterprise part of the university, but they seemed to be half-hearted about it. They had a brief talk with Nintendo about turning it into some kind of gaming system. [...] However, they said they didn't really deal with building hardware. They are focused more on software. The university said they were going to look at more companies, but we never really heard back from them. We were both a bit too busy with other things [...] I think there is potential in the future to do maybe something along the lines, maybe not the Animotus, but maybe a different device that could be useful to the general public. The jury's still

out on that one. I don't think the Animotus is quite too good after reading people's opinions during the experiment. [...] It's actually really interesting [...] people saying the device isn't working. Then you read why in their comments and you are like 'Oh the tracking system is not working' or 'There is latency in the communication'. Obviously they focus their attention on the device, but there's actually many components involved.

GK: You said that the data is in a way open to share. Would that change if there was any commercial interest?

AS: Possibly. I don't know. I think I'd be less comfortable giving the data to say Facebook than to you know you like a researcher. If there was commercial interest I'd be interested to know why. What they're hoping to do with it? [...] I'd have to think about it more actually you know sharing data with people. I mean the data, the nice thing about the data is it's de-identified. It's just numbers. You can't tell who the person is. We have a couple of spreadsheets that kind of link numbers to names, but we don't share those. We call everyone by a number. [...] It is nice that we don't need to have ethical concerns that we are leaking people's personal information. [...]

GK: I think that participants input into creating part of *Flatland's* documentation. If that is so, what is your opinion with regard to their rights?

AS: I can't say I can remember what the consent form looked like [...] I do quite a few human subject experiments and I usually have tick boxes of what they agreed to like... 'Do you agree to your data being used by all researchers?' If they say no, they can't take part in the experiment. 'Do you agree to it being shown at the conference? Do you agreed to it being hosted on the website?' Normally I gauge what the participant is interested in. Usually the focus of that data is on video recordings and people can be identified. I don't think we tend to ask about numerical data but, in this case, I could see why it could be. There's so few blind participants compared to other participants and I believe one participant was in a wheelchair. If we had data that said this participant is in a wheelchair, obviously then they get back to that person. I think I would have to look at the consent form again, but I think we would probably be able to release the data that don't specify too much about the participants. We would just say visually impaired participant. I think for any video data or audio recordings or things like that, my feeling

is that... we've already published a paper with maps in and quotes so I think the consent form must allow us to do that.

GK: Maria said something very interesting she said, 'We were buying people's time and body.'

AS: Maria comes from a different background than I do. One of my roles in Yale was to run all the human subject trials for the lab. We dealt a lot with people with various disabilities and consent was really important. We had formal training in how to gain consent and for what; what's considered good and bad consent forms. I think my approach should be more formal using a scientific method. Usually, for a performance they don't have a consent form. [...]

AS: I'm kind of out of my zone of experience with what things being are being documented in performances. Normally the documentation we do is purely in the lab. I'm currently working on a large data set of videos of amputees performing tasks in their own home and the plan is eventually to release that to the community. There is going to be a lot of questions to address that. How much can we anonymize? It's a video shot in someone's home. The plan is to kind of get rid of personal data but then obviously it is that person, it's not just a number. I have to say that it's currently outside my realm of expertise especially if it was to be archived in a museum. I would definitely consult with a museum for a guideline.

GK: Do you know if there is a plan for keeping and preserving the documentation in general?

AS: The things that have been listed in the papers obviously will be preserved because they've been published. That's as close as we can get to keeping those things settled. In terms of the data we've collected, I don't think there's any plan at the moment. I don't think there's a plan right now to look at it again. I can't really think of any plan we've made in that sense.

GK: For *the Question* everything was presented in a laptop, but the laptop isn't really working anymore.

AS: Oh really? I think I've preserved the data of *the Question* somewhere on a hard drive. I should probably if I haven't already... I think that's probably on Dropbox as well. [...] I have a lot of things backed up on the cloud. The data from *the Question* is quite different. Our tracking system is very rudimentary, it didn't actually record the user's position. It's what we kind of call open-loop system. [...] In *the Question* what we did was we had beam lights from the ceiling down and then the device looked for those light sources. The devices couldn't record they had no kind of brain while in *Flatland* we created a field of radio projections and then we had a separate system that would triangulate from those and try and work out the position and communicate it to the computer. Then the computer would generate navigation instructions and send it back to the Animotus. That allowed us to record all this stuff. Also, in *the Question* the devices were handmade. They were cast by pouring liquid into a mould that had been cut out by hand while in *Flatland* the devices were CAD models. There is a digital model from which I could build it again. [...] I think that what they're talking about with data from the *Question* is the interviews or discussions afterwards.

GK: Were the feedback from the audience in *Flatland* important to you?

AS: Yes definitely. Yes, very much so. Our most recent paper kind of combines verbal feedback with the map data and other motion data... it took a long time to tie the two together: who said what and who they were in terms of their map. Sometimes you would find that someone would say something really positive about the Animotus but when you look at that data you could see they had a mediocre navigation. Then you would ask, is this just an open-minded person or did they just fall in love with the device itself? Did they find it that useful? It was quite interesting in that sense, but it was very useful to hear people's feedback. Some were critical of the device. Then you read their comments and then you realize it's the localization system that let them down. In *Flatland* we purchased one [localization system] after lots of investigation into possible options, but it certainly wasn't perfect. It got confused when people got too close together. The radio frequency signals get distorted by human bodies, which is obviously a problem. It was the best one that we could find. It wasn't cheap either. I think we spent thirty thousand pounds on it. The next best solution was forty thousand pounds.

GK: What are the things you would ensure they happened in a second round?

AS: First off, all cameras: overhead view cameras so that we can get a really nice clear view - we actually had these in the platform. Nice overhead kind of security cameras that could see in the dark. Another thing would probably be some kind of form that the person operating the system could fill out. This would trace who was going in which position. Then a map that can be linked to other things. Any video recordings of the interviews would be useful because sometimes it is quite difficult to work out who's saying what [...] Also, I'd probably make my code a little bit different so that it would be easy to set all devices to start at the same time. [...] I think a couple of times operators would turn the system on and off again and turned it back on me again. I never learnt why, but that really confused my code. [...]

GK: Do you think that there are specific things that practitioners need to keep in mind when using technologies that generate data from the participants?

AS: I think it depends on the data. My data is a lot like numeric and statistical than most people's data in this field. [...] I think it's definitely good to have someone with experience in conducting research to know what things can and cannot be done. What good practice is. What sort of things are involved in the experiment, for example, how you randomize things. In *Flatland* the blind person would always enter the space from the same door. They would all have the same experience. I would have randomized the door to eliminate any bias [...] Knowing how to isolate variables and balance variables is important. Also, be objective in the analysis of data. [...] These are things that I would put in place for recording data. There's also ways about analysing data after the event. You can be biased by, for example, grouping people in particular ways. You need to pick things randomly. [...]