

Archiving the Websites of Contemporary Composers

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Abstract:

NYU is engaged in work on a two-year Mellon-funded collaborative project with Archive-It and NYU's Moving Images Archiving and Preservation (MIAP) program to improve the quality, scope, and accessibility of its collections that include archived websites.

The project has three primary goals; to identify, collect, describe, and preserve the musical works and websites of a group of contemporary musicians, to develop an API that will help us to intellectually integrate the disparate parts of these collections into a more cohesive whole, and to improve our ability to capture websites using the Archive-It tool.

The previous workflows at NYU led to a siloing of archived websites away from the rest of the collections to which they belong or relate. This alienation not only confuses the processing procedure, it also contributes to the under-utilization of our web resources. Our project is using innovative tools to bring together archived websites and other digital materials, along with their associated metadata, in order to improve dissemination, discovery and access to the collections.

We are also developing and implementing new descriptive practices in order to accommodate the differing natures and needs of the many material formats represented in our collections. This reworking is vital to maximizing the usefulness of NYU's collections.

Finally, we are working with the Internet Archive to find weak points in their capture software and improve the fidelity of archived websites to their live counterparts, and thus raise the standards of web archiving within our institution. This work by the Internet Archive has resulted in the creation of their next-generation crawler, "Brozzler".

About the Author:

Bess Pittman graduated from the University of Michigan School of Information in 2016 with a Masters in Information, specializing in Archives and Records management. She worked in several cultural and academic knowledge institutions before beginning work at New York University as their web archivist under a Mellon-funded grant project. She has been instrumental to expanding the size of NYU's web archives holdings, while also improving the quality of the site captures. She hopes that her work, along with the work of other web archivists, will help to map the new frontier that the need to save the web presents.