

ANARCHIVAL SCRIPTS



Søren Rasmussen
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a series of experiments performed at conferences, seminars, and in the classroom, where I as a speaker invited the audience to modulate the course of the talk by editing, commenting, adding to, and deleting the prepared manuscript in real-time. One aspect of these experiments was to play with the affective relation between speaker, audience, and technological support to see what would happen when an audience is empowered to manipulate an exposed body at their own will. Another aspect was to experiment with a reflexive capture of memory traces that might encompass more of a situation's dynamic form than traditional documentation. These experiments work to inform speculations on the potential for real-time interfaces to facilitate ways of collectively inhabiting the affective passage from the privacy of the body to publicly accessible form. The paper takes its point of departure in the prevalence of mobile digital devices that allow for an affective attunement to the diverse speeds, rhythms, and flows of information of the Internet. Rather than simply regarding this distributed presence as disengaging, the paper explores what new possibilities for thinking together and attuning to each other that is enabled through the intensively extended attention span enabled by digitally networked technologies. The notion of the *anarchive* creates a leeway for working experimentally and conceptually with the excess (of memory, affects, belief and desires) that is produced when sharing and remembering through technological means. Beyond the archive's conservative ordering of memory, the paper explores the potential for authoritarian rupture and collective thought enabled by the anarchival slips, spillages and mutations of memory in real-time signal transmissions. It is argued that the real-time modulation of the manuscripts in the experiments becomes immediate transcripts of the situation's dynamic form which might enable an interfacial materialization of a common ground.

KEYWORDS

anarchive, real-time, signaleptic material, modulation, collectivity

[Last edit was made on 20 January 2016 by anonymous].¹ As I continue to present the outcomes of previous research endeavours, scrolling-talking through the digital manuscript, a new image appears on the screen. A photograph, unknown to me, is inserted into the manuscript, screaming for attention. Puzzled, I look up and scan the room for signals that might help decipher what seems to be some kind of message (“LOOK AT THIS!”), only to find expressionless faces drawn in by the gloomy light of a calm sea of half-eaten apples. Confusion. I recognise no immediate link between the prepared manuscript and the newly incorporated photograph. And so, I put my faith in the following section of the manuscript to steer the talk back on track. Time extends. Anxiety. The warm feeling of blood shooting through my veins. What was my point? I know there is a connection! I stutter a bit while slowly making a return to the original course of the pre-scripted talk. The unforeseen disruption still echoes with me, signalling a gap in my storyline as I continue the talk.

Above is an anecdote from a series of experimental presentations of research at conferences, seminars, and in the classroom, where the audience were invited to collaboratively edit the supporting manuscript in real-time. For this purpose, a Google Docs document functioned as both memory support tool (manuscript) and presentation media; the document was made publicly accessible, the URL shortened and made visible for the audience via the projected screen. At the beginning of a talk, the audience were invited to participate in an ongoing making of the talk by adding, editing, or deleting content in the manuscript. The anecdote serves as an initial example of an autoethnographic exploration of the precarious position of orally presenting research outcomes assisted by digital memory support tools. Prior to such encounters between a speaker, a technological memory support, and an audience, a careful selection of archived data takes place in order to structure the narrative for the audience, thereby prioritizing certain memories over others and ‘scripting’ the talk in advance.

During the talk, the speaker is enmeshed in a twofold affective relation with the audience and with the technological memory support. Both audience and memory support amplify or diminish the speaker’s capacity to think and act in various ways in the situation by re-conditioning the pre-scripted talk: the almost mandatory hassle with setting-up computers and projectors; an occasional cough from the audience; the vibration of an incoming phone call; too small lettering in the manuscript to read; people coming and going; stuttering or speed-talking under the pressure to perform; low battery; etc. All such social and technical factors re-configure the virtual potential for what can be said and done in the situation.

This paper plays with the notion of ‘script’ as “something written” (Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary). The notion of script very much relates to the notion of the archive and its authoritative transfer of something or someone into a particular order (e.g. the narrative of a ‘manuscript’ or the military enrolment of a ‘conscript’). Today, the somewhat static meaning of script as a noun has been picked up and repurposed in computational areas to denote the dynamic execution of automated tasks in programmed operations of software and web pages. Working with the idea of *anarchival scripts*, this paper will argue for a break with ‘prescriptive’ ordering of things (social, computational, temporal, etc.) and explore a constructive middle ground between manual and automatic modes of production: between order and disorder.

The Signaletic Materiality of Real-Time

While the following presents insights from a series of experiments, it is not the experiments themselves that are the focal point of this paper. Instead, the experiments have worked to inspire and inform speculations on the potential for real-time technology to record and support collective ways of thinking together. In this regard, the paper explores the potentiality embedded in what Gilles Deleuze terms the “signaletic material” that he uses in relation to cinema, and electronic and digital media to underscore the inclusion of “all kinds of modulation features, sensory (visual and sound), kinetic, intensive, affective, rhythmic, tonal, and even verbal (oral and written)”. Deleuze (1989) further describes the signaletic material as a plastic and dynamic mass, which “is not an enunciation, and these are not utterances. It is an *utterable*” (italics original, 29). Picking up on this proposition to depart from a reading of the electronic and digital image as sign, Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen (2012) argues that the signaletic material “became present on the surface of the video-screen as electronic lines and dots, leading neither to a representation of time nor space but to a *becoming of time itself* in the live signal and further to time as the dominant vector of digital variation, even within the production of images” (italics added, 3). Following this line of thought, this paper re-contextualises Jacques Derrida’s (1995) notion of archival “consignation” (i.e. the act of archiving) as a dynamic process of “*gathering together signs*” (italics in original, 3) in contemporary real-time signal transmissions. The notion of an interface is central in this regard as an operative surface on which signals dynamically gather and modulate the flow of information, thereby substituting the emphasis on signs for signals.

This paper argues that the prevalence of real-time interfaces has amplified the slips, spillages, and mutations of memory occurring in information transmissions. Under the rubric of the *anarchive*, the paper explores the potential for real-time interfaces to

facilitate a “gathering together of signals” that produce and modulate a temporary common ground. The anarchival is understood as those memories, feelings, and affects that are in excess of the authoritative selection and ordering of memory for the archive. The anarchival will provide a conceptual entry point for understanding the new possibilities enabled by real-time networked technologies. I argue that real-time technology holds the potential to both render the flow of information visible in its temporal becoming, and to also facilitate an immediate inscription of the signaletic material into the records. This modulating inscription thereby allows one to consider the excess of affects, memories, and values present in real-time interface events, and to imagine new ways of thinking together and attuning to the forces that condition how communication can occur in network cultures. My approach is thus akin to Lisa Blackman’s (2019a) inquiry into “haunted data” as a way of attending to and re-activating the gaps, absences, and contradictions that return to haunt a statement (in this case a scientific paper) after its publication in the digital sphere. Blackman illustrates how statements survive and are transformed across different digital platforms and in an entanglement of multiple temporalities. She argues that digital platforms tend to support and further a statement’s claim to truth through their hierarchichal structuring of data. As an alternative to such foreclosing of potential truths and speculations, Blackman therefore calls for the development of “collective apparatuses and modes of storytelling, which might allow for new relations of association to take form and attract attention” (ibid 49). Where Blackman’s hauntological approach engages with the resurrection of potential “traces, deferrals, absences, gaps and their movements within a particular corpus of data”, (ibid 49) in their afterlife, the anarchival approach in this paper engages such potential in *real-time*.

Networked Modulation of Memory

The exploration taps into the transformation from analogue print culture to digital network culture, where paper and pencil have, mostly, been replaced by smartphones and laptops with real-time connection to multiple sources of information. In the context of this paper, an interesting problematic has surfaced with the prevalence of individualized devices, where the attention of an audience in class, at conferences, etc. often attunes to the rhythms of the hyperlinked Internet, shifting back and forth between corporeal and incorporeal, analogue and digital, flows of information. Anna Munster (2006) describes how digital technologies

allow for bodies to extend beyond their corporeal boundaries, which comprises, “an intensive capacity for being affected by the diverse speeds, rhythms and flows of information” (19). So, rather than critically regarding such shifting attention as disengaging, this paper explores how the co-presence of multiple extended corporealities distributed across time and space weave together and open up new potential for other sources of knowledge to fold into the situation.

In general, this potential distribution of attention in time and space has made profound changes in how memory is preserved and can be accessed and mobilized, and thus how identities are formed and transformed (as individuals, groups, societies, etc.). Increases in automation and connectivity of omnipresent devices enable us to participate—knowingly and unknowingly—like never before in the production of social memory through an endless performative recording, mapping, tracing, and sharing of our “dividual” (Deleuze 1992) bodies, activities, and relations. The consumer/producer dichotomy is increasingly replaced by “producers” (Bruns 2007), who continuously participate in real-time making and interpretation of the dynamic and abundant flows of information circulating online. The formation and transformation of social memory is thus intrinsically connected to the values embedded in the algorithmic processing of transnational corporations such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook functioning as contemporary “guardians of the archive” (cf. Derrida 1995). Enabled by a “technical option of immediate feedback, turning all present data into archival entries and vice versa” (Ernst 2013, 98), historical representation has been replaced by real-time *modulation*, often associated with control societies (Deleuze 1992; Galloway 2004; Rouvroy 2012; Chun 2016). This real-time modulation of information thus breaks with the narratives of historical linearity and affectively reconfigure how events are shared and remembered. According to Richard Grusin (2010), events are also often “pre-mediated,” which means that future situations are technologically anticipated through probabilistic processing of small and big data to a degree where their actualization are affectively *pre-scripted*. In a sense, the future becomes archival, while memories of the past become the result of real-time processing.

However important these critical stances may be towards the production of social memory in contemporary network culture, social control need not be the only end to the imaginaries derived from the concept of modulation, as argued by Yuk Hui (2015): “[f]or if modulation is identified with control societies today, then the task for those who wish to find ways to supersede existing forms of social control will be to invent new forms of modulation that are not limited to them or by them” (88). Hui (2015) recovers the notion of modulation from being a determin-

ing characteristic of control societies to also encompass “the field of possibilities opened up by contemporary digital culture” (79). Hui does so by resituating the concept within Gilbert Simondon’s (2009) ontogenetic philosophy in order to resist the reductive ontology of hylomorphic thought. According to Simondon, modulation is to be thought in relation to processes of amplification, where a charge may trigger changes in a system (technical, social, societal, etc.). Individuation is seen as a process of relational *becoming* with the immediately inhabited environments, which thereby breaks with the binary separation of being and world, form and matter, interiority and exteriority found in hylomorphic thought.

This paper takes up the challenge posed by Hui of inventing new techniques of modulation that might resist and circumvent social control. I propose to affirm and engage with what has traditionally been treated as ‘noise’ in communication, and I argue that such affirmative engagement might provide an interface through which authoritarian rupture and collective thinking is simultaneously supported and recorded. Hence, the aim is to explore some means of infusing the archive’s reductive capture and representation of memory with the anarchival’s excessive production of counter-memories. In other words, this paper explores the potential for real-time interfaces to facilitate a reciprocal production and tracing of a networked excess of memory, affects, and values that reconfigure how a situation is perceived—in its immediacy and in retrospect. A question emerging from this is: what new possibilities for thinking together and attuning to each other is enabled through the intensively extended attention span facilitated by digital technologies?

From Retrospective Documentation to Immediate Transcripts

The paper is based on insights and experiences from five ‘in the wild’ experiments staged in various academic settings (conferences, seminars, and a classroom) in the context of knowledge dissemination. The experiments took place over the course of 1.5 years, and the number of the audience/participants ranged between approximately 10–100 people. The experiments consisted in an open invitation for the audience to participate in real-time transformation of the (sole) prepared manuscript, thereby potentially interfering in the course of the presentation. The manuscript was projected onto a big screen so that it simultaneously functioned as my memory support and presentation media for the audience. The normally

private manuscript and the public multimedia presentation were thus merged into one and the same thing. The shortened URL needed to access the online manuscript in Google Docs was likewise projected so people in the audience could access the document at any time during the talk.

The semi-publicly accessible manuscripts allowed for comments, questions, provocations, suggestions, and greetings to fold into the immediacy of the talks (semi-public since only people with the correct URL had, and still have, access). This exposed my presentations to a wide array of real-time modulations. The interventions ranged from changes in font type, size and colour, over pasted pictures and quotes, to rearranging and editing (strangely enough never deleting) content. Even a meta-hyperlink redirecting back to the very same manuscript found its way in. Some participants made alterations and suggestions directly in the manuscript, some made use of the suggestion tool to add comments in the margins of the document, while others seemingly refrained from intervening at all. Through real-time modulation, these altered manuscripts thus transformed into *transcripts* of the situation's dynamic form, moving beyond documentary representation to include what might otherwise be treated as the 'noise' of a situation. As such, the manuscripts serve as memory traces, and in conjunction with the affective experience of positioning my own body in the middle of this interfacial encounter, they worked to trigger reminiscent experiential qualities of the situations. The experiments can thereby be regarded as anarchival techniques aimed at troubling documentation's limiting capture of an event's excessive potential and the archive's authoritative ordering of memory.

The five manuscripts—edited by participants in real-time—thereby make up the empirical foundation for inquiring into the intensified relation between speaker, technology, and audience. Since the dataset only consists of five experiments with no standardized method of collecting and analysing the data, I do not argue that any generalizable claims can be made on the basis of this experimental study. The experiments rather act to provoke thoughts and support speculations on the potential for academics and creative practitioners to understand and engage with the signalitic material's dynamic form. In addition to this technical aspect, the experiments also explored what happens to the social order when an audience is allowed to interfere with a scripted and normative situation by indirectly objecting, correcting, and supporting the data and viewpoints expressed from the authoritative yet precarious position of an academic speaker. What, or rather whose, memories are privileged over others' when a group is invited to assist in the real-time modulation of a scripted situation?

“Do you have a copy?”

[Last edit was made on 1 July 2017 by anonymous]. “Yes, I have a copy,” I think when the question appears in the manuscript, “Or do I?” I suddenly find myself in doubt whether or not I will be able to restore the original manuscript, or at least parts of it, if someone decided to press cmd+a and hit the delete button. Of course, I can just hit cmd+z—right? Remembering that I actually never did test out this possible turn of events (that would be cheating), I decide to ignore what might be a precursor to potential catastrophe and resume the talk. Again, the question appears. This time I can hardly ignore it, since it is written in continuation of a quote I am reading out loud. “Yes, I have a copy,” I say out loud, comfortably knowing I am nearing the end of the manuscript anyway. I wonder what will happens when the manuscript is wiped clean. Nothing happens. I round off the talk.

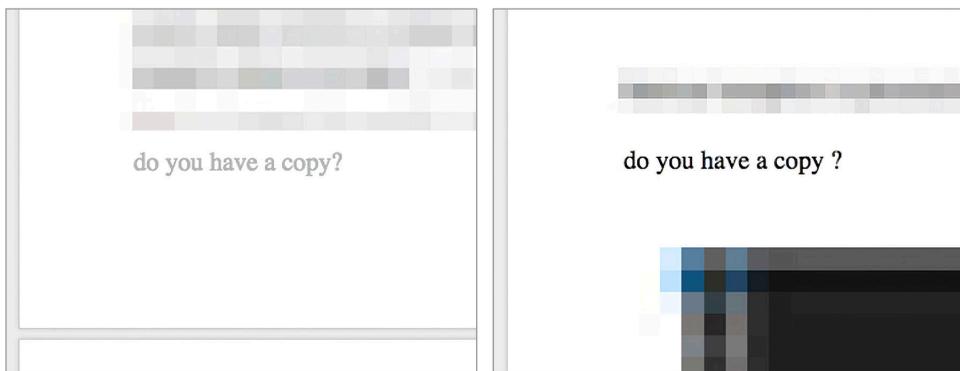


Figure 1. Screenshots of the same question posed twice in the same manuscript. The surrounding content has been blurred for focus.

Had I been able to abstract myself from the pressure of performing, I would likely have been able to remember that Google Docs automatically saves a copy of the document whenever substantial changes are made (you can always rely on Google to safeguard your data), and that any particular version can easily be restored by browsing a detailed version history. In fact, one of the key ingredients in the paradigmatic shift from analogue print culture to digital network culture is that the idea of an ‘original’ document and its archival repository must be rethought. No longer conditioned by the limitations in space and time of analogue materiality, all digital material has the potential to mutate, to multiply, and to partake in synergetic media ecologies. According to Wolfgang Ernst (2013), the

read-only paradigm of static, documentary stills has thus been replaced by a read/write paradigm of algorithmic dynamics, where each move to access information is immediately followed by an execution of code that reassembles the file anew. Thereby, “the emphasis in the digital archive shifts to *regeneration*, (co-)produced by online users *for their own needs*” (Ernst 2013, 95, italics added). The notion of an archive is diluted as it is shot through with change, where signals perpetually modulate how information is composed and received, thus making the digital archival an ‘archive in motion’ (Røssaak 2010). So, the logic implied in the question “do you have a copy?” is really a remnant of the print culture. Do I have a copy? No. But Google most certainly does.

A trait of this unruly nature is exemplified in what has popularly become known as the “Streisand Effect” (also “Hydra Effect”). An aerial photograph of the coastline mansion of American singer and actor Barbra Streisand received massive public awareness and an increase in downloads, when Streisand in 2003 filed a \$50 million lawsuit to remove the photograph from a publicly accessible database of research on coastal erosion. This effect indicates that every act to suppress memory from the ever-expanding archives of the Internet has the paradoxical tendency to amplify the very same thing that it set out to remove (the Hydra’s head multiplies when cut off). Today, an example of the ugliness of this regenerative capacity reveals itself when copies of intimate imagery (e.g. nudes and sexual assaults) enter into circulation on online platforms and devices, and out of the hands (both metaphorically and legally) of the violated individual(s).

Anarchival Amplification

Recent years have shown an increased awareness on a “right to be forgotten,” which emphasize the political implications of archivization in the production of social memory today. The right to be forgotten is a complex and controversial matter: on the one hand, it may prevent recurring individual stigmatization caused by involuntary distribution of personal information. On the other hand, it may restrict the freedom of expression and effectuate a rewriting and negation of history. In the European Union these discussions have materialized through the 2018 implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). According to Derrida (1995) archivization is a co-constitutive process of remembering and forgetting, in which archival preservation of memory is underscored by a “violence of forgetting, *superrepression* (suppression and repression), the anarchival” (79, italics in original). A selection of what to include and what to

exclude must take place in order to avoid informational overload. Some memories are thus preserved for future recollection while others are consigned to oblivion. The anarchival can be understood as that which is in excess in the selective act of archiving or in encounters with archived material, the excess of memory, and of affects, desires, and beliefs. It is the surplus value of the archive, which enables the future to become more than the homogeneous narrative of the archive.

While it might seem like the capture-all logic of the contemporary 'global village' means that nothing is forgotten, the opposite is probably more accurate from a technical perspective: the archives of digital network cultures are always in the process of forgetting, but they do so in a productive manner. Every reading of information comprises a simultaneous writing somewhere else, where information is made readily available, while the activity of accessing this information is logged for future use (e.g. caching search history). One can even say that in the land of permanent updates, activity is made king following the abdication of content; or in other words, data about data (i.e. metadata) produced through signal transmissions in online interactions hold higher value than the signs perceived in the data itself (e.g. interactions surrounding a picture, such as downloads or shares, is more interesting than the picture itself). Every piece of information is composed anew, which accentuates "time as the dominant vector of digital variation" (Thomsen 2012, 3) and modulation as the process through which we make sense in network cultures.

While analogue media are conditioned by a spatiotemporal reality of continuous progression (one roll of film in one place decaying little by little), the regenerative capacity makes digital media discontinuous (multiple copies of film perpetually regenerated and accessible from multiple places). Real-time networked technologies thus multiply the potential number of sources that can modulate what Derrida (1995) articulates as the, "institutional passage from private to public" (2) of the archival machinery. The transformation from the privacy of the body to publicly accessible form is thus effectuated in a passage through an interface of some sort (electronic, digital, architectonic) that guides how the archival entry takes form and place. The possibility in distributed networks for an *n*th number of individuals (human and machinic) to co-inhabit the passage means that communication in digital networks is in no way linear but multilinear and consists of multiple temporalities with their own speeds and rhythms. Through the interface, these temporalities are drawn together in real-time, which introduces a

“liveness” (Auslander 2012) to human–computer interactions. To a large degree, this feeling of liveness makes the passage “from private to public,” a two-way operation in which an archiving body can immediately and continuously (re-)position itself in relation to the archiving apparatus (e.g. using a smartphone’s front camera to take a selfie). According to Anna Munster (2006), this interfacial operation is fundamentally affective, where “affect slips in and inhabits the passage between sensing and rendering. Affect arises relationally and is produced out of the difference between being in the body and representing/mapping the body from the outside” (142). Digital processing has reduced the interval between bodily sensation and computational rendering to what seems like ‘real-time’. This acceleration thereby reduces response time and leaves (virtually) no time for the experiential process of filtering and processing sensory input. In effect, experience is increasingly shaped by the immediacy of real-time processing, which means that habit and affective states tend to dominate how we produce and receive information (e.g. on social media).

In the experiments presented in this paper, the audiences were able to observe how cursors of various colors moved around in the manuscript and made changes in real-time. This infused the manuscript with a certain feeling of (a)liveness, as multiple flashing cursors crawled through the document (see fig. 4). Depending of their relative positioning to my progress in the talk, some of the renderings performed on the manuscript also influenced my composure and my reading of the manuscript, and thereby also the talk. An immediate and intensified triangulation could thereby take place between the speaker (me), the audience, and the manuscript. Here, the manuscript (*im*)mediated a continuous repositioning of both audience and myself in relation to the manuscript and each other. Some members of the audiences reported a feeling of transgressing an interpersonal threshold, since they—as peers or students—could relate to the precarious position I was in as a speaker. This accentuates the transindividual nature of affect as the experiments become more than simple interactions with an interface. Instead, the experiments leave room for what Brian Massumi calls “*immediation, immediately lived relation*” (2011, 73) as an intensive experience of the situation’s dynamic form.

What I initially wanted to explore—the potential for through the experiments as a form of collective thinking that cuts across lines of thought—turned out to be subsidiary to how the experiments amplified a feeling of extending beyond the corporeal boundaries of one’s own body. Many of the thoughts, feelings, and affects that emerged in the situation may not have been expressed and recorded

in the manuscript. In this sense, these unspoken impressions remain virtual traces that linger in the individual member of the audience that may or may not produce new understandings and orientations. Still the question remains: how might this virtual excess be activated? Although the experiments did not provide answers to this question, they did however, reveal how interfaces may underscore a trans-individual feeling with a situation by gathering (a)live signals (i.e. participants) in real-time.

Engaging an Anonymous Badger

[Last edit was made on 4 February 2017 by anonymous]. Should I respond to this? The beating of my heart accelerates. I know it has not been my finest hour when it comes to giving a paper, but did I not make my point clear, or did the author of the question just not get it? Doubt. Is this a critique of my talk, or is it a helping hand? What is my point anyway? I read the question out loud, stalling for a moment. Staying within the safety of the experiment's framing I decide to make a reply. Again, I am able to read the response of my audience, only this time in the occasional gesture of a nod. On my screen I catch a glimpse of a cyan-coloured cursor belonging to an anonymous badger: "Ok!–thanks ;)". Relief.



What's your point?
OK! – thanks ;)

Figure 2. Screenshot of the textual traces from a 'dialogue' between myself, the speaker, and the audience.

The badger's bite did not leave any visible marks on my body (in Google Docs, each anonymous user is represented as a non-human creature). It did, however, inscribe itself into my archives as a textual reminiscence of the talk, which was the culmination of two days of exhaustive conferencing that had been doubled in intensification due to a need to re-write my paper because of changed circumstances.

[Cut to 1974]. Marina Abramović performs *Rhythm 0* in which the public is invited to choose any of 72 items (including paint, a feather, knives, and a loaded pistol) laid out in an open gallery space to treat Abramović's body however they

wanted to over the course of six hours. In this piece, Abramović's body can be seen as an interface between her own experience and the public's potential renderings by cutting, rearranging, cleaning, painting, tickling, and potentially even killing her body with no restrictions (free rein and free passage) nor juridical or social repercussions (people are within the art museum, and so afforded a certain amount of anonymity). Abramović has later recounted how the public instantly left the space when the performance was over, reluctant to be confronted with what proved to be more than a compliant body (Marina Abramovic Institute 2:30). In referencing to *Rhythm 0*, I want to underscore the potentiality embedded in the 'thinking-feeling' of what happens (Massumi 2008) when an audience is empowered to manipulate an exposed body at their own will. How does anonymity influence the social rules of engagement? What happens to the situational dynamics? How might technology support the sharing and remembrance of such an affective experience?

A major difference between the two experiments is that my body was not the direct object of manipulation, as the manuscript performed as an interfacial buffer between myself and the participating audience. As such, the performative aspect of my experiments was no way near as radical as in *Rhythm 0*; it rather situated the interfacial configurations of the social in a contemporary network culture. In both experiments, a variety of 'tools'—analogue items and digital word processing tools—were made available for the audience to explore the boundaries of what can be done to a body, and what is socially acceptable. In *Rhythm 0*, the 72 items offered a wide range of possibilities for action, which could be further extended by combining or dismantling them (e.g. rose thorns were separated from the stem and stuck into Abramović's skin). In my case, it was the limited affordances of tools in Google Docs' digital word processor (copy, cut, paste, type, undo/redo, insert, link, edit, delete, etc.) that modulated the way I made sense of the manuscript.

Through observation and participants' testimony, I recognized a peculiar pattern that took form across the series of experiments: I became aware that people were putting a great effort into producing and retrieving content that would go into the manuscript—or they were paralyzed by the pressure of procuring content that would fit and make sense in the context. While the experiments were definitely opened for contributions of this sort, the kind that would add content to the manuscript, the initial idea was actually of a more playful character aimed at reorganizing and editing the already existing material. I had imagined that people would make use of the word processing tools to play around with the format of the manuscript, that they would edit more than add content, transform the script rather than complying with it.

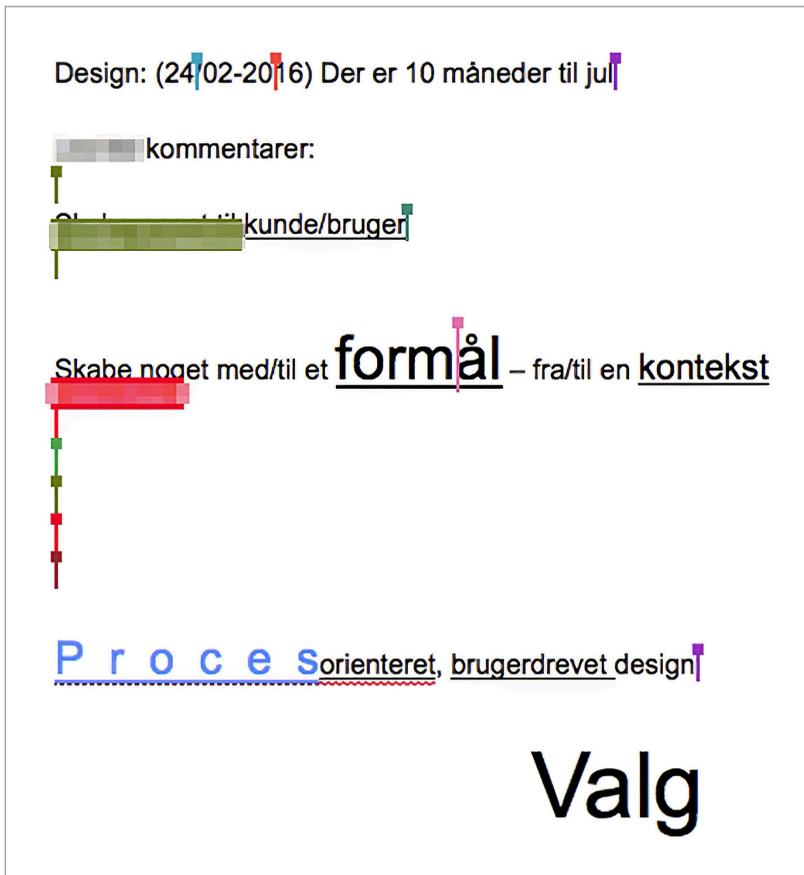


Figure 3. Screenshot of multiple participants simultaneously engaged in real-time modification of a manuscript used during class. Last edited on 25. February 2016. Blurred for anonymity.

Except for one of the experiments, this collective caution and wariness—in following the talk’s chronology and script—was evident, both in situ and going through the altered manuscripts in retrospect. In this exception, participants engaged the manuscript with a playful attitude. For instance, they emphasised or de-emphasised words and concepts by changing the color, font, and size of the text, either as immediate responses to my emphasis on their importance in the talk, or because of the significance attributed to them by the participants themselves (figure 3). The setting for this exception, however, differentiated from the rest of the experiments, since it was the only experiment taking place in a classroom, where the people present were familiar with each other, with the space, and with my way of teaching. In this case, the invitation to participate came from my authoritative position as a lecturer, and the students may have perceived their engagement as more

of a duty in the first place, rather than an opportunity to influence the lecture. However, in all experiments, participants remained anonymous (unless they were automatically logged into their Google account and opted not to log out), and the talk would have continued without their participation—so why even bother?

Becoming Networked: Contagion, Cooperation, Collectivity

In all the experiments, this matter of voluntary cooperation is a question that extends well beyond the experiments and into collective behaviour in network culture in general. The possibility to connect to others and to cooperate on the production of social memory across space and time is greatly amplified by the prevalence of digitally networked technologies. Omnipresent real-time interfaces have enabled people in the same place or in different time zones to immediately and collaboratively produce and publish multimedia content in what feels live. This liberalization of how information is produced and distributed has made way for neoliberal corporations to supersede the nation state as powerful “guardians of the archive” (Derrida 1995), and of (collective) memory as such. In his seminal work on the sociotechnical implications of archivization, Derrida (1995) emphasises, “the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation” as key to political power (4). New regimes of power have taken hold today as digital media corporations support and exploit increased participatory cultures. While such corporations capitalize on the expanded social playing field offered by real-time networks, Tiziana Terranova (2017) reminds us that this participatory regime produces a surplus of not only economic value but also of cultural and social value: “Remembering and sharing by technological means produce surplus value for netarchical capitalists but also an excess of affects, desires, and beliefs materializing a ‘common ground’” (288). These developments thus effectuate new modes of experience that are highly individualized (through data-profiling and customized devices) and yet leave room for collective thought and action.

Terranova argues that if we are to understand why people voluntarily engage in cooperative production of social memory across distributed networks (e.g. publishing on social media), there is a need to move beyond neo-liberal theories of individual motivation. Instead, she argues, the matter ought to be understood in terms of infra-individual contagion: “The engine of voluntary and collective social production is, in fact, a willingness to follow, to copy, to imitate (even one’s

own self), to become part of a flow, to join somebody else's design, all the time hoping to realize one's own small or great invention" (301). Rather than adhering to the idea that cooperation is fundamentally based on exchange (monetary, intellectual, etc.), Terranova argues that social memory is produced through a Nietzschean "will to power" where individuals connect to others and cooperate in a drive to "proliferate to the point where it will have become the whole world" (300). In her explanation of this infra-individual contagion, Terranova draws from Leibniz' concept of a "monad", as reworked by Tarde and by Deleuze (1993). In order to further an understanding of the subject matter of this paper, I use the more common term 'individuals' while acknowledging that a monad designates an entity prior to any individualised formation. The contagious connection that draws individuals into the flow of others does not occur reflectively but rather spreads across individuals on an affective level prior to conscious understanding and reasoning. In regards to the experiments, what are the inserted pictures and comments, the change of fonts, and the questions posed, if not traces of the will of others to infect the design of the scripted situation with their own desires and beliefs? But again, one may wonder why there were no attempts to obstruct or short-circuit the scripted flow of the situation by deleting or radically altering the manuscript.

[Cut to 20 January 2016]. A participant at a seminar comes up to me immediately after I have given a paper using the experimental technique in question. This person, who was also giving a paper at the seminar, confesses to having been terribly nervous on my behalf that someone would delete the entire manuscript, and had therefore made a back-up copy of the document—just to be safe. While there turned out to be no need for the copy, this gesture hinted at an unexpected tendency similar to what occurred during Abramović's performance of *Rhythm 0*: a protective group formed in the audience to prevent potentially violent acts from being realized. Since nobody did delete the manuscript, a protective group never had the opportunity to form during my experiments, and it thus remains speculative if there was ever the potential to begin with. What became clear, however, was that many of the participants in the audience engaged in an intensive 'reading' of the situation through which they were able to anticipate and relationally intervene into the flow of my talk.

Perhaps opening up the manuscript—and thus partly the situational 'script'—became a gesture that invoked a sympathetic atmosphere, as explained by Brian Massumi (2014): "What is felt in sympathy is the *dynamic form* of the *situation*."

This is not felt from the point of view of one participant or the other, but from the situational perspective of what, potentially, passes between them” (77, italics in original). According to Massumi (2014), sympathy occurs as “transindividual immediacy” in an “intuitive understanding of what does not affect one without affecting the other” (78). What worked well in the experiments was exactly this possibility to not only feel but to actually see the dynamic form of the situation through the collective authoring of the manuscript in real-time: each minor or major alteration of the manuscript marked potential lines of flight from the pre-scripted narrative and thus reconfigured the virtual potential of the situation, whether I decided to act upon it or not; even the idle presence of a throbbing cursor signalled a precursor to change. Such modulative co-presence of multiple distributed bodies (locally situated and globally connected) transformed the otherwise static manuscript into a dynamic interface through which a common ground could materialize. This transformation was enabled due to a shift in focus from the content of the manuscript to its signaleptic materiality (i.e. the nonsensical mutations, additions, and gaps in the pre-scripted order). In this way, the situation’s dynamic form is inscribed into the document and rendered visible as traces that reflexively crystallize the signaleptic material as a conditioning force of how communication can occur. As remnants of the signaleptic material’s becoming of time, these inscriptions can be treated as traces that underscore and relay an anarchival production of excessive memories, affects, beliefs and desires, which might work as a meta-stable foundation for the information of a common ground.

Postscript or: Towards a Conclusion

[Undated] I marvel at the icons that appear in the document. “Are they human or machine?” I think to myself. Out of nowhere they appeared when I checked the box that made the document publicly accessible: now an anonymous panda, now an anonymous hippo, now an anonymous wombat. “What do they want?” I sit back and observe the screen, thinking to myself that the Internet is indeed teeming with life. For a moment, I anticipate a whirlwind of exotic creatures rummaging through the document in an explosion of chaotic movement. No movement occurs. One by one they leave the scene and I continue my work.

When I work my way through the five altered manuscripts, I make use of a time machine. This time machine is Google’s invention and allows me to search through each version of the five manuscripts—from their initial creation to the point in time of their last modification. Google Docs thereby allows me to go back and forth in time—to explore different times—and also to gather a multiplicity of temporalities in a unifying ‘real-time’.

This paper has explored what new possibilities for thinking together and attuning to each other is enabled through the intensively extended attention span enabled by digitally networked technologies? What possibilities for collective thinking and attunement are enabled by the prevalence of digital interfaces with real-time connection to the diverse speeds, rhythms, and flows of information of the Internet? Reiterating Blackman's (2019a) call for: "collective apparatuses and modes of storytelling, which might allow for new relations of association to take form and attract attention," this paper has explored the potential for real-time interfaces to facilitate collective modes of thought (49). For this purpose, the notion of the anarchival has worked as a conceptual leeway for working with excess (of memory, affects, values, etc.) in network culture. I have argued that the prevalence of real-time networked technologies has led to an anarchival amplification of the potential number of sources (human and machinic) that may co-inhabit the interfacial passage that affectively modulates how social memory is formed and transformed.

Re-contextualizing archivization in network culture's dynamic signal transmissions, the paper builds on an experimental exploration of the signaleptic materiality of real-time networks as a potential focal point for collective knowledge production. This exploration has taken place through a series of five experiments at conferences, seminars, and in the classroom, where I, as speaker, invited the audience to modulate the course of the talk by editing, commenting, adding to, and deleting the prepared manuscript in real-time. These experiments play with the twofold affective relation between speaker and audience, and between speaker and technological support, to see what will happen when an audience is empowered to manipulate an exposed body at their own will. This social experimentation is underscored by a technical exploration of the potential for digital technology to both render the flow of information visible in its temporal becoming, and also to facilitate an immediate inscription of the signaleptic material's dynamics into the archival order. The paper thus works both with interfacial reconfigurations of the social and with the capture of memory traces that might encompass more of a situation's dynamic form than traditional documentation.

In sum, the aim of this paper has been to explore the potential for real-time interfaces to facilitate ways of collectively inhabiting the affective passage from the privacy of the body to publicly accessible form. The hope is that these explorations may point towards a development of an "interfacial commons" that operate along

the axis of the anarchic, where a dynamic multiplicity of memories, affects, desires, and beliefs overflow and leak from the production of social memory. This is an approach that moves beyond highly individualizing systems of exchange towards a repurposing of the commons in which memory is underscored in its excessive becoming.

Notes

1. The indented text in the beginning of each anecdote is copied directly from Google Drive's automatic logging of the manuscript used during the specific talk.

References

- Auslander, P. (2012). Digital liveness: A Historico-Philosophical Perspective. *A Journal of Performance and Art*, 34 (3), pp. 3-11.
- Blackman, L. (2019a). Haunted data, Transmedial Storytelling, Affectivity: Attending to 'Controversies' as Matters of Ghostly Concern. *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, 19 (1), pp. 31-52.
- Blackman, L. (2019b). *Haunted Data: Affect, Transmedia, Weird Science*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Bruns, A. (2007). Producers. *Proceedings of the 6th ACM SIGCHI Conference on Creativity & Cognition*.
- Chun, W.H.K. (2016). *Updating to Remain the Same*. The MIT Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1992). Postscript on the Societies of Control. *October*, 59, pp. 3-7.
- Deleuze, G. (1989/1985). *Cinema 2*. The Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1993). *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. Translated by T. Conley. London: The Athlone Press.
- Derrida, J. (1995). *Archive Fever*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Ernst, W. (2013). *Digital Memory and the Archive*. The University of Minnesota Press.
- Galloway, A. (2006). *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*. The MIT Press.
- Grusin, R. (2010). *Premediation: Affect and Mediality After 9/11*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hui, Y. (2015). Modulation after Control. *New Formations*, 84-85, pp. 74-91.

- Marina Abramovic Institute. (2013). *Marina Abramovic on Rhythm 0 (1974)*. Video available at: <https://vimeo.com/71952791> [Accessed 28 Aug. 2019].
- Massumi, B. (2008). The Thinking-Feeling of What Happens: A Semblance of a Conversation. *Inflexions*, 1(1), pp. 1-40.
- Massumi, B. (2011). *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. The MIT Press.
- Massumi, B. (2014). *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*. Duke University Press.
- Manning, E., Munster, A. & Thomsen, B.M.S. (2019). *Immediation*.
- Munster, A. (2006). *Materializing New Media: Embodiment in Information Aesthetics*. Dartmouth College Press.
- Rouvroy, A. (2012). The End(s) of Critique: Data-Behaviourism vs. Due-Process. In: M. Hildebrandt and E. De Vries, ed., *Privacy, Due Process and the Computational Turn. Philosophers of Law Meet Philosophers of Technology*, 1st ed. Routledge.
- Røssaak E. (2010). The Archive in Motion: An Introduction. In: E. Røssaak, ed., *The Archive in Motion: New Conceptions of the Archive in Contemporary Thought and New Media Practices*, 1st ed. Novus Press.
- Script (n.d.). In: *Merriam-Webster* [online] Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/script> [Accessed 20 Sept. 2019].
- Simondon, G. (2009). The Position of the Problem of Ontogenesis. *Parrhesia* 7(1).
- Terranova, T. (2017). A Neomonadology of Social (Memory) Production. In: I. Blom, T. Lundemo and E. Røssaak, ed., *Memory in Motion: Archives, Technology, and the Social*, 1st ed. Amsterdam University Press.
- Thomsen, B.M.S. (2012). Signaletic, haptic and real-time material. *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, [online] 4 (1), DOI: 10.3402/jac.v4i0.18148.