Colliding Norms, Community, and the Place of Online Information: The Case of archive.org

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Abstract

The theory of normative behavior (Burnett, Besant, and Chatman, 2001) examines aspects of information behavior in the context of definable social groupings of people, or "small worlds." Using the concept of "worldview," derived from the theory, this article examines a controversy that erupted in the Live Music Archive (LMA) of archive.org in November 2005 when access to a collection of live concert recordings by the Grateful Dead was limited. It analyzes posts made by representatives of the archive, participants in the forum, and a small handful of statements made by band members and representatives in order to understand the controversy as an instance in which participants shared some elements of a common worldview but, because they understood those elements differently, emerge as three different small worlds.

Archive.org, an online "public library" founded in 1995 to provide access to a wide range of public domain digital materials, houses a collection of concert recordings of the band the Grateful Dead. This collection—like many in the archive, and like many materials housed by and used in public libraries generally—might, in a broad sense, be considered to be "leisure" materials rather than something more substantive. They do not, that is, provide information essential to users for their working lives or for "serious" problems in their day-to-day lives. Rather, they are more directly relevant for users' more leisurely interests; fans of the band can listen to them for entertainment, collect them for personal reasons, talk about them with each other, and so on. However, as the controversy explored in this article suggests, members of the core audience for the recordings openly define themselves as "Deadheads," linking their very identities to

their encounters with the Grateful Dead, its music, and each other. In such a context, something that might otherwise be taken to be a mere leisure activity—listening to concert recordings—takes on a much more serious quality, transforming leisure into something quite different.

In November 2005, the archive decided, for reasons that remain obscure, to limit access to its collection of Grateful Dead recordings. This article investigates a controversy in the archive's online Live Music Archive (LMA) forum following this decision—the so-called "Thanksgiving Day Massacre." To frame the investigation, it draws upon the concept of "worldview" derived from the theory of normative behavior (Burnett, Besant, and Chatman, 2001) to present an interpretivist examination of posts made by archivists and Grateful Dead fans ("Deadheads") to the LMA forum as well as a small handful of public statements made by surviving band members and representatives in the days following the decision.

The first section of the article provides an overview of "worldview" and the theory of normative behavior. It then turns to archive.org and the Thanksgiving Day Massacre before analyzing the three "small worlds" involved in the controversy.

The Theory of Normative Behavior and Worldview

The theory of normative behavior (Burnett, Besant, and Chatman, 2001) examines information behavior in the context of definable social groupings of people, or "small worlds." Growing out of Chatman's earlier work, much of which focused on localized social worlds constrained by economic poverty and a dearth of information resources (e.g., Chatman, 1985, 1987, 1992, 1996; Chatman and Pendleton, 1995), the 2001 presentation of the theory extends its focus to include other types of social groupings, including virtual communities and feminist booksellers. Similarly, Burnett, Jaeger, and Thompson (2008) used the theory to investigate the social aspects of information access in public library and governmental settings. The small world concept is closely linked to other notions of social groupings, including Strauss' (1978) "social worlds," which are built "around a primary activity such as work, learning, or family support" (Haythornthwaite and Hagar, 2004, p. 313); it is also allied to more recent theoretical work by Fisher and her colleagues on "information grounds" (see, e.g., Fisher, Landry, and Naumer, 2007).

The theory of normative behavior is not linked to specific geographic locales, and it explicitly addresses the relationship between behavioral and attitudinal norms of groups and their use of information resources— how they understand and use information in their world, what types of information they value (and what types they disregard), how they interact with information providers of various sorts, how they exchange information among themselves, etc. According to the theory, information is never a neutral value in a particular world, nor is it a commodity imposed from

the broader world outside. Rather, it is always embedded within the specifics of the world itself, and is given significance by the values and norms of that world. The theory focuses on how information is made visible and shared publicly.

Implicit in the theory is an argument that people's interaction with information is not limited to formalized encounters with information systems such as databases and library catalogs, but is embedded in day-to-day interactions and activities, whether goal-oriented and related to "serious" concerns like work or with shared leisure or entertainment. Information behavior is intrinsically socially embedded, and the values of information are socially determined. For example, information shared between two intersecting small worlds may be perceived as trivial by inhabitants of one world and as of the utmost importance by inhabitants of the other; further, an activity considered to be a leisure activity in one world may be a matter of labor—or even survival—in the other.

The theory of normative behavior includes four basic concepts: (1) worldview; (2) social norms; (3) social types; and (4) information behavior. While all four of these concepts provide useful tools for examining the place of information within specific social settings, this article focuses on only one of the four: worldview (for definitions of all four concepts and for examples of full analyses of different small worlds using all four, see Burnett, Besant, and Chatman, 2001; and Burnett, Jaeger, and Thompson, 2008).

Worldview can be defined as "a collective perception held in common by members of a social world regarding those things that are deemed important or trivial" (Burnett, Besant, and Chatman, 2001, p. 537). Members of small worlds are not only united by shared interests, but also by a common understanding of which aspects of the world are worth their attention and which are not. Worldview, thus, defines the "scope" of a small world, establishing the relative importance of different bits of information available to its members. It provides a way of analyzing information value, or what is of concern—and what is not important—within a specific social context. Using the concept of worldview, this article provides a case study of an instance in which three small worlds came into contact with each other, resulting in a situation in which their overlapping but differing worldviews clashed. The next section describes the setting of this clash.

ARCHIVE.ORG, DEADHEADS, AND THE "THANKSGIVING DAY MASSACRE"

Archive.org—the "Internet Archive"—was founded by Brewster Kahle in 1995 as an online public library housing a permanent online collection of digitally available public domain materials, including audio and video files as well as textual materials, software, and (in the Wayback Machine) an historical archive of the World Wide Web, which can be used to display

outdated and otherwise unavailable versions of websites. In addition to nearly 850,000 audio, video, and text files, the archive contains eighty-five billion historical Web pages. As of late May 2008, the home page for archive.org highlighted an interesting—and representative—range of materials, including a video interview with Japanese video game developer Shigeru Miyamoto, an audio recording of a live concert by a band named Mama's Cookin', audio files of music consisting of sounds used in the Windows and Macintosh operating systems, and a 1910 book titled *Notes on Bookbinding for Libraries.*

In addition to such materials, archive.org hosts more than 200 "forums," allowing users to participate in conversations about any issue related to the archive's holdings. While a large number of these forums receive very little traffic, a handful are extremely active and serve, in essence, as virtual communities—or small worlds—focusing on specific materials. Of these forums, the two most active are devoted to general conversations about the Live Music Archive (with over 40,000 posts as of May 2008) and, more specifically, to discussions about the band the Grateful Dead (with nearly 98,000 posts). These two groups account for the majority of traffic in archive.org forums, despite the fact that recordings of concerts by the Grateful Dead form only a small part of the archive's Live Music Archive, and the LMA is not the largest segment of the archive's collections.

That the Grateful Dead, which ceased to exist in 1995 when its lead guitarist Jerry Garcia died, would receive such attention in a context like archive.org forums is unsurprising, for two reasons. First, fans of the band have a long history of taking up residence in online venues, where they have formed multiple active (and still ongoing) virtual communities. These include, most notably, the Usenet newsgroup rec.music.gdead, which began life in the early 1980s as an email-based group variously named "Jerry's Breakfast" or "dead-flames," before moving to Usenet, first as net.music.gdead in 1985 (History, 1996); and the "deadhead ghetto" of the Grateful Dead conferences on the WELL, an online community founded in 1985 and populated by Deadheads in 1986 (Hafner, 2001; Rheingold, 1993). The connection between Deadheads and online communities is strong enough that deadnet (http://dead.net), the band's official website hosts an active virtual community a full twelve years after the band itself has ceased to exist.

Although online Deadhead communities do not limit themselves to discussions of a single topic, the trading of live recordings of the band's shows has long been one of their core concerns. Even though the band itself did not formally condone fan recording until 1984, when it created a sanctioned "Tapers' Section" at shows, recordings exist—and are actively traded—dating back to 1959, when Phil Lesh (later to be the band's bassist) performed his student composition "Finnegan's Awake" with a nineteen-piece jazz band at the College of San Mateo in California. Dead-

heads' interest in such tapes has been documented in a variety of ways, from tapers' and traders' personal ads in the back pages of Grateful Dead fanzines such as *The Golden Road, Dupree's Diamond News,* and *Relix* to thousands of organized tape "trees" or "vines" joining traders to each other in online settings. Perhaps the best example of the Deadhead tape-trading phenomenon is *The Deadhead's Taping Compendium*, a dense three-volume set, the first of which includes detailed descriptions of every known recording of the band (and its precursors) from 1959 through 1974 in addition to a lengthy history of the technology and sociology of taping and trading (Getz and Dwork, 1998; the two subsequent volumes take the story through 1995). Similar projects have been carried out online, including the "Deadlists Project" (http://www.deadlists.com).

Given such a confluence of interests—a band with a history of allowing its fans to record performances and to trade those recordings with each other, and an online library providing access to such materials—it is not surprising that Deadheads were active early users of the archive's services, or that the archive's LMA came to house copies of nearly every extant Grateful Dead concert recording. With downloadable files available at a click of a mouse, obtaining recordings of Grateful Dead shows was never easier; with the forums, such access could remain—as tape trading had always been—part of the ongoing social interaction of Deadheads.

However, on November 22, 2005, a post by "brewster" (Brewster Kahle) appeared in the LMA Forum, announcing that, while recordings made by audience members would still be available for "streaming," downloading of Grateful Dead recordings would no longer be permitted, and that "soundboard" recordings (made either by the band itself or by one of its sound engineers) would be removed entirely:

> Following the policies of the Grateful Dead and the Dead communities we have provided non-commercial access to thousands of great concerts. Based on discussions with many involved, the Internet Archive has been asked to change how the Grateful Dead concert recordings are being distributed on the Archive site for the time being. The full collection will remain safe in the Archive for preservation purposes.
> Here is the plan:
> Audience recordings are available in streaming format (m3u).
> Soundboard recordings are not available.
> Additionally, the Grateful Dead recordings will be separated from the Live Music Archive into its own collection. The metadata and reviews for all shows and recordings will remain available.
> We appreciate that this change will be a surprise and upset many of you, but please channel reactions in ways that you genuinely think will be productive. If we keep the bigger picture in mind that there are many experiments going on right now, and experiments working well, we can build on the momentum that tape trading started decades ago. (archive.org, 49553, "brewster")[1]

This decision was partially rescinded nine days later on December first, with an admission that the archive's "mistaken attempts to move quickly were based on what [they] thought the Grateful Dead wanted" (archive. org, 49553). At that time, the Dead's recordings were separated from the rest of the LMA, soundboard recordings were restored for streaming only and audience recordings again became fully downloadable (this arrangement remains in effect to date). However, Deadheads immediately responded with open and vehement complaints, dubbing the decision the "Thanksgiving Day Massacre." Not only was the forum inundated with thousands of posts (lasting well beyond the partial rescinding of the decision on December first), but the issue was taken up—at great length—by every other online Deadhead community. Blogs—including both mainstream blogs (*BoingBoing*, http://www.boingboing.net) and Dead-related blogs (Christian Crumlish's *Uncle John's Blog*, http://thedeadbeat.com/ unclejohn/ and David Gans' *Playback* http://playback.trufun.com/)— posted items on the removal of recordings; an account of the controversy even hit the pages of the *New York Times* (Pareles, 2005). The initial posting on *BoingBoing* is typical:

> This is pretty disappointing. Deadheads made the Grateful Dead some pretty substantial fortunes over the years by acting as unpaid, volunteer evangelists for their commercial offerings. This is a genuine betrayal of the audience from a couple of greedy people who would line their pockets at the expense of the memory of the generous, mutually beneficial relationship between the band and its supporters. (Doctorow, 2005)

The archive's decision, clearly, ran headlong into a deep-seated Deadhead culture committed to the sharing and trading of live recordings. To put it in the terms of the theory of normative behavior, the decision instantly pit several small worlds against each other: one (the Deadheads') devoted to the open exchange of a particular kind of information (live recordings); another (the band's) largely behind the scenes, but with a perceived economic interest in transforming the information encoded in those live recordings into commodities for sale; and a third (the archive) with a commitment to open access to public domain materials and an understanding of the legal limits of such access. The Thanksgiving Day Massacre brought these worlds into contact with each other in a way that starkly exposed their differences; each group had an interest in the decision, but each understood the significance of that decision differently. The remainder of this article examines this conflict by examining a number of posts made to the archive's LMA forum in the days immediately following the decision, as well as a handful of public statements from band members and representatives, through the lens provided by the concept of worldview.

THE THREE WORLDS

The initial announcement by "brewster" sets the tone for much of the controversy. His post openly refers to "Grateful Dead communities," anticipating the "surprise and upset" that many would feel. The worldview of the archive itself comes through most clearly in a statement downplaying the importance of Grateful Dead recordings within the larger context of the archive. It is, "brewster" notes, important to "keep the bigger picture in mind that there are many experiments going on right now, and experiments working well," adding that the collection will, in accord with the archive's mission, "remain safe . . . for preservation purposes." The archivists' understanding of the decision—through the lens of librarianship and archival practice—is unswerving throughout the controversy. Diana Hamilton, the forum moderator, consistently distinguishes between online "tape trading sites" and the archive's mission as "an online public library" (e.g., archive.org, 47802).

As a matter of worldview, representatives of the archive present a consistent vision of what they perceive to be of importance: the value of the recordings is not in their link to the Grateful Dead, but rather in their broader archival worth—they are one group of items in a much larger archive. Their significance has less to do with the fact that they document performances of the Grateful Dead than with the fact that, like the black-and-white animated cartoons from the 1930s elsewhere in the archive, they document a specific kind of digital "cultural artifact." Grateful Dead recordings are not, for the archivists, at the heart of the mission; they are simply one set of documents of cultural production among many. They are important archival materials; however, as with any archival materials, contractual or other limitations on access may be in play, and such limitations are not immediately amenable to user demands for open access.

After the controversy had raged for more than two weeks, well after downloading of many of the recordings had been restored, archivists' posts began to show frustration:

> Folks, it's time to be moving forward here, not looking back to respond to emotions of over two weeks ago now. Accept that you will have to declaim on this subject now at a better place such as deadnetcentral. com or your own personal blog. (archive.org, 51130)

Such frustration might be seen simply in light of the archive's vision that there are other things of greater importance, and that two weeks was more than enough time to spend in discussion about an incident that, in the context of the "bigger picture" of the entire archive, is relatively minor. As Diana Hamilton puts it at one point, the archive sees itself as a "'Copernican universe' . . . (where the sun actually 'doesn't' revolve around the Grateful Dead)" (archive.org, 51830). The archivists' frustration also, however, reflects a distinction between the worldview embodied

by the archive and that of the Deadheads who had been using it, whose focus is almost exclusively on one collection of recordings, and for whom any limitations on access to those recordings is anathema. For many of the Deadheads, the preservation of archival materials is important only to the extent that those materials are related to the Grateful Dead, and any conceivable limitation of access to those materials is censorship, as a user known as "drew4utoo" makes clear:

> Seems like the archive motto should be modified to reflect this new attitude, something like "Universal access to human knowledge . . . through censorship"! (archive.org, 51532)

From the very beginning of the controversy, the intensity of Deadheads' reactions to the removal of tapes from the archive is clear. The first post made to the forum now appears only in truncated form, having been edited to remove "Ugly rumors and death threats (?!)" (archive.org, 47636). What remains of the post (curiously, given its apparent original content), is wistful, ending with a quote from the song "He's Gone"; the practice of using song lyrics to communicate in a way that is immediately recognizable to other Deadheads—a kind of "insider" talk—is typical:

> Anyway thanks archive for your support and kindness, still a lot of great music in here. Now it's time to go back to old way of trading grateful dead blanks and postage anyone? nothing left to do but smile smile smile. . . . (archive.org, 47636)

In addition to such textual practices, a number of themes appear throughout the discussion, reflecting a consistent worldview. This consistency emerges despite the fact that there is no agreement among participants about the propriety of the decision—while many are furious, many others note that legal or other concerns may have made the decision inevitable. Still, even if participants disagree about the meaning of the decision, they universally agree that it is worthwhile discussing it, and further consider the recordings themselves to be important enough to justify extensive time and energy discussing them. While the recordings are just one collection among many to the archivists, to the Deadheads they are unequivocally the core collection, giving the archive its significance.

While the worldview of the archivists is easy to define, that of the Deadheads is, beyond its focus on the Grateful Dead and their live recordings, more complex, encompassing several different shared values even in the midst of disagreement. Such shared value often takes on a perceived spiritual dimension, frequently tinged with reference to psychedelic drugs, as in this exchange between "blueendo" and "josewavo" in response to a post casting open access to the recordings as—literally—a matter of life and death. "blueendo," arguing that access to the recordings provides only a dim shadow of the original community found at the band's concerts, re-

fers to the spiritual preparation required in order to appreciate the "holy magic" of the Grateful Dead's "blessed sound":

> Men and women who, with great bliss and fellowship, once shared the holy magic of Grateful Dead shows have reduced themselves to scuffing toes in the dust and beating on their pots, acting for all the world like welfare queens or, worse, looters.
>   The magic was never meant to be free if it was to be enjoyed in the manner in which it was created. You had to prepare yourself to receive that blessed sound. (archive.org, 51108)

Unfortunately, "blueendo" supplements this vision of "fellowship" with other observations, comparing those making demands for access to the tapes to victims of Katrina whose suffering was, he suggests, their own fault:

> I'm not surprised the folks in the Dead camp shut off the pipe. I'm sorry so many people feel they were entitled to total and free access to other peoples' work.
>   That is a large part of what is wrong with our country today. We saw it in New Orleans after Katrina, when people who ignored warnings to get to safety stood around in the stink and complained about not getting handouts fast enough. (archive.org, 51108, "blueendo")

This intemperate (and unforgiving) comparison, not surprisingly, garners several responses. One, written by "josewavo," not only poses a counter-argument that the recordings should remain accessible, but also touches directly on the perceived spirituality of the Grateful Dead experience, suggesting that "blueendo" misunderstands not only the recordings, but the significance of Katrina, and even the meaning of the very community and spirituality he cites:

> Now that the digital age has made it a "volumn relative" threat, the Dead has renigged on a time honored system. We the public did not compromise the "agreement" by selling copies of the shows. If that had been the case, the GDM [Grateful Dead Merchandising] would have been justified. This is simple a matter of a financial concern outweighing an artistic one.
>   One other note . . . most of the Katrina victums did not choose to stay, they had no other option. To overlook this small point is to reveal something about your own character I don't care to discuss, but it certainly is not reflective of the spiritually compassionate attitude for ALL peoples that was first prevelant in the early counter-culture. (archive.org, 51108, "josewavo")

Although "josewavo" and "blueendo" are, clearly, in opposite camps regarding the propriety of the decision by archive.org (and regarding the aftermath of Katrina), what they share in terms of worldview is still striking. They are linked by their shared appreciation for the Grateful Dead, particularly as preserved in a specific collection of live recordings; what-

ever else is important to the participants in this discussion, the recordings are at the center of their world, justifying attention that, to outsiders (including archive staff), can appear obsessive. The place of the recordings within the worldview of the Deadheads is reflected in the cultural events that participants cite as comparable situations; at various times, the removal of the recordings is compared to the assassination of JFK (archive.org, 47712), the war in Iraq (archive.org, 47966), and slavery (archive.org, 49785).

The appropriateness of such comparisons is regularly challenged. However, the regularity with which they arise points to the centrality of the recordings in the Deadheads' world—it is neither incongruous nor outlandish to measure their value against that of serious events in the outside world. When one poster challenges another it is not typically because of the hyperbole of the comparison, but because—as in the comparison to Katrina noted above—the challenger believes that the initial poster has misapprehended the meaning of the event. That is, comparing the removal of recordings from archive.org to Katrina is not necessarily considered to be inherently over-the-top. What "josewavo" criticizes, rather, is the lack of compassion in the initial post by "blueendo," and, in this Deadhead world, compassion is just as important in relation to the recordings as it is in relation to the victims of a devastating hurricane.

For many participants, the problem with the decision is that it signals a move away from the "compassion" that they feel is intrinsic to the open "sharing" of tapes toward the twin scourges of commerce and profit. A poster named "darkstargirl" (taking her name from the title of one of the band's most revered songs), responding to "blueendo," makes the connection explicit:

> i fail to see how we're "seeing another version" of hurricane Katrina. for as long as the dead have existed, they have done so with a mentality that includes things like "music should be free," "the audience is just has much to do with the music as we do," and "once we've played it, it's yours." oh, i get it . . . you mean that the heartless fools that currently run this country have gone against all its principles in much the same way as whomever decided dead music must be bought? (archive.org, 51978, "darkstargirl")

While a number of posters acknowledge that the band should be able to make a living from its work, and others acknowledge legitimate issues related to intellectual property rights, the perception of a nearly binary split between free access to the recordings and capitalist profit-mongering suffuses much of the discussion. One poster, "omahadeadhead," rhetorically suggesting that he has taken a kind of Deadhead "vow of poverty" to live by "principles rather than economics," links the "deepest depths of the Grateful Dead" to the Internet's capacity to support community along with free access to information (and, in particular, the Dead's music):

> I strive everyday to avoid lending my hand to raise a flag atop a ship of fools. The Dead brought me into this higher state of mind. What they have taught me over many years is to see through the haze of greed and corporatization. It is well known that the Dead outgrew their roots and inevitably became a corporate entity. But somewhere along the line, Jerry's idea on avoiding seeing themselves as a corporate entity was lost. . . . But I never thought the day would come where that very greed would grow to the point of taking away what we already have. Technology is a marvelous thing, a true incarnation of the mind expansion explored so meticulously by the band themselves. The internet is truly a source of limitless knowledge and resource. NOw the day has finally come where greed has overtaken the desire to shine the light on those who have yet to see it. (archive.org, 49727, "omadeadhead")

For these Deadheads, the archive's true value (undermined by the decision to remove the recordings) meshes completely not only with the presumed original goals of the band but also with the promise of digital reproduction and the ideal of free access to information – or, as one poster puts it, "COPIES FOR FREE INTO THE INFINITE REACHES OF TIME AND SPACE" (archive.org, 49980).

Throughout, this tendency for participants to align their understanding of the archive with a perception of the community of which they are a part (and of the original goals and values of the Grateful Dead) remains constant. Participants tend to root their arguments for these values in an overt belief that they were shared by Jerry Garcia, the band's guitarist, who died in 1995. Often, they do so without directly stating what those values are, as if they are sufficiently self-evident to everybody who will read them, as in this post by "spinneresque": "Jerry is gone and he has no say, and we all know what he would have said" (archive.org, 49819, "spinneresque"). The belief is expressed more simply by multiple posters as "WWJD"—"What would Jerry do," in a play on "What would Jesus do," with Jerry Garcia in the implicit role as the spiritual guide of the Deadheads. At other times, the connection is more explicit, if equally rooted in inaccurate claims: "Correct me if I'm wrong but it was either one of Jerry's last wishes or in his will that he could make the entire vault [the band's own collection of concert recordings] available to everyone" (archive.org, 49471).

Such appeals to the presumed values of the Grateful Dead do have a source in a remark made by Jerry Garcia in an interview, where he commented "when we're done with [the performance], they [i.e., tape traders] can have it" (cited in Gans & Simon, 1985, p. 91; for a similar Garcia comment, see Jackson, 1999, p. 277, where he says "my responsibility to the notes is over after I've played them. At that point I don't care where they go"). This quote has become an important bit of Deadhead folklore, and is often treated as "sacred writ" among tapers and collectors, blanket permission for open and free distribution of all live recordings, whether through trading or downloading. The comment has been taken as giv-

ing explicit imprimatur to one of the core values of the Deadhead small world. As such, it has been widely cited—in a variety of different forms and occasionally attributed to someone other than Jerry Garcia—not only in the LMA forum, but across the web, and even by other band members in interviews (e.g., Makin, 2008; Carlson, 2005).

For the representatives of the archive, with their very different world-view, such blanket permission does not carry the same weight as it does for the Deadheads. However, in this dispute a third small world plays an important—if largely obscured and even somewhat contradictory—role: that of the surviving band members themselves. The odd nature of the band's involvement is evident from the very beginning. The initial state-ment by "brewster" attributes the decision to "discussions with many in-volved" (archive.org, 47634), without clarifying who those "many" are. Further, the partial retraction issued nine days later suggests that the de-cision was made because of a misunderstanding of the band's position: "We at archive.org now realize that our mistaken attempts to move quickly were based on what we thought the Grateful Dead wanted" (archive.org, 49553).

Such ambiguity and vague attributions regarding the band's involve-ment can be taken to suggest either that the removal of the recordings was, in fact, undertaken mistakenly by the archive or, by implication, that there was little agreement among the band members themselves concern-ing the importance of the recordings or the significance of the archive. In retrospect, while it is still difficult to choose between these alternatives—particularly since there are no more than a handful of brief statements regarding the archive by band members or their representatives—it seems likely that the latter is more accurate.

Indeed, the band's comments themselves reflect inconsistent world-views. One of these, made by bassist Phil Lesh on his website the day be-fore the decision was partially retracted, aligns itself explicitly with the worldview of the Deadheads:

> It was brought to my attention that all of the Grateful Dead shows were taken down from archive.org right before Thanksgiving. I was not part of this decision making process and was not notified that the shows were to be pulled. I do feel that the music is the Grateful Dead's legacy and I hope that one way or another all of it is available for those who want it. I have enjoyed using archive.org and found it invaluable during the writing of my book [his autobiography *Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead* (Lesh, 2005a)]. I found myself being pulled back in time listening to old Grateful Dead shows while giggling with glee or feeling that ache in my heart listening to Jerry's poetic guitar and sweet voice. (Lesh, 2005b)

Similarly, John Perry Barlow, one of the band's lyricists (and a founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, an organization devoted to "defend-

ing your rights in the digital world" (EFF, 2008), echoes a point made in 1994 that the band had "increased its popularity enormously by giving [recordings of concerts] away" (Barlow, 1994); Barlow comments that the removal of recordings was "magnificently counter-productive," and that it would lead to a massive "backlash" against the band (Barlow, 2005). One of the band's drummers, Mickey Hart, released a comparable statement (Hart, 2005).

In the aftermath of these two statements, participants in the forum applauded both Lesh and Barlow, portraying them as exemplars of the band's original spirit, as in this post by "manwich74": "Thank the Gods for Phil. He seems like the only voice of reason in the band for the last 10 years" (archive.org, 50527, "manwich74").

However, two other band statements present an almost diametrically opposed worldview, in which the removal of recordings was not only justifiable, but legally or ethically necessary. In a statement that proved to be incendiary in the LMA forum, guitarist Bob Weir was vehement in an interview on a Denver radio station two days after the partial reversal of the decision:

> We had to cover our asses. What they're doing is illegal, unless there are arrangements made . . . particularly in the case of covers—other people's material. . . .
>   The "information wants to be free, man"—those folks . . . this is not information, this is music. It's kind of value-added information. Some people prefer to call it art. . . .
>   We had to go ahead and do the right thing, and it upset some folks. I'm really sorry about that. So they started up a petition, a boycott, and all that kind of stuff. I really hope they can stick to their guns, and boycott us, and . . . seeya. . . . (Weir, 2005)

Echoing Weir's comments (though more gently), publicist Dennis Mc-Nally (Leeds, 2005), suggesting that the entire band agreed, put the issue explicitly in terms of values (and, thus, worldview) in a comment to the *New York Times*:

> "One-to-one community building, tape trading, is something we've always been about," Mr. McNally said. "The idea of a massive one-stop Web site that does not build community is not what we had in mind. Our conclusion has been that it doesn't represent Grateful Dead values."

McNally's choice of the word "community" can be read as a direct appeal to the worldview of the Deadheads themselves who repeatedly cite it as an important aspect of their world, as in the following post by "drew4utoo":

> I am especially disturbed by the comments made by Dennis McNally in reference to the live music archive when he said, "The idea of a massive one-stop Web site that does not build community is not what we had in mind. Our conclusion has been that it doesn't represent Grateful Dead values." Having spent time visiting this website over the

> past few months I can say that I very much felt a sense of community browsing the shows in the collection, listening to the music, reading the reviews and comments, and reminiscing about the shows I'd attended. (archive.org, 49786)

McNally's appeal—and its rejection by LMA participants—points to a focal issue. Both McNally and the Deadheads pay homage to the ideal of a "community," noting a relationship between Deadheads and the concert recordings. However, where McNally sees the relationship as existing only in an older (and pre-Internet) world of "one-to-one community building" through tape trading, many Deadheads see archive.org not as a "massive one-stop Web site," but as itself an opportunity for community building, precisely because of the availability of the recordings.

This is key to understanding the entire controversy. The three small worlds involved—those of the archive and the archivists, the Deadheads, and the band itself—are inextricably linked to one another through a number of issues, including a common collection of "information" (the concert recordings or, to use Bob Weir's phrase, "value-added information"), the technology used to provide access to that information (the World Wide Web), and a perception of "community." In some sense, the three worlds share elements of worldview: they all agree that these three things are important, and worthy of attention. However, even though the three worlds have overlapping worldviews, they diverge—and must be seen as three separate worlds—because they have fundamentally different, even incommensurate, understandings of the significance, value, and place of the things that they share. To put it simply, those things shared by the three different worlds in the archive.org controversy ultimately do not, because of the different ways in which members of the worlds understand their meaning, provide the basis for a shared worldview.

As Burnett, Jaeger, and Thompson (2008) have suggested, when different small worlds come into contact with each other, they may act at cross-purposes with one another. The contact, and the fact that they share certain interests without also sharing a common understanding of those interests may lead to conflict rather than common ground. As the controversy surrounding the Thanksgiving Day Massacre unfolded, a collection of materials that, to an outsider, might appear trivial or of little more than entertainment value emerges as a significant body of information to three different groups. For one, the collection is a portion of a larger set of culturally significant "public domain" materials. For another, it is the essential signifier of a spiritual experience and ongoing community. And for the third, it is either (depending on who is asked) a key mechanism for reconnecting with a legacy and with others who have shared that legacy or a danger, threatening whatever community once existed, and possibly even illegal.

When worlds collide, the place of information, taken for granted by each of the worlds, becomes a place of battle. Certainly, such a place of

battle suggests that "leisure" materials may, in at least some cases, more accurately be seen as essential and meaningful elements of users' lives, every bit as important for those users as materials obviously tied to work and other "serious" matters. For libraries—and archive.org characterizes itself explicitly as a public library—at least one implication is clear: the value of materials and collections is not primarily defined by how librarians view them, but is a function of users' worldview; materials perceived to be trivial or unimportant by some may be extraordinarily important and meaningful for others. Even when multiple user worlds intersect, resulting in conflict, libraries must take into account those varying worldviews rather than relying on notions of value and importance divorced from the lives of their users.

Note

[1] All quotations from archive.org are from the LMA forum, and are presented verbatim, without correction of typographical or other errors.

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