The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention

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Abstract

The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention is an arts-based research project that reflects on the spirit of this digital information age. This alternative event activates a new space for meaning-making within the conference setting, inviting conference participants to engage in an alternative method of inquiry facilitated by an interactive art installation.

Keywords: arts-based research, information art, installation and intervention, relational aesthetics, participation


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1 Introduction

The Analogue Internet started as a mail-based art project in June 2012. Currently, it has seven installments, built from an ever-changing collection of found source materials, sent to an evolving list of international subscribers. The project was first inspired by an ecological impulse to salvage discarded books and deaccessioned library materials. Excerpts from these recovered resources were cut out, assembled, and packaged in an envelope of print and non-print-based miscellany. Each envelope, a legal size (41/8” x 9 ½”) airmail envelope, was filled with a unique collection of curated ephemera, some pieces directly referencing the Internet and others broadly reflecting a rich Information landscape. Sources used for The Analogue Internet include do-it-yourself guides, dictionaries, translation books, world almanacs, cookbooks, workout books, puzzle books and maps; in addition to other information-rich curios such as seeds, string games, and friendship bracelets. Each mailing of the Analogue Internet is a hand-held, hand-made, and hand-delivered relief of the digital age, sent to over forty subscribers.

Figure 1: The Analogue Internet. The contents of the July 2013 Edition.

Figure 2: The Analogue Internet. The contents of the December 2012 Edition.

Figure 3: The Analogue Internet. The contents of the September 2012 Edition.

2 The Installation

The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention builds on the arts-based questioning posited by the Analogue Internet project, and creates an intervention specifically designed for the iConference, 2014. The alternative event will activate a new space of the conference through the installation of an Analogue Internet
intervention. The proposed Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention will exist as a space for the artist to make and distribute the Analogue Internet and for conference participants to send, read, and discuss the project. The alternative event plays with established conference practices—such as the receiving of conference pamphlets, networking, and information sharing—as each conference participant will have the opportunity to receive an edition of the Analogue Internet, sort through the content, discuss their findings with others, and even mail the Analogue Internet to a friend. The Analogue Internet Intervention will be a space for connecting, interacting, and information gathering: a mirror to our contemporary digital possibilities.

3 Theoretical Framework

Arts-based research is an alternative approach to qualitative research, bridging scholarly inquiry and creative processes (Rose, 2007; McNiff, 2008). Arts-based research is a method of inquiry that can employ a range of art practices. Art therefore becomes the catalyst for the exploration of questions and theories through expressive means of inquiry. Inspired Relational Aesthetics, *The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention* values social encounters and participation as a method for meaning-making (Bourriaud, 2002).

4 Relevance to the Conference.

*The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention* explores the potential of the arts-based research within the field of Information Studies, facilitating inquiry through situational intervention. Through the installation, conference participants will have an opportunity to gaze upon the diversity of a rich, print-based information environment, deconstruct the materials, and recontextualize ephemera. The inclusion of non-print based resources enables the collocation of things that at first seem separate from the information world but indeed are part of the landscape. The mail-based framing of the project demonstrates the overall connection of people through information: conference participants have the opportunity to send someone an edition of the Analogue Internet through the post, in addition to discussing their own edition within the context of the conference. The Analogue Internet’s use of decontextualized information, is anchored equally on the destruction of resources as it is hinged on the recycling and reimagining of Information, encapsulating the old and the new, the random and the organized, the connected and the individualized.

5 The Space

The installation of *The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention* is active throughout the iConference. The installation is comprised of one l-shaped desk with a single chair, and an adjacent area of five chairs. The artist will be stationed at the desk over the course of the conference, distributing the Analogue Internet, curating new editions, and answering questions. The table will also function as a site of exhibition for all print and non-print-based materials used in the mailings. In addition
to the source material, the artist will be equipped with a typewriter, a scale, and stamps.

Adjacent to the desk, there is a seating area, where people are invited to sit and explore their own package of the Analogue Internet. The seating area is a multipurpose space designed to facilitate the discussion and exploration of the content within each mailing and the issues raised by arts-based inquiry as a whole. The work can be encountered individually, in pairs, or in a group. Participation can be characterized as viewing, making, reading, or sending. And can be engaged throughout the conference: once, often, or routinely.

6 Conclusion

The Analogue Internet: A Post Intervention intends to activate new spaces in the conference environment to create areas for playful meditations on the nature of information, preservation, and participation.

7 References


8 Table of Figures

Figure 1: The Analogue Internet. The contents of the July 2013 Edition. .............................................. 1220
Figure 2: The Analogue Internet. The contents of the December 2012 Edition. ..................................... 1220
Figure 3: The Analogue Internet. The contents of the September 2012 Edition. .................................... 1220
Figure 4: The Analogue Internet. Unopened July 2013 Edition. ............................................................. 1221
Figure 5: The Analogue Internet. Preparing the December 2012 Edition. .............................................. 1221