The New Reithians: *Pararchive* and Citizen *Animateurs* in the BBC Digital Archive

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He who prides himself on giving what he thinks the public wants is often creating a fictitious demand for low standards which he will then satisfy. Lord Reith, 1925.

Abstract

The ongoing AHRC *Pararchive* project seeks to build new interactive environments that explore issues of ownership, public and institutional relationships and provide tools for collaborative community research and creative expression using digital heritage resources.[1]It was motivated by recognition that communities are encountering real barriers to organising and connecting to resources and with each other. In the field of cultural heritage it is often difficult to access archival materials from public institutions and overcome barriers to what could and should be mutually enriching relationships. In this context the BBC has traditionally been seen as a problematic institution - publicly funded and immeasurably rich - yet distant and patrician. Working with the Head of BBC Archive Development Tony Ageh the project team is focussing on issues such as copyright and institutional voice as a means of facilitating a more open and collaborative audience relationship. As part of our current dialogue we have also been examining the traditions within the BBC that might act as a block to these activities. Our initial conclusion is that a major part of the problem lies in the lack of partnership between the BBC and its licence paying audience and we have made that a key focus of our study. This article outlines the background to the *Pararchive* project and the specific focus within it on the relationship between the BBC and its audiences.

Key Words

Digital archive, open space, co-design, partnerships, animateur, BBC, archive, Reithian

Introduction

One of the direct consequences of the 'digital archive' is an increasingly irresistible expectation, on all sides, of openness and enhanced collaborative public engagement. Fostering a mutually reinforcing relationship between archives and audiences is crucial both to its emergent purpose and future sustainability. It is also, increasingly, a measure of its cultural significance.[2] The roots of this digitally facilitated co-dependency are partly anchored in the current lack of funding and forged from a wellspring of digital optimism (Litan & Niskanen 1998, Roberts 2009).

They are also part of an ongoing debate about democratic exchange, pluralism and the concept of the 'open archive' (Popple & Thornham 2013).

However, there exists today a troubling disconnect between the democratic language used to describe these evolving relationships and the realities of current public experience.[3] Much is promised and predicted - but little has yet materialised.[4] One of the key problems is the nature upon which these relationships are predicated. It is hard to break through historical architectures in which audiences and institutions operate and are separated (Norcia 2007). The barriers between what lies within the archive and all of its attendant constraints and the public expectation that material will magically appear through some digital conduit seem to be building and are fuelled by technological developments and common misunderstandings about how archives operate and the limits of digitisation (Cameron and Kenderdine 2010).[5] Part of the solution lies in managing expectations, in trusting the public with formerly 'secret' knowledge and in co-developing approaches to allow for new relationships and responsibilities. The other lies with archives themselves and their ability and willingness to explore new collaborative and cooperative models.

The BBC is certainly a case in point in respect of these problems and mounting audience expectation. Former BBC Director General Greg Dyke's commitment to open its archive and let people have what they paid for through the licence fee was in retrospect an unwelcome hostage to fortune. His speech at the 2003 Edinburgh Television Festival caught and fuelled the prevailing digital optimism of the moment. (Dyke 2003) What it usefully did, however, was to commit the BBC to thinking about how it needed to change its relationship with its audiences and how the archive could become one of those agents of change.

Since Dyke's speech the BBC has been through a turbulent few years and has undergone a series of structural and managerial shifts in response to a range of scandals and editorial decisions (Weissmann 2013). Its public service remit has increasingly been called in to question and the imminent renewal of its charter has served to make it focus on its relationship with audiences and helped it to recognise that it needs to become a more open, financially accountable and responsive organisation. Part of this realisation has triggered an aspiration to readdress some of the traditions of the BBC and characterise audiences as operating in a post-Reithian world.[6]

The following will explore how the project is seeking to expand and develop new relationships between the public and the BBC's programme archive. It is focussed on how we might reclassify historic relationships and use new language to model a new collaborative partnership through co-research and co-production approaches to produce mutually informed solutions.

The BBC and A New Digital Age?

Many see the digital as a form of 'liberation technology' and as a means of quickly uniting audiences with the content they crave. Digital optimism is pervasive, and it certainly promises to deliver huge benefits in our public and institutional lives. For example, in 2010 the then Director General of the BBC Mark Thompson made a speech in which he pronounced that:

The digital age should be a golden age for public space. The means of creating and disseminating content of every kind have been democratised. The barriers to entry to the global conversation have collapsed and every day individual citizens reach thousands of others with their ideas and opinion. (Thompson 2010)

There is increasing evidence that within certain sectors of the BBC there is a will to develop a collaborative and extra - institutional approach as a means of developing public engagement, debate and creativity around archival content.[7] The problem lies in the logistical nightmare such a project might represent and in convincing those in senior management of the benefits and opportunities it would open up. The BBC has one of the largest broadcast archives in the world, with over 12 million items including documents, television and radio broadcasts, photographs and online content, but digitisation of the collection of BBC's broadcasting history is still in its infancy. Its collections are widely distributed across a number of sites and vary in degree of cataloguing and accessibility. A small portion of the programme archive covered by ERA + is in the process of being digitised and published online via *Box of Broadcasts*.[8] Whilst this is currently limited to the education sector it does provide a set of content that allows for exploration by broader audiences and begins to evidence real movement towards making content available, albeit with limited creative possibilities.[9]

In designing the *Pararchive* project we were keen to take advantage of these new opportunities and test the limits of BBC resolve. We began by thinking about some essential questions about the purpose of the BBC programme archive, ownerships of knowledge, discourse and public value. These have become a key focus and through the developing partnerships between academia, public institutions and the audiences they serve we hope to be able to design a new model for collaborative engagement. Many of the challenges faced in trying to open up and reconfigure the relationships between public audiences and archival institutions have deep historical roots. The evolution of the archive as a concept and its structuring powers are well theorised as is its tenacious grip on a self- sustaining authority (Derrida 1995, Emerling 2012). The control of content and the authorial voice of the institutional archive require contestation and reconfiguration. Through examining the history of such archives as the BBC one can see some of the key issues and appreciate the real challenges of our current situation. What we learn from the history and the traditions of archiving in these contexts can help us develop research-based solutions to access and collaborative endeavour that can help frame a complex set of future choices for the BBC and other public and private cultural institutions.

But we should also be cautious and avoid overly optimistic pronouncements. Developments are deeply contingent and it seems only now that a happy combination of circumstances and targeted funding has allowed us to broaden our aspirations and work with and through institutions and audiences to push relational boundaries as far as we can and model what is possible. For our research team and BBC partners this has already been a long evolutionary process and we have worked together over several years.

The Open Archive and the BBC

The first collaborative project – *The Open Archive and the Miners' Strike* (2007/8) began to examine issues of access and the BBC's relationship with audiences and was indirectly prompted by Greg Dyke's 2003 commitment. We wanted to examine the ethical and logistical issues related to a particular section of the BBC's archive dealing with the 1984/5 Miners' Strike. This research focused on the importance of social records and historical representation, and the potential for digital archives to enhance public engagement and civic participation. Using the BBC programme archive as our case study, the project examined issues around the ownership of cultural heritage resources and looked at how institutions, by opening up digital archives in terms of access and engagement, could seek to build democratic public spaces and develop community engagement.[10]

It saw us investigating how the BBC could use the concept of an 'Open Archive' to understand the relationships that audiences might have with content. The project examined historical representations and how the BBC could digitally facilitate audiences' ability to interact with, comment on and contextualise the materials. Significantly, the research focused on how the BBC dealt with its regional audience, demonstrating how regional, rather than national news and historical agendas, could be prioritised to provide audiences with material that could be used to construct and make sense of their own histories and memories of important or sensitive events. The BBC had produced extensive coverage of the strike, which was seen as controversial and attracted great criticism from various sides in the dispute. The project enabled us to bring together groups directly involved or affected by the strike to explore how the event had been memorialised in the BBC Archive. Participants included former miners, retired police officers, women's groups, local history groups and political activists, who were tasked with responding to the content of the BBC archive, re-examining the coverage and challenging the 'official' version of events. Through looking at the potential for redressing misrepresentations, contesting editorial decisions and enriching the archives' content through much fuller contextualisation, the research explored how these communities might take ownership of cultural and historical materials in which they are represented, and how they could use archival sources to give voice to their own stories and construct their own histories.

As part of the findings the team jointly produced a report with a BBC link partner aimed directly at BBC staff. It suggested the best ways of enriching public use of the archives[11]. It advocated adding the perspectives of citizens to existing broadcast records and the promotion of collaborative activities, beyond blog comments and controlled spaces, through digital storytelling and the development of forms of user generated content and creative practices (Popple 2013).

The wish to turn these findings into something tangible formed the basis of a subsequent project, *Fusion* (2008/9). It too focused on the major historical event of the strike and brought together participants' stories through a series of films, under the title "Strike Stories".[12] At that stage the reuse and re-versioning of BBC materials was not possible and instead our group members chose to produce filmed responses to the issues they felt that the original archive failed to address or had been misrepresented.[13] For me this project demonstrated the potential for collaborative working and helped in the identification of future research themes. Above all else it signalled the genuine commitment and desire of our community participants to engage in collaborative research and to take ownership of the cultural resources that represented and framed their communities. As one of our participants noted,

..the footage needs also to be balanced by personal input…by witness accounts. By the voice of people and the opinions of people who were involved. (Focus Group Member 2008)

Citizen *Animateurs* and the Archive

What Tony Ageh, Head of BBC Archive Development and Director of the Digital Public Space, and I drew from the experience of these two projects was the need to think about how to broaden public access to these possibilities, how to create a more open and free space in which exploration and interaction could take place and how to reconceptualise the basis on which these activities are founded. As we reflected and discussed the potential of trying to create a new way of thinking about the relationships between institutions, archives and audiences we were careful to try and avoid seeing digitisation as the immediate solution. What we felt was really at stake, especially in relation the BBC, was the reconceptualization of the audience and the willingness of the BBC to embrace a new model which could have profound consequences for the ways in which it might operate in the future. When we recently discussed the historical nature of the BBC's approach to its audiences Tony noted that:

Our primary relationships with licence fee payers have been essentially a one-way transmission of media to a passive recipient, with a relatively limited amount of 'have your say' commenting, which is strictly moderated and framed within often tight parameters and not really taken into account in subsequent commissioning decisions. This is no longer the default expectation of an acceptable (let alone a

fulfilling) relationship for an ever-increasing proportion of our audiences. (Ageh 2014)

Recognising the historical and traditionally patrician nature of the organisation is key to thinking about how to radically redefine the relationship and examine the potential of partnerships that go beyond the model of broadcaster and viewer or listener, beyond content provider and content consumer. Lord Reith's mission to give the public what the BBC felt it needed rather than what it desired has looked less and less tenable. The passivity of the traditional audience model as purely receptive needs to be challenged. The appetite for a deeper engagement had certainly been demonstrated through our previous research and BBC initiatives like IPlayer marked a sea change in the ways in which audiences could, momentarily at least, archive material for themselves.[14]

The partnership model we began to frame is one based on a recognition of some of these positive steps and is motivated not only by the desire to engage creatively and curatorially with the archive - but out of a recognition of the particular skills and knowledge that resides within each audience member. As Tony stated:

They (the public) gain access, can select material, are trusted to tell others, and us, about what they know, think and feel, and get to use the material to explore, understand and further the causes of the things that matter to them. (Ageh 2014)

It is clear that this can form the basis of a partnership based on an exchange of knowledge and recognition of the flow of expertise across a traditionally impermeable institutional boundary. It is also recognition of the vast challenges that confront the BBC and similar institutions in the long-term management of their archives and in the essential role the public can play:

Our few thousand archivists and researchers and journalists will never be able to capture *all* of the useful metadata about the material that they believe is important, let alone the useful metadata about the 'unimportant' elements of a programme, document, image. The public can - and probably will - provide this info if we invite (and trust) them to do so, using effective and attractive tools and with appropriate (non-financial) reward mechanisms. (Ageh 2014)

We were also keenly aware of the need to keep a balance between the function of the archive - its role as a guardian of historical content - and to set expectations in terms of what each partner can expect from the other. We spent some considerable time trying to develop a concept which would adequately describe the type of partnership relationship we wanted to test and idealised the archive as a cell-like structure with a permeable membrane allowing for the free flow of content, metadata

and creative practices. At this stage an obvious fantasy - but one to which at least aspire.

The model we decided upon is based on the concept of the *animateur* in which audiences can play an increasingly integrated role in many of the fundamental functions of the archive and engage in a range of creative, research and storytelling activities that are no longer limited or constrained by traditional anxieties about the ceding of power and the retention of a lone authoritative voice. The figure of the *animateur*, drawn from the theatrical tradition was, we felt, the best way to describe our thinking in relation to the audience and a new relational paradigm.[15]

As Tony noted in our discussion:

*Every single object, idea, organism in the world has at least one 'fan', for whom it has infinitely more value, meaning, significance than for nearly everyone else. Animateurs can catalyse the interests, creativity and excitement of others around them, often simply through the amount of time and energy they are willing to spend thinking, talking and acting about it. (*Ageh 2014)

The process of animation - of the creative arrangement of materials and resources - seems to fit what we are now trying to achieve through the *Pararchive* project. We want to develop our thinking beyond Reithian concepts of the unidirectional broadcaster and audience, in order to empower the 'citizen *animateur*'- and allow them to become 'connectors', equal partners in collaborative curation, context and creative expression. The figure of the citizen animateur is an unequivocal recognition of the essential importance of the audience as an equal partner in the opening up and creative use of the archive. It has profound consequences for the nature of the relationship between the institution, its content and the external audience and implications for curatorial models, voice and metadata capture. Thinking about distributed and devolved responsibilities of curatorship has been taking place in the museums sector and we are keen to build on these initiatives within the context of the digital archive (Adair, Filene and Koloski (eds.) 2011). The sense that the audience functions as an equal participatory agent in the archive, and has rights and responsibilities as well as sharing in the benefits of access and creative exploration are principles that drive our current research and we want to see if they are realisable. It is about to be tested through the BBC's new *Genome Project* which will invite the public to use the scanned copies of the *Radio Times*, and link and add metadata and corrections in a collaborative exchange.[16]

The model will, we feel not only serve audiences and the communities of which they are a part but has the potential to create new virtual communities of affinity and interest that can strengthen experiences for participants and the resource itself. The notion of community as a more defined expression of audience is also something we are keen to explore.[17]

This is not a model suited to all heritage contexts but one that could certainly be exportable. In trying to realise this aspiration we decided to work together again under the umbrella of the project, wedding the concept of the *animateur* to a digital environment that could facilitate such activities and also them to work across multiple institutional boundaries.[18]

The Pararchive Project

This partnership modelling is now taking place as part of the *Pararchive* project. We are building interactive environments that will explore and then extend existing public-institutional relationships. Founded on the principles of collaborative research we are working with a range of communities to explore the needs of public audiences in relation to web orchestration, to create community research capacity and to pool solutions to problems of accessibility and functionality raised directly by the communities themselves.[19]

The project is designed to produce a new open digital resource that will allow users to harvest existing online archival sources and combine them with their own films, photographs and ephemera as a means of digital storytelling and enabling community research. The resource will be a single 'go-to' space for online research and collaboration in the face of burgeoning and often diverse opportunities to use online archives. Unlike existing platforms it will allow users to organise and link materials across all online sources in one place and act as a single access point based on the integration of public archives with intuitive storytelling tools providing a solution to the problems of harnessing and channelling online community research. We want *Pararchive* to become a repository of both personal and institutional resources researched, co-designed and evaluated by its users. Through our research we are addressing crucial issues related to the idea of open digital space, community use of cultural assets, self-representation and the potential to build new online communities. *Pararchive* will avoid the IP issues that have limited previous attempts to co-ordinate and re-use online materials through its strategy of hosting content links rather than digital content.[20] In the face of a growing post-scarcity environment communities are encountering real barriers to organising and connecting to resources and each other. *Pararchive* represents a vitally important resource in this context and will be freely available to all communities. We want it to act as a means of managing the rapidly changing digital heritage landscape and the resource is designed to build capacity through reflecting on the potential for developing expertise, confidence and autonomy in line with the concept of the *animateur*.

The resource will, for example, provide content links, initial narrative threads and thematic and geo-location tools to encourage connectivity and community identification It will allow existing and emergent communities to represent themselves and link them with content providers - archives, museums, galleries and news organisations. Such organisations increasingly 'open' approach to collaborative

engagement can thus be fully tested by community-led research. Project members, creative professionals and cultural institutions are working with communities in the design and co-development of new research that ensures effective and on-going relevance and impact. We want the resource to exist in two formats; one a centrally hosted open version free to all users and also as a takeaway open-source tool that community, education and public groups can use for specific research purposes and self-host.

The rationale for this project is the growing need for co-creating a genuinely open public digital space in which communities (both actual and virtual) can use cultural heritage resources as a means of engaging in self-empowerment activities, democratic exchange and civic participation. For the first time the digital tools at our disposal offer to facilitate such activities and connect communities with each other and burgeoning collections of digitised cultural assets. The liberation of content by major cultural institutions coupled with increasing online access has created a context in which this is now possible. Increasingly audiences are invited to participate through digital interfaces, use apps and contribute their own experiences and expertise to enrich institutional and commercial collections. Commercial genealogy sites like *Ancestry*[21] invite users to engage in guided research whilst institutional projects such as the Imperial War Museum's *War Story*[22] invites users to contribute memories of the Afghanistan conflict. Both are framed on behalf of users and controlled and augmented, and in the latter case, corporately funded by Boeing Defence Limited. Whether commercial or institutional they are hosted within controlled spaces. More open forms do exist in the realms of digital storytelling-platforms like *Cowbird* [23]that encourage the development of communities and have a freer architecture through which users can express themselves. *History Pin* is another more open example which invites users to pin and post historic materials and demonstrates the potential for co-ordinated and communal activity.[24] However, both are severely limited by the architectures they impose on the nature of community activity, and the possibilities for creating personal and community assets. Both are, however, resources that can be linked to and through *Pararchive*.

What we feel is now needed to cope with the consequences of a post-scarcity digital culture is the creation of an open and community driven digital space and our research examines the democratic nature and consequences of building one. The control of access and action within such a digital domain is central to what the idea of democratic space might be. Increasingly the problem is being framed through the concept of the *Invited* and the *Open* space. The 2008 Demos report *Democratising Engagement* discusses the growing potential of the invited space – something increasingly located in the digital domain – and links its various emergent iterations to the increased potential to engage and enfranchise citizens and involve them in the democratic process. As Cornwall notes: 'The expansion of the participatory sphere represents an opportunity for democratising citizen engagement' (Cornwall 2008:37). A compelling case is made for the development of the invited space in which participation and collaboration go hand in hand. However, realising the potential of

the 'invited' space in archives or museums has proven hard to achieve (Lynch and Alberti 2010). There is a widely recognised danger that the institutional voice delimits the potential for expression and discourse (Lynch 2011). The space - whether web based or material - becomes part of the apparatus of the institution.

What our research sets out to do is to consider if a democratic community space can be co-created, designed and built, and test its functionality through a series of community generated research projects.

The project will produce a range of tangible assets of benefit to a broad audience of users, researchers, cultural producers and heritage institutions. The primary asset will be the open source *Pararchive* platform which will be freely available to all users as a central resource and also as a package that users can self-host to run their own projects and community activities. Users will also be able to link these satellite projects back to broader communities via the central resource and thus connect and collaborate beyond their immediate research circle. This first phase of work, now complete, involved communities, designers and technicians working together through a *Community Technology Lab* project to identify user needs, functionality and model the platform before it is built. The Labs resulted in the production of the *Pararchive* specification and was also the process through which the research questions relating to the issues for communities were developed and in which each of the four community partners began to identify and design their own research projects to be tested through the Beta resource. These groups were facilitated by three specialist technology developers who were employed to support community partners throughout the research.

Using the specification the technology team is now working on phase two of the process of constructing a prototype of the resource and evaluating its usability in conjunction with community users and a team of academic researchers. A web architect and developer are now employed to build and augment the prototype in liaison with groups and researchers. All participants have been involved in regular technical explorations of the evolving platform functions as they progress to ensure maximum community impact and ownership of the processes. This development takes place in conjunction with the continued design of the community research projects and work with potential and actual content providers to assess questions of compatibility, copyright and benefit.

Phase three will involve testing the Beta version of the platform with the four communities and running their own projects through the platform. It will also be the period in which the technical evaluation process begins and work on the broad research questions is undertaken by the academic researchers.

Phase four is the evaluative and reflective stage of the project and will involve all participants in a series of focus groups, interviews and technical evaluation sessions aimed at evaluating community experiences, the effectiveness of the research undertaken and a final re-design of the platform before its public launch

Along with the BBC the Science Museum Group is supporting the project through the provision of content and expertise and will also be part of the reflexive research into the benefits and experiences of their sector in relation to community activity.[25] Each has a specific perspective and interest in the proposed project centred on their willingness and desire to work more closely and collaboratively with public audiences and to consider the nature of their relationships to those audiences.

Pararchive and the BBC

The BBC is particularly concerned with issues of access, the educational and creative use of digital archival sources and its relationship with audiences. Now that all of our partner groups are up and working and starting to develop a real sense of the research projects they want to undertake a number of questions are already emerging. They are helping us to frame the notion of the *animateur* and to define the ways in which audiences can become part of a new relationship with such institutions through testing the boundaries of collaborative and creative practices.

One of the key issues for the project is that, as with many large archival repositories, our community partners do not always have a full understanding of what an archive/collection may contain, what constraints - such as conservation or donor permissions - pertain, what its copyright status is, what format it is in and so on. (This knowledge gap also applies to many institutions as well.) So, what we are beginning to address is thinking through and modelling the ways in which interactions take place and the issues we need to address to develop the role of the *animateur* in relation to the BBC's archive. The architectures and traditions of access and rights, creative potential and reward for both partners are our key focus. The digital tools and approaches that will emerge as part of the broader project that can facilitate this are a longer term issue. We want to ensure that the concept and approach is sufficiently developed before we develop the digital components. So for example we have been working on some basic questions about how audiences might engage with archival institutions as a set of generic stages and will then apply this to the BBC's particular situation. The iterative approach we have adopted, will, we feel, provide us with the best opportunities to solve the many problems and issues we have already identified and allow solutions to be properly designed and tested. In an interview based on our discussions Tony and I explored what the project meant specifically for the BBC and what we hoped to achieve as a consequence:

What does the Pararchive project mean for the BBC?

It offers an opportunity for the BBC to learn what actually happens - in terms of process > interaction > outcome - when 'community-defined' collections of archive holdings are made available to individuals and groups who have an emotional / historic / intellectual / social stake in the material that they are able to access.

It means that BBC archive is used outside of the set of purposes for which it was originally envisaged by people who would not normally be able to access it, giving a wider, independent practical assessment of the value / utility / purpose of the BBC Archive

It allows the above to happen in a controlled environment, where the process can be studied and analysed as well as the output and outcomes, and for these insights to be shared with The BBC and, perhaps more importantly, with others to the benefit of future projects and initiatives

What does the BBC hope to discover as a result?

It hopes to learn from the above, and to discover additional and new insights in to its archive, e.g. in the form of enhanced metadata, and to discover exemplar use-cases from actual usage.

It hopes to have made available to it a set of innovative software tools and components that have been developed by the Pararchive project for potential reuse in other BBC or 'Digital Public Space' projects, services, and initiatives.

It hopes to increase public and opinion-former acknowledgement and awareness of the archive as a priceless resource to disparate and diverse communities, with as-yet-unknown uses and values which can only be discovered when people have real access to the material.

What do you see as the key challenges?

Finding routes to release material in a manner that means it can be acted upon by a sufficient number of people in an unrestrictive manner

Defining the process and protocols to 'accession' additional and enhanced metadata back in to BBC systems, and the processes for this additional metadata to be valued and validated by other BBC and partner users

Using the Pararchive project as a pathfinder that 'removes friction and bureaucracy' making it easier for other such projects to work with the BBC and partners in the future.

We are now beginning to face some of these challenges in relation to work taking place with our community research partners and over the next year we will work with the BBC to test our partnership model and examine what creative and intellectual collaboration really looks like. We don't expect to develop solutions to all the key

challenges nor do we think that we will be able to overcome some of the key barriers to creating the citizen *animateur* - but we do hope that the process will help identify key issues and problems for further research. The process is much longer than this individual research programme, and has consequences across a very wide sector of publics and institutions- but the BBC component is essential in testing and establishing the viability of such an approach. By March 2015 we will launch the first iteration of *Pararchive* as an open source platform which we hope will draw in other partners and help us develop the process further. We see this as a considered and long-term approach which allows for the time and space in which these aspirations might be collectively realised and the digital tools deployed are sustainable and scalable for use across the sector. The process will be, we hope, a major step in giving the BBC audience what it wants in relation to the Archive and not what Lord Reith might have said - what it needs.

Conclusion

 The current funding situation is certainly difficult and we are limited and constrained by some of the material conditions of archiving, rapid and fluctuating shifts in the technologies of audio visual production and conservation, IP issues and because of rising public expectation. Rushing to potentially radical technological solutions afforded by the increasing range of digital tools and born digital content is probably the last thing we should do. We are in a period of transition in which we are being forced to re-consider practices and principles and the choices we make now, and those we have already made since the introduction of digital technologies, could have catastrophic consequences for the future if we do not pause to consider them and provide a necessary research focus. Opportunities that were missed in the past and historical precedents should not overshadow what we are poised to achieve in the next few years and our hope is that the *Pararchive* project can go some way to setting the agenda and demonstrating the benefits of working with the broadest possible coalitions to create open resources and embed collaborative partnership.

Author Biography

I am Deputy Head of the School of Media and Communication at Leeds University and lead investigator on the Pararchive project. I have become increasingly interested in the role that digital archives can play in terms of empowerment and capacity building within the communities they represent. Over a number of projects I have explored the potential for using archival sources and structures as a basis for creative practice and digital storytelling. I am also interested in the potential for these activities to take place in 'open space' - beyond the context of the institution. I have worked with the BBC and AHRC on two previous projects dealing with the BBC's archive of the 1984/85 Miners' Strike and worked with mining and police communities to examine how they could use the archive to make sense of their

experiences and tell their stories in relation to these sources and representations. I teach photography and am editor of the journal Early Popular Visual Culture.

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[1] www.pararchive.com / http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/research/research-projects/pararchive-

[2] See http://www.digitalheritage.leeds.ac.uk/

[3] The use of the concept of the 'open archive' is becoming widely used, but is used in broad aspirational terms rather than something that is deeply contingent.

[4] In Europe the first steps were taken through the Europeana gateway (http://www.europeana.eu/) and in the UK the new BBC-led Digital Public Space (DPS) launched its first public facing venture, an Arts and Culture pilot called 'The Space', (www.thespace.org) in collaboration with Arts Council England and the BFI, in May 2012. Whilst the Space represents a very welcome first step on what all partners recognise is a very long road its content is predominantly 'targeted' to an audience in a traditional reception paradigm and remains overlaid by a set of institutional voices and made available through managed gateways and architectural processes.

[5] Many of our community partners don't have experience of the constraints of third party rights for example, and see the institution as the barrier rather than the law. As one of our outputs we are developing a series of tool kits for communities which will include one on copyright and copyright clearance. The BBC is collaborating on this and we are currently testing different models.

[6] The idea of the *New Reithians* as a means of characterising future BBC audiences was something that Tony Ageh suggested and hence the title of the paper. It is certainly not a rejection of all Reithian concepts but recognition that audiences are central to the BBC's future and have the right to play a major part in its activities as well as holding the organisation to account.

[7] This is certainly the case in relation to the work undertaken by Tony Ageh and his team in BBC Archive Development. See http://www.illuminationsmedia.co.uk/2013/09/nobody-cares-return-to-reading/

[8] http://www.era.org.uk/

[9] Box of Broadcasts allows limited creative possibilities; users can produce compilations and perform basic editing. http://bobnational.net/

[10] Details of both projects can be found here: http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/research/research-projects/4029-2/

[11] The BBC link partner was Heather Powell, former head of BBC Information and Archives North. You can read the report at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/knowledgeexchange/leeds.pdf

[12] The *Strike Stories* films are available here: http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/research/research-projects/4029-2/strike-stories-films/

[13] We are making materials available to our community groups through BoB, using their status as co-researchers and looking at rights models and licensing agreements.

[14] IPlayer allows the public to download and retain programmes for a 30 day period.

[15] The *animateur* has a long standing central role in the production of the theatrical performance – in the animation of content and the creation of new works. It is a proactive and directive identity and is located in an empowering sense of agency. I wanted to use a concept that spoke to the potential agency of the audience and the directive possibilities we are testing through the *Pararchive* project. As a term it originated in mid-19th century France.

[16] http://www.bbc.co.uk/ariel/23285431

[17] Evidence of this potential can be found in existing BBC project around the World Service Archive. http://worldservice.prototyping.bbc.co.uk/

[18] We are working with Jake Berger, Head of Technology and Distribution for the DPS, to ensure a compatibility of architectures and APIs across the BBC and other cultural institutions, especially those who are part of the Digital Public Space initiative.
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/inform/inform36/DigitalPublicSpace.html#.U5885_mwJcQ

¹⁹ Full details of all our partner communities can be found at:
http://pararchive.com/groups/

²⁰ See recent news on open linking: http://pararchive.com/2014/02/16/good-news-for-pararchive-and-digital-storytellers-eu-says-yes-to-open-linking/

²¹ http://www.ancestry.co.uk/

²² http://www.iwm.org.uk/corporate/projects-partnerships/war-story

²³ http://cowbird.com/

²⁴ http://www.historypin.com/

²⁵ The Science Museum Group is focusing on the role of heritage collections within communities, the benefits of collaborative research and ideas of regional and community identity in relation to their collections and museums.