Internet Art and the Archive

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Abstract

Internet art is ephemeral by nature and several initiatives have been taken to preserve it for the future. Apart from formal archives holding art of this kind, there are also artworks which exist outside these web based institutions. In what way can they be regarded as archived? In the article, criteria are suggested which can be used to judge whether an artwork is active or archived and these criteria are applied in the analysis of twelve different artworks. Different kinds of dating are important for how the status of a work is perceived by the visitor. The concepts of explicit and implicit archiving are used to characterize archiving of Internet art, where works can be "dead" and "alive" at the same time.

Keywords

internet art; implicit archiving; explicit archiving; web archiving

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album art has never been all good. Far from it. I remember album covers like this and this and these being the norm. And then there’s … well you’ve probably seen these jaw-dropping monstrosities from the distant past…. Maybe the truly awful album cover is as rare a treasure as the truly great one. You can do your own cultural anthropology of the album cover, from 2018’s era of eye candy glamor, and the recent creative—and not-so-creative—repurposing of the past, to the genuine articles from the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s at the Cover Art Archive, a joint project of the Internet Archive and MusicBrainz, an "open music encyclopedia that collects music metadata and makes it available to the public."