

Inputs & Feedback on Workshop

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Goals of Discussion

- Provide feedback on the proposal for a Workshop on Collecting Historical Software
- Provide input on selected questions in advance of the workshop
- The Workshop in Brief
 - to gather a small group of leading thinkers and practitioners in this area
 - to help shape the strategic direction and practical next steps for long-term software collection and preservation efforts, particularly at CHM but also elsewhere
 - May 5 2006, all participant must present opinions on selected set of subjects
 - Organizing committee: Lee Courtney, Henry Lowood, Paul McJones, Bernard Peuto, Len Shustek, Dag Spicer, Kirsten Tashev

Multiple Views of Reality

- The attic and the Parlor:
 - The attic: a broad, community-based effort to collect for preservation with little or no curatorial/interpretive layer
 - The Parlor: A more narrowly-focused effort to collect, preserve *and present* the more seminal instances of software as coherent, scholarly artifacts available for interrogation and display
- The actors:
 - It is tempting to be simplistic and declare:
 - that parlors are created by professionals within institutions,
 - attics are assembled by enthusiastic and independent amateurs
 - In fact this is neither true nor desirable.

A Complex Set of Factors

	Attic	Parlor	Representative volunteer driven sites
Focus	Broad based	Narrow focus	Sites are typically focused, multiple sites create a very broad base
Curation	None	Critical	Significant amount
Presentation	None	Critical	From small to an integral part
Community	Large Volunteer Community	Smaller professional staff	Large group of technically expert volunteers
Institution, Resources	Private volunteer & Museum initiatives	Institution like museum	Few passionate volunteers
Quality or expertise		Supposed to be of quality	Technical expertise

Questions and Selected Focus

- What is the structure of, and what are the arguments for, the Attic?
- What is the structure of, and what are the arguments for, the Parlor?
- Which notion is a better metaphor for how to put together a collection now?
 - Should we just try to create a repository for collectors to deposit bits, or do we focus on carefully crafted projects?
 - What is the balance of attic and parlor?
 - Is it necessary/reasonable/possible to do both?
- Who does the work?
 - What roles should/can institutions like CHM (ACM, IEEE, etc) play?
 - What roles should/can individuals play?
 - What roles should/can software companies play?
 - If collecting software is a distributed (“open source”) activity,
 - How are rules established for selection, standards, cataloging, etc.?
 - How is quality maintained?

More Questions

- In the year 2050, what should the software archive covering the era from 1950 to 2000 look like?
 - What can we do now to create a foundation for such an archive?
- What existing collections are endangered and could be rescued?
 - How do we conduct these rescue operations?
- How do we manage the absorption of existing attics and parlors into ours?
 - (There are organizational as well as technical versions of this question.)
- How do we encourage and organize more informal/amateur collecting activity?

More Questions

- Is software collecting an activity where collaboration among multiple institutions is helpful, or would the coordination overhead impede progress?
- Do we need to create a new institution or independent initiative to succeed, or would that be counter-productive?
- Who are likely collaborators? If CHM were to take the lead in creating a network of institutional collaborators right now, who would they be?
- How do we ensure international participation?
- What is your advice to CHM?
- What role would you like to play?
- What are the next steps?

A Request for Feedback

- Free wheeling discussion today
- More detailed feedback in the next weeks
- Input to the workshop by answering questions.
- Thanks from the committee