

Received Feedback on Workshop

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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.

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?

Received Feedback

- Attic and Parlor feedback1:
 - (1) Lookin' good
 - (2) No reason to favor either approach.
 - What is actually done (at least by volunteers) will depend on the subject matter and the personal preferences of the volunteer. The style of work will be of less interest to CHM than its **quality**.
- Attic and Parlor feedback2:
 - 1. "Who does the work? Better said, "Who do we want to participate? Who are our collaborators?"
 - 2. "How are rules established...quality maintained?" Foremost, don't reinvent the wheel; see what has been done and try to streamline it rather than add complexity.
 - 3. "What should the software archive...look like?" Identify universally recognized classes of SW, name as many examples of each as you can, then provide as much actual code/literature/documentation/implementation as you can acquire.
 - 4. "What collections...can be rescued?" Collectors realize on their (figurative) death beds that they should have taken steps to preserve their treasures. I believe many would willingly surrender these items to an organization that would recognize them as the donors, give assurances of long term preservation, and promise "visitation rights."
 - 5. "How do we manage [this]?" Have collectors describe the contents of their gifts in terms they will later recognize, and preserve these descriptions; have enough shelf space to accommodate what you accept; get it at least superficially cataloged immediately; make this catalog available to the world immediately; help collectors offer to other worthy repositories what you can't accept; don't lose track of where things came from and where they went.
 - 6. "How do we encourage...amateur collecting activity?" Publish human interest stories about successful collectors.
 - 7. "...collaboration among multiple institutions..." Such a "consortium" is vital. And it is manageable through the rules mentioned in (2.) and the cataloging mentioned in (5.).
 - 8. "...international participation?" Get holdings, however new and raw, onto the Internet and into whatever native languages deemed appropriate. Meanwhile, search for similar undertakings and encourage collaboration (in terms such as those in (4.))

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