

Call for proposals for an issue of the journal *Le Temps des Médias*
(<https://www.cairn.info/revue-le-temps-des-medias.htm?contenu=liste-numeros>)

STORAGE

Edited by Katharina Niemeyer and Valérie Schafer

Although the topics of memory and archives have given rise to considerable cross-disciplinary interest, the issue of storage – of media content, information, data, documents and objects, as well as the use of stored content – has received less attention. In particular, and more specifically in French speaking scholarly work, research has rarely viewed the question of storage in conjunction with the related long-term practices.

This special issue therefore intends to explore three strands – the storage of media content, storage media, and the use of stored content– and links between them. Whether on an individual or collective, professional or institutional level, we want to investigate these questions from a long-term media history perspective, going back for example to the republication of articles in gazettes, the emergence of news agencies in the 19th century, Scott de Martinville’s phonograph, the paleophone invented by Cros – even the introduction of the legal deposit by French King Francis I and the volumen and codex (Laguës, Beaudoin and Chapoutier, 2017). The related issues of flows and persistence also merit analysis (Merzeau, 2009).

The history of storage is often limited to a linear, technical genealogy of storage media – and one that remains patchy. Recent research has looked at pre-digital storage (Priestley and Haigh in Haigh, 2019) and the transition from analogue to digital methods (punched tape, magnetic drum, cathode ray tube). There is also a tendency to focus on recent history, despite the fact that the archiving of the “self”, the shoebox filled with private documents (Van Dick, 2005) and many other practices encourage us to go back further, to pre-digital or even pre-contemporary periods. Moreover, the translation into French (Parrika, 2017) of *What is media archeology?* (Parrika, 2013) demonstrates the value and importance of alternative approaches (and their international circulation) that complement these technical, linear, innovation-centred genealogies (Pelé and Pisano, 2016; Thibault and Trudel, 2015). The approaches and theories – now known as media archaeology – that emerged in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s within cultural and technical science (Kittler, 1985), and also in France with mediology, charted a path between the notions of “organised matter” and “materialised organisation” (Debray, 1991; Merzeau, 2006). Although they have encouraged new perspectives, as yet they have generally failed to explore private, personal practices and/or the emotions caught up in “storage media” and their links with our memories (Jacques, 2020; Magaouda and Minniti, 2019). This journal issue therefore intends to explore the question of storage from a socio-technical perspective, in particular from the angle of media practices (Kirschenbaum, 2008; Paci, 2015), in a bid to shed new light on the topic via a use-based approach, focusing on how stored content (images, audio footage, information and codes) is handled, retooled, improved, intermediated and recycled.

While undoubtedly sometimes a trivial activity, in many respects the storage and “mnemonic reactivation” of content raise key issues that help us understand how society relates to media production, information and data, while also clarifying our own relationship with memory and historiography. From the practice of storing our own data on a USB drive, external disk or “cloud” to the storage of information by organisations and institutions for vital economic, geopolitical and legal reasons, the question of storage encompasses both individual and collective, “amateur” and professional practices.

What interests us here is the transformation or co-existence of these practices over time (from juke boxes to audio cassettes to MP3s, from VHS to VOD, not forgetting DVDs and Blu-rays, from floppy disks and CD-Roms to the cloud), their ever-increasing capacities, the broadening notion of heritage and its digital forms (Bachimont, 2017; Treleani, 2017), the recycling of content (collage, redistribution, mashup, etc.) and the question of obsolescence (information transfer and also emulation and data loss).

This special issue encourages a long-term perspective. It welcomes proposals that fall within the following broad areas (or look at a subject linking them):

(1) Media and storage: theoretical and historiographical approaches

- Media archaeology, media philosophy, studies on intermediality, memory or mediology as theories or methods that shine a light on forgotten or disregarded storage media by linking them to questions related to storage, practices and designers
- Theoretical reflections on society’s relationship with storage, taking particular account of the (sometimes hidden) challenges of archiving, heritagisation and data management

(2) Storage of media content

- Storage practices (mnemonics) and uses and their development over time (family photographs, collections of objects, the transition between and (simultaneous) use of analogue and computer storage, etc.)
- The social, technical and economic history of specific storage media (from phonograph cylinders, audio and video cassettes, microfilms, punched cards and magnetic tape to data centres, including, for example, CD-Roms, USB drives, hard disks, scanners, MP3, etc.), whether individually or comparatively
- Storage and archiving of media material (the history of institutions like the French National Audiovisual Institute (INA); storing music on audio cassettes, in MP3 format, etc.; storing home videos, etc.)
- Historical case studies about information storage ecosystems

(3) Production and use of stored content and information

- Our emotional bond with storage as a means of saving and sharing information, and also as a skill, a form of amateur and professional *bricolage*
- Reusing stored media content (rebroadcasting programmes, reusing archive images, remixing, collage, mashups, etc.)

- Using stored information (from the early days of the press to data journalism)
- The development of professions and professionals in the area of information storage

Please send an abstract of 500 to 650 words, together with a title, a short bibliography and a biography (not included in the word count), jointly to

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Timetable

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Submission of articles (35,000 characters): by early June 2021

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