

9 Archiving the Databody: Human and Nonhuman Agency in the Documents of Erkki Kurenniemi

Geoff Cox, Nicolas Malevé, and Michael Murtaugh

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Will she (either of them) share the love of pornography? Or at least, art? I shall present myself to both of them as a geniality self-flagellat%n [sic] machine. Just one bottle tonight, ok? I shall invite them on my journey of change, showing the way ahead. Immortality. I will let them sniff and sneak through my archives.

The archive has increasingly become to be understood as a cultural paradigm, transfiguring notions of collective memory and the complexities of historical and temporal processes. This essay seeks to align some of these ideas with computational processes through Constant's (*Preliminary Work*) *Toward an Online Archive*, a set of (ongoing) experimental explorations of the archive of Erkki Kurenniemi that probes the vast amount of diverse materials with a variety of machinic processes.¹ The work is extensively documented in a logbook² and begins with an entry that makes reference to Kurenniemi's own invitation to "sniff and sneak through my archives," from his (electronic) diary entry of 1996.

Active Archives

Preliminary Work builds on the ongoing *Active Archives* project initiated in 2006 by Brussels-based art and media collective Constant (of which Malevé and Murtaugh are members), which engages the politics of open data and introduces core values associated with free software development related to the decentralization of resources and the ownership of infrastructures.³ Put simply, to Constant, archives are understood as a collection of material that is not merely readable but also writable and executable, and thus subject to certain ethical standards.⁴ Their working approach is not to follow standardized archiving procedures of ordering and classifying, but to offer a series of speculations on the specific qualities of the materials by running computer programs. Nor is this reducible to something like Google's PageRank algorithm that makes sense of the vast archive of the Internet in distorted ways to "reify" knowledge and make sure