



Who owns cultural heritage?

Oil on canvas, jokes via Instagram

In an increasingly digital landscape, what can Classical Art Memes, a unique form of remixed cultural heritage content, tell us about how society views cultural heritage and ideas of ownership?

The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation

Exploring Data Curation in the GLAM sector through Classical Art Memes

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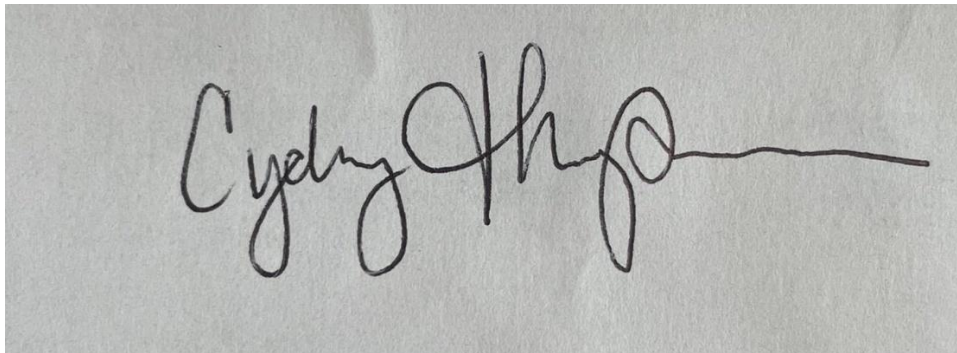
Declaration

I declare that this research has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

I agree to deposit this dissertation in the University's open access institutional repository or allow the Library to do so on my behalf, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.

I consent to the examiner retaining this dissertation beyond the examining period, should they so wish (EU GDPR May 2018).

Signed (September 30, 2024):

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored, textured background. The signature is written in a cursive style, starting with a large 'C' and ending with a long horizontal line.

Summary

This interdisciplinary dissertation explores the evolution of Walter Benjamin's aura through the lens of Classical Art Memes (CAMs), a unique style of internet meme, which recontextualises digitised works of art with colloquial language. Questions surrounding the creation and dissemination of CAMs, ranging from the application of copyright to the function of digital platforms, allow for a rich body of research that can be applied to the development of best practices in the GLAM sector and for digital content creators. This research aims to define the relationship between digital content creators and the GLAM sector by examining CAMs, which act as a connection point between two very different sets of goals, ideals, and platforms. CAMs highlight how these two bodies create, disseminate, and communicate their content online. Using a mixed methods approach, this dissertation collected three datasets: The first dataset consists of available documentation regarding digitised cultural heritage material, copyright, and licensing from GLAM sector websites. The second dataset consists of CAMs collected from popular Instagram accounts. The third dataset consists of ten interviews with digital content creators who specialise in the creation of CAMs. These datasets were analysed through the lens of the FAIR Data Principles (which states that in order for data to be considered "open access," it needs to be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable). By applying technical and cultural readings of the FAIR Data Principles, this dissertation illuminates gaps in how culture is created and shared online.

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Glossary of acronyms

A few key phrases have been shortened into acronyms in order to streamline the text. Please note that these acronyms will be explained again in context:

AGLS—Australian Government Legal Service

AHD—Authorised Heritage Discourse

AMC—@artmemescentral

API—Application Programming Interface

ARTIC—Art Institute of Chicago

C2PA—Coalition for Content Provenance and Authority

CAM—Classical art meme

CARE—Collective Benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics

CC—Creative Commons

CR—Content Credentials

DAM—@depressedartmemes

DCC—Digital content creator

FAIR—Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable

GDPR—General Data Protection Regulations

GLAM—Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums

IIIF—International Image Interoperability Framework

IP—Intellectual Property

LACMA—Los Angeles County Museum of Art

NGL—National Gallery in London

NMA—National Museum of Australia

OA—Open Access

PD—Public Domain

PH—@punkhistory

PID—Persistent Identifier

PM—Paris Musées

R&R—Rights and Reproductions

Glossary of terminology

A few key words and phrases need to be defined within the context of this dissertation, as they will be used in this research in very specific ways. Please note that these definitions will be supplied again in context:

Adaptation vs. Appropriation: Adaptation is the “recombination of cultural material and the operation at work in intertextual remodelling,”¹ and “implies a relationship” with the source material² while appropriation is the “act of taking something for your own use without permission,”³ and implies a move away from the source “into a wholly new cultural product.”⁴

Algorithm: A computer program that defines a series of steps that involve operating on data to produce some outcome.⁵ In modern technology, algorithms play a key role in shaping the online experience, especially on social media, where algorithmic ranking determines what posts are seen.⁶

Aura: The ephemeral thing that makes a work of art uniquely itself, or the sacred in a work of art. It captures the mystical and holy, and for Benjamin, is about emancipating art from religion⁷—this is done through politics, allowing art to be freed from its “parasitic subservience to ritual,”⁸ and is achieved through technological reproduction. This reproduction causes the aura/authenticity to be lost but allows for art that is designed for reproducibility and for “freedom and play.”⁹

Classical Art Memes: An internet meme template defined by the source content, which is usually derived from ‘classical art,’ or art from Western antiquity that is influenced by Greek and Roman stylistic choices.¹⁰ As the style was inspired by the Facebook account “Classical Art Memes Official,” the name has become synonymous with art memes generally, even if the art depicted is not strictly classical.

Classical art: “classical” art, or art from Western antiquity that is influenced by Greek and Roman stylistic choices.¹¹

Creation process vs. creative process: Within the context of this dissertation, the phrase “creation process” is focused on the act of creating data, such as the assignation of metadata, for example, as opposed to the artistic choices made within the process of creation, such as colours in a painting, which is known as the “creative process.”

Digital content creator: Within the context of this dissertation, the phrase “digital content creator” (DCC) will specifically refer to someone who creates CAMs to be shared online.

Digital Platforms: Gillespie defines digital platforms as “sites and services that host public expression, store it on and serve it up from the cloud, organise access to it through search and recommendation, or install it onto mobile devices.”¹²

Digitised cultural heritage materials vs. Base content: This dissertation will refer to digital reproductions of works of art which have not been remixed as “digitised cultural

heritage material,” while digital reproductions of works of art which have been remixed will be referred to as “base content.”

GLAM+ institutions: The term “GLAM+ institutions,” refers to the industry term “GLAM,” which stands for Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums, with the + referring to other organisations that house works of art and their digital facsimiles, such as digital repositories and auction houses. Institutions that house art, like those listed above, will be referred to as GLAM+ institutions moving forward

Internet meme: An “internet meme” simply put, is a digitally mediated piece of communication.¹³ It can also be defined by three main characteristics according to Limor Shifman:

- (a) A group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance;
- (b) that were created with awareness of each other, and
- (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the internet by many users.¹⁴

Internet memes vs. Classical art memes: Within the context of this dissertation, the phrase “internet meme(s)” will refer to any kind of internet meme that does not contain “classical art” of any kind. The phrase “classical art memes,” then, will refer to internet memes which do contain “classical art.”

Juxtaposition: This is the key form of humour within the genre of CAMs, with the antiquated image and the modern language used being at odds with one another in a striking and often absurd way.¹⁵ Piata suggests that the root of the humour of CAMs is stylistic incongruity, a type of juxtaposition which is predicated on the mixing of varieties, one which is unexpected or unconventional.¹⁶

Low vs. high culture: Low culture is considered to be culture of common people, traditionally viewed with a negative connotation, as it applies to non-elites and the lower classes. Low culture can often be considered less than, or crass, despite its universal popularity, likely due to the accessible nature of appealing to those without special privilege or knowledge. High culture is considered to be culture of the elites and upper classes, traditionally viewed with a positive connotation. High culture can often be considered exclusive and refined, due to the need for special knowledge or privilege to fully comprehend it. This view hinges on high culture, to a degree, being inaccessible.¹⁷

Meme template: Commonly used patterns, elements, or ideas that can be remixed into a new internet meme.¹⁸ Examples include the Success Kid, The Reluctant Bride, and Bayeaux Tapestry internet memes.¹⁹

Open data vs. open science vs. open access: The FAIR Principles and their adoption are part of a larger movement for “open data” which has also been referred to as “Open Access,” or “Open Science,” depending on the data being made “open.”²⁰ This dissertation will refer to this movement as “Open Access” (OA). This movement, which started in the 1990s, aims to promote free/accessible research and has had a profound

impact not only on the field of academia and academic research, but also in non-academic contexts, including GLAM+ institutions, many of which have embraced a variety of the tenets of OA.²¹

Open Knowledge: The Open Knowledge Foundation defines “open knowledge” as any “content, information or data that people are free to use, re-use and redistribute—without any legal, technological or social restriction,” and goes on to lay out the main characteristics of “openness” as:

- Availability and access: the data must be available as a whole and at no more than a reasonable reproduction cost, preferably by downloading over the internet. The data must also be available in a convenient and modifiable form.
- Reuse and redistribution: the data must be provided under terms that permit reuse and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets. The data must be machine-readable.
- Universal participation: everyone must be able to use, reuse, and redistribute — there should be no discrimination against fields of endeavour or against persons or groups. For example, ‘non-commercial’ restrictions that would prevent ‘commercial’ use, or restrictions of use for certain purposes (e.g. only in education), are not allowed.²²

Recombinant appropriation: Recombinant appropriation is a style of adaptation and type of remixing which combines multiple forms of cultural material without the consent/knowledge of the original creators, creating one new complex transmission.²³

Recontextualised: reframed in contemporary terms.

Remixing: Remixing, a style of mimetic repackaging, is a newer cultural practice which developed alongside digital technologies in the end of the twentieth century.²⁴

Use vs. Reuse: Within the context of this dissertation, the word “use” will refer to interactions that happen with a digital object within a digital repository. The word “reuse” will refer to any kind of interaction with the same content outside of a digital repository, such as making a CAM. This delineation is sourced from O’Gara et al.’s work with GLAM+ institution staff trying to define terms like these within their own practice.²⁵

Utilisation: Within the context of this dissertation, the word “utilise” or “utilisation” will refer to the process of enabling the use and reuse of cultural heritage materials. In this context, enabling its use refers to being findable online and having licensing that enables use and reuse, including alterations by third parties.²⁶ This definition is sourced from Wiedemann et al.’s work with GLAM+ institutions regarding their efforts to enable use and reuse of digitised cultural heritage materials.

Notes

¹ Eckart Voigts, “Memes and Recombinant Appropriation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, 2017, 287, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199331000.013.16>.

² Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 35.

³ “Appropriation, n.,” in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, accessed September 12, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/appropriation_n.

⁴ Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 35.

⁵ Tarleton Gillespie, “The Relevance of Algorithms,” in *Media Technologies* (MIT Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262525374.003.0009>.

⁶ Kelley Cotter, “Playing the Visibility Game: How Digital Influencers and Algorithms Negotiate Influence on Instagram,” *New Media & Society* 21, no. 4 (April 1, 2019): 896, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818815684>.

⁷ Žarko Paić, “Aura, Technology, and the Work of Art in Walter Benjamin,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Image Studies*, ed. Krešimir Purgar (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 276, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-71830-5_16.

⁸ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 52.

⁹ Paić, “Aura, Technology, and the Work of Art in Walter Benjamin,” 275.

¹⁰ Verity Platt, “The Matter of Classical Art History,” *Daedalus* 145, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 69–78, https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00377.

¹¹ Platt.

¹² Tarleton Gillespie, “Governance of and by Platforms,” in *SAGE Handbook of Social Media*, ed. Jean Burgess, Thomas Poell, and Alice E. Marwick (Sage, 2017), 30.

¹³ Camilla Vásquez and Erhan Aslan, “‘Cats Be Outside, How about Meow’: Multimodal Humor and Creativity in an Internet Meme,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 171 (January 1, 2021): 101, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.10.006>.

¹⁴ Shifman, *Memes and Digital Culture*, 41.

¹⁵ Anna Piata, “Stylistic Humor across Modalities: The Case of Classical Art Memes,” *Internet Pragmatics* 3, no. 2 (November 17, 2020): 197, <https://doi.org/10.1075/ip.00031.pia>.

¹⁶ Argiris Archakis et al., “Linguistic Varieties in Style: Humorous Representations in Greek Mass Culture Texts,” *Discourse, Context & Media* 3 (March 1, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2014.01.001>.

¹⁷ Kunal Debnath, “Between High Culture and Low Culture; and Also The Difference Between Popular Culture and Folk Culture,” *SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH* 7 (August 28, 2019): 12, <https://doi.org/10.24113/ijellh.v7i8.9572>.

¹⁸ Asaf Nissenbaum and Limor Shifman, “Meme Templates as Expressive Repertoires in a Globalizing World: A Cross-Linguistic Study,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 23, no. 5

(September 1, 2018): 294–310, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy016>; “Meme Templates,” in *Know Your Meme*, September 4, 2016, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/meme-templates>.

¹⁹ “Medieval Tapestry Edits,” in *Know Your Meme*, June 2, 2009, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/medieval-tapestry-edits>; “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend,” in *Know Your Meme*, November 14, 2023, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/the-reluctant-bride-tiktok-trend>; “Success Kid / I Hate Sandcastles,” in *Know Your Meme*, August 24, 2009, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/success-kid-i-hate-sandcastles>.

²⁰ Sönke Bartling and Sascha Friesike, *Opening Science - The Evolving Guide on How the Web Is Changing Research, Collaboration and Scholarly Publishing*, 2014; Peadar, “Why Open Science and Open Access Matter: The MARCO-BOLO Perspective,” *Marco-Bolo* (blog), October 25, 2023, <https://marcobolo-project.eu/why-open-science-and-open-access-matter-the-marco-bolo-perspective/>; Melissa Terras, “Opening Access to Collections: The Making and Using of Open Digitised Cultural Content,” *Online Information Review* 39 (September 1, 2015): 733–52, <https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-06-2015-0193>; Ulrike Wuttke and Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, “Loners, Pathfinders, or Explorers? How Are the Humanities Progressing in Open Science?,” Text, *Generation R* (blog), April 24, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20221103175512/https://genr.eu/wp/humanities-progressing-in-open-science/>.

²¹ Andrea Wallace, “Introduction to Open GLAM,” *Open GLAM*, October 19, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.21428/74d826b1.be9df175>.

²² “What Is Open?,” accessed February 11, 2022, <https://okfn.org>.

²³ Voigts, “Memes and Recombinant Appropriation,” 287.

²⁴ Limor Shifman, “Memes in a Digital World: Reconciling with a Conceptual Troublemaker,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 18, no. 3 (April 1, 2013): 365, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12013>.

²⁵ Genya Morgan O’Gara et al., “Barriers and Solutions to Assessing Digital Library Reuse: Preliminary Findings,” *Performance Measurement and Metrics* 19, no. 3 (January 1, 2018): 135, <https://doi.org/10.1108/PMM-03-2018-0012>.

²⁶ Julia Wiedemann, Susanne Schmitt, and Eva Patzschke, “Responding to Open Access: How German Museums Use Digital Content,” *Museum and Society* 17, no. 2 (July 18, 2019): 194, <https://doi.org/10.29311/mas.v17i2.2756>.

Chapter 1: Introduction

“To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.”¹



Figure 1: An Instagram comic depicting a visualisation of the aesthetic experience of art, referencing Gustav Klimt’s “The Kiss.”²

From the invention of the printing press to the development of the internet, technology has allowed for artistic works to be reproduced and interacted with in a variety of methods, be it visually, textually, or online.³ This has been especially true in the twenty-first century, with the release of the first Apple iPhone in 2008 and the popularisation of social media in the 2010s.⁴ These technologies have enabled anyone with an internet connection to interact with and create culture online. Applications like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitterⁱ allow for digital reproductions of art to be posted

ⁱ While Twitter was bought out and renamed to “X” in October 2023, the social media site is still colloquially referred to as Twitter online. Given the public refusal to call the site “X,” reaching as far as Wikipedia (which notably has not changed the name of the site on its dedicated page) and the fact that

through individual social media accounts, which in turn can be viewed by millions of people, shifting the means through which consumers interact with art from the physical (exhibitions, installations, stores, and physical print media like books) to the digital.⁵

But how does this shift in the method through which consumers interact with art impact their experience of art? Reproduction of art and its ramifications have long been a topic of academic discussion, exploring ideas such as the tradition of copying master works in art academies across Europe in the Renaissance Era, the development of lithography in the 1800s introducing machine-powered reproductions of art, and the establishment of the film industry in the early twentieth century.⁶ Writing in the 1930s, philosopher Walter Benjamin's writings looked at technological developments in the production and reproduction of art, in particular photography and film, which they viewed as a form of "low" culture, in contrast to the "high" culture of works in museums or religious spaces like cathedrals.⁷ Benjamin's insights have become both widely debated and accepted, serving as the foundation for many examinations of art as technology has continued to evolve over the past century.⁸

In their famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin examines the impact of mechanical reproductions, such as film, on the aesthetic experience of consuming art.⁹ Benjamin debates the merits of mechanical reproductions but ultimately concludes that the reproduced work of art is deficient in comparison to the original work. "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art," they say, "is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."¹⁰ In this way, they begin to

most of the references to Twitter in this dissertation occurred when it was still officially known as Twitter, this dissertation will refer to the site "X" exclusively by its previous name, "Twitter." See note 5 for supporting evidence.

discuss the concept of “aura:” the ephemeral thing that makes a work of art uniquely itself, or the sacred in a work of art. For Benjamin, aura represents the mystical and holy associated with art, particularly religious art, noting the reverence and care that is taken with religious works of art in Western culture. Mechanical reproduction, Benjamin posits, emancipates art from religion¹¹—freeing works from a “parasitic subservience to ritual,”¹² and allowing for new works of art that are designed for reproducibility and “freedom and play.”¹³

This observation by Benjamin underscores the transformative impact of technological advancements on art and its consumption. Technology has continually reshaped how art is reproduced, shared, and experienced. In the twenty-first century, this concept has been realised through the advent of digital technology and the internet, which enable the creation of digital reproductions of physical objects in the form of digital images. These images, as previously noted, can be seen, interacted with, and remixed by online users.

Remixing is a newer cultural practice which developed alongside digital technologies in the end of the twentieth century.¹⁴ Remixing involves re-editing existing artifacts via technological manipulations, such as Photoshop.¹⁵ This dissertation will refer to digital reproductions of works of art which have not been remixed as “digitised cultural heritage material,” moving forward.

Remixes, from patterns for fabric, to digital prints, to high end fashion lines,¹⁶ benefit from the “freedom and play” Benjamin posits comes as the result of mechanical reproduction.¹⁷ Classical art memes, or internet memes in which “classical” art are employed, are an excellent example of this concept at work—digitised cultural heritage material, such as a reproduction of the Mona Lisa, is able to be recontextualised via

remixing from a famous work of art that lives in a GLAM+ institution into an accessible source of amusement that lives online. So what is a classical art meme? As noted above, a very loose definition would be a type of “internet meme” which employs “classical” art. An “internet meme,” then, can be defined by three main characteristics according to Limor Shifman:

- (a) A group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance;
- (b) that were created with awareness of each other, and
- (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the internet by many users.¹⁸

Working with the above, classical art memes (CAMs) are a type of internet meme which share a common characteristic—their “base content,” or the works of art that form the base of a CAM. In the context of this dissertation, the phrase “base content” refers to digitised cultural heritage material that has been remixed into a CAM. This base content is theoretically derived from “classical” art, or art from Western antiquity that is influenced by Greek and Roman stylistic choices.¹⁹ However, CAMs often feature art that does not strictly fit this definition, sourcing base content from non-Western sources, more recent periods, old photography, or art created in the modern era but in a classical style.²⁰ However, as the style is believed to have been inspired by the Facebook account “Classical Art Memes,” the name has generally become synonymous with art memes, even if the art depicted is not necessarily ‘classical.’²¹

For the purposes of this research, the historical accuracy of the base content used for CAMs (in regards to being classified as “classical,”) is not crucial to the function of the internet memes, as long as they utilise art that could conceivably be found in a GLAM+ institution, creating distance between the viewer and the CAM, be it through time or aesthetics.²² The term “GLAM+ institutions,” refers to the industry

term “GLAM,” which stands for Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums, with the + referring to other organisations that house works of art and their digital facsimiles, such as digital repositories and auction houses. Institutions that house art, like those listed above, will be referred to as GLAM+ institutions moving forward.

This research explores changes in cultural creation and consumption, particularly of digitised cultural heritage material, since social media has become a primary method of communicating and creating culture on a global scale. It will do this by specifically examining the function and success of ‘classical art memes,’ (CAMs) a unique form of reuse, and oftentimes remixing, of digitised cultural heritage materials. CAMs were chosen as the focus of this research because of the particular richness of research questions that could be asked surrounding their creation and dissemination.

When interrogating CAMs, questions surrounding copyright and access arise concerning the base content. The process of creating CAMs gives rise to questions regarding digital culture and how communication online has changed in the last decade, looking to the concept of “recombinant appropriation,” or the process of taking multiple unconnected sources and creating one new, complex transmission.²³ Looking at the dissemination of CAMs on social media allows for an inquiry into online platforms and how they contribute to the democratisation of information online. A focus on CAMs allows for a truly innovative and diverse examination of the various issues associated with mechanical reproductions of digitised cultural heritage material.

Take, for example, Figure 2, which is an example of a stereotypical CAM on the Facebook page “Classical Art Memes Official:”



Figure 2: A stereotypical Classical Art Meme from Classical Art Memes Official on Facebook²⁴

The base content is taken from an unnamed Orthodox Christian-style painting (likely an Icon of the Good Shepherd, a common icon in the Orthodox tradition²⁵) of Jesus Christ, one of the central deities of the Christian faith, recognisable from the lamb draped over his shoulders and the halo surrounding his head. Both of these motifs are commonly used in depictions of Jesus Christ in religious paintings.²⁶ The lamb references the parable of the lost sheep from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and the halo is an indicator for the Christian belief in Christ's divinity.²⁷ These motifs have been used so frequently in artistic depictions of Jesus Christ that they have become commonly understood across many Western and/or Christian cultures.²⁸ However, the text superimposed over the artwork is a play on the lyrics from the 1993 hit song "What

is Love,” by Haddaway, with the lamb on Christ’s shoulders making the pun “herd” instead of the original lyric “hurt.”²⁹

The juxtaposition of religious imagery and a pop song highlights two key concepts which contribute to the success of CAMs as a style of internet meme. The first is recombinant appropriation, which is a style of adaptation and type of remixing which combines multiple forms of cultural material without the consent/knowledge of the original creators. In this instance, the creator of the base content probably cannot be contacted due to the age of the work (while in this instance the base content has not been identified, this is true in the case of many CAMs), and Haddaway was likely not contacted for use of their lyrics due to the costs associated with licensing music. This fusion of seemingly disconnected topics created in the process of recombinant appropriation is intended to elicit laughter from the reader, highlighting the second concept: juxtaposition. This is the key form of humour within the genre of CAMs, with the antiquated image and the modern language used being at odds with one another in a striking and often absurd way.³⁰ Piata suggests that the root of the humour of CAMs is stylistic incongruity, a type of juxtaposition which is predicated on the mixing of varieties, one which is unexpected or unconventional.³¹ In the case of CAMs, expectations are subverted with the form. One does not need to understand art history to get the internet meme—the base content is simply recognised as an image that is distant from the viewer in time and aesthetics, that is recontextualised through the modern/colloquial text, making the base content accessible to the consumer or user’s understanding of modern (and most often Western) culture.³²

While the text is important, grounding the CAM within modern culture, it does not work without the base content. Having a wide selection of classical art to pull from

is crucial to digital content creators (DCCs) creating CAMs. Within the context of this research, DCCs specifically refers to digital content creators who specialise in crafting CAMs. As the vast majority of what DCCs would consider “classical art” is housed within GLAM+ institutions, examining the relationship between these two bodies of cultural creation is critical, as this kind of incongruity and how it functions is important to understanding the place of culture and heritage in our time. At the same time, the kind of engagement (likes, comments, shares, messages) CAMs can afford GLAM+ institutions is crucial to the success of these institutions in the digital age, as they clearly demonstrate an interest amongst consumers in online interaction with art.

Classical Art Memes Official, for example, has 5.4 million followers on Facebook and 671,000 followers on Instagram.³³ However, there are countless copycat classical art meme pages with similar followings. On Instagram for instance, there is @classical_art_memes_official (not affiliated with the previously mentioned account) at 286,000 followers, @classicalcringe at 403,000 followers, @classicmemelord at 104,000 followers, and @classicaldamn at 744,000 followers.³⁴ All of these accounts are in the top 5.27% highest number of followers on Instagram (as of 2023).³⁵

CAMs are a unique form of collaborative cultural creation, simultaneously showcasing the work of GLAM+ institutions in digitisation and the work of DCCs in recombinant appropriation, highlighting the two main parties being examined in this research. The first is GLAM+ institutions, which house and preserve the original works and their digital facsimiles and provide access to/educate the public about the works they care for. Second are the DCCs, who find digitised cultural heritage materials to use as their base content, remix them digitally, and share these remixes on various online platforms with the public. However, GLAM+ institutions and DCCs have very different

values and goals. These influence their approaches to their work and ideas of how digitised collection materials can/should be used online.

These two parties form an uneasy cultural ecosystem, which is grappling with uneven power dynamics, different requirements, and disparate values that create tension. These differences highlight gaps in current research that bear investigating. For example, base content is only available to DCCs because of the efforts of GLAM+ institutions to digitise their collections and share the resulting base content online, making DCCs dependent on GLAM+ institutions. However, this is a reciprocal relationship, as the exposure CAMs can afford GLAM+ institutions can result in foot traffic, media attention, or financial gain, all three of which are hugely beneficial to the institution. This form of cultural reuse and remixing depends on a GLAM+ validation loop for its existence, in spite of the ways in which this particular form defies those institutions.

As the world has become increasingly digital, the central practices of GLAM+ institutions have begun to shift to accommodate the growing role of digitisation and the practice of creating and managing digitised cultural heritage materials.³⁶ The barriers to digitising are numerous, including both internal and external factors. However, the most significant barrier is funding. Many of the other barriers, including adequate staffing, necessary tools, copyright/intellectual property laws, and institutional infrastructure for the storage and sharing of images, come back to needing sufficient funding for the scope of the digitisation project that the institution wants to undertake.³⁷

The Network of European Museum Organisations surveyed sixty museums across sixteen European countries in 2020 and found that while roughly 43.6% of the museums' collections have been digitised, only 20% of that material is available to

view online.³⁸ This data aligns with research published by Europeana in their 2015 Enumerate Survey, which reported that only 10% of the 300 million objects housed in European GLAM+ institutions were available online at that time.³⁹ These numbers had been achieved only after years of legislative and financial support from the European Commission, national agencies, foundations, and more, highlighting how complicated (and expensive) the task of digitisation truly is.⁴⁰ A common practice in GLAM+ institutions to offset these costs is to charge some kind of fee for access to or rights to reuse the images.⁴¹ However, this practice not only inhibits access to digitised cultural heritage materials, but research also shows that this is not an effective method of offsetting digitisation costs.⁴² In fact, making digitised cultural heritage materials Open Access is showing increased profits for GLAM+ institutions in other areas, such as printing services, as reported by the Rijksmuseum.⁴³

The two parties in this research primarily interact on “online platforms.” Tarleton Gillespie defines online platforms as “sites and services that host public expression, store it on and serve it up from the cloud, organise access to it through search and recommendation, or install it onto mobile devices.”⁴⁴ Examples of online platforms include social media websites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; Wikimedia and its associated sites, Reddit and other forum style sites, and digital repositories, such as Europeana. These platforms give DCCs and GLAM+ institutions access to a global audience, however they are not without their own issues, including content governance, relationship to copyright, accessibility for both creators and consumers, and unreliable functionalities, such as algorithms for content sharing—issues which have been thoroughly researched by a number of scholars, including Gillespie, DeNardis and Knackl, Fenwick et. al., Carrigan and Fatsis, and Krishnan et.

al.⁴⁵ Research has also been conducted on GLAM+ institutions and their relationships with platforms and consumers, including Taylor and Gibson, Valeonti et. al., Terras, Villaespesa and Wowkowych, O’Gara et. al., and Djikshorn et. al.⁴⁶ Similarly, research has been conducted on different kinds of content creators and their relationships with platforms and consumers, (although usually they produce different content to CAMs), including Cotter, Hu et. al., Hudders et. al., Audrezet et. al., and Khamis et. al.⁴⁷ However, there is a gap in current research in regarding the relationship between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions and their impact on how consumers interact with art in the digital age.

Regarding CAMs, research has been conducted on various ideas connected to internet memes as a unique form of cultural transmission, including Shifman, Voights, Knobel and Lankshear, Dancygier and Vandelanotte, Miltner, Bastari, Smith and Lantagne, Adler and Fromer, and Molina.⁴⁸ While the field of research surrounding internet memes is blossoming, there is very little research on CAMs as a unique style of internet meme which utilises digitised cultural heritage content.

Oskari Raivio was one of the first scholars to examine CAMs specifically as a method of interrogating digital content creation for their Master’s dissertation in 2016, examining the style against more general research on memetics, as a way of advocating for the further study of CAMs as a unique source.⁴⁹ Raivio posits that CAMs are a distinct type of internet meme that form “an affinity space within the participatory digital culture,”⁵⁰ therefore requiring further study.

Also in 2016, Anna Gumkowska & Piotr Toczyski published a journal article which examined the “emerging genre of Facebook art memes” as a new genre-communication form, analysing its impact on discussions of current events in Poland in

Polish groups on Facebook.⁵¹ Gumkowska & Toczyski highlight how the adoption of new communication styles, like “art memes,” indicates the process of globalisation at work through the “digitalising Western memosphere,” or the influence of Western culture as experienced through digital means, like memes. They posit that this phenomenon can be noted in other non-Western countries, with a clear flow of culture noted from “West to East.”⁵²

In 2019, Tali Aharoni published a journal article which examined CAMs as a form of political and individual expression online, comparing the “Pepper Spray Cop” internet meme template (that was created in response to the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States in 2011 at UC Davis) as it has been realised with classical art as the base content with Europeana’s “VanGo Yourself” project (a participatory project which invites users to create their own versions of famous artworks, storing and cataloguing these CAMs for public viewing on their platform).⁵³ Aharoni noted three core textual dimensions of creating CAMs: mimesis of the content, the form, and the artist.⁵⁴ These styles of mimesis, Aharoni posits, have a massive impact on how the memes are received and understood by consumers.⁵⁵ Aharoni calls for further research into the creation process of CAMs, as they are a fusion of “high” and “low” culture, which carries a “deep cultural load,” that, when exploited, can facilitate nuanced and oftentimes complex messages from their creators.⁵⁶ In the context of this dissertation, the phrase “creation process” refers to the technical steps taken to create data, as opposed to a “creative process,” which refers to artistic steps taken to create art.

Anna Piata noted the scarcity of research on CAMs in their 2020 journal article, saying that to the best of their knowledge, no one else had written about CAMs (in their case, they were focusing specifically on the field of linguistics) as a “distinct category

of internet memes with its own formal/structural and functional/communicative characteristics.”⁵⁷ Piata argued that CAMs are not only a distinct form of online communication due to their base content, but also their specific style of humour and stylistic incongruity. Their examination of the role of humour in the function and success of CAMs examines linguistic styles and multi-modal communication, noting that these internet memes should be “viewed as carriers of embodiment,” critically commenting on the lives of the consumers.⁵⁸ Beyond these four studies, this researcher is not aware of any other work examining classical art memes.

Examining these four studies highlights two important facts. First, that CAMs are an understudied source of research data, and second, that CAMs have been examined almost exclusively from a linguistic/cultural point of view. However, none of these researchers have used CAMs as a means to interrogate the relationship between GLAM+ institutions and DCCs or looked at some of the more technical elements of the creation process, such as copyright, metadata, or accessibility.

1.A: Research Questions and Aims

The central research question for this dissertation is:

How can examination of the creation process of DCCs and GLAM+ institutions through the lens of the FAIR Data Principles (which state that data should be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), shape ideas around ownership, accessibility, and engagement with cultural heritage in the digital era?

This central question will be explored through the following sub-questions:

- 1) What can be learned about wider ideas of the reception of art, like Benjamin's aura, and how people engage with art through digital means? Is aura lost in the digital sphere, or is it transformed in some way?
- 2) How do remixes and reuses of digitised cultural heritage materials like CAMs shift the way people think about ideas of copyright, authenticity, and ownership?
- 3) How could this examination contribute to the development of policy regarding digitised cultural heritage materials in GLAM+ institutions? How could it contribute to the development of partnerships between DCCs and FLAM+ institutions?
- 4) How could the FAIR data principles be re-envisioned to enhance the data creation process for DCCs and GLAM+ institutions alike?

The aims of this research are:

- 1) To define the relationship between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions through the lens of CAMs, which act as a connection point between two very different sets of goals, ideals, and platforms.
- 2) To develop an understanding of the technical and cultural creation process of DCCs when creating CAMs, which can illuminate gaps in current understanding of how the wider pool of users online create cultural transmissions.
- 3) To examine the role of GLAM+ institutions as mediators of cultural heritage online, paying attention to issues of accessibility, both technically and

culturally, which can illuminate gaps in current practice that can be adjusted to better facilitate cultural creation by their users.

1.B: The FAIR Data Principles and Open Access

As a method for organising and analysing the data in this research, the FAIR Data Principles were chosen as a useful framework to apply to the creation processes of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs. The FAIR Data Principles were developed in 2014 by a group of stakeholders in academia, industry, funding agencies, and scholarly publishers.⁵⁹ FAIR stands for “Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable.”⁶⁰ Officially launched in 2016, the principles were designed to address the rising need for research data management frameworks, particularly with regards to scientific data that might be reused in future studies, with two parties in mind: researchers and data repositories.⁶¹ The aim of the framework was to provide a mechanism through which both the producer of the data and the host of the data are empowered to enable the creation and dissemination of research data—also known as the “FAIR-ification” of data.⁶² While the principles were originally written with technical specifications in mind, they allow for questions about how culture is produced and disseminated to be explored as well. For example, while technical accessibility is the ability of a user to consume some kind of data, an image for example, a cultural perspective in accessibility can interrogate how the message of the data was crafted in a way to be cognitively accessible for the user.

This separation between technical and cultural accessibility highlights the key difference between data in the arts and humanities versus the sciences: Arts and Humanities data is generally gathered from existing sources, like CAMs, producing qualitative data that can be used in any variety of methods. Meanwhile, science data is

more likely to be generated for a specific purpose, like an experiment, producing quantitative data, which is more suited to technical applications.⁶³ Scientific data is much more straightforward, and therefore easier to categorise and manage. While data gathered from a scientific experiment can generally be read and understood objectively, the outcomes of interviews (and other Arts and Humanities data gathering exercises) are much more subjective, with different researchers able to interpret different results based on tone, level of context available, and many other human factors.

Because the FAIR Data Principles were initially designed for the sciences, they haven't fully been adapted to suit the more complex needs of Art and Humanities data, an issue which a number of researchers are trying to address, such as Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra and Angelina Kraft.⁶⁴ Kraft notes that the principles were designed with intentionally vague language, allowing for interpretation by practitioners in various fields.⁶⁵ Tóth-Czifra advocates for adapting the FAIR Data Principles on a case-by-case basis to best suit the needs of specific Arts and Humanities projects, as the FAIR Data Principles are currently designed to work with a limited scope of data.⁶⁶ This dissertation will be doing just that by interpreting and adapting the FAIR Data Principles to apply within the context of GLAM+ institutions, DCCs, and CAMs. Within the conceptual framework of the FAIR Data Principles, ideas relating to both the technical and cultural elements of the principles will be examined.

The FAIR Data Principles and their adoption are part of a larger movement for “open data” which has also been referred to as “Open Access,” or “Open Science,” depending on the data being made “open.”⁶⁷ This dissertation will refer to this movement as “Open Access” (OA). This movement, which started in the 1990s, aims to promote free/accessible research and has had a profound impact not only on the field of

academia and academic research, but also in non-academic contexts, including GLAM+ institutions, many of which have embraced a variety of the tenets of OA.⁶⁸ The FAIR Data Principles have enjoyed similar levels of reception and adoption across both academic and non-academic fields, including GLAM+ institutions, with one of the original aims of the Principles being stated as wanting to be an extension of the OA movement that would be attainable to employ on data by anyone.⁶⁹ This process, known as “FAIR-ification,” has been adapted over the last decade as needed, including extensive resources aiming to make FAIR-ification a universally understood and applied process.⁷⁰ This dissertation will utilise the FAIR Data Principles as a conceptual framework within which to interrogate CAMs and their role as a point of connection between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions and their respective creation processes. The FAIR Data Principles were selected because they touch on the various aspects of data creation, and follow a data creation workflow, allowing for a focus on workflows within the research design, data collection, and analysis.

To understand if and how the FAIR Data Principles are at work within the creation process of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, data was gathered from three different perspectives, resulting in three different datasets: a GLAM+ institution website dataset, a CAM profile dataset, and a DCC interview dataset. The GLAM+ institution website dataset collected a sample of publicly available information from twenty-eight GLAM+ institution websites regarding policies, terms, statements, or web pages pertaining to their digitised collection materials, including application of copyright, dissemination of content, and tracking of reuse online. This dataset was collected to understand the motivations and values of GLAM+ institutions as communicated through their public facing documentation, as would be seen by a DCC

or user navigating these sites to find base content. In total, policy documents totalling over 200 pages of data were collected. The CAM profile dataset collected a sample of 400 publicly available CAMs from a corpus of twenty Instagram accounts, paying attention to base content, metrics, captions, collaborations, and advertisements, to understand the motivations and values of DCCs as seen through their content by a user. The DCC interview dataset collected ten interviews with DCCs who specialise in making CAMs, with questions that were designed to capture how DCCs view their own creative practices and their own motivations and values. The questions paid attention to if and how DCCs interact with GLAM+ institutions and if and how DCCs deal with ideas of copyright when gathering their base content and later disseminating their completed CAMs. In total, the ten interviews resulted in over 100 pages of transcripts. These three datasets provided a rich base of knowledge for analysis.

The analysis of this data considered both technical and cultural implications of the FAIR Data Principles, first interrogating the creation process, including acquisition of base content, metadata creation, and accessibility. Then analysis interrogated the dissemination process, including how content is communicated, approaches to copyright and licensing, and the affordances of platforms.

1.C: Positionality and Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the positionality of a researcher, particularly in work that is so deeply influenced by cultural production online, which is shaped by a very specific set of cultural practices and knowledge. In their influential essay “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” Donna Haraway highlights how truly ethical research seeks to first acknowledge all the elements that influence the work being done, ranging from socio-

economic background to language skills.⁷¹ In this way, another researcher with a differently situated knowledge can contribute to the work, allowing for a more complete view of the idea being examined.⁷²

This research focuses primarily on the Global North, although non-Western accounts and institutions were examined and will be briefly discussed. Examples used within this research were almost exclusively drawn from culturally Western countries for reasons of accessibility (physically, financially, and due to language barriers) and concentration of production. Therefore, this work is limited in how globally applicable it can be. That said, internet culture is deeply influenced by platforms and trends that find their origins in the Global North. Limor Shifman notes this in their research on internet memes and digital culture, positing that while visual humour is much more popular than verbal humour on the internet, the images and comedic techniques that are used most often by content creators are heavily affected by Western culture and values, and that when written language is present, it is predominantly in English.⁷³ However, this research can and should be used as a jumping-off point for further research to examine these relationships within the context of non-Western countries and their culture.

As a white, middle-class American woman, this researcher approaches this work from the position of having been privileged to have unfettered internet access, have English as a first language, have unfettered access to high quality education, and to grow up within the culture being studied. This researcher is also a millennial, intimately familiar with internet meme culture, and actively participating in the dissemination of internet memes on social media platforms outside of their remit as a researcher. These

factors all influence how this researcher operates online, what content is sought out and consumed, and what elements of content stand out to the researcher.

This researcher has a background in Public History, with a decade of experience working in GLAM+ institutions, which gives unique insights into their inner workings. Multiple years of professional experience have been spent working in digitisation, image licensing, and research requests. This gives the researcher a unique level of understanding of the creation processes surrounding digitised cultural heritage materials. Additionally, this researcher has been involved in policy creation and adoption on an institutional level, facilitating an understanding of how GLAM+ institutions work behind the scenes.

This research was inspired by an experience while working at a GLAM+ institution in a digitisation/rights & reproduction role, and is worth discussing within the context of this researcher's positionality. Within the remit of the role, a researcher from another country contacted the institution hoping to be provided access to images of a manuscript. This manuscript was hundreds of years old and within the Public Domain. The manuscript was also originally created in the country that the researcher was from. However, the policy of the GLAM+ institution at the time was to apply an institutional copyright to the image, and charge for access/reuse as a way of recouping the costs of digitisation. In this instance, the researcher could not pay for the images, and so did not get access to them, effectively resulting in being denied access to their own heritage, as they were researching the history of their country (and by extension, the manuscript's country). Meanwhile, a friend of this researcher was obsessed with CAMs and would regularly exchange CAMs with this researcher. However, this friend

turned down an invitation to visit a gallery because they didn't feel welcome/comfortable in a GLAM+ institution setting.

The clear dichotomy between the researcher's struggle to access their heritage and the friend's appetite for digitised cultural heritage material only in the context of CAMs inspired a long list of questions. How is it ethical to block someone from accessing their own heritage? Does licensing digitised cultural heritage materials actually recoup the cost of digitisation? If getting access to digitised cultural heritage materials is so carefully regulated by GLAM+ institutions, how do CAMs flourish on social media? Where is all this base content being used in CAMs coming from? Is it coming from legal sources? Does illicit use of digitised cultural heritage materials actually harm GLAM+ institutions? Why do CAMs speak to people who do not feel comfortable physically visiting a GLAM+ institution? Why do people feel uncomfortable when visiting GLAM+ institutions? Who owns cultural heritage? Does anyone? This experience and the uncomfortable feelings they inspired in this researcher guided this dissertation, both from a need to understand the above questions and from a desire to contribute to the work of making GLAM+ institutions welcoming and accessible spaces for everyone, both physically and digitally.

1.D: Research Structure

This dissertation includes eleven chapters, which are as follows: the Introduction, the Theoretical Framework, the Conceptual Framework, the Methodological Framework, the GLAM+ Institution Website Dataset Findings, the CAM Profile Dataset Findings, Findings around Findability, Findings around Accessibility, Findings around Interoperability, Findings around Reusability, and the

Conclusion. The Introduction presents the central research questions and details the contents of this dissertation. The remaining chapters will be explained below.

The second chapter of this dissertation, the Theoretical Framework, will be divided into five sections to lay the groundwork for the subsequent research. The first section examines the form of CAMs and will aim to demonstrate how internet memes function both technically and culturally through a review of academic literature relating to memetics, or the study of memes. The second section examines the motivations and values of GLAM+ institutions as noted within academic literature, including how they approach ideas of “openness” in relation to use and reuse of their content. The third section examines digital platforms, noting how digital platforms function both culturally and technically, to capture the needs of both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs as determined by the affordances of their selected digital platforms, and examining how Instagram and its associated content recommendation algorithms operate. The fourth section examines the motivations and values of digital content creators, by examining academic literature relating to digital influencers, social media marketing, and literature detailing the function and impact of Instagram’s algorithms on how digital influencers produce content. The final section examines academic literature regarding copyright law, ideas of ownership online, and the challenges of tracking digital content once reused.

The third chapter of this dissertation, the Conceptual Framework, details the conceptual foundation of this research, building upon the Theoretical Framework and further examining ideas of aura as they are seen within GLAM+ institutions, and commons theory and how it can be adapted to suit the needs of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs. The chapter then introduces the FAIR Data Principles, examining both how they

operate generally and what they might look like when applied to the creation process of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation, the Methodological Framework, examines the theoretical and empirical methodologies that will be employed in this research. This chapter then details the processes by which data was gathered through three main activities: a sample of GLAM+ institution content, a sample of CAM profiles on Instagram, and a series of interviews with DCCs. This chapter examines the structure of these data-gathering activities, aligning the structure of the data-gathering and analysis with current academic practice and relevant methodological literature.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation, the GLAM+ institution Website Dataset Findings, examines the data collected in the GLAM+ institution Website Dataset, which consists of a dataset of twenty-eight GLAM+ institution websites and their available online content regarding digitisation policies, copyright notices, terms and conditions, and similar such data documentation. Themes within the dataset were noted and analysed, citing a variety of examples from within the dataset.

The sixth chapter of this dissertation, the CAM Profile Dataset Findings, examines the data collected in the CAM Profile Dataset, which is comprised of twenty CAMs each from twenty CAM accounts, categorising posts, noting themes in methods of creation and dissemination, and paying close attention to both credit for the base content and other DCCs. Themes within the dataset were noted and analysed, citing a variety of examples from within the dataset.

The seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of this dissertation examine The DCC Interview Dataset Findings, analysing the data collected in the DCC Interview Dataset, which is comprised of ten coded interview transcripts sourced from ten

interviews with DCCs who specialise in producing CAMs. Broken up into the correlating FAIR Data Principles used to organise the data, these chapters highlight the trends, outliers, and notable moments from the ten DCC interviews that speak to issues important to this research. Additional themes that emerged during the coding process will also be discussed, including the creation process, ideas of ownership, and meme culture.

The final chapter of this research, the Conclusion, will first bring together the notable trends and outliers from the three datasets. The datasets produced richly annotated material, allowing for the wealth of data gathered to fall into themes that could then be explored within the structure of FAIR. This resulted in a dataset that is complex, yet illuminating, highlighting clear ways in which methodologies for both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs might be shifted to more fully accommodate a FAIR-ification of their data. By then comparing how GLAM+ institutions approach data sharing through a FAIR lens and comparing this with if and how digital content creators go about making their data FAIR, this chapter responds to noted gaps in how culture is created and shared online. This chapter will then use the data gathered in the context of the Literature Review, the GLAM+ institution Website Dataset, the CAM Profile Dataset, and the DCC Interview Dataset Findings to discuss the implications of this research, examining ideas previously touched upon such as conceptions of ownership, meme culture and its impact on the physical world, and the idea of recombinant appropriation, returning to the concept of the aura as described by Walter Benjamin.

Notes

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⁵³ Aharoni, “When High and Pop Culture (Re)Mix,” 2288; “VanGoYourself,” VanGoYourself, accessed February 21, 2025, https://vangoyourself.com/?utm_content=bufferc03c5&utm_medium=social&utm_source=plus.google.c

om&utm_campaign=buffer; Jessica Stewart, "People Are Recreating Famous Artworks in Real Life for the 'VanGoYourself' Challenge," *My Modern Met*, September 28, 2017, https://platform.tumblr.com/v2/follow_button.html?type=follow&tumblelog=mymodernmet&color=blue; Mark Memmott, "'Casually Pepper Spraying Cop' Meme Takes Off," *NPR*, November 21, 2011, sec. America, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2011/11/21/142601429/casually-pepper-spraying-cop-meme-takes-off>; "Gallery: Pepper-Spray Cop Squirts Internet in the Eye," *WIRED*, accessed February 21, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/2011/11/pepper-spray-cop-meme/>; "Casually Pepper Spray Everything Cop," in *Know Your Meme*, November 20, 2011, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/casually-pepper-spray-everything-cop>.

⁵⁴ Aharoni, "When High and Pop Culture (Re)Mix," 2300.

⁵⁵ Aharoni, 2300.

⁵⁶ Aharoni, 2301–2.

⁵⁷ Piata, "Stylistic Humor across Modalities," 177.

⁵⁸ Piata, 197–98.

⁵⁹ Mark D. Wilkinson et al., "The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship," *Scientific Data* 3, no. 1 (March 15, 2016): 160018, <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>.

⁶⁰ "FAIR Principles," GO FAIR, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

⁶¹ Wilkinson et al., "The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship."

⁶² Angelina Kraft, "The FAIR Data Principles for Research Data," *TIB-Blog* (blog), September 12, 2017, <https://blog.tib.eu/2017/09/12/the-fair-data-principles-for-research-data/>.

⁶³ Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, "The Risk of Losing the Thick Description: Data Management Challenges Faced by the Arts and Humanities in the Evolving FAIR Data Ecosystem," in *Digital Technology and the Practices of Humanities Research*, ed. Jennifer Edmond (Open Book Publishers, n.d.), 237, <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/1108>.

⁶⁴ Tóth-Czifra, 235–65.

⁶⁵ Kraft, "The FAIR Data Principles for Research Data."

⁶⁶ Tóth-Czifra, "The Risk of Losing the Thick Description: Data Management Challenges Faced by the Arts and Humanities in the Evolving FAIR Data Ecosystem," 236–37.

⁶⁷ Bartling and Friesike, *Opening Science - The Evolving Guide on How the Web Is Changing Research, Collaboration and Scholarly Publishing*; Peadar, "Why Open Science and Open Access Matter"; Terras, "Opening Access to Collections"; Wuttke and Tóth-Czifra, "Loners, Pathfinders, or Explorers?"

⁶⁸ Wallace, "Introduction to Open GLAM."

⁶⁹ Wilkinson et al., "The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship"; Tóth-Czifra, "The Risk of Losing the Thick Description: Data Management Challenges Faced by the Arts and Humanities in the Evolving FAIR Data Ecosystem"; Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (European Commission) and PwC EU Services, *Cost-Benefit Analysis for FAIR*

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⁷⁰ “Current Implementation Networks,” GO FAIR, accessed August 27, 2024, <https://www.go-fair.org/implementation-networks/overview/>.

⁷¹ Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 590, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.

⁷² Haraway, 573.

⁷³ Shifman, “Humor in the Age of Digital Reproduction,” 204.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

To fully explore the issues raised in the Introduction, several fields relevant to this dissertation need to be explored, forming a theoretical foundation from which to build the subsequent conceptual framework and methodological framework, leading to data collection and analysis. To that end, this chapter will be divided into five sections, covering the form—classical art memes (CAMs), the players—GLAM+ institutions and digital content creators (DCCs), where they meet—online platforms, and common issues—copyright law, ideas of ownership, and a struggle to track reuse of their content online. This theoretical framework brings together a wide collection of research studies, ranging from public history to sociology to digital marketing. The goal of this theoretical framework, in addition to establishing a knowledge base from which this research can build, is to highlight many of the ways that GLAM+ institutions and DCCs face many of the same issues in the creation process. When possible, examples of the concepts and terms discussed will include CAMs as much as possible, however as they are understudied, examples from other related sources will be discussed and contextualised to relate to CAMs when necessary.

2.A: Memetics and the Classical Art Meme

“Memes are a pain. Or so at least a glance into the world of academic literature would suggest.”¹ This 2013 statement from Limor Shifman highlights the intellectual quagmire that is an assessment of academic literature regarding internet memes (and by extension, classical art memes). This is because internet memes have been examined by researchers from a variety of fields of research, using a wide variety of techniques, with an even wider variety of aims for their research, ranging from marketing research to aid in business to linguistic research in order to understand the impact of meme subculture

on current methods of communication.² This section will examine the origin and development of memes, internet memes, and classical art memes, pulling from media studies, biomedical terminology in a sociological context, linguistics, and adaptation studies. This approach, while not exhaustive, will indicate important theories and terminology relating to CAMs, particularly given how little research is currently available studying them.

Although originally a biomedical term, the word “meme” has taken on a life of its own on the internet. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins is largely responsible for introducing biological terminology into cultural studies in *The Selfish Gene*, published in 1974.³ In it, Dawkins highlights cultural reproduction by using genetic reproduction terms, including the term “meme,” which they define as “a unit of cultural inheritance,” or “a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation.”⁴ Dawkins posited that memes, like a virus, would spread from person to person via the mind, resulting in the spread of culture. Critics of Dawkins have argued that this definition is too broad, encompassing anything from music to blueprints.⁵ However, the term and its definition were popular, and soon a new field of research emerged: Memetics, or the study of information and culture based on an evolutionary model.⁶ Memetics were initially used to examine materials such as advertisements, political cartoons, and televised sketches, and as a school of research found its home in media studies.⁷

Memes as they are more commonly understood today—simply put, as digitally mediated pieces of communication⁸—seem to be as old as the internet itself. Finding a singular moment when they came into being is a contentious (and some would argue impossible⁹) task, but during the 1990s and early 2000s message and image boards saw the development of an online meme subculture, featuring memes and meme templates

like the dancing baby and LOLcatz, among others.¹⁰ This culture developed rapidly with the introduction of content sharing platforms, like 4chan in 2003 and Reddit and YouTube in 2005. This culture exploded with the introduction of social media networks, predominantly Facebook and Twitter, and later Instagram.¹¹

A number of scholars have attempted to redefine the term “meme” to reflect digital tools and technologies, however the most popular definition comes from Shifman in 2014,¹² who notes that in order to delineate between Dawkins’ conception of a meme and a meme created on the internet, it is necessary to update the term to “internet memes.” Shifman’s definition of internet memes, as previously discussed, is in three parts, stating that they are:

- (a) A group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance;
- (b) that were created with awareness of each other, and
- (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the internet by many users.¹³

While this definition could also be argued to be more broadly about adaptation and appropriation of online content generally, Eckhart Voights notes that Shifman’s specificity regarding degrees of change, manipulation, and participation are the keys to differentiating what online content is (or is not) an internet meme.¹⁴ Shifman goes on to highlight the way that internet memes have become integrated into the everyday language of today’s digital culture.¹⁵ This integration has resulted in the development of a new literacy—people can have complete conversations online using only memes (a social phenomenon which is attracting more attention from researchers¹⁶) — which has significantly expanded the field of literary and cultural studies.¹⁷

Voights takes Shifman’s previously discussed definition of internet memes a step further, arguing that within meme subculture, many internet memes are also a form

of “recombinant appropriation.” Harkening back to Dawkins’ use of genetic terminology to explain cultural processes, the word “recombinant” is also borrowed from biology, such as recombinant DNA or a recombinant organism in genetics, and “suggests that these texts and practices conjoin all sorts of material from multiple sources,” much like how two strands of DNA are combined to transform genetic material.¹⁸ Within the context of this dissertation, the word appropriation is intended to capture the idea of reusing digital content without asking for permission, but without intentional malice. Recombinant appropriation then, is the combining of many different forms of cultural material without necessarily having the knowledge/consent of the original creators. This lack of knowledge/consent, it is important to note, is not always considered to be a bad thing, but rather disruptive, surprising, and innovative, as recombinant appropriations feed back into the wider cultural conversation/production that is happening online.

In order for internet memes to be considered in the style of “recombinant appropriation,” Voights posits, they must fulfil all or most of the following criteria:

1. They are viral memes, both commercial and non-commercial, made popular through sharing in an attention economy and a relational “bastard culture.”¹⁹
2. They are ephemeral vignettes, short-lived, marginal, and non-functional.
3. They tend to be hybrid, derivative, parasitic, critical, comic, playful, transgressive, humorous, parodic, carnivalesque, performative, illegitimate, celebrating discontinuity and undermining textual authority and integrity by appropriating existing texts.
4. They tend toward montage, collage (art, two-dimensional), or assemblage (art, three-dimensional).
5. They tend to use *objets trouvés* and damage the integrity of (popular) artworks or texts.²⁰
6. They complicate meanings, precluding a seamless, unilinear meaning-making.
7. They celebrate the *monteur*’s²¹ art of ephemeral meme creation.²²

To make sense of these criteria, Voights compiled the below table of categories and examples, which was published in 2017. Recombinant appropriation is functionally

very similar to the concept of “remixing” digital content. Remixing involves re-editing existing artifacts via technological manipulations, such as Photoshop.²³

Platforms: Imageboards (4chan); microblogs (Tumblr); video-sharing platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, MyVideo); Internet news media, magazines, and news aggregators (HuffPost, Slate, Screen Junkies, BuzzFeed, Reddit, Mashable); social networking services (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest), blogging services, social bookmarking sites (etc.)	
Genres	Significant Examples
Listicles	If Women’s Roles in Movies Were Played by Men
Animated GIFs	Dancing Baby
Image Macros	Lolcats
Supercuts	Star Wars Uncut; Previously on Lost; Hello?: Lionel Richie Supercut, Woody Allen Stammer Supercut
Literal Videos	Total Eclipse of the Heart
Redubbing/Fandubs	Sinnlos im Weltraum
Gag Sub/Fansubs	Downfall Parodies
Fan Edits	The Phantom Edit
Lip Dubbing	Furtwangen: What Do You Do after Studying?
Animutation	French Erotic Film
Hyperlink Bait and Switches	Rickrolling
Response videos	Ten Hours of Walking..., Leave Britney Alone
Web Comics	PHD comics, rage face, Obama not bad
Charity Videos/Challenges	Ice Bucket Challenge
Trailer Mashup/Trailer Parodies	Honest Trailers, Ten Things I Hate about Commandments
Shredding	Kiss shred, Creed shred, Revolverheld shred

Table 1: Voights’ List of Internet Phenomena²⁴

Despite the fact that these examples stretch across various platforms, employ different protocols, and concern many different topics; some trends stand out that highlight what

recombinant appropriation is at its core. Even looking at the titles, one can see the various inputs at play in these examples, highlighting one of the key features of internet memes and recombinant appropriation that make them such a powerful tool for communication on the internet: intertextuality. This term, like “meme,” has shifted in meaning over time since it was first coined by Julia Kristeva in 1980. Piata defines intertextuality as “the multiple ways in which texts are connected to other texts.”²⁵ However, in the era of the internet, intertextuality has come to encompass other modalities, such as video, audio, and images, in addition to text.²⁶ Take, for instance, the first example in the above table—the listicle (a format popularised by BuzzFeed), “If Women’s Roles in Movies Were Played by Men”:²⁷

This Is What It Would Look Like If Women's Roles In Movies Were Played By Men

"Draw me like one of your French boys."

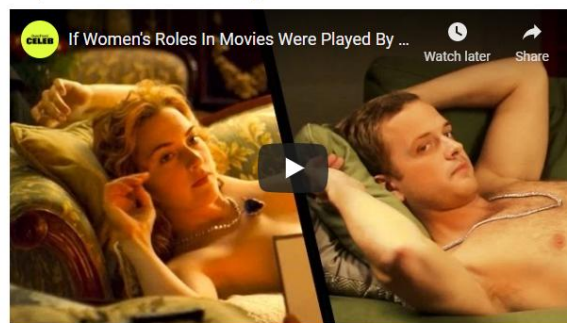


by **Adam Bianchi**
BuzzFeed Motion Pictures Staff

[View 29 comments](#)



Movies tend to lock women into the same objectified positions over and over, so we decided to put men into those positions instead.



youtube.com

Figure 3: BuzzFeed’s “If Women’s Roles in Movies Were Played by Men”

Content for this article was appropriated from a wide range of films (e.g., Titanic, Twilight, Wild Things), blended with common feminist critiques (e.g., objectifying female bodies, watching women without their knowledge, mansplaining), and then a small cast was utilised to recreate these scenes in a pre-established in-house style unique to BuzzFeed, including graphics, music, and cinematography.²⁸ In order for this listicle to work, it requires the consumer to have a broad cultural knowledge, or “cultural capital.” This shared cultural capital allows for the consumer to be “in the know,” and cements a feeling of inclusion within the online community.²⁹ This idea of being “in the know,” is central to the function of recombinant appropriation as the user needs to have knowledge of the various components in order to understand the joke.

Raivio suggests additional classification is necessary, through use of the concept of “affinity spaces.”³⁰ This term was originally coined by James Paul Gee in 2004 as a “place or set of places where people affiliate with others based primarily on shared activities, interests, and goals, not shared race, class culture, ethnicity, or gender.”³¹ While this term can be applied to a variety of spaces, both in the physical and digital world, it has been further developed by Julie Davies in 2006 and Michele Knobel and Colin Lankshear in 2007 in relation to online communities.³²

It is easy to see the applications of this term online. On Reddit, for example, one can join a sub-Reddit based on a special interest, like building model tanks or writing romantic literature. On Instagram or Twitter, one can follow an influencer or celebrity, sharing and commenting on their content—such communities often acquire popular names, such as “Beliebers” (people who are fans of Justin Bieber), “Potterheads” (people who are fans of the Harry Potter franchise), or “Swifties” (people who are fans of Taylor Swift). While affinity spaces can exist within a singular platform, such as a

sub-Reddit, it is important to note that they can also exist across a slew of platforms, like Swifties, who interact with Taylor Swift on Twitter, Tumblr, TikTok, Reddit, and Instagram, and participate on fan sites, in person at concerts, promotional events, and more.³³

Internet meme pages will often have a focus of some kind, usually centred around a common interest, such as being a PhD student, owning an overweight cat, a favourite animal (raccoons, possums, manatees, etc.) or classical art.³⁴ Raivio advocates for studying CAMs as a unique affinity space within meme subculture, noting the importance of both the content shared among the participants and the social significance of that content, an idea that is growing in popularity in academic research concerning internet memes.³⁵ For Raivio, the significance of the content was found within linguistic analysis of the content. Within the context of this dissertation, the significance is found in the creation and sharing of the content, which will be discussed in later chapters.

Finally, within the affinity space of CAMs comes one more layer—classification of content. Anna Piata focuses on classifying the content of CAMs in their research, which explicitly builds on the work of Raivio in focusing on CAMs as a unique form of content online. Their work, while linguistic like Raivio's, focuses on the function of the humour in the internet memes, examining what they call "multimodal stylistic humour," a type of stylistic incongruity.³⁶ There are many different modes of communication in the world, including visual, textual, audio, facial cues, etc. A piece of multimodal communication combines more than one mode of communication.³⁷ Look at the below internet meme, as an example.³⁸

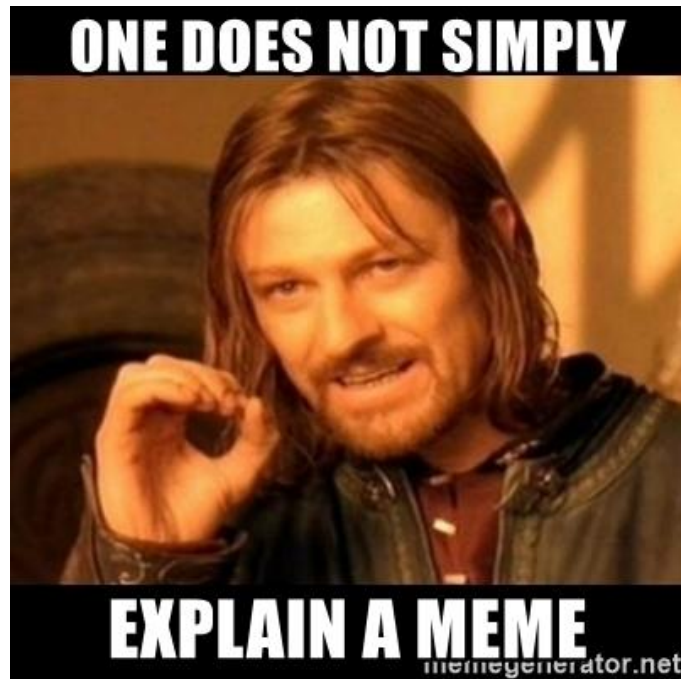


Figure 4: An example of an internet meme created by the author on an internet meme generator website

This internet meme includes visual and textual communication, as it is in the form of an “image macro,” or captioned image that consists of a picture and witty message or catchphrase.³⁹ However, there are also the cultural modes to consider—knowledge of the scene referenced from the Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, knowledge of the history of this internet meme, the facial cues within the image, the hand gesture, and the message communicated by the text. The blend of these many factors is what makes the internet meme work, simultaneously also exemplifying the idea of recombinant appropriation and multi-modal communication. The multimodal nature of internet memes has been researched by Francisco Yus and Barbara Dancygier & Lieven Vandelanotte, whose work has then been built upon by numerous scholars including Camilla Vásquez & Erhan Aslan, Marta Dynel, Leticia Tian Zhang & Daniel Cassany, and, as previously mentioned, Anna Piata.⁴⁰

Piata adapted her definition of stylistic humour from Argiris Archakis et al., who noted that “Stylistic humour can be generated via mixing different varieties (one of which is unexpected or unconventional) or via replacing the expected variety with an unexpected one.”⁴¹ In other words, instead of subverting expectations with the content itself to elicit laughter, stylistic humour subverts expectations with the form. In their analysis of the stylistic humour of CAMs, Piata also adapts elements of Adrian Lou’s analysis of the “when” meme template, a template that is also popular within the affinity space of CAMs.⁴² Using this research, they break “when” style CAMs down into two categories: Mimetic multimodal similes and Narrow-scope multimodal similes, noting a sub-category within the narrow-scope category called source-focused multimodal similes.

This research will adapt Piata’s classification system, suggesting that within the affinity space of CAMs, a three-part classification system can be adopted for any CAM-style internet meme. The first is a “mimetic multimodal simile,” the second is a “narrow-scope multimodal simile,” and the third is a “source-focused multimodal simile.” A multimodal simile, as defined by Lou, is a type of communication in which there is a “visual image supplying context and content that audiences must selectively integrate with the textual parts.”⁴³ Take, for example, the internet meme in Figure 4. As previously noted, a consumer needs knowledge of the Lord of the Rings films (content) and an understanding of the history of the use of this internet meme template (context) that can then be integrated with the textual elements: “One does not simply explain a meme.” It is only when incorporating all three parts that this internet meme communicates the desired message.

While many internet memes rely on the consumer having knowledge that provides context for the image, CAMs, for the most part, rely on the fact that the consumer will NOT have context for the base content, allowing for the language to fill in the contextual gap and recontextualise the base content through modern language use, with this stylistic incongruity eliciting laughter from the consumer by playing into the unexpected pairing of “classical” base content and modern colloquial, often irreverent language.

These categories are helpful in understanding how and why CAMs are so popular—their use of the comedic tactic of juxtaposition, or stylistic incongruity, is intrinsic to the form, making them instantly recognisable. Additionally, by keeping the language used in the internet memes witty and/or colloquial, the internet memes become widely applicable/relatable to their audience, which promotes sharing. This highlights the impact of CAMs on their audience. It is important to note that while Piata applied these categories specifically to “when” internet memes (like in the first of the above examples, a “when” internet meme comprises an image with a caption that begins with the word “when” and lays out a scenario in which the image is the punchline—the text does not work as a joke without the image and vice versa), for the later analysis of a corpus of CAMs, this three part classification system will be used.

1. **Mimetic multimodal similes (Emotion based):** Images that visually depict what is expressed or implied in the text, with a witty (often colloquial) *caption making light of the emotions being depicted*.⁴⁴ See the below example of a mimetic (emotion-based) CAM:⁴⁵

When nobody cancels and you
actually have to go out



Figure 5: An example of an emotion based CAM

The meme-maker is providing a situation to suit the emotions being displayed, often employing juxtaposition and exaggeration. In this specific example, the sorrow on display in the painting is juxtaposed with the idea of going out and meeting friends—a humorous play on how many people prefer to stay at home, in which the woman depicted is deeply saddened by actually having to leave the house. This is intended to elicit laughter from the consumer, but also be relatable, allowing the consumer to feel an emotional connection with the emotions displayed in the base content, and mimicking the sorrow displayed. This style of CAM relies on artistic displays of

emotion which can be juxtaposed against more mundane textual expressions of emotion, however the text is supposed to mimic the emotions being displayed. The modern use of language provides missing context in the historical base content.

2. **Narrow-scope multimodal similes (Situation based):** Images that perceptually resemble the text, usually with a witty (often colloquial) caption making light of the situation depicted.⁴⁶ See the below example of a narrow-scope (situation-based) CAM:⁴⁷

**READING THE MESSAGES IN THE NOTIFICATION
BAR AND PRETENDING THAT I'M NOT ONLINE**



Figure 6: An example of a narrow-scope CAM

The meme-maker is providing emotions to suit the situation being displayed, often employing absurdity or juxtaposition. In this specific example, the woman looking out over the stone wall is alone with her thoughts, seemingly ignoring the viewer. It is a humorous play on the idea of ignoring notifications, in which the consumer can imagine themselves looking out over the wall and pretending the rest of the world does not exist. Like emotion-based CAMs, this is intended to elicit laughter from the consumer while also being relatable, again allowing the consumer to feel an emotional connection with

the situation being depicted in the base content. This style of CAM relies on artistic but unclear situations, where the action being depicted can be interpreted in several ways which can be guided by the text.

3. Source-focused multimodal similes (Absurd image): Piata denotes this form to be a sub-type of the situation based when-memes, however this research posits that this is a distinct category within the affinity space of CAMs. In this form, the image of the meme directly dictates the content of the text, highlighting the absurdity of the image.⁴⁸ See the below example of a Source-focused (absurd) CAM:⁴⁹

-What da dog doing?
-Getting ready for the next crusade



Figure 7: An example of a source-focused CAM

The meme-maker is commenting on the absurdity of the image, often employing juxtaposition. This is a unique type of CAM as it emphasises the distance between the user and the base content, subverting the expectations created by the first two types of CAMs, which aim at creating relatability between the consumer and the base content. In this specific example, by using two images, side by side, one which shows two

women and a dog, the other zoomed in on the dog, the creator is forcing the consumer to see and acknowledge the dog dressed in medieval armour, an unexpected image. The text additionally points out the dog, suggesting the armour is because the dog is going to fight in the “next crusade.” The Crusades were a series of wars fought to control Jerusalem, the historically recognised birth-place of Christianity, in which various leaders in Europe, which was predominantly Christian, wanted to take control of the holy city from the predominantly Islamic and Jewish population.⁵⁰

The women depicted are in European clothes, and the art style is vaguely medieval, with the intended assumption being that the women and dog live in an area which is sending soldiers to fight in one of the many Crusades. The outfits and armour create distance with the reader through time and aesthetics, and while in the previous two types of CAM the text would find a way to make the base content relatable, in this type of CAM the language highlights this distance, making the absurdity in comparison to modern lifestyles humorous.

This idea of relatability underscores one of the main outcomes of the circulation of CAMs online. Lou notes that multimodal similes (like CAMs) are “inextricably tied to embodiment and to some form of mimetic performance.”⁵¹ Embodiment is to be an expression of or give a tangible or visible form to something.⁵² In the case of CAMs, embodiment is more about capturing a common feeling, like boredom, rage, or disgust—the viewer can see their own emotions more clearly through the depiction of it as expressed in the internet meme.

Take the below example of an emotion-based CAM: ⁵³

When your toxic ex is
finally out of your life



Figure 8: A CAM featuring manipulated images of the wives of Henry VIII

The joy on the women's faces is apparent, without having to explicitly say they are happy in the text. In a multi-modal twist, these famous portraits have been altered with an image editing software to include smiles that would not have been depicted in portraiture of the time. The assumption is that the consumer will know that these are the infamous six wives of Henry VIII, and then know the image has been altered. This edit, in combination with the text, serves as a poignant reminder of how poorly Henry treated these women. This joy is reflected in the memory of one's own toxic ex finally leaving their life. And even if the viewer does not have a "toxic ex," they know someone who does and can put themselves into the shoes of that person, effectively embodying themselves (or someone else) in the internet meme.

Piata suggests that this embodiment produces “affect,” defined as “of, relating to, or invoking feelings, emotion, or mood.”⁵⁴ In other words, when the consumer sees their own emotions reflected back at them in a piece of content, like a CAM, they will develop an emotional reaction to, and thereby connect with, the content. This facilitation of the forming of an emotional connection between a CAM and a user is important, as it highlights the continuation of the aura of the original work of art, despite being in a digitally replicated form.

In summary, classical art memes have a functional base within academic literature, despite the scarcity of research directly addressing CAMs. One of the primary techniques for creating internet memes is recombinant appropriation, an adaptation style which pulls from a number of incongruent sources to make one new piece of communication, most often in the form of an image macro, or an image with inserted text. Recombinant appropriation is aware of the variety of sources available and how combining these sources in different ways can impact the meaning of those sources. This intertextuality is key to the function of internet memes, as they allow users to feel included within the discourse internet memes provoke.

There are groupings of interest within meme subculture, known as affinity spaces, which allow for users with similar interests to create and consume content relevant to them, enabling increased and accelerated production and circulation of internet memes within these spaces. One of those affinity spaces is classical art memes, or internet memes which utilise classical art as their base content. Within the affinity space of classical art memes, the CAMs produced can be categorised into three types, denoted by the style of adaptation and method of multimodal stylistic humour being utilised by the creator of the CAM.

The first is a mimetic multimodal simile, or an emotion-based CAM, which uses modern colloquial language to play off of base content which depicts an emotional subject. In this type, the humour from the CAM arises from the juxtaposition between an emotional response depicted in the base content and an incongruent situation depicted in the text. The second is a narrow-scope multimodal simile, or a situation-based CAM, which uses modern colloquial language to play off of base content which depicts a specific-yet-unclear scenario. In this type, the humour from the CAM arises from the juxtaposition between a particular scenario depicted in the base content and an incongruent emotional response depicted in the text. The third is a source-focused multimodal simile, or an absurd CAM, which subverts the expectation of the text making the base content relatable by using modern colloquial language to highlight an absurd situation depicted in the base content. In this type, the humour from the CAM arises from subverting the expected juxtaposition of the two previous types, which seek humour through relatability by reinforcing the perceived distance between the consumer and the base content through the text.

By attempting to recontextualise the base content in a way which makes it relatable to the consumer, the first two types of CAM enable affect, which fosters an emotional connection between the consumer and the base content. This emotional connection draws the consumer back to CAMs, fostering a broader connection with art, (albeit in a digitally mediated, remixed fashion) allowing users in the digital age to connect to the past in meaningful ways using the base content of CAMs as a virtual touchstone.

2.B: Open Access and GLAM+ institutions

This portion of the literature review will be examining the Open Access (OA) movement as it has been realised within GLAM+ institutions. The OA movement, which aims to promote freely accessible research, has had a profound impact not only on the research field, but also in professional fields, including GLAM+ institutions, which have embraced many of the tenets of OA. The greater OA movement began in the 1990s as a response to the monetisation of and restriction of access to information, particularly scholarly research, online.⁵⁵ Melissa Terras defines the OA movement according to its functions, which are the “provision of unrestricted access to peer-reviewed scholarly research...research conducted in a spirit of making available its methods, data, and results so that other can replicate, investigate, corroborate, and ultimately contribute to answering the underlying research questions.”⁵⁶

This movement is widespread and well supported, with academic researchers in particular championing the publishing of “open access research,” meaning research that is freely accessible and reusable online.⁵⁷ The term open access, in the context of this research, refers to a number of different qualities. Ireland’s National Principles for Open Access Policy Statement defines OA as:

...free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited.⁵⁸

This definition highlights the variety of activities that can be undertaken through the reuse of data, and clearly states the only acceptable application of copyright within an “open” data space. Within the context of this dissertation, ideas surrounding “open”

data rely on The Open Knowledge Foundation's (OKF) definition of "open knowledge." OKF defines "open knowledge" as any "content, information or data that people are free to use, re-use and redistribute—without any legal, technological or social restriction."⁵⁹ The OKF then goes on to lay out the main characteristics of "openness" as:

- Availability and access: the data must be available as a whole and at no more than a reasonable reproduction cost, preferably by downloading over the internet. The data must also be available in a convenient and modifiable form.
- Reuse and redistribution: the data must be provided under terms that permit reuse and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets. The data must be machine-readable.
- Universal participation: everyone must be able to use, reuse and redistribute — there should be no discrimination against fields of endeavour or against persons or groups. For example, 'non-commercial' restrictions that would prevent 'commercial' use, or restrictions of use for certain purposes (e.g. only in education), are not allowed.⁶⁰

Within the context of this dissertation, open knowledge is considered the ultimate goal of FAIR-ification, with the characteristics of openness indicating the ways to achieve open knowledge. However, due to a variety of legal, technological, and social issues, open knowledge is not always attainable.

The core values of OA have been picked up across other fields as well, including GLAM+ institutions, which can also sometimes be referred to in academic literature as "the GLAM sector."⁶¹ The acronym GLAM, which means galleries, libraries, archives, and museums, finds its origins in the promotion of the OA movement and its goals, having been popularised in 2010 by Liam Wyatt, the then-Vice President of Wikimedia Australia. He hoped the term would encourage memory institutions to recognise how deeply interconnected they are, regardless of their name.⁶² He solidified the term's usage in Australia and New Zealand by convening an annual GLAM-Wiki conference (still running today) which works to connect staff from various GLAM+ institutions and

educate them on making their institutions more “open,” in line with the Open Knowledge Foundation, in partnership with (and publishing through) Wikipedia.⁶³

That same year, the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, in a historic move, had released a significant portion of their collection into the public domain as digitised cultural heritage material, a move which has since been followed by many GLAM+ institutions around the globe. This move was inspired by what is known known in academic circles as the “problem of the yellow milkmaid.”⁶⁴ *The Milkmaid* is a famous painting by Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer that is housed in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (below).⁶⁵



Figure 9: An image of the painting *The Milkmaid* by Johannes Vermeer

In the late 2000s more than 10,000 different versions of the painting could be found online, often portraying the artwork as more yellow than it actually was. This led to visitors to the museum not believing that the “postcards in the shop were showing the

original painting.”⁶⁶ Frustrated by this, the Rijksmuseum made the decision to provide free and unrestricted access to thousands of their high-quality collection images, including *The Milkmaid*, to be reused any way a user sees fit. The justification for this decision was that it was “painful” to see low quality versions of the museum’s paintings being used everywhere.⁶⁷

Taco Dibbits, the director of collections at the Rijksmuseum at the time famously said, “If they want to have a Vermeer on their toilet paper, I’d rather have a very high-quality image of Vermeer on toilet paper than a very bad reproduction.”⁶⁸ This move set a precedent within the GLAM sector, challenging previously established ways of operating when dealing with digitised cultural heritage materials, enabling consumers to engage with, remix, and even commercialise their remixes, free of charge. The impact of the Rijksmuseum’s choice can still be felt across the GLAM sector today, as more and more GLAM+ institutions are making their collections, metadata, and even APIs publicly accessible.⁶⁹ (API stands for application programming interface, which is a programme that, in the case of GLAM+ institutions, communicates all of their public data in a way that is both human and machine readable, and can be used in a variety of creative endeavours.⁷⁰)

In 2011 the Open Knowledge Foundation received a grant from the European Commission as part of the DM2E (“Digitised Manuscripts to Europeana”) project, with the task of establishing a new organisation with the singular goal of promoting open access in GLAM+ institutions.⁷¹ The organisations involved included Europeana, Wikimedia and its various affiliates, the Open Knowledge Foundation, Creative Commons, and various GLAM+ institutions, like the Rijksmuseum and the British Museum. Representatives from these various parties established the OpenGLAM

initiative, a self-titled “global network on sharing cultural heritage,”⁷² who have been working on promoting legislation, producing research, and educating institutional staff about openness in GLAM+ institutions, and have produced a set of standards called the “OpenGLAM Principles.”

These principles have been drafted and subsequently edited by the collective members of the OpenGLAM Working Group, which is open to the public. The OpenGLAM Principles are as follows:

1. Release digital information about the artefacts (metadata) into the public domain using an appropriate legal tool such as the Creative Commons Zero Waiver.
2. Keep digital representations of works for which copyright has expired (public domain) in the public domain by not adding new rights to them.
3. When publishing data make an explicit and robust statement of your wishes and expectations with respect to reuse and repurposing of the descriptions, the whole data collection, and subsets of the collection.
4. When publishing data use open file formats which are machine-readable.
5. Opportunities to engage audiences in novel ways on the web should be pursued.⁷³

The above principles clearly reflect the goals and values of the OA movement, championing free reuse of content, free and accessible licensing policies, and encouragement to engage with content, points which run parallel with Terras’ definition of the OA movement. The above principles, when read in full with all of the associated notes, highlight key goals, important organisations, examples of policy documentation, and offer suggestions of ways to implement these principles, creating a roadmap for an GLAM+ institutions to adopt more “open” practices, a concept which is important to this research.⁷⁴

After some internal restructuring in 2018 which saw Creative Commons taking over as the predominant organisation attached to the initiative, OpenGLAM began publicly working on a “Declaration on Open Access for Cultural Heritage.”⁷⁵ In 2021 the initiative and Creative Commons began supporting rounds of consultations around the Declaration, allowing GLAM+ institutions and their staff to contribute to the finalised Declaration.⁷⁶ This method of public, collective engagement in developing ways to manage heritage resources has been instrumental in the ongoing implementation of OA policies in GLAM+ institutions, as clearly demonstrated by the level of adoption of various policies advocated for by the OpenGLAM initiative, such as employing Creative Commons licenses on digitised cultural heritage materials, openly releasing APIs to the public, and other activities advocated for within the OpenGLAM principles.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which saw global shutdowns to facilitate social distancing, GLAM+ institutions had to suddenly shift their focus to their digital offerings as a way of continuing to connect with the public. During this period, researchers began to discuss the idea of “commons-oriented GLAMs” or “heritage commons,” as a way of approaching this shift in the mission of GLAM+ institutions.⁷⁷ Commons as a term in academia was popularised by Elinor Ostrom in the 1990s.⁷⁸ Ostrom envisioned “commons” as an economic methodology through which to manage natural, urban, and intangible resources.⁷⁹ Within commons theory, resource management is intended to be more equitable and democratic than capitalism, and able to respond in real time to social, economic, and environmental issues as they arise.⁸⁰ Amanda Huron defines commons as a “resource that is both collectively owned and/or managed by its members for its everyday use, rather than for its potential monetary

exchange on the market.”⁸¹ In the early 2000s this idea of the commons split into two schools of thought: the Ostromian approach and the Autonomist approach.⁸² The Ostromian approach forms the foundation of contemporary scholarly commons theory, establishing a framework within which:

1. the commons is a social structure in which resources are only one component
2. the commons are a viable alternative to public/private ownership and control
3. the commons create a sustainable ecosystem within which both commons and other blended models, like public/private ownership can continue to exist and even work together⁸³

However, some scholars felt that this approach did not fully account for power structures and imbalances, such as political conflicts.⁸⁴ In response, in the early 2000s the Autonomist approach emerged, building on the Ostromian approach. The Autonomist approach, inspired by an autonomist Marxist reading of Ostrom’s work,⁸⁵ shifted the idea of commons from an empirical management of resources to a radical questioning of the way societies operate, examining tangible and intangible resources and how they could be managed to collectively improve commonly-faced issues.⁸⁶ In line with the Autonomist approach, scholars have developed variations of commons theory which focus on different social systems and connected resources, such as urban, digital, and cultural commons.⁸⁷

Urban commons are “spaces of public interest that are catered and managed by communities,”⁸⁸ which are characterised by Huron by two unique attributes: first, they are created and operate in a densely populated space, and second, they are created and operated by a group of strangers who come together for a joint purpose.⁸⁹ Urban commons prioritise the management of resources outside of the public-private model of ownership, challenging ideas of capitalism and representative democracy. Avdikos et al. propose that GLAM+ institutions can play a pivotal role in the establishment of

urban commons, through the reorganisation of urban layouts and through the provision of public access to “heritage resources that can serve as ‘raw materials’ for fostering creativity.”⁹⁰

Digital commons are digital spaces which highlight open knowledge, open software, open designs as resources that are the “fruit of the labour of communities which reside in cyberspace.”⁹¹ Digital commons prioritise the sharing of open resources and data, popularising an alternative economic paradigm in which cooperation, openness, and sharing dictate the value of digital resources. The OpenGLAM initiative aligns closely with the ideas and goals of digital commons, highlighting how commons theory aligns with the publicly expressed values of GLAM+ institutions for openness, accessibility, and sharing of knowledge.

Finally, cultural commons (also referred to in academic literature as knowledge commons or information commons⁹²) deals with the management of culture as a resource, i.e. social structures, cultural traits, traditions, and practices, such as ethics, languages, codes, customs, and creative endeavours. Some scholars conceptualise cultural commons as “pools of ideas, research, and innovation.”⁹³ Pelissier suggests that cultural commons enable creative practices which can sustain an “ecosystem that facilitates and democratises popular expression.”⁹⁴ Lekakis asserts that in addition to the preservation and dissemination of cultural practices, such as rites, customs, and traditional knowledge, cultural commons can manifest as “the creative aura of a cultural district or the collaboration patterns between online peers over the production of open-source software.”⁹⁵ Cultural commons can cover both the preservation of older ways of being and the creation of new ways of being. A memory institution, such as a gallery, taps into this idea of cultural commons by facilitating time and space for creative

expression, such as through a workshop, which can communicate protected cultural practices. However, it is important to note that as GLAM+ institutions are generally not community-led, and as such are not generally considered to be sites of cultural commons.⁹⁶

Within cultural commons, several researchers note the idea of an additional level known as “heritage commons,” which is sometimes conceptualised as a part of cultural commons.⁹⁷ Lekakis notes heritage commons as described in academic literature as, “regularly presented as similar to environmental commons or considered as cultural commons, a treasury of the community’s imagined identity, part of the aspired and yet utopian democracy of the commons.”⁹⁸ Avdikos et al. similarly describe heritage commons through the lens of existing academic literature, in which cultural heritage is a resource that is “compiled collectively,” as part of the work of GLAM+ institutions, to “promote greater representation and more democratic/multivocal discourses about the past.”⁹⁹

The idea of commons is particularly valuable for scholarship within and about GLAM+ institutions, as it facilitates a comprehensive and critical view of the ways in which GLAM+ institutions engage communities, manage resources, and are impacted by economic interests and political rhetoric. Approaches have varied wildly, from flagging concerns with gentrification mechanisms and real estate rates failing to capture the value of heritage sites to concerns about the “Disney-ification” of GLAM+ institutions and heritage resources.¹⁰⁰ Some scholars have begun to conceptualise what “heritage commons” could look like, envisioning dynamic systems which protect heritage resources while “catering for the common benefit of involved communities.”¹⁰¹

Avdikos et al. suggest that GLAM+ institutions should be considered as a new commons, as GLAM+ institutions embody characteristics of urban, digital and cultural commons, such as employing increasingly digital means and infrastructure for managing their collections and engaging with their audience.¹⁰² A “commons-oriented GLAM,” as they call it, is a GLAM+ institution which expressly employs commons theory throughout their administrative and creative practices, orienting their spaces (physically in urban spaces, digitally within online spaces, and intellectually within cultural spaces) around commons theory, allowing these ideas to direct how the institution operates. Scholars such as Avdikos et. al., Bertachinni, and Eriksen have explored what a commons-oriented GLAM+ institution would look like and how it would operate, largely as an extension of cultural commons research.¹⁰³

Commons theory, while not explicitly tied to the OA movement, is deeply intertwined with the ethos of OA, having been developed around the same time in response to issues of resource management and equality. The concept of the commons-oriented GLAM+ institution is a natural progression of the OpenGLAM initiative, continuing the very clear goals of the OpenGLAM initiative, while aiming to create an environment in which the initiative and its associated principles can continue to evolve with technology and society, particularly as stances surrounding ideas of copyright and ownership shift in the digital age.

In summary, GLAM+ institutions are deeply intertwined with the OA movement, even deriving the name “GLAM” from a campaign to promote OA in memory institutions. The OA movement has been taken up in a number of methods in GLAM+ institutions, partially inspired by the Rijksmuseum’s famous decision to release high-resolution images of their collection items into the Public Domain, and

partially guided by the OpenGLAM initiative, with the express purpose of creating a roadmap for GLAM+ institutions to adopt more open practices, as seen through the OpenGLAM principles.

As GLAM+ institutions adjust to a forced focus on digital offerings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, one branch of academic theory has attracted researchers, who are calling for GLAM+ institutions to rethink the way they approach their tangible and intangible resources via commons theory. Originally an economic methodology, commons theory, particularly the idea of reframing GLAM+ institutions as commons, highlight economic, ethical, organisational, and practice-based approaches grounded within commons theory that could be useful for GLAM+ institutions to adopt.

Commons theory is similar to the OA movement in its ultimate goals: freely available resources and equitable access to those resources, with a focus on sustainability and inclusion. In treating GLAM+ institutions as commons, digitised cultural heritage materials can be considered tangible resources, a move which enables GLAM+ institutions to approach their practices in relation to these materials with a new lens that facilitates the evolution of the goals and methods of the OA movement as technology continues to develop.

2.C: Online Platforms and Algorithms

This section will examine the spaces online within which classical art memes are shared and DCCs and GLAM+ institutions interact: online platforms. As previously mentioned, online platforms are largely defined by what they do, with Gillespie noting that these sites and services “host public expression, store it on and serve it up from the cloud, organise access to it through search and recommendation, or install it onto

mobile devices.”¹⁰⁴ This definition was made intentionally vague by Gillespie, as a way of capturing the plethora of websites that fit within this description.

Examples of online platforms include: social media platforms like Instagram, blogging sites like Tumblr, search engines like Google, streaming services like YouTube, dating services like Tinder, and other types of online platform such as sales, encyclopaedias, and repositories. At their core, Gillespie notes, all of these platforms offer the same thing: to “host and organise user content for public circulation, without having produced or commissioned it.”¹⁰⁵ This research will be examining GLAM+ institutional websites and their associated digital repositories and the social media site Instagram, with some discussions about other social media sites including Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Threads, TikTok, and Pinterest, as mentioned by the interview participants. This section will be more broadly looking at online platforms and online governance, then moving to Instagram, finishing with an examination of algorithms and how they function.

“Platform” as a term for online intermediaries is an “ambiguous” one, Robert Gorwa notes, as it is defined and applied in various ways by various scholars.¹⁰⁶ This sentiment is echoed by Schwartz and Gillespie.¹⁰⁷ However, Gillespie notes in a later publication that despite inconsistencies in defining the term “platform,” it is nonetheless a “valuable and persuasive token in legal environments, positing their service in a familiar metaphoric framework as merely the neutral provision of content, a vehicle for art rather than its producer or patron, where liability should fall to the users themselves.”¹⁰⁸, Gillespie is noting the power of the term, despite its ambiguity, to enable organisations to launch these platforms without having to take responsibility for

the discourse contained within those platforms. The online platform, according to these organisations, is a neutral space for facilitating discourse and dissemination of content.

This idea of creating a neutral space for the creation and dissemination of culture is compelling, however in reality platforms are far from “neutral,” as they have a mandate to regulate (to varying degrees) the user generated content they will allow to be distributed, to whom they will distribute it, and how they will connect their users.¹⁰⁹ A number of scholars have undertaken research regarding how platforms regulate their content, including Gillespie, DeNardis and Hackl, Gorwa, Fukuyama, Fenwick, and Grimmelman.¹¹⁰ While these scholars focus on particular issues within the wider concept of platform governance, some scholars have taken to collecting all of these individual works into literature reviews as a method of trying to grapple with the varied definitions of platforms and approaches to platform governance, paying special attention to content regulation.¹¹¹ In addition to keeping the platform a technically functioning space for both individual users and larger organisations to operate on, there are major ethical, political, and legal concerns that arise from so many people around the globe having access to various platforms via the internet.¹¹²

An example of this can be seen in headlines reporting on Mark Zuckerberg’s appearance in US congressional hearings after the 2016 US presidential election. Many people blamed misinformation that was spread on Facebook as one of the deciding factors in Donald Trump winning the election, resulting in the US Government compelling Meta to enact more comprehensive governance initiatives.¹¹³ Twitter has come under similar fire for seemingly randomly censoring hate speech, famously banning Trump only at the end of his presidency after the Capitol Riots in January 2021, despite a long and problematic legacy on his Twitter account.¹¹⁴

At the heart of these controversies is the question: Whose job is it to decide what is acceptable to say (or share) and not say (or share) on online platforms? Is it anyone's? As a way of responding to the concerns expressed in the wake of the 2016 election, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram began to moderate their content and combat misinformation more actively. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, all three social media platforms added banners to any post that mentioned a keyword related to COVID-19 that included links to health service websites, such as the US Centres for Disease Control, warning people to be aware of misinformation.¹¹⁵

Why then, if these spaces are the source of so much controversy, have they become so popular (and one may argue, necessary) within Western society today? Gillespie tries to answer this question when they note the cultural function of platforms, positing that: “‘Platforms’ are ‘platforms’ not necessarily because they allow code to be written or run, but because they afford an opportunity to communicate, interact or sell.”¹¹⁶ Platforms accommodate cultural exchange on an unprecedented level.

Take for example, the infamous “Rick Roll.” Based on the popular 1987 song “Never Gonna Give You Up,” by Rick Astley, which had been a number one hit at the time, the song reached new heights of popularity in 2007 when it became one of the original viral memes. The meme was created in response to demand for an unreleased version of the Grand Theft Auto IV trailer online, when someone posted a link labelled as the trailer, but it redirected the user to “Never Gonna Give You Up” on YouTube.¹¹⁷

This move, called a bait-and-switch, would continue to be used in a variety of ways (e.g. Google employing this technique on April Fool's Day in 2008), with the trend of surprising someone with a link or reference to “Never Gonna Give You Up,” being called “Rick Rolling” someone. In 2022, a “Rick Roll” made headlines in Texas

when 300 drones created a QR code in the sky, and the link in the QR code linked to the music video on YouTube,¹¹⁸ which as of this writing has over 1.3 billion views.¹¹⁹ This example, while silly, highlights the rapidity with which trends on the internet develop and change, to the point of almost becoming a language of their own. Gillespie attempted to capture this idea of rapid cultural development online when he called online platforms such as YouTube and other interactive online spaces, “the primary keepers of the cultural discussion as it moves to the internet.”¹²⁰

For this reason, this dissertation has opted to focus on social media, specifically Instagram, as the main form of platform being examined within the scope of this research. Social media platforms have unique functional features which allow for users to directly interact with content in the forms of likes, comments, shares, and saves. These interactions, referred to as metrics, can be recorded and tracked over time and are incredibly useful in capturing the reach of content.¹²¹

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social media platform that was launched in 2010 by Kevin Systrom, and is widely considered the fastest growing social media platform of all time, with 25,000 users making profiles on the first day, and over a million users signing up within the first year.¹²² Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012 in what was considered a historic buyout by Mark Zuckerberg.¹²³ As of 2023,

Instagram has over 1 billion users around the globe.¹²⁴ See Figure 10 for a breakdown of average follower accounts:¹²⁵

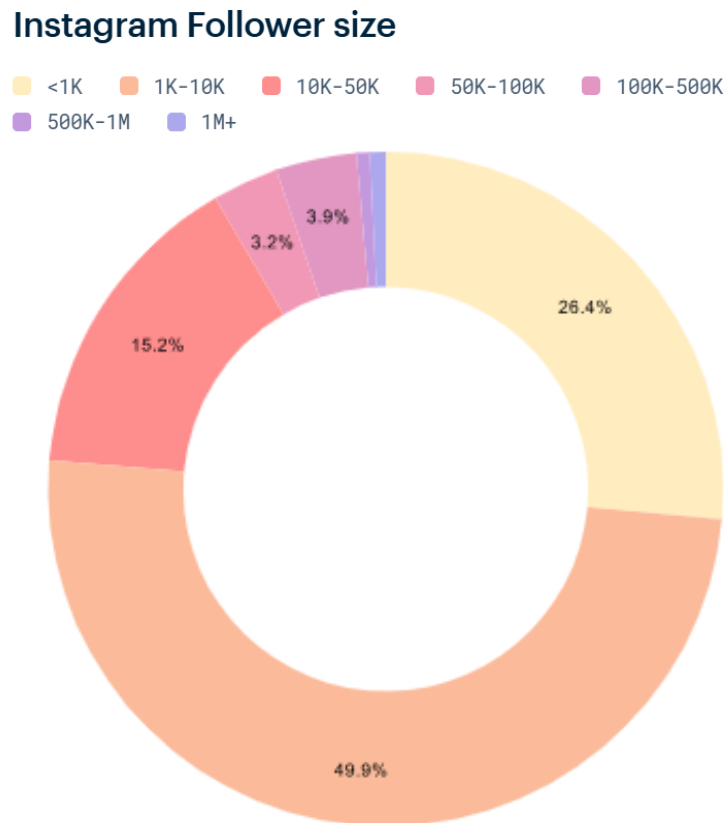


Figure 10: 2023 Instagram follower size statistics from mention

Instagram is unique among other social media platforms due to its focus on visual media,¹²⁶ making it an ideal platform for sharing classical art memes, which rely on their base content to grab the attention of users. Instagram is considered one of the easiest social media applications to learn and operate, as they prioritise simpler mechanics in order to focus on images.¹²⁷ This accessibility makes Instagram an ideal social media platform for most users, no matter their technical knowledge and abilities. Instagram also has always made sure to associate with other social media applications,

namely Facebook and Twitter, with the ability to share content on Instagram and onto these apps simultaneously, a feature which is unique among social media applications.¹²⁸ Instagram has become a meeting place amongst many other social media platforms, as users share Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook posts on Instagram and vice versa, sharing Instagram content on Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook.¹²⁹

While Instagram originally only had the one feed for sharing single images with short captions, today it has 4 main methods of sharing content with users: the main feed where photos and videos can be posted, the Stories feed which shares an image or video for 24 hours, the Explore page which features content related to a user's interests, and the Reels tab which shares short videos.¹³⁰ The stories function was developed in 2016 in response to the social media platform Snapchat, in which a user shares images, known as "Snaps," with their followers for 24 hours, before the snap expires and can no longer be viewed.¹³¹ The Reels function was developed in 2020 in response to the social media platform TikTok, in which users view and share short videos with their audience.¹³²

Instagram has been researched by a wide variety of scholars, from a wide variety of fields, using a wide variety of approaches.¹³³ Scholarly research on Instagram begins in 2014, when Hu et al. published their computer science-based research, categorising types of Instagram users and types of content shared on Instagram, based on qualitatively coding a sampling of profiles and posted content. This work aimed to find a tie between the type of content shared and the number of followers a user had, although the results were not conclusive and the researchers called for more of this kind of work to be done.¹³⁴ Other studies have been conducted using social science, psychology, marketing, cultural analytics, media studies, neurosurgery, politics,

business, and linguistic approaches, to name a few.¹³⁵ This variety of approaches highlights the viability of Instagram to provide rich research data that can be used in a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches.

One of the defining functions of Instagram today is its algorithm. An algorithm at its most basic is a set of numeric codes that can be built into a computer program that defines a series of steps that involve operating on data to produce some outcome.¹³⁶ The internet operates based on innumerable algorithms addressing a variety of functions, such as generating search results, recommending ads, and sending notifications to a user.¹³⁷ When referring to algorithms moving forward, this research specifically means content recommendation algorithms on social media platforms, which play a key role in shaping the online experience, where algorithmic ranking determines what posts are seen and by whom.¹³⁸

In 2015, Facebook introduced their first proprietary content recommendation algorithm, the first of its kind on a social media platform,¹³⁹ to sort posts based on their content—previously the mode of display on the Newsfeed had been posts with the most likes within a short time period, and before that the timeline was chronological.¹⁴⁰ Instagram followed suit in 2016, ditching their chronological feed for one tailored by a content recommendation algorithm similar to Facebook.¹⁴¹ This change on both platforms received backlash from numerous sources, ranging from users complaining on Facebook and Instagram to newspaper articles—“New algorithm-driven Instagram feed rolled out to the dismay of users,”¹⁴² to academic articles—“Algorithms ruin everything”: #RIPTwitter, Folk Theories, and Resistance to Algorithmic Change in Social Media.”¹⁴³ Part of this backlash was due to the unclear nature of how the algorithms worked. Facebook (the parent company has been known as Meta since

2021¹⁴⁴), has always been secretive about how their content recommendation algorithms work, leaving content creators and general users to attempt to understand the algorithms through trial and error.¹⁴⁵

Today, Instagram has different algorithms for each of the functions within the platform—the main feed, stories, the explore page, and reels.¹⁴⁶ The various algorithms recommend content based on a number of factors, or “signals,” as Instagram calls them.¹⁴⁷ The “Instagram Feed Algorithm,” or the algorithm which recommends content for the main home page on Instagram, has four main categories. The first is a user’s engagement, or what content a user is liking, sharing, or commenting on. The algorithm will share content similar to what a user is already regularly engaging with. The second is individual post information, or how popular a particular post is. In this case, popularity is determined by factors such as the number of users interacting with a post, how quickly users interact with a post, and how long users stay on a post. The algorithm will share content that is particularly popular, paying attention to the date, time, and location of the post in relation to the user. The third is individual poster information, or how likely a user may be to follow a particular account based on either past engagement with the account’s content or past engagement with similar content. The fourth is a user’s history with a particular account., Instagram is more likely to share content with a user that is from particular accounts that the user has a history of following, messaging, or otherwise engaging with.¹⁴⁸

Each different algorithm Instagram employs is slightly different, prioritising different needs for the different functions of the varied streams on content on Instagram. For example, the “Instagram Stories Algorithm,” only shows stories to a user from accounts they already follow, so there is no element of recommending new accounts for

a user to follow.¹⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the “Instagram Reels Algorithm” has a particular focus on “entertainment,” according to Instagram, which shifts what data the algorithm will consider relevant for recommending content.¹⁵⁰

While these rough descriptions of how the algorithms on Instagram work can be helpful, they are still not particularly specific, leaving users to guess how precisely their activity on Instagram is impacting what content they see and what other users can see their content.¹⁵¹ Additionally, algorithms on social media platforms are regularly updated, shifting what elements it uses to prioritise what content will be shown to a user.¹⁵² Butcher views contemporary social media algorithms as disciplinary apparatuses that “prescribe desirable forms of participation on social media,” disciplining digital influencers into normalising their behaviour, at the risk of “becoming invisible.”¹⁵³ The algorithm more widely shares content on Instagram that aligns with the “signals” that the algorithm has been programmed to prioritise, or does not share (or in some cases, hide) content on Instagram that does not align with the “signals” it has been programmed to prioritise. It is important to note how deeply algorithms shape the motivations of digital content creators, an idea which will be explored later.¹⁵⁴

In summary, online platforms are a broad category of online sites and services that facilitate public discourse through the mechanics of their digital infrastructure. While online platforms have been envisioned as neutral spaces for discourse and dissemination of content, the reality is that online platforms require governance, or methods for regulating user generated content and how it is shared within the online platform. This is a complex task, leading to the question: Whose job is it to decide what is acceptable to say (or share) and not say (or share) on online platforms? Is it

anyone's? These questions are critical to answer as interactive online platforms like Instagram are being considered "the primary keepers of the cultural discussion as it moves to the internet."¹⁵⁵

This research will be examining online platforms from GLAM+ institutions (institutional websites and online repositories) and the social media site Instagram. Founded in 2010, acquired by Facebook in 2012, and today hosting more than 1 billion users globally, Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world. Instagram has unique features which are both accessible to users of any technical skill and able to share content to and from other social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. Its focus on visual media is unique and facilitates the sharing of classical art memes. Research into Instagram has taken a variety of approaches, ranging from a computer science led examination of the technical functions of the online platform to a psychology led examination of users on Instagram and how they develop emotional attachments to popular content creators.¹⁵⁶

Instagram shares content with users through their content recommendation algorithms, which play a key role in shaping users' online experience, determining what posts are seen and by whom.¹⁵⁷ Introduced in 2016, what was originally one algorithm for the main feed has now expanded into a suite of algorithms that are tailored to the various content delivery methods Instagram employs. These algorithms have historically been carefully guarded by Instagram and Facebook/Meta, with only the vaguest of details being released about how the algorithms work. This withholding of information has been viewed within the research community as a way to keep content creators in check, as their livelihoods depend on their content being widely shared by the algorithms.¹⁵⁸ It also stands to reason that GLAM+ institutions, who often have

multiple social media profiles across platforms, including Facebook and Instagram,¹⁵⁹ would have similar struggles with algorithms.

2.D: Digital Content Creators and the Content Creation Process

This section will examine research into digital influencers on Instagram, making parallels with digital content creators who primarily create CAMs, then looking at how these influencers are directed to craft content that will be widely shared by the Instagram algorithms, and how catering to the algorithms can impact the content created. While there is an established tradition of mechanically reproducing and remixing art, the practice of crafting remixed and recontextualised artworks in the format of internet memes is a new artistic style, and the creators of these works have unique motivations and constrictions on their work that necessitate study. These creators are working against previously discussed obstacles, including an established tradition of framing artworks within an institution, the legal ideas surrounding copyright, and notions of “high” and “low” culture needing to be separate entities. However, these digital content creators have carved themselves a unique and flourishing niche within meme subculture, that can often be financially profitable, to the point of becoming some of these creators’ full-time job.

Similar to the lack of research surrounding CAMs, there is no current research on DCCs who create CAMs as their primary form of content. However, the 2010s saw the rise of the “influencer,” particularly on Instagram, and this phenomenon has inspired a substantial amount of research.¹⁶⁰ And while influencers and DCCs are different in terms of the digital content they produce (lifestyle blogs vs. CAMs, for example), the research into the psychology and function of influencers provides an excellent window into how influencers gain popularity, why they might be so popular,

and how they engage with their audience to maintain and build their followings. This research is valuable for trying to understand similar questions in relation to the digital content creators this research is focusing on.

Kelly Cotter makes a point to specifically frame their research subjects as “digital influencers,” in order to ground the conversation within the bounds of social media.¹⁶¹ Digital influencers, then, are ordinary people who have sizable followings on social media platforms and can use their social capital for financial gain in a variety of ways.¹⁶² Cotter’s research specifically examines the ways that digital influencers navigate various platform algorithms to heighten their profile’s online visibility and strengthen their self-branding. Hu et al. build on Cotter’s definition of a digital influencer, calling them “micro-celebrities,” and adding that, “one of the most defining characteristics of influencers’ success is the identity that they craft on social media and that is critical when they cultivate their own personal brand.”¹⁶³

Online visibility is the ability for a social media profile to be widely consumed on a platform, usually by following the rules of an algorithm in order to have the profile promoted by the algorithm. The second term, self-branding, is a “commodification of the self as a means of participating in a culture increasingly defined by a commercial logic.”¹⁶⁴ In other words, self-branding involves crafting your online personality in a way that is accessible and marketable, in order to attract both followers and financial deals. Cotter posits that online visibility and self-branding go hand in hand, shaping how influencers (and content creators) consciously respond to the “algorithmically derived threat of invisibility.”¹⁶⁵

Hu et al. echo this sentiment in their definition of a digital influencer, but posit that the crafting of a unique identity by the digital influencer further allows for them to

build a large online following.¹⁶⁶ Generally speaking, an identity is the characteristics or traits that are central to individuals, distinguish them from others, and are relatively enduring over time.¹⁶⁷ Within the context of this dissertation, an identity as a way of distinguishing oneself from others is very important to crafting an online following as a digital influencer, as it is the main form of “involvement” that digital influencers employ to connect with their following.¹⁶⁸ Involvement is a term in media and communication studies that has been widely used to capture the influence of media personalities on audiences. Hu et al. define involvement as “a multidimensional concept that includes both the cognitive response to a message and the emotional response to a media persona.”¹⁶⁹ Involvement is the forming of emotional attachments with a persona the user only interacts with through media. Involvement can take four forms: transportation, worship, parasocial relationships, and identification, although Hu et al. posit that influencers only utilise parasocial relationships and involvement.¹⁷⁰

Digital influencers build parasocial relationships with their followers through the crafting of their self-branding, which focuses on authenticity and relatability as the way to connect with followers. In this form, having a particularly authentic and/or relatable brand and content can result in a user feeling as if they know the digital influencer, forming a bond with them.¹⁷¹ Having content that reflects the self-branding of the content creator is one of the most important traits identified for successful digital influencers.¹⁷²

The second form of involvement identified as being utilised by influencers is identification. The previously discussed self-branding allows for a digital influencer to create a distinct online identity, the characteristics of which followers can perceive to identify with as well.¹⁷³ Authenticity and relatability again play an important role in this

process, as the digital influencer needs to have notable traits that the user intentionally adopts. These two forms are important for creating a base of followers that could be considered “sticky.” Originally created for digital marketing, the term “stickiness” refers to customers lingering on or repeatedly visiting a website, where the users are “sticking” to the site. The longer a customer lingers on a site, the more likely they are to make a purchase. Hu et al. have adapted this terminology to apply to the stickiness of the followers of influencers, such as repeated and elongated visits to their social media pages and following their recommendations for purchases.¹⁷⁴

This recontextualisation of stickiness is called an “emerging phenomenon,” by Hu et al. in the context of media to customers (M2C).¹⁷⁵ M2C is a context that is constructed by an individual (usually a digital influencer) in which they promote their own products/someone else’s products through their social media accounts to their followers.¹⁷⁶ This model as a form of business has become quite popular with digital influencers, who make their living by encouraging their followers to buy certain products (normally the company has sponsored the influencer to do this marketing, but sometimes they promote their own branded products as well).¹⁷⁷

Stickiness heightens the engagement on a digital influencer’s content, usually resulting in their content being promoted by the platform’s algorithm. Hu et al. posit that stickiness can also be an indicator of an influencer’s market value,¹⁷⁸ enabling digital influencers to succeed at third-party advertising by encouraging their followers to model their own identities off of the digital influencer by engaging in the same purchasing patterns.¹⁷⁹ There are two forms of revenue generation that digital influencers engage in—promotion of their own products/brands, and third-party advertising, where they promote the brands/products of others.

When comparing the noted traits of digital influencers to CAM accounts, immediate parallels appear, which will be noted alongside examples from CAM accounts. The most noticeable is revenue generation. The accounts What Matilda Says and Fat Cat Art promote their own content for purchase, in the form of merchandise such as prints, clothing, and calendars.¹⁸⁰ Fat Cat Art has been creating and selling merchandise since 2014, indicating a high level of stickiness from their followers.¹⁸¹

Meanwhile, accounts like Art Memes Central and Classical Damn promote third party products, including sex toys, mental health tracking apps, and lingerie.¹⁸² These third-party promotions can be very jarring on a feed, jumping from classical art that would be considered “high” culture to images of sex toys, which would be considered “low” culture due to their association with sex. However, as previously discussed, this juxtaposition of high and low culture can be very effective in getting an audience to engage with art. The continued presence of these advertisements on CAM accounts indicates a high level of follower stickiness, making the marketing successful—the Instagram account Classical Damn has been running a variety of ads since at least 2018, when the first ad appears on their page.¹⁸³ Both of these revenue generation styles will be examined in later chapters, looking at their function and success for both the creator and promoter (depending on whether these two are separate, as in third party advertising).

Self-branding can be seen on a number of account pages in their logo and watermark. Many of these accounts have designed unique logos which feature on their pages and associated websites (if they have them). Many accounts have developed unique watermarks. and often are incorporated into a watermark,. While this practice will be discussed later, the logos and watermarks allow for users to quickly identify

posts from the account in question, as they remember the unique branding. Take, for example, the logo for the account Punk History, taken from their Instagram page, in Figure 11:¹⁸⁴



Figure 11: Punk History's logo

Another example is watermark from the account Classical Art Memes Official, the Instagram page for the famous Facebook account, which can be seen in Figure 12.¹⁸⁵

Interestingly, this meme was posted by another account, Classical Fuk, so in this instance the watermark is helping to identify the original creator of the CAM.

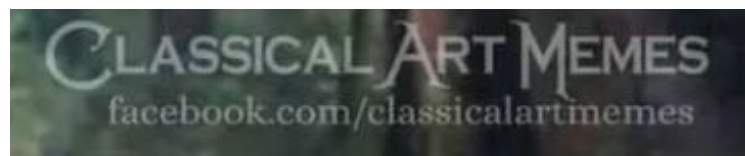


Figure 12: Classical Art Memes Official's watermark

Online visibility practices can be seen when looking at the individual posts on CAM pages, both through posting on a regular schedule (in the case of Art Memes

Central, almost daily¹⁸⁶), and through use of hashtags, (in the case of Texts From Your Existentialist, a few tailored to their content,¹⁸⁷ but in the case of Classical Damn, a wide selection unrelated to the content¹⁸⁸). These similarities between digital influencers and digital content creators who specialise in making CAMs demonstrate that digital influencer practices are being employed in the process of creating and disseminating CAMs, particularly in relation to working with the Instagram algorithms.

Learning about the functions of algorithms is considered a central component of the work of digital influencers,¹⁸⁹ as algorithmic ranking generally determines the success of the digital influencer in building their following.¹⁹⁰ As previously discussed, Meta and Instagram share very little about how their algorithms operate beyond categories of metrics that are tracked. This leaves very little for digital influencers to work with when trying to build their following and have their content shared by the algorithm. Cotter discusses this tension, positing that digital influencers “play an invisibility game,” in which algorithms dictate and control behaviour online. The task of the digital influencer is to figure out what the rules of the game are, or more accurately, what elements of the content the algorithms have been programmed to find in order to widely share content or risk their content becoming invisible.¹⁹¹

A number of marketing companies have dedicated themselves to the M2C context and assisting digital influencers with marketing strategies, promising to teach them how to “beat” the algorithm.¹⁹² The strategies are largely the same across these articles, first listing the categories that the Instagram algorithms use to rank and share a digital influencer’s content, such as the Main Feed Algorithm, which are:

1. Information about the post being shared
2. Information about the account that shares the post
3. An account audience’s activity
4. An account audience’s history of engaging with the account¹⁹³

This list is lightly different from the 4 points discussed in the previous section, however that is because this list is being given from the perspective of someone sharing their content and wanting to know how to extend its reach, not the perspective of a user trying to understand why they are being sent particular content.

The subsequent advice that these articles give digital influencers follow roughly the same pattern of a list of things to do, and things to avoid. The dos: Adopt Instagram's latest features and updates into content. Vary the types of content posted (stories, lives, videos, reels, images). Post at specific times. Use hashtags strategically. Post regularly. Include location information in posts. Make original content. Motivate your audience to engage with content by asking questions. Engage with your audience via messages and comments. Use Analytics to track what content has the widest reach on your account. Prioritise Reels.¹⁹⁴

The list of things to avoid: Avoid posting multiple pieces of content too close together in relation to timing. Avoid overusing hashtags or using hashtags that are not related to the content. Avoid low quality images. Avoid misinformation. Avoid violating the "Community Guidelines," which is the code of conduct that users agree to they make an account. These guidelines dictate behaviour on Instagram and provide users with content regulations. For example, hate speech is not allowed, sexually explicit content is not allowed, graphic imagery and the promotion of violence is not allowed, posting images that the user does not have the rights to is not allowed. If an account posts content that Instagram believes has "violated" the Community Guidelines, the content could be removed, the account could be no longer recommended by the algorithms, or the account could be shut down.¹⁹⁵

The final thing to avoid is posting content that violates Instagram's "Recommendation Guidelines," which detail topics that Instagram wants digital influencers to avoid, such as content that depicts violence, sexually suggestive content, use of drugs, such as smoking, or misinformation.¹⁹⁶ While these topics do not violate Instagram's Community Guidelines, Instagram has stated that this content will not appear on the Explore page and will not be recommended by the algorithms.¹⁹⁷ While Meta and Instagram may see the Recommended Guidelines as governance of their social media platforms,¹⁹⁸ many researchers feel that these rules, combined with secrecy surrounding how the algorithms work, are ultimately being used as a way to police digital influencers and other types of content creators.¹⁹⁹

Duffy posits that digital influencers feel a sense of "algorithmic precarity," which is characterised by the turbulence and flux experienced as a "routine feature of platformised labour," in which digital influencers are never completely sure of what they need to do to succeed algorithmically.²⁰⁰ Cotter notes that this algorithmic precarity plays into a larger issue they term "black box gaslighting," in which digital influencers who try to discuss what they perceive as a lack of algorithmic sharing of their content and are told by the "algorithmic boss" (in the case of this research, Meta and Instagram) that they simply do not understand how the algorithms in question work.²⁰¹ This black box gaslighting further contributes to feelings of algorithmic precarity, perpetuating a vicious cycle that can ultimately be damaging to the digital influencer's mental health and ability to create content.²⁰²

In summary, while there is little research on DCCs who specialise in creating CAMs, there is a significant body of research on a similar pool of creators online, digital influencers. An examination of research on digital influencers, when compared

with visible practices of digital content creators, highlights clear parallels. Digital influencers are defined as ordinary people with sizeable followings on social media platforms who use that following for financial gain,²⁰³ typically through the M2C context, which sees the digital influencer encouraging their followers to purchase products/services they endorse via posts on their accounts.²⁰⁴

Digital influencers build their following through self-branding and online visibility, which involve building a unique identity online through which users can easily identify an account, and following the rules of the algorithm in order to ensure content is recommended to users by the algorithms.²⁰⁵ Employing these strategies can help users to develop “involvement” with a digital influencer, which manifests in two ways: parasocial relationships and identification.²⁰⁶ Parasocial relationships are the close bonds a user can feel with a digital influencer, as if they know them despite having never met in person.²⁰⁷ Identification is when the user models themselves in some way off of a digital influencer.²⁰⁸

The development of involvement between a digital influencer and their following is the key to understanding the “stickiness” of a digital influencer’s following. Stickiness refers to the likelihood that users will spend time on the digital influencer’s content within the bounds of social media, but also will follow the digital influencer’s recommendations for purchases outside of the bounds of social media.²⁰⁹ This business context is known as media to consumers (M2C), in which digital influencers recommend their own or a third-party’s products via advertising on their account to their followers.²¹⁰ M2C has been a demonstrably successful style of marketing.²¹¹

Classical art meme accounts have visible signs of these traits of digital influencers on their pages and within their content. Logos and custom watermarks, for example, highlight self-branding, while techniques like regular posting and using hashtags show a consideration for online visibility.²¹² These accounts also employ M2C, with some account recommending their own products inspired by their CAMs, while other promote third-party products.²¹³

Learning how to get the algorithms to share content with users is considered a central component of the work of digital influencers.²¹⁴ Meta and Instagram are secretive about the inner workings of their algorithms, leaving digital influencer to play an “invisibility game,” in which they have to learn the rules of the algorithms in order to have their content recommended to users or face the risk of being made algorithmically invisible due to the Instagram algorithms not recommending their content to users.²¹⁵ Media companies have been built around trying to assist digital influencers in working with the algorithm, producing articles which give lists of dos and do nots, such as posting regularly and at specific time, avoiding low quality images, focusing on creating Reels, and avoiding violating Recommendation Guidelines.²¹⁶

This invisibility game produces what Duffy terms “algorithmic precarity,” in which a digital influencer is never sure that they have done what was needed to get the algorithms to recommend their content.²¹⁷ These feelings of algorithmic precarity can be damaging to the mental and physical wellbeing of digital influencers, as their livelihoods can often depend on the algorithm recommending their content to users.²¹⁸ It stands to reason that as digital influencers and digital content creators who specialise in making CAMs already have so many parallels in how they craft their content that behind the scenes, these feelings of algorithmic precarity may be occurring as well.

2.E: Copyright law, Ownership, and Tracking Reuse of Content

At its core the Open GLAM Initiative, digital and cultural commons theory, and the wider OA movement are negotiating ideas surrounding copyright and ownership in the hopes of giving equal access to information for all. Intellectual property, meanwhile, is a contentious subject within meme subculture, as memes employ the adaptation style recombinant appropriation, or the taking of various inputs to make a new cultural transmission that is often viewed as the intellectual property of the meme creator, without acknowledging the various sources. In the case of CAMs, DCCs reuse digitised cultural heritage materials created by GLAM+ institutions and add text which is often either sourced from a pre-existing meme template or referencing an idea/event that is currently popular online. Despite the process of gathering from multiple sources, digital content creators are keen to claim their work as solely their own, as seen in CAMs bearing watermarks.

To that end, this section will now examine copyright, paying special attention to how copyright law impacts the work of GLAM+ institutions in making their content more “open.” It will then examine ideas of ownership, such as intellectual property, paying special attention to how Instagram approaches these ideas in relation to CAMs. This section will then feature a brief examination of recent relevant legal cases in which GLAM+ institutions and DCCs sought to protect their works. This section will conclude with an examination of research into the tracking of reuse of digitised culture heritage materials and the challenges of tracking content online.

Copyright can generally be defined as a form of “legal protection given to content creators through the assignment of specific rights to works that qualify for protection.”²¹⁹ It is important to note that copyright protects expressions, not facts or

ideas.²²⁰ This could be paintings, photography, written works, audio, video, or other forms of creative expression. Copyright is automatically applied to works that meet an originality standard, in line with the Berne Convention,²²¹ and there is no requirement to apply for copyright, although the copyright may need to be registered in the case of suing for copyright infringement.²²² A copyright can be licensed or transferred, and permission from the copyright holder must be obtained to copy the work, make it available to the public, or make derivative works.²²³ CAMs, as a remixed form of artworks under copyright, can be classified as derivative works. A derivative work is defined in the US Copyright Act as:

Work based upon one or more pre-existing works, such as a translation, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed, or adapted.²²⁴

Copyright, in most cases, lasts for the lifetime of the creator plus seventy years.²²⁵ Some countries allow moral rights to accompany copyright, and in some of these countries, moral rights never expire.²²⁶ In the digital age, GLAM+ institutions' relationship with copyright has significantly changed due to the affordances of new technologies. The two main issues GLAM+ institutions deal with in relation to the copyright of their collection materials can be boiled down to: copyright on the original artefact, and copyright on the digital copy produced when digitising an artefact, usually in the form of a digital image.²²⁷

In regard to the copyright on the original artefact, as previously stated, copyright for most artistic works is the life of the creator plus seventy years. Any collection items that fall under copyright must go through a careful negotiation process with the rights holder if the institution wants to use them in some way.²²⁸ For example, if a collection item is featured in an exhibition, rights must be purchased to include a digital facsimile

in guides, promotional materials, educational materials, and any other way the artefact would be highlighted.²²⁹ This can be extremely difficult (or expensive) for an institution to navigate and can result in certain objects waiting in storage for the copyright period to end.²³⁰

In regard to the copyright on digitised cultural heritage materials (if the item is in the public domain or the copyright on the artefact has been handed over to the institution), the institution holds the copyright, and it is up to the institution to decide how they want to apply their copyright, particularly whether or not they want to allow the images to be reused, like how a content creator would make a CAM.²³¹ Some institutions charge licensing fees based on how the image will be used, such as for commercial or research purposes.²³² Others release their collection to the public for reuse for non-commercial purposes, while a licensing fee will apply for commercial uses.²³³ Other GLAM+ institutions will release their collections to the public to be used for any purpose, like the Rijksmuseum did in 2014.²³⁴ How then, would an institution (or a creator) go about enabling the utilisation of their digitised content? The main way to go about this would be to apply a licence that would enable to transparently free use/reuse of the content, such as a Creative Commons (CC) licence.

The Creative Commons, the organisation that created CC licences, was founded in 2001 in response to the passing of the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act in 1998 in the United States.²³⁵ This bill extended copyright on all works to the current 70 years after the death of the creator, a move which negatively impacted creators waiting for content to come into the Public Domain.²³⁶ In response, Lawrence Lessig, Hal

Abelson, and Eric Eldredⁱⁱ founded a non-profit organisation called The Creative Commons, whose goal was to make creative works freely available online.²³⁷ They began publishing CC licences, which were free, public licences that had more flexibility than the basic “all rights reserved.”²³⁸ Today there are nearly two billion works licensed under CC, which allows for creators to reuse, retool, and resell images and keep the profits.²³⁹ There has been international support for GLAM+ institutions applying CC licenses to their content, with some governments and governing bodies making it a requirement for institutions, particularly in the EU, where Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain have passed additional laws requiring government funded content to be OA beyond the general EU regulations.²⁴⁰

These licences, which are free to generate and use, come with a variety of potential restrictions/requirements for creators to choose from, dependent on how the creator wants to restrict/enable reuse of their content.²⁴¹ There are six types of licences to choose from, which the CC have distilled to icons, which are easily recognisable and allow for simple insertion on websites or within artworks themselves, making their reuse limitations intuitive to understand, as seen in Figure 13, below.²⁴² This is an intentional choice on the part of the CC to make their licensing framework accessible and simple to apply, in the hopes of preventing tension between creators and copyright holders.²⁴³

ⁱⁱ Interestingly, the Creative Commons do not list Abelson as a founding member on their website, although he is listed as the founding director. However, Wikipedia states he is a founder, however the citation for this is a broken link. It is unclear where this discrepancy comes from, and what the correct information is, so all three names will be included. See note 251 for supporting evidence.

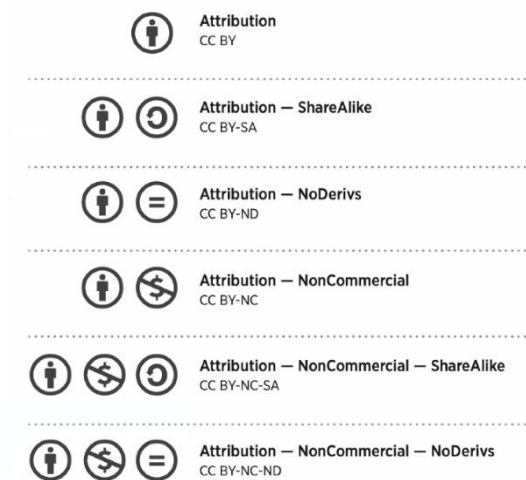


Figure 13: Types of Creative Commons licences and their associated symbols

GLAM+ institutions have had to rapidly evolve their responses to copyright issues as the internet evolved over the 2010s, with increased access, new platforms, and data available for immediate download making reuse of their digitised heritage materials easier than ever for users.²⁴⁴ Copyright law protects institutions' images, and they have the right to decide who can use images of objects from their collections depending on the purpose, the number of times the image will be used, the amount charged to allow re-use, and more.²⁴⁵ However it is important to keep in mind that GLAM+ institutions do not have law or rule-making power and must lobby another actor (i.e. the state or government) to pass laws or put rules in place. Their ability to do so is very limited compared to, for example, record companies, who have much stronger legal protections for the music released under their label. Copyright law is not intended to provide security to GLAM+ institutions. It is more accurately intended to secure the commercial exploitation of works by their creators e.g., the authors,

publishers, painters, playwrights etc. and not by the institutions the works are stored or displayed in.

Copyright and IP law are complex in the digital world. While the policies and laws surrounding images used as base content have been discussed, this section will briefly address research relating to copyright and IP laws and general best practices as applied to internet memes. As previously mentioned, internet memes generally employ the adaptation style of recombinant appropriation, which sources cultural information from a wide variety of sources, often without gaining necessary permissions. This can technically be viewed as copyright infringement, depending on what sources are sampled in the process of creating an internet meme.²⁴⁶ Adler and Fromer address internet memes, ideas of ownership, and the law in their comprehensive 2021 work, *Memes on Memes and the New Creativity*, highlighting a myriad of issues to consider, including the idea that internet memes need to be considered “a new creativity,” which engages in so many levels of cultural adaptation that current copyright law is too narrow to capture, simultaneously worrying that if creators are forced to allow free use, they cannot stop people with opposing rhetoric from co-opting their content.²⁴⁷

McConaghy and Holtzman introduce the idea of an “ownership layer” on the internet.²⁴⁸ This 2015 paper advocates for retrofitting the internet with some kind of system to allow for average users on the internet to easily register their works, handle licensing, track where content has been used online, and record provenance information, in addition to utilising blockchain as a method of securing timestamps on content. They note that the root issue of theft of IP online is that it is currently inconvenient for users to do anything but grab the images they need from a Google search and go.²⁴⁹ This, and other issues such as regional locks on media content (i.e. the

regional locks on certain content on Netflix), highlight the bigger problem: “while the Internet offers global connectivity, it ends at the legals,”²⁵⁰ going on to note that any laws implemented to protect IP, such as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act in the US, require an user to have extensive legal knowledge (or connections to someone with extensive legal knowledge) to understand and implement.²⁵¹

Variations on this idea have been popular in research, with Leung advocating for the concept of joint authorship to be adapted to suit the needs of meme culture.²⁵², while Soha & McDoweell champion the idea of “distributed authorship.”²⁵³ These arguments echo the central values of digital commons, in which ownership of information online is viewed as collective, while still protecting the needs of individuals. The consensus throughout these studies is that current copyright law is not meeting the needs of internet memes and their creators in general and needs to be addressed directly by lawmakers,²⁵⁴ and that internet memes are a valuable form of cultural expression that need protections developed specifically to suit the form and the level of complex adaptation involved in the creation process.²⁵⁵

Instagram’s rules around copyright are listed in their Terms of Use, Community Guidelines, Intellectual Property, and Copyright pages.²⁵⁶ They can be broken up into three rough categories of information relating to a user’s rights regarding copyright: User’s rights in relation to Instagram, user’s rights in relation to other users, and how users should respond to copyright violations. When posting to Instagram, a user gives Instagram a license to use their content, as described in the “Permissions You Give Us” section of the Terms of Use:

We do not claim ownership of your content, but you grant us a license to use it... When you share, post, or upload content that is covered by intellectual property rights (like photos or videos) on or in connection with our Service, you hereby grant to us a non-exclusive, royalty-free, transferable, sub-licensable,

worldwide license to host, use, distribute, modify, run, copy, publicly perform or display, translate, and create derivative works of your content (consistent with your privacy and application settings). This license will end when your content is deleted from our systems. You can delete content individually or all at once by deleting your account.²⁵⁷

Users own their content on Instagram, and therefore retain the rights to their intellectual property. However, users grant Instagram a global non-exclusive license to host their content, as well as to use, reuse, or remix their content in any way, as long as that use aligns with Instagram's privacy and application settings.²⁵⁸ The only way to revoke this global non-exclusive license is to delete content from Instagram.²⁵⁹

Advice from Instagram about how a user can and cannot use Instagram feature warnings to only post content that a user "has the right to share." "Remember to post authentic content," The Community Guidelines state, "and do not post anything you've copied or collected from the internet that you do not have the right to post."²⁶⁰ In the Terms of Use section "How You Can't Use Instagram," users are cautioned from posting anyone else's "private or confidential information without permission," or do anything else that involves violations of someone else's rights, including IP, copyright or trademark infringement, counterfeit or pirated goods.²⁶¹ More information, including an in-depth Q&A section can be found on the "Copyright" page.²⁶²

The final category of advice on Copyright from Instagram is how to report copyright violations. Instagram has a page dedicated to Intellectual Property, and on that page includes advice, instructions, and links for reporting copyright infringement on the app.²⁶³ Copyright violation reports can be made through two methods—by filling out and submitting Instagram's dedicated form for Copyright Infringement,²⁶⁴ or through contacting a designated agent and submitting a claim.²⁶⁵

There are few court cases that deal with copyright and memes. The most relevant case is “Griner vs. King for Congress,” in 2021. The case concerns the “Success Kid” meme, one of the first viral memes. Created in 2011, the internet meme features an image of a baby holding a fist up just under their chin, wearing a determined expression, with coloured panels in the background, and text above and below the baby, that users can remix as they see fit.²⁶⁶ The pose and facial expression are reminiscent of someone celebrating a victory of some kind, leading to the name “Success Kid.” An example of the meme can be seen in Figure 14.²⁶⁷



Figure 14: An example of the “Success Kid” internet meme

Lacey Griner took the original photo of their then 11-month-old son, Sam, in 2007. Griner licensed the image and registered the copyright in 2012, with the “Success Kid” image going on to be licensed for use in advertising for Virgin Media, Vitamin Water, Microsoft, and Coca-Cola, among others, even being used in an internet meme by the White House in 2013 to celebrate immigration reform.²⁶⁸ Griner has been very

engaged in the viral spread of “Success Kid,” often giving interviews and participating in meme subculture events, like ROFLcon.²⁶⁹

However, in 2020 Republican Steve King started using “Success Kid” in political advertisements to raise money for their congressional re-election campaign. An example of this illicit usage can be viewed in Figure 15.²⁷⁰ Griner denounced this move, noting that King had not contacted Griner in any way to try and legally acquire a license for the “Success Kid” image,²⁷¹ additionally taking issue with King’s controversial rhetoric, which includes racist and white supremacist comments that were so inappropriate that King was stripped of their House committee assignments by Republicans in 2019.²⁷² Griner did not want the “Success Kid” to be associated with what they described on Twitter as “this vile man or disgusting party,” referring to the US Republican Party.²⁷³



Figure 15: King’s use of the “Success Kid” in his campaign

Griner’s attorney served King and his campaign with a cease-and-desist letter in early December 2020, and filed a formal lawsuit on December 30, 2020 for copyright infringement.²⁷⁴ The case proceeded to trial, with the jury finding King and his

associates liable for copyright infringement.²⁷⁵ Griner was awarded \$750 in damages, which King appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, who declined to hear the case in 2024.²⁷⁶ This was the first successful case of this scale in which the creator of an internet meme was able to claim copyright on their internet meme.

In 2018, the creator of the "Pepe the Frog" meme, comic book artist Matt Furie, sued Alex Jones and Info Wars over their use of the internet meme template, particularly in merchandise that promoted right-wing figures.²⁷⁷ Similar to Griner, Furie took issue with Pepe the Frog becoming associated with right-wing rhetoric. However, unlike Griner, Furie had not taken the steps of licensing and registering the copyright on the Pepe the Frog images until after Info Wars had started selling merchandise with Pepe the Frog on it.²⁷⁸ Both parties chose to settle the case out of court instead of proceeding to trial, with Jones and Info Wars awarding Furie \$15,000 and a promise to destroy all of the merchandise with Pepe the Frog on it and no longer use Pepe the Frog in future merchandise.²⁷⁹

A number of copyright infringement cases brought forward by GLAM+ institutions have made headlines in recent years, such as the Berlin Egyptian Museum's case against an artist for using a 3D model of the famous Nefertiti statue (a suit which they lost)²⁸⁰, or the Uffizi gallery's case against French fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier over an unauthorised use of Botticelli's Venus in a clothing collection (as a result of which the merchandise was removed from sale venues and the suit was dropped).²⁸¹ In 2022 the Louvre filed a trademark lawsuit against an exhibition in a mall in Illinois, which was using the likeness of the institution and its art in what they called a "gimmicky" interactive digital display.²⁸² This suit is yet to be resolved as of April 2024.

Finally, the UK courts recently passed a decision that could fundamentally change the way that GLAM+ institutions handle copyright and licensing by setting a new legal precedent. In the UK in particular, many institutions are charging for not only reproductions of the images, but licenses to use images, for any purpose. UK copyright law requires content that a creator would like to be copyrighted to pass an “originality test.” The party requesting copyright protection need to be able to prove that the work was the “author’s own intellectual creation.”²⁸³

On November 20, 2023, the Court of Appeal in London made a significant ruling, which clarified the threshold for originality in copyright, stating that there must be clear evidence of creative expression which indicate a party’s intellectual property.²⁸⁴ Although the case was based around a dispute concerning software, the judge asserted that photographs of someone else’s intellectual property does not constitute a creative expression.²⁸⁵ Realistic photographs of a work created by another party cannot then be copyrighted by the photographer, as the photographer did not utilise creative expression in the creation of the photograph.

A number of articles have subsequently been published heralding this decision as the beginning of the end of GLAM+ institutions in the UK being able to claim copyright on an image of an artwork that itself is out of copyright, through the setting of legal precedent.²⁸⁶ It is a crucial ruling, which stipulates that there is “no copyright for faithful reproductions of PD materials.”²⁸⁷ This move has been heralded by Creative Commons, Europeana, and the Communia Association, among other organisations who champion OA in GLAM+ institutions. Creative Commons highlights how this ruling is in line with the 2019 EU Directive on copyright, creating further legal precedent for the

rest of the world to follow, as OA becomes a greater priority, particularly for publicly funded institutions.²⁸⁸

The biggest challenge in legally protecting images such as digitised cultural heritage materials or CAMs is being able to find the fraudulent uses of this content online. Since the rise in popularity of social media platforms with trackable metrics, a number of research studies have looked into tracking the reuse of content from GLAM+ institutions on various platforms.²⁸⁹ A number of studies have chosen to focus on how difficult and complicated tracking reuse of content online is. This idea of the lack of a consistent method of tracking is central to O’Gara et al., who highlight the need for standardised assessment methodologies in GLAM+ institutions. On the lack of reuse metrics, they write:

combined with a lack of community assessment norms, has a twofold effect: it makes it difficult for institutions to develop, using appropriate data, strong infrastructures and collections that are responsive to user needs, and it suppresses the ability of a digital library to demonstrate its value to stakeholders, including administrators, funding bodies, and potential users.²⁹⁰

This idea of using metrics to facilitate demonstrating the value of GLAM+ institutions is also a central theme for Chapman et al., who focuses on developing a set of best practices for assessing use and reuse.²⁹¹

Carter calls for building a culture of assessment of online reuse of content, advocating for governing bodies to step in and regulate this method of demonstrating reach through metrics.²⁹² If a more robust culture of assessment were to be embraced by GLAM+ institutions, King, Stark, and Cooke assert that it would be easier to highlight the cultural value of digital content and engagement with digital content to outside parties (and within GLAM+ institutions), which could have a massive impact on every aspect of the sector, from partnerships to marketing to funding.²⁹³ Punzalan and Butler

echo this concern over a lack of assessment and assessment models for digital engagement and reuse, emphasising the many attempts over the last ten-fifteen years to develop one through multiple organisations.²⁹⁴

Another common technique in the current research is to focus on metrics for a specific platform as a way to narrow the scope of tracking their content online. This technique covers a variety of platforms ranging from Instagram to Wikimedia, for example.²⁹⁵ Within this category, studies can focus on metrics for a specific institution, such as The Brooklyn Museum or the Museum of Natural History of Florence, within which Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter are highlighted.²⁹⁶ Certain institutions have taken on the task of tracking reuse of their own materials across the internet and published the results, such as the Rijksmuseum, the British Library, and ScotDigiCH.²⁹⁷

These studies, given their intentionally narrow scopes, offer a variety of informational lessons in regard to tracking reuse of content, both from GLAM+ institutions and DCCs. However, one consistent point made across these studies is that while metrics are helpful for quickly capturing the impact of a piece of content, it is the qualitative impact that truly matters, not the quantitative. Villaespeasa and Wowkowych highlight this in their examination of the Brooklyn Museum's presence (via visitors) on Instagram and Snapchat. Their focus was on the ephemeral storytelling nature of Snapchat and the Instagram stories function, and how visitors to the museum who posted about the museum were attempting to capture an emotional connection with the art and institution—a far more valuable interaction, they posited, than one that could be captured by metrics connected to professional photos, such as those posted to their own repositories and social media accounts.²⁹⁸

Another consistent point across these studies, particularly in many of the individual institutions' work on tracking the reuse of their collections, has been on finding ways to further enable the utilisation of their digitised content. The Rijksmuseum, as discussed previously, has been a trailblazer in the GLAM sector in regard to their work enabling the utilisation of their content. Much of the Rijksmuseum literature on tracking use and reuse online focuses on legal/licensing issues and justifying releasing their content freely.²⁹⁹ The British Library's work on tracking use/reuse of their content, however, is much more granular, focusing on documenting as many platforms and related functions (commercial, creative, etc.) as they can find.³⁰⁰

In summary, copyright is the legal protections afforded to creators for their works. Copyright is automatically applied and can be additionally registered. Copyright can be licensed or transferred, or permission can be granted to use a copyrighted work. Copyright lasts for the lifetime of the creator plus seventy years in most cases. CAMs are considered a derivative work, which is a work based on one or more pre-existing works. GLAM+ institutions deal with two main types of copyright—the copyright on artefacts, which depending on the age of the artefact may not have expired yet and so rests with the original creator of the artefact, and the copyright on digitised cultural heritage materials, which rests with the GLAM+ institution as they created the image. GLAM+ institutions generally license their digitised cultural heritage materials, either through a licensing department, charging users based on their intended purpose for the images, or through an open licensing scheme, like the Creative Commons, which allows for a wide variety of licenses to be freely applied that denote a variety of requirements for using the content they are applied to.

Research examining internet memes and copyright highlight a few central points, the first being that due to the nature of internet memes being the product of many inputs, they can technically be viewed as copyright infringement. This is not because these researchers want to highlight copyright infringement within the meme subculture, but because they are trying to highlight how current copyright law is unable to meet the needs of meme subculture. However, internet memes are a valuable form of cultural expression within the online sphere, even being considered a new form of language by some researchers. To that end, many researchers have advocated for a purpose-built solution for internet memes and copyright.

Instagram's rules and policies regarding copyright and IP are spread out through their administrative pages, with relevant sections in the "Terms of Use" and "Community Guidelines," and a few dedicated pages for "Copyright" and "Intellectual Property." The rules are simple: do not post content that you did not make yourself. And if you must post someone else's work, credit them accordingly. If a user posts content that is flagged as a violation of copyright, Instagram has the right to delete the post and even delete the account it was posted from. Users have multiple pathways to report copyright violations.

When looking to court cases relevant to copyright, internet memes, and GLAM+ institutions, a few cases have had significant impact on this research over the last decade. The first is Griner vs. King for Congress in the United States in 2024, in which the creator of the base content for the "Success Kid" internet meme defended their registered copyright of the base content from being used by controversial Republican Steve King to raise money for their re-election campaign. This case establishes a precedent for how DCCs can potentially protect their intellectual property moving

forward. The second is THJ vs. Sheridan in the United Kingdom in 2023, in which a dispute between software developers resulted in a landmark decision regarding the “originality test” for works seeking copyright protections in the UK. The judge ruled that realistic images of works of art cannot themselves be copyrighted, as they do not constitute a creative expression, merely a recreation of a pre-existing work. Under this ruling, GLAM+ institutions in the UK cannot continue to copyright and license images of their collections, particularly those in the Public Domain.

The most significant challenge for dealing with copyright infringement is being aware of its occurrences. Research looking into tracking reuse of digitised cultural heritage materials emphasise how daunting of a task this is, with researchers calling for standardised assessment methods to be developed,³⁰¹ as well as fostering a “culture of assessment,”³⁰² in which meaningful evidence of engagement with content is prioritised within GLAM+ institutions.³⁰³ A number of researchers highlight how metrics are an unreliable demonstrator of impact, calling for assessment methods that prioritise qualitative data.³⁰⁴ These studies highlight a clear gap in both research and practice.

2.F: Final Thoughts

Similar to recombinant appropriation pulling from a wide range of cultural sources to form a base of knowledge from which to create a new cultural transmission, this theoretical framework has pulled from a wide range of literature to form a base of knowledge from which to conduct this research. Each section yielded valuable insights into the foundational subjects within this research, and inspired questions for consideration throughout the data gathering and analysis processes.

CAMs are a unique style of internet meme, a type of digital cultural transmission, which employ a unique style of adaptation: recombinant appropriation,

which sources cultural inputs from a variety of sources, combining the ideas to form new meanings as a CAM.³⁰⁵ CAMs employ stylistic humour, a style of juxtaposition in which expectations are humorously subverted by the form—a “high” culture work of art and a “low” culture text.³⁰⁶ There are three types of CAM, the first is an emotion-based CAM, in which the text makes light of the emotions depicted in the base content. The second is a situation-based CAM, in which the text makes light of the situation depicted in the base content. The third is an absurd CAM, in which the text acknowledges the absurdity of the image, in contrast with the first two types which use the text to make the base content relatable to the viewer. There are two types of revenue generation that CAM accounts engage in—advertising their own merchandise based off of their CAMs or third-party advertising. Do DCCs intentionally create CAMs which roughly align with these categories? Does the intention of the text dictate how DCCs choose base content? Or does the base content dictate how DCCs write the text? Does the revenue generation style of the account impact how DCCs choose their base content or write the text?

GLAM+ institutions have seen a need for digital offerings in the last decade and responded by launching massive digital collections, notably the Rijksmuseum was the first to release their collection under an open access licensing scheme, making their images free to reuse.³⁰⁷ The OA movement has been taken up in a number of methods in GLAM+ institutions, through avenues such as Creative Commons licenses, the OpenGLAM initiative, and cultural commons theory.³⁰⁸ Some researchers have called for GLAM+ institutions to consider adopting commons theory into their operations, creating commons-oriented GLAMs.³⁰⁹ As technology continues to develop, could the idea of commons-oriented GLAMs be a way for GLAM+ institutions to continue to

evolve? How does illicit use of digitised cultural heritage materials impact GLAM+ institutions, if it does at all? Could commons theory assist in the development of OA practices and policies in GLAM+ institutions? Could commons theory have an impact on the relationships that GLAM+ institutions build with visitors/users?

Online platforms, such as Instagram, are websites which facilitate public discourse through the mechanics of their digital infrastructure. These online platforms have had to develop proactive governance measures in the last decade, particularly as social media applications have become globally popular, becoming the “primary keepers of the cultural discussion as it moves to the internet.”³¹⁰ This research focuses on Instagram as the main social media platform from which to gather data. One of Instagram’s defining features is its content recommendation algorithms, which send various pieces of content to a user based on their choices on Instagram, such as what content they like, comment on, save, or share.³¹¹ How do the Instagram algorithms impact DCCs and how they operate online? Instagram is the chosen platform for this research, but do DCCs prefer working with Instagram or another social media platform? How do ideas of platform governance impact the work of DCCs?

While there is no direct research on DCCs in the context of CAMs, research on digital influencers can fill in gaps in knowledge, particularly in relation to the experience of Instagram’s algorithms. Digital influencers can build their following by developing two key characteristics on their page and within their content: self-branding and online visibility. Self-branding is developing methods through which a user can recognise a digital influencer and their work, such as stylistic choices like a logo or a catch phrase or a particular aesthetic. Online visibility speaks to practice more than appearance and denotes activities that the digital influencer can undertake to make their

content appeal to the Instagram algorithms.³¹² Learning how to get the algorithms to share content with users is considered a central component of the work of digital influencers.³¹³ Researchers note a concerning phenomenon amongst digital influencers in relation to social media algorithms. This is a feeling of “algorithmic precarity,” in which a digital influencer feels unable to keep up with or understand the requirements the algorithm has in order to widely share the digital influencer’s content.³¹⁴ How does this feeling of algorithmic precarity impact DCCs? How does it impact GLAM+ institutions, if at all? How have the creation processes of DCCs shifted to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the Instagram algorithms? Comparing publicly visible practices between digital influencers and DCCs has highlighted a number of similarities, will algorithmic precarity be another?

Copyright law and ideas of ownership have been shifting in the digital age, as the internet has fostered a flourishing remix culture, challenging ideas of individual ownership of works. Current copyright law affords legal protections to creative works, usually for the lifetime of the creator, plus 70 years.³¹⁵ While copyright is automatically applied, copyright can be registered, transferred, or licensed, traditionally in the case of a commercial reproduction of the work.³¹⁶ CAMs are considered derivative works, or works based on one or more pre-existing works, which could technically be considered copyright infringement, depending on the base content in the CAM.³¹⁷ GLAM+ institutions have to deal with copyright in the form of existing copyright on works that they do not own, and applying their own copyright to images of works in their collection. Some GLAM+ institutions choose to waive their copyright, some choose to apply an open license, like a Creative Commons license, some choose to license images only in the case of commercial reproductions, while some choose to license images for

any use.³¹⁸ Researchers advocate for the idea of “joint ownership,” in which a derivative work is considered an extension of the original work, which still has valid ownership of the IP, while equally being the IP of the creator of the derivative work.³¹⁹ How could this idea of joint ownership impact the work of DCCs? How could it impact the work of GLAM+ institutions? What would joint ownership look like in practice? How does Instagram play into ideas of copyright and ownership in the digital era?

At the core of this research is the question: Who owns cultural heritage? By examining these varied fields of study, a picture begins to emerge in which both DCCs and GLAM+ institutions are wrestling with this question. Do GLAM+ institutions, as the keepers of the physical manifestations of works of art, get to decide how digitised cultural heritage materials get used? Do DCCs get to use whatever digitised cultural heritage material they want, without consideration for how much time, money, and labour went into the creation of these digital facsimiles? Online platforms facilitate cultural exchange and the dissemination of information, do they get to police how that information is used? How do current understandings of copyright law and current relevant court cases in which current interpretations of those laws are challenged impact DCCs and GLAM+ institutions? These questions will be considered throughout this dissertation, informing the conceptual and methodological frameworks, guiding the analysis of the data sets, and ultimately contributing to the findings.

Notes

- ¹ Shifman, "Memes in a Digital World," 362.
- ² Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture*; Voigts, "Memes and Recombinant Appropriation."
- ³ Gumkowska and Toczyski, "Global Digital Genre-Communication Forms in the Process of Flow to Local Polish Memosphere," 46.
- ⁴ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 192.
- ⁵ Nikos Salingaros, "Darwinian Processes and Memes in Architecture: A Memetic Theory of Modernism," *Journal of Memetics - Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission*, ATOA, 6, no. 1 (2002).
- ⁶ Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture*, 14.
- ⁷ Shifman, 14.
- ⁸ Vásquez and Aslan, "'Cats Be Outside, How about Meow,'" 101.
- ⁹ Shifman, "Memes in a Digital World," 362–63.
- ¹⁰ Gabriele Marino, "Semiotics of Spreadability: A Systematic Approach to Internet Memes and Virality," *Punctum*. 1, no. 1 (2015): 43–66, <https://doi.org/10.18680/hss.2015.0004>.
- ¹¹ Raivio, "Classical Art Memes as an Affinity Space: A Faceted Classification of an Online Entertainment Page," 9.
- ¹² Gumkowska and Toczyski, "Global Digital Genre-Communication Forms in the Process of Flow to Local Polish Memosphere," 44; Voigts, "Memes and Recombinant Appropriation."
- ¹³ Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture*, 41.
- ¹⁴ Voigts, "Memes and Recombinant Appropriation," 2–3.
- ¹⁵ Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture*, 30.
- ¹⁶ Knobel and Lankshear, "Online memes, affinities and cultural production (2018 update)"; Aharoni, "When High and Pop Culture (Re)Mix"; Vásquez and Aslan, "'Cats Be Outside, How about Meow.'"
- ¹⁷ Dancygier and Vandelanotte, "Internet Memes as Multimodal Constructions"; Adrian Lou, "Multimodal Simile: The 'When' Meme in Social Media Discourse," *English Text Construction* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 106–31, <https://doi.org/10.1075/etc.10.1.06lou>; Francisco Yus, "Multimodality in Memes: A Cyberpragmatic Approach," in *Analyzing Digital Discourse: New Insights and Future Directions*, ed. Patricia Bou-Franch and Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 105–31, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92663-6_4; Knobel and Lankshear, "Online memes, affinities and cultural production (2018 update)"; Marta Dynel, "'I Has Seen Image Macros!' Advice Animals Memes as Visual-Verbal Jokes," *International Journal of Communication* 10, no. 0 (January 29, 2016): 29; Sapanzha O.s and Ershova D.e, "VERBAL IN FINE ARTS: USE OF QUOTES, WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS IN MODERN ART MEMES," *Russian Linguistic Bulletin*, no. №2 (10) 2017 (June 19, 2017): 56–58, <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.10.07>; Jiayu Wang and Mingfang Hu, "The Discursive Power of Memes in Digital Culture: Ideology, Semiotics, and

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¹⁸ Voigts, “Memes and Recombinant Appropriation,” 286.

¹⁹ Voights refers to the concept of “bastard culture,” as coined by Schäfer, who is referring to the way that technology has allowed for the integration of business and personal practices online.

Mirko Tobias Schäfer, *Bastard Culture! How User Participation Transforms Cultural Production*, Media Matters (Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 107.

²⁰ Objets trouvés are material to be transformed at the hands of its audience.

²¹ Monteur is a French word for “someone who fits parts of a machine together.”

²² Voigts, “Memes and Recombinant Appropriation,” 291.

²³ Aharoni, “When High and Pop Culture (Re)Mix,” 2286; Shifman, “Memes in a Digital World.”

²⁴ Voigts, “Memes and Recombinant Appropriation,” 291.

²⁵ M.M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), <https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/bakess>; Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992).

²⁶ Piata, “Stylistic Humor across Modalities,” 178.

²⁷ Adam Bianchi, “This Is What It Would Look Like If Women’s Roles In Movies Were Played By Men,” BuzzFeed, June 5, 2014, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/adambianchi/this-is-what-happens-when-you-replace-the-women-in-movies-wi>.

²⁸ Bianchi.

²⁹ Cole Stryker, *Epic Win for Anonymous: How 4chan’s Army Conquered the Web* (New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2011); Bree McEwan and Miriam Sobre-Denton, “Virtual Cosmopolitanism: Constructing Third Cultures and Transmitting Social and Cultural Capital Through Social Media,” *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 4, no. 4 (November 1, 2011): 252–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2011.598044>.

³⁰ Raivio, “Classical Art Memes as an Affinity Space: A Faceted Classification of an Online Entertainment Page,” 18.

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³⁵ Raivio, “Classical Art Memes as an Affinity Space: A Faceted Classification of an Online Entertainment Page,” 2.

³⁶ Piata, “Stylistic Humor across Modalities.”

³⁷ Dancygier and Vandelanotte, “Internet Memes as Multimodal Constructions.”

³⁸ “Meme Generator: Create Your Own Meme,” MemeGenerator.net, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://memegenerator.net/>. (Image created by Cydney Thompson on January 20, 2022).

³⁹ Dynel, “‘I Has Seen Image Macros!’ Advice Animals Memes as Visual-Verbal Jokes.”

⁴⁰ Vásquez and Aslan, “‘Cats Be Outside, How about Meow’”; Dynel, “‘I Has Seen Image Macros!’ Advice Animals Memes as Visual-Verbal Jokes”; Leticia Tian Zhang and Daniel Cassany, “‘The Murderer Is Him ✓’: Multimodal Humor in Danmu Video Comments,” *Internet Pragmatics* 4, no. 2 (October 25, 2021): 272–94, <https://doi.org/10.1075/ip.00038.zha>; Piata, “Stylistic Humor across Modalities”; Yus, “Multimodality in Memes”; Dancygier and Vandelanotte, “Internet Memes as Multimodal Constructions.”

⁴¹ Archakis et al., “Linguistic Varieties in Style.”

⁴² Lou, “Multimodal Simile.”

⁴³ Lou, 109.

⁴⁴ Lou, “Multimodal Simile.”

⁴⁵ “Classical Damn 🐾 on Instagram: ‘🐾 Follow Me, @classicaldamn for the Best Art Content on Instagram 🐾 #artmemes #funny #arthistorymemes #classicmemes #relate#me#explore #laugh #humour#explorepag #art #middleage#sarcastic#sarcasm#dankmemes#funnymemes#explore#classicartmemes#classicalartmemes#history#philosophy#bestmemes#philosophy #philosophymemes #philosophyjoke#philosophicalmemes #philosopher #philosophical#memesdaily #dailymemes #nerdjokes,’” Instagram, January 8, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CYekNEHvWtp/>.

⁴⁶ Lou, “Multimodal Simile.”

⁴⁷ “Classical Damn 🐾 on Instagram: ‘🐾 Follow Me, @classicaldamn for More Art Memes like This! . . . #nichememes #filthyfrank #ironicmemes #cleanmemes #tumblrpost #memestar #spicymemes #redditmemes #edgymemesforedgyteens #edgymemes #contemporaryart #contemporaryartist

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⁵⁰ Thomas F. Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 10–14.

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⁵⁴ “Affective, Adj.,” in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, July 2023), <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/3357>.

⁵⁵ Sasha Luks-Morgan, “Open Access: History & Policies,” Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Lib Guides, accessed February 13, 2022, https://cshl.libguides.com/open_access/history_policy.

⁵⁶ Terras, “Opening Access to Collections,” 735.

⁵⁷ Terras, 735.

⁵⁸ Digital Repository of Ireland, “DRI Factsheet No 2: Copyright, Licensing and Open Access (2014-2021),” *Digital Repository of Ireland*, October 5, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.rb699s72v-1>.

⁵⁹ “Home,” Open Knowledge Foundation, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://okfn.org>.

⁶⁰ Open Knowledge Foundation, “What Is Open?,” Open Knowledge Foundation, accessed February 11, 2022, <https://okfn.org>.

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Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

As mentioned in the Introduction, in order to make sense of data available, the FAIR Data Principles will be used as the cognitive structure within which data gathered can be organised and analysed. This chapter will describe the conceptual framework of this research, first examining the idea of “aura” as presented by Benjamin, and later discussed by other researchers, as CAMs allow for unique questions to be asked surrounding aura and how people engage with art in the digital era. Benjamin’s advocacy for art to be made that does away with aura leads into the idea of commons-oriented GLAMs, in which GLAM+ institutions promote the creation of data designed for reproducibility, freedom, and play, as Benjamin advocated for, and engaging in community-led approaches to their practice. One of the ways that commons-oriented GLAMs could be fostered is through the reinterpretation and application of the FAIR Data Principles, a set of OA designed measures to produce open data.

This chapter will then examine the FAIR Data Principles and how they can be applied to the creation practice of both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, paying attention to the original technical specifications of FAIR and suggesting cultural applications of FAIR, as well as explaining important related concepts within the analysis of the three datasets. Illustrating how these principles may be applied by the parties in this research is important, as they highlight how easily the FAIR Data Principles can be applied to data by anyone, whether they are a professional content creator or not.

3.A: Aura and Commons-oriented GLAM+ Institutions

As previously discussed, Benjamin’s theory of aura is an important concept within the wider discussions on reuse and remixing of digitised cultural heritage materials. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin

addresses reproductions of art, introduces the concept of the “aura,” and asserts that this aura is the sacred in a work of art. When artworks are mechanically reproduced, Benjamin asserts, this aura is lost.¹ GLAM+ institutions have reported a similar phenomenon, both to the visitors experiencing the aura of an object, and visitors who are inevitably disappointed when they find out that the object they are looking at is a reproduction, highlighting the loss of the feeling of the aura of the object.

An example of the visitors experiencing aura can be seen in the highly emotional responses to shoes on display in the U.S. Holocaust Museum.² While shoes are not typically an item that evokes an emotional response from the average person, these shoes belonged to victims of the Holocaust, and people have reported that seeing those shoes, 4,000 of them in a pile, humanises the victims for visitors, allowing the visitors to imagine the lives of the original owners of the shoes. Some of the shoes are beautiful, highlighting the care taken in selecting and caring for them, while others are worn, highlighting the hard conditions the wearer may have faced.³

It is not the idea of shoes, the idea of the age or make or condition of the shoes, that is touching to the visitor. It is the connection the shoes make for the visitor with the thousands of people who inhabited the shoes.⁴ People who were just as real as the visitor, not some vague idea of what the past or people in the past may have been like. This emotional connection is fostered by the aura of the object. The responses from visitors to these shoes have led other museums around the world to incorporate these items into their own displays that focus on the Holocaust.⁵ Other examples of the experience of aura include the wonder displayed by visitors to the Vatican when they get to view the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and the sorrow displayed by visitors when they get to view works by Vincent Van Gogh.⁶

An example of the lack of aura can be seen in questions noted in a handling session for medieval armour in a museum, from children who asked the session leader, “Is this real?” The implied meaning of the question in this instance being, “Is this authentic?”⁷ This kind of interaction is so common that in 2013 the American Alliance of Museums annual conference was entitled, “Is it real? Do we care?” and focused on 3-D replications of collection materials.⁸ Another example is seen in the account of a journalist who visited the Caverne du Pont d’Arc, which is a replica of the Chauvet cave in France that opened in 2016. They described the replica cave as photo realistic, but “patently false,” describing the experience as entering a simulacrum, a “very good one,” but suggesting that while we have been left with a protected version of the cave, we risk “the loss of the most important thing to those who truly know and love art history: the soul.”⁹ Visitors to other cave replicas exhibited the same range of reactions, with some being deeply appreciative of the time and effort, while others were dismissive of the replica experience.¹⁰ Other examples of this phenomenon can be seen in responses to 3D replicas of Native American artefacts in the Smithsonian Museum, which have drawn controversy.¹¹

Aura is a contentious term within academic literature regarding museum collections, with a clear divide between scholars, some asserting that museums need original authentic objects, while others assert that aura can be transferred to replications, or even that the aura does not need to transfer, as replications have auras of their own.¹² The evolution of views regarding aura since Benjamin’s essay was penned in 1935 highlight an evolution happening in parallel, as society and the GLAM+ sector itself have shifted in their views of the mission of GLAM+ institutions.

Casey introduced three typologies for classifying GLAM+ institution practice in 2003, which remains accurate in 2024: legislative, interpretive, and performing institutions. The legislative is “a pre-19th century conception.”¹³ Legislative GLAM+ institutions aim to be “paragons of the aesthetic and intellectual pursuit,” with Casey further describing them as “a venue for display, not debate.”¹⁴ Very few of these kinds of institutions exist today, as society’s expectations of these places have shifted. Interpretive GLAM+ institutions are closer to today’s GLAM+ institutions and aim to act as intermediaries of knowledge for the visitor, imparting context for the objects including provenance and other relevant information.¹⁵ Performing GLAM+ institutions are put forward by Casey as the future of the sector, in which performing GLAM+ institutions aim to employ “commercial strategies to entertain audiences,”¹⁶ and just as much emphasis is placed on how objects are displayed (specifically referencing interpretive materials accompanying the artworks) as the objects themselves.¹⁷

This de-centralisation of the object within the visitor experience is indicative of the shift in the remit of museums, which has gone from a high culture space for objects to be displayed in, to a space intended for all kinds of culture, in which objects are used by GLAM+ institution staff to share the story of the past through the lens of the object, instead of solely focusing on the object.¹⁸ Aharoni echoes this idea, noting that, “Museums have begun to alter their object-centeredness and to value the potential of digital collections for both democratising access and generating emotional engagement.”¹⁹ Other scholars envision the future of the GLAM+ sector as one that is participatory in nature, in which the interaction between a user/visitor and the GLAM+ institution is the most important element of the learning experience.²⁰

When looking at academic literature concerning aura, Zarko Pać defines this idea of technological reproducibility through the example of cinema, noting that in cinema, technological reproducibility allows for there to be distance between the object and the viewer, “because it brings a copy of the original to a situation completely different from the original, thus eliminating the authenticity of the work or its aura—distancing being the essence of reproduction.”²¹ This definition works very well when applied to CAMs—as a form of technologically reproduced art, a CAM is recontextualising the original work of art that serves as the base content, using humorous low-brow language to create a “situation completely different from the original,” which is in opposition to this idea of the base content’s aura, or the sacred in the work, as a type of “classical art.” Boris Groys controversially believes that the aura does not disappear when reproduced, but rather “emerges in the full scale of its appearance.”²² Groys states that the sanctity of the object is amplified when it is reproduced, an idea which is indirect opposition to Benjamin’s conception of aura.

Some scholars hold the notion of aura, contentious and highly ambiguous as it is, in high regard, with one going so far as to claim it is the combination of:

Motifs of Greek mythology, Jewish Kabbalistic and eschatology, echoes of esotericism and occultism, the modern experience of transcending the boundaries of the material world of phenomena, the bohemian experience of poets and artists from Baudelaire to the Surrealists, and the practice of opium and hashish users.²³

This is a wide reaching and almost religious view of Benjamin’s inspirations, potentially echoing the religious reverence Benjamin’s notion of aura holds for art. However, most scholars cite Benjamin’s writing as being heavily influenced by the German philosophical tradition, with aesthetics of Hegel and Kant, Heidegger’s terminology and categories, the language of Schlegel and Novalis, and the romanticism

of Nietzsche,²⁴ performing their own sort of recombinant appropriation with the work of these iconic German philosophers to distil their idea of aura. Other scholars believe that in the digital age, aura is less important, or that aura has transformed alongside technology. Jasmine Burns postulates that aura as Benjamin imagined it is a concept that is maintained by GLAM+ institutions, who set the standards for how people can interact with art. “Part of what defines the authenticity of historic objects,” they write, “is their existence within a cultural heritage institution. The custodial history provided by the institution offers a provenance that further enhances the aura and defines our expectations for viewing and interacting with these collections.”²⁵

This is echoed in Ernst Hans Gombrich’s assertion that the frame is what communicates the aura of an artwork, or rather, the way it is encased for view. When a frame is appropriate it goes unnoticed, they write, as it “invites a proper mode of viewing,” while when the frame changes drastically beyond what is expected, the viewer becomes aware of it.²⁶ Daniel Miller takes this idea a step further, positing that spaces are a form of framing—a library or archive for example, becomes the frame to artwork housed within the institution—and ideas such as curation, preservation, and promotion of the artwork become a part of the framing. In this format the way that art is viewed is framed by institutional policies, shaping the public understanding of artworks.²⁷

In regard to digitised cultural heritage materials, by taking the work of art both out of its literal frame and the framing of an institution, digitised art works can exist in a context outside of their traditional one, becoming a part of popular culture. Burns posits that the digital transformation of an artwork enables the art to become a “part of a larger cultural ethos, therefore changing the social context of these sources once again.”²⁸ The

artwork re-joins the current cultural creation cycle, and this recontextualisation allows for the audience to identify with the artwork in a new way. This identification allows for the formation of emotional attachments with both the work of art and the DCC who delivers it to the audience. This idea of identification, as noted previously, is important to understand how CAMs have become so popular.

There are famous examples of users identifying with technologically reproduced artworks, ultimately boosting the popularity and reputation of the original work, seemingly in direct contradiction to Benjamin's ideas about the aura of a work. Many scholars have cited the Mona Lisa as a particularly notable example of this, going so far as to label it as a phenomenon.²⁹ "The Mona Lisa effect," as Merete Sanderhoff calls it, theorises that digital reproductions of artworks can increase the iconic value of works through distribution of copies.³⁰ Itay Snir considers the Mona Lisa effect in light of its impact on engagement with art, noting that "a reproduced Mona Lisa evokes no awe and has no authority: it can be approached and touched, one can draw a moustache and write whatever they like on it. The loss of aura, then, is a liberating, enabling event."³¹ Paić, echoes this in their analysis of Benjamin's intent in examining aura, noting that he does not "lament the aura's decay," instead looking for its meaning and potential.³²

Paić goes on to note:

What radiates in the aura is the *tradition* the original object carries with it: a tradition anchored in the ritualistic manner original artworks are preserved and transmitted along with the sociocultural context that gives them meaning. Simply put, original artworks are not only treated in a traditional way; they *are* tradition, embodying and carrying it from one generation to the next.³³

What Paić means is that the aura of a work can instead be viewed as the summation of the creation, dissemination, and preservation of art throughout history. This shift in the definition of aura allows for technological reproduction of the work without worrying

about the aura. In the example of the Mona Lisa, the aura is more concerned with the legacy of the painting, shifting the notion of the sacred to the painting's history, where users can revere the work and the artist while simultaneously consuming remixes of the work. This idea of the aura of an artwork instead consisting of the tradition of creating art throughout time is powerful—it allows art to continue to be revered and impactful in any context it finds itself in (religious or not) and enables the creators of new and remixed art to push the boundaries of what their art can say and do. This is what Benjamin wanted with regards to aura, as seen in their comments about the loss of the aura facilitating reproducibility and “freedom and play.”³⁴

Interrogating Benjamin's work and the critical tradition surrounding it is important as this idea of aura can be seen in various aspects of how GLAM+ institutions and DCCs operate online. What is aura in the era of modern technology? How does it impact the content that creators make? How does aura align with commons theory?

Commons theory, as conceptualised by Ostrom, was previously discussed in the Theoretical Framework. But what precisely would a commons-oriented GLAM+ institution look like? How would it operate? As previously noted, three strands of commons theory directly relate to GLAM+ institutions and DCCs in the context of this dissertation. DCCs and GLAM+ institutions both can (and possibly already do) directly benefit from practices online that align with digital commons. GLAM+ institutions, for example, as caretakers of cultural heritage artefacts with a mandate to preserve and share that cultural heritage with the public, engage in cultural commons activities—although they are generally not sites of cultural commons due to a lack of community involvement in the leadership of these institutions.³⁵ DCCs, meanwhile, unintentionally

engage in cultural commons through their recontextualisations of digitised cultural heritage materials as base content for CAMs. This creative work engages with and disseminates cultural tradition, making the base content accessible intellectually and culturally through the text for a modern audience.

As a natural extension of urban, digital, and cultural commons, Avdikos et al. propose the concept of a “commons-oriented GLAM,” or a GLAM+ institution which is led by commons theory. The goal of this shift in practice is to ground the GLAM sector in commons theory in long-term meaningful ways that challenge traditional ideas of how GLAM+ institutions should be run, such as democratic process in management. The three central tenets of commons are also present in the GLAM sector: resources, communities, and governance/management arrangements. By examining these 3 elements within GLAM+ institutions through the lens of commons theory, a framework for how a commons-oriented GLAM could be operated begins to emerge.³⁶

The resources of a GLAM+ institution can be 1) intangible, such as knowledge, information, and various types of labour (volunteer vs. specialised), 2) material/physical, such as artefacts and archives, or merchandise and 3) digital, such as digital infrastructure and data about the collections. The communities of GLAM+ institutions are diverse and ever-changing. There are professional groups which include GLAM+ institution staff, including scientific experts such as conservators and curators. There are non-professional groups such as volunteers and other people who support the institution, such as donors. There are social groups who take interest in the institution, or have a special interest in an element of the collections. Within commons theory, all of these parties should be able to actively contribute to the work of the GLAM+ institution. Finally, the governance/management of GLAM+ institutions is traditionally

achieved through a committee, for example, a board of directors or trustees, who make all the important decisions for the institution.³⁷

Within their conceptual framework of how a commons-oriented GLAM would operate, Avdikos et al. identify 9 areas of interest where they identify practices that could be shifted to accommodate elements of commons theory: 1) Legal/ownership status, 2) decision-making, 3) accessibility/engagement, 4) labour, 5) relations with external actors, 6) finance, 7) content creation, 8) sharing/distribution, and 9) open access and IPR.³⁸ While it is not within the scope of this dissertation to fully delve into all 9 areas of interest, it is worth noting how many of them align with the areas of interest within this dissertation: Ideas of the law and ownership, accessibility and engagement, relations with external actors, content creation, sharing and dissemination of content, and open access and IP.

A commons-oriented GLAM+ institution as conceptually framed by Avdikos et al. is one that aligns with the denoted areas of interest in these ways:

- 1) Legal/ownership status: community-based, organised as a non-profit.
- 2) Decision-making: decisions are made via an open mechanism that is horizontal and inclusive, such as general assemblies or extended boards.
- 3) Accessibility/engagement: no or low ticket costs, sharing their spaces with the community, freely distributing educational materials, bringing the community in to work with GLAM+ institution professionals.
- 4) Labour: In addition to traditional paid labour and volunteering, start accepting alternative modes of labour such as reciprocal and communal labour.

- 5) Relations with external actors: develop relationships with other groups/institutions engaging in commons, supporting one another.
- 6) Finance: Remove dependence on corporate and state funding which can dictate practice that is not aligned with commons theory, adopting co-funding mechanisms such as membership.
- 7) Content creation: Adopt co-creation processes, which bring the community into the decision making processes of what content to create, what stories to tell, and what values to prioritise, and adopt digital commons practices, encourage creativity and active participation in content creation.
- 8) Sharing/distribution: the main output of GLAM+ institutions is the sharing of “non-rival and shareable knowledge, both scientific and social.” This can be accomplished through digital means, like digital repositories, cloud-based infrastructure and open licensing. This sharing enables commoners to contribute to a myriad of knowledge sharing activities, such as creative endeavours, critical conversations, and other social interactions. The impact of this sharing can foster commons more broadly within society.
- 9) Open access and IPR: Commons theory necessitates open access to the resources of GLAM+ institutions and “assumes a feedback loop where a portion of the system’s output is used as future input,” meaning that the role of the GLAM+ institution is to enable and expect reuse of their content.³⁹

It is important to note that many GLAM+ institutions are already employing many of these techniques. The British Library, for example, has a robust digital infrastructure and digital repository for the sharing of knowledge, while the Art Institute of Chicago has applied Creative Commons licenses to their content, making their

digitised cultural heritage materials OA. However, numerous scholars have cited a concern about “commons washing,” in which activities that can be considered “participatory” within GLAM+ institutions are being labelled as commons.⁴⁰ Lekakis posits that in order for these activities to be considered commons, there is a level of intentionality required—the GLAM+ institution needs to be engaging in practices and activities with the express intention of engaging in commons work in order for it be considered as such.⁴¹ Similarly, while DCCs engage in activities that could be considered commons, such as the reuse of OA content and sharing cultural materials freely online, without intention, they are not commons activities. Both parties intentionally engaging in commons activities and intentionally engaging in commons activities together would foster the kind of co-creation and invested community that Avdikos advocate for in their ideas about how commons-oriented GLAM+ institution would operate.⁴² In that spirit, this research would like to suggest a means through which both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs can intentionally and accessibly adopt commons practices: The consideration and application of a technical and cultural reading of the FAIR data principles.

A technical reading of the FAIR data principles guides the creation of data in an accessible and universally applicable manner, encouraging the user to consider how their data is found and accessed, how it works with other data, and how data can be reused through the assistance of digital tools and technologies. However, a cultural reading of the FAIR data principles, although less straightforward than a technical reading, can be just as valuable to the data creation process. Considering how to craft content so it is findable can lead to explorations of how content is disseminated, while a consideration of accessibility could lead to explorations of cultural capital, for example.

These considerations are valuable for GLAM+ institutions and DCCs because they not only foster commons-related approaches to the creation of data, but they also foster a consideration of the user and the ways in which data can be crafted to appeal to the user that has not been explored previously.

The FAIR Data Principles were chosen for this research for three main reasons: First, the FAIR Data Principles were intentionally designed for anyone to be able to apply them to their data, meaning they are an accessible and attainable set of goals for both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs to apply to their data.⁴³ The second is that in the last five years the FAIR Data Principles have been critically examined by researchers who want to be able to apply them to Arts and Humanities data, allowing for this dissertation to build off of their work and inform approaches to the principles and data gathered.⁴⁴ The third is that the FAIR Data Principles can map loosely onto a workflow, a technique previously utilised by Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, as the tenets of the principles are most easily applied in the order they are listed (an intentional choice by the creators), which in the context of this dissertation was intuitive to apply to the process of creating data by GLAM+ institutions and DDCs. Ultimately, the FAIR data principles provided this dissertation with a clear structure to deploy when analysing the data gathered.⁴⁵

The FAIR data principles are useful within the context of this dissertation because in the process of applying them to the data gathered, they allowed for the central aims and research questions to be directly addressed. For example, in examining a GLAM+ institutions website from within the GLAM+ institution Website Dataset to try and see how ideas of Reusability are addressed, this dissertation was able to examine how GLAM+ institutions both disseminate and communicate their content

online. The rest of this chapter will detail the FAIR data principles, including examples of technical and cultural considerations and applications. It is important to note that in this chapter the phrase (meta)data is used to cover data and/or the metadata about data. For example, a collection object record could be considered data, and associated into the metadata. This use is intentional and captures both. When referring to both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs moving forward, this chapter will use the term “actor.”

3.B: Findability

According to the GO FAIR website, the main website for the FAIR Data Principles and associated resources, the principle of Findability can be defined by what it accomplishes for the user: “The first step in (re)using data is to find them. Metadata and data should be easy to find for both humans and computers. Machine-readable metadata is essential for automatic discovery of datasets and services, so this is an essential component of the FAIR-ification process.”⁴⁶ The central requirements of Findability (according to GO FAIR) are:

- F1. (meta)data are assigned a globally unique and persistent identifier
- F2. data are described with rich metadata
- F3. metadata are clearly and explicitly include the identifier of the data it describes
- F4. (meta)data are registered or indexed in a searchable resource.⁴⁷

Some additional elements of FAIR that can be sought out within the creation process of GLAM+ institutions /DCCs in order to gauge the cultural and technical Findability of their data include:

- What metadata standards does the actor follow for their content, if any? Is there any documentation regarding why a particular standard was chosen?
- What specific, intentional measures does the actor take to make their content “findable” online, if any?
- How does the actor approach exposing their content to a wider audience, if at all? Social media accounts, hashtags, repositories?

- Is the actor trying to keep track of/monitor the findability of their content in any way?

Is it clear from the sub-principles listed above that a key enabler of findability is (meta)data. The general definition of metadata is “data about data,” with this term being invented in the 1960s in relation to data management, although the social construct of keeping “data about data” has been practised for centuries.⁴⁸ Anne Gilliland expands the general definition of metadata created before the year 2000 to:

A suite of industry or disciplinary standards as well as additional internal and external documentation and other data necessary for the identification, representation, interoperability, technical management, performance, and use of data contained in an information system.⁴⁹

Gilliland goes on to note that within the context of GLAM+ institutions, metadata looks like “the value-added information they create to arrange, describe, track, and otherwise enhance access to information objects and the physical items and collections related to those objects.”⁵⁰ (Meta)data, in more simple terms, is information embedded in some fashion within a digital object that can identify that object as unique within the greater collection it is housed in if the persistent identifier (PID) is lost. A persistent identifier is a data point that can be used to identify a digital object as unique. From the wider pool of data on the internet, like on an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) on a book, (meta)data can be used to locate an object within the platform it is hosted on through the search function, for example searching for paintings by a particular artist, or searching for a specific account on Instagram (although metadata standards have a massive impact on how useful search functions are). (Meta)data and its creation and use on digital objects are a key tool in the classification of digital objects, particularly with the introduction of linked open data and the standardisation of online rule sets, like the

Resource Description and Access standard in the last decade, which builds off of the World Wide Web Consortium's Resource Data Framework.⁵¹

This section will first detail examples of the ways that GLAM+ institutions and DCCs could apply the principles of Findability to their data from a technical perspective, as a method of illustrating how they function when applied to data relevant to this dissertation. Then this section will examine questions related to the concept of "rich metadata." What is it, how does it assist in the findability of data, and how can it be created? Then this section will explore the idea of cultural findability.

The principles associated with Findability above focus exclusively on (meta)data. In the context of this dissertation the definition of metadata is more specific than the previously mentioned general definition—it is identifying information linked in some manner to the image it is describing, tailored to work within the platform the image is housed on. Application of the principle of Findability could look like an accession or object number assigned to the object photographed on the GLAM+ institution side or a URL assigned to a Instagram post on the DCC side—these are both examples of a globally unique and Persistent Identifier (PID), satisfying F1. (as listed above). Rich metadata is easily applied to the image on the GLAM+ institution side in the form of provenance information, for example, while hashtags can fulfil the role of rich metadata on a CAM, satisfying F2 while also enhancing the findability of the CAM. F3 refers to how metadata files can oftentimes be separated from the file they describe. However, in the case of both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, the URL to the digital object also links to associated metadata due to the design choices made by software developers who have worked on GLAM+ institution repositories and social media platforms. Finally, F4 is satisfied through the GLAM+ institution's repository

and through the platform functions of Instagram, which allow for searching for CAMs through multiple avenues.

An important element of generating findable metadata is the consideration for generating “rich” metadata. Rich metadata is defined as metadata that is described as, “generous and extensive,” and within the context of this dissertation includes metadata embedded within the image and metadata about the image.⁵² The ultimate goal of rich metadata, as posited by GO-FAIR, is for the metadata to be able to direct a user back to the main data point if the PID is lost and they only have access to the metadata.⁵³ For example, if an user has access to the metadata for an object from a GLAM+ institution collection but they no longer have the URL, they can utilise metadata such as the name of the painting, the name of the artist, the year it was made, even the name of the GLAM+ institution which houses the object. Then, by inputting these details into a search engine, they should be able to find a link to the image on a digital repository. Often, these kinds of images have been shared with other repositories or aggregators as well, such as Europeana, Wikimedia, or Google Arts and Culture, meaning there are even more instances of the image online that the user could find through the use of the object’s metadata. Alternately, in the case of CAMs, if someone has the name of the profile the CAM was posted from, the date it was posted, the platform, or the hashtags associated with the CAM, in theory, the search engine on the platform being used should be able to locate the CAM for the user, or a search engine can help as well.

One of the most important elements of this idea of rich metadata is how metadata standards align with the goals of rich metadata as described above. The creation of rich metadata can be a complicated process due to a lack of consistent metadata standards being utilised online. This makes sense, as metadata standards are

developed for specific data and specific purposes and uses, and no one metadata standard has been developed with FAIR-ification in mind. GLAM+ institutions have multiple metadata standards they can choose from, such as DublinCore or the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF).⁵⁴ In the case of CAMS, there are no published metadata standards for DCCs to follow. Metadata standards will be discussed thoroughly in a later section of this chapter.

Rich metadata can be produced through photo-editing software, such as Adobe Bridge, Photoshop, or InDesign, however it can also be created using Windows File Explorer.⁵⁵ The GO FAIR website features a resource section which offers tools and links to assist in the creation of FAIR-ified data, including starter kits, guides, and more.⁵⁶ In the context of CAMs, rich metadata can also be created through the crafting of captions and hashtags. While these steps are relatively simple to follow in a technical sense, they can have a massive impact on the ability for an user to find images. Martha Baca addresses the need for this work in their 2016 book *Introduction to Metadata*, noting that:

Digitization does not equal access. The mere act of creating digital copies of collection materials does not make those materials findable, understandable, or utilizable to our ever-expanding audience of online users. But digitization combined with the creation of carefully crafted metadata can significantly enhance end-user access—and our users are the primary reason we create digital resources.⁵⁷

This sentiment is just as true for DCCs as GLAM+ institutions, as simply making a CAM does not make their internet memes more findable, understandable, or utilisable, even if those traits are not all the goals of DCCs. However, depending on the platform the DCC shares their CAM on, those goals are important— Findability is a concern on Instagram, with the search function going through some pretty significant updates since 2020.⁵⁸ Crafting content that can be widely understood is a central concern for DCCs.

On TikTok, enabling content for utilisation is a central function of the platform, with the idea of participation in various trends being a major contributing factor to the platform's popularity.⁵⁹

When considering Findability through a cultural lens, a few considerations stand out. How can an actor create data that is “findable?” Elements that make an item findable could be more readily conceived by considering visibility, as discussed in the Theoretical Framework. Visibility could be achieved by adding the data to a widely accessed platform—this could look like GLAM+ institutions hosting their content through multiple digital repositories, such as a bespoke repository, Wikimedia, Google Arts and Culture, etc. This could also factor into considerations of what social media platform to utilise for sharing content, which impacts both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs. DCCs have methods available to them to make their content more visible online, by working with algorithms, as discussed previously. DCCs could also host their content on their own website, as Punk History and Fat Cat Art do, also noted previously.⁶⁰ Other methods for attaining visibility for content could include tapping into current cultural conversations when creating content. For example, referencing a moment in the news cycle, remixing a currently popular meme template, or responding to a holiday. See how Classical Cringe has referenced the Christmas holiday, posting on December 25th, as a way of tapping into discussions about holidays happening online in December, in Figure 16:⁶¹

When it's your birthday but everyone
else is getting presents



Figure 16: A CAM from @classicalcringe for Christmas

3.C: Accessibility

Accessibility, according to the GO FAIR website, can be defined by what it accomplishes for the user: “Once the user finds the required data, she/he/they need to know how can they be accessed, possibly including authentication and authorisation.”⁶²

According to Wilkinson et al., in order for data to be accessible:

- A1. (meta)data are retrievable by their identifier using a standardised communications protocol
 - A1.1 the protocol is open, free, and universally implementable
 - A1.2 the protocol allows for an authentication and authorisation procedure, where necessary
- A2. metadata are accessible, even when the data are no longer available⁶³

Some additional elements of FAIR that can be sought out within the creation process of the actors in order to gauge the cultural and technical Accessibility of their data include:

- What protocols have the actor put in place for users to complete in order to access their content, if any?
- Is the metadata for online content accessible, even if the image itself is not?
- Is the actor trying to keep track of/monitor how often their content is accessed or interacted with online?
- If someone has accessed or reused the actor's content without following the prescribed protocols, what are the consequences? Or, how does the actor respond?

A protocol is a media-related adaptive change,⁶⁴ for example, the adoption of specific traits of an original video in an adaptation, or the affordances of a platform, such as Twitter's character limit, or the paywall on articles from the New York Times.

Regarding facilitating accessibility, these protocols could include the requirement to make a platform-specific account in order to access content, such as the Rijksmuseum's online platform, the Rijksstudio, requires⁶⁵. This site includes a search function within the platform that allows for data to be retrieved by its identifying metadata (A1.), is free, allows anyone with an email address to make an account (A1.1), and requires the creation of a username and password (A1.2).

This section will first detail examples of ways that GLAM+ institutions and DCCs could apply the above principles to their data from a technical perspective, as a method of illustrating how the principles of Accessibility function when applied to data relevant to this dissertation. Then this section will examine the cultural considerations of accessibility, with questions related to the concept of democratisation online, an idea which is in tension with the concept of the "Authorised Heritage Discourse" (AHD), the discourse surrounding which informs an understanding of accessibility as experienced by the participants and users.

If Findability centres on the (meta)data within an object, accessibility centres on the platform the object finds itself within, looking at the way objects are digitally

housed. In other words, if Findability is concerned with how to find a digital resource, Accessibility is concerned with how to access it, in the context of this dissertation either by viewing or being able to download an image.

The principles associated with Accessibility focus primarily on protocols, which were previously loosely defined as media-related adaptive changes,⁶⁶ however within the context of this research it looks slightly different. A standardised communications protocol (SCP), as named in A1, is a formal rule set indicating how to transmit or exchange data within a network of some kind. This rule set then becomes codified as a standard. Some examples of this include Wi-Fi, the Internet Protocol, the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (http(s)), and clicking on a link is considered a low-level protocol more commonly known as TCP.⁶⁷ Metadata being retrievable via their identifier using a standardised communications protocol is a much simpler task than it initially sounds, as most data producers use http(s) or ftp (another SCP), and they are considered to be the “backbone of the modern internet.”⁶⁸ Instagram utilises http(s),⁶⁹ satisfying A1. Similarly, as http(s) is free⁷⁰ and almost universally applied, Meta, other online platforms, and GLAM+ institutions (who utilise http(s) for their repositories) have satisfied A1.1. Similarly, utilising http(s) or ftp fulfils A1.2. Fulfilling A2 is a more complicated, as it means that data producers, in this case GLAM+ institutions and social media platforms, need to provide access to the metadata of objects even if the objects are not accessible.

GLAM+ institutions maintain detailed collection catalogues, and many have made moves to publish the metadata from their catalogues, often in the form of an Applied Programming Interface (API) (more on this in Chapter 5), meeting the requirements of A2.⁷¹ However, for social media platforms this task is much more

difficult, especially given the vast quantity of data on the sites. Individual DCCs can and do address this issue, however, through the creation of a home for their content outside of Instagram, such as the account @fatcatart's website, which features a post archive.⁷²

The idea of protocols in the FAIR Data Principles is limited to a very specific technical element that is, for the most, part, already fulfilled by the User Interface (UI) design of GLAM+ institution and social media platforms, as detailed above. The questions of Accessibility examined in the following section will examine more general protocols as mentioned in the Introduction, like platform constraints such as paywalls or passwords. These protocols can be prohibitive to the exchanging of data, contributing to unequal power structures online, an issue which will be discussed.

A key function of openness online, such as that FAIR data is intended to facilitate, is that it democratises information, and in the case of GLAM+ institutions, culture. It is important to note that while data can be FAIR, it does not necessarily mean that it is OA. However, in line with ideas of democratisation, data that is FAIR clearly states how to access it, even when it is not OA. In the context of this research, the term democratisation is used specifically in reference to information. Online democratisation, then, is the acquisition and spread of information beyond the privileged elite—academics, GLAM sector staff, wealthy donors, etc.—and into the hands of general public. This democratisation is important to consider when looking at issues of online creation, sharing and reuse of content, and access to digital cultural heritage.

Katherine Howard posits that there is a clear correlation between digitisation and increased democratisation, noting that, “digital collections blur the boundaries of

who owns what content as the format and medium of the artefacts traditionally collected by each institution becomes less domain specific.”⁷³ Many scholars are advocating for institutes in the GLAM sectors to consider universal ownership of information online, including Taylor and Gibson, Graden and O’Dell, Terras, Dijkshoorn et. al, Economou, and Beaulieu and de Rijcke.⁷⁴

Taylor and Gibson posit that there is a relationship between digitisation of collection materials and democratisation of cultural heritage that is understudied.⁷⁵ While many scholars, such as like Besser, Mudhai, and Griffiths posit that digitisation will lead to an increase in democratisation, Taylor and Gibson argue that there has been a disconnect between increased access (which digitisation is supposed to provide) and increased democracy.⁷⁶ “Indeed, much of the attention given to democracy through digitisation has focussed on the ability to reach larger user numbers, rather than how the discourse itself is created and mediated.”⁷⁷ What Taylor and Gibson mean by this is that instead of measuring the impact of content through means such as metrics, a method which is quantitative, more qualitative methods need to be used, such as tracking various types of reuse online, for example art projects or CAMs. This quantitative view fails to query how GLAM+ institution content is being communicated and interpreted, which they argue is a more useful demonstration of impact.

This quality over quantity argument has been briefly discussed within the academic discussions of GLAM+ institutions tracking reuse of content online, as previously discussed. Numerous scholars have argued that the more empirical method of examining engagement with online cultural materials such as page views, downloads, likes, comments, and shares, are missing the mark as they skip how people are reusing cultural materials online.⁷⁸ Taylor and Gibson echo this position, noting that

“substantial interaction can take place at many stages, and dialogue response is often possible. Consultation is frequently laudable and well-intended. However, the issue here is that much of the interaction is purely *responsive*.” By this they mean that interrogation of interaction with content most often happens after the content is made, with all of the most important decisions such as agenda setting, issues of appropriation, and ideas of what and whose heritage to focus on having already been made. They challenge the more common style of back-end analysis, positing that “it is not the extent of the interaction, but the kind of interaction that is problematic here.”⁷⁹

This democratisation of cultural content is in direct tension with another academic concept: the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). This is a concept created by Laurajane Smith in 2006, which they define as a dominating heritage narrative that is moulded and preserved by a small group of privileged elite/industry professionals.⁸⁰ This narrative, Smith posits, is ultimately self-confirming and deeply institutionalised, and works to exclude outside voices and reinforce itself through an emphasis on aesthetics, monumentality, and the notion of a ‘grand’ overarching narrative.⁸¹ This is very reminiscent of “aura”, which Benjamin felt needed to be lost to foster a more vibrant and creative culture. The AHD as a way for discussing the elitist and often exclusionary way GLAM+ institutions have operated both in the past and present is popular within academic circles, appearing in numerous research studies,⁸² serving as the foundation for conversations around the accessibility of the GLAM sector.

When digital content, such as digitised collection materials, become freely available online it removes the institution as the sole interpreter of the object’s narrative, opening the role of interpreter up to the public. As interpretation of artefacts is one of the central mandates of GLAM+ institutions,⁸³ it is clear why this could make

institutions uneasy, particularly in the case of objects that relate to more contentious moments in history, such as the Holocaust or apartheid in South Africa.⁸⁴ Additionally, it can be damaging to an institution's reputation if popular items from their collection are poorly reproduced or support contentious rhetoric.⁸⁵

One response to the AHD has been the decolonisation movement. Decolonialisation has emerged as an important goal for users around the world as internet access has connected the various corners of the world that many GLAM+ institutions have acquired their collections from.⁸⁶ GLAM+ institutions have had mixed responses to this movement, with a number of institutions returning objects to the cultures they originally came from, such as Benin bronzes.⁸⁷ Museums in the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom have responded to calls from their constituents and from representatives of Nigeria to return what are considered sacred religious objects to their home.⁸⁸ By facilitating the repatriation of the bronzes and other similar objects, institutions have begun to democratise their collection materials and gain a new level of access to patrons and fulfil their mission of dissemination and education. An example of this can be seen in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C., where a very successful partnership has been made between the Smithsonian Institute and the Inuvialuit tribe, allowing for new modes of interpretation and new understandings of objects in the collection.⁸⁹

The implications of democratisation as a way of challenging the AHD extend beyond internet memes to many forms of recombinant appropriation and are seen in the popularity of a slew of cultural materials—Shakespeare, Van Gogh, the Mona Lisa, the Bayeux Tapestries, even iconography of famous individuals, such as Che Guevara and Frida Kahlo—their modern popularity is built on a foundation of access to the source

materials. Culture is created by the intersection and dialogue of genres. By allowing for greater access, we allow for more dialogue, therefore allowing more space for GLAM+ institutions within today's cultural creation space.

3.C: Interoperability

According to the GO FAIR website, Interoperability can be defined by what it accomplishes for the user: "The data usually need to be integrated with other data. In addition, the data need to interoperate with applications or workflows for analysis, storage, and processing."⁹⁰ According to Wilkinson et al., in order for data to be interoperable:

- I1. (meta)data use a formal, accessible, shared, and broadly applicable language for knowledge representation.
- I2. (meta)data use vocabularies that follow FAIR Data Principles
- I3. (meta)data include qualified references to other (meta)data⁹¹

Some additional elements of FAIR that can be sought out within the creation process of the actors in order to gauge the cultural and technical Interoperability of their data include:

- Is the actor's content shared on more than one platform, such as an institutional vs. a national repository or Instagram vs. TikTok?
- Does the actor alter the way content is presented on various platforms for different audiences? How would the presentation of content change on social media versus a repository?
- Is the actor trying to keep track of/monitor how often their content is used across platforms/systems online?

The literal definition of interoperability is "capable of being used or operated reciprocally," and in a computer science context it more specifically means, "the basic ability of different computerised products or systems to readily connect and exchange information with one another, in either implementation or access, without restriction."⁹²

An example of this idea can be seen in the images used by GLAM+ institutions and

DCCs. GLAM+ institutions primarily release their images in a .jpeg file format. This type of image is the most commonly used image file format online. It is also the main file type that Instagram can work with, therefore it is the main image file format DCCs work with.⁹³

Within the context of this dissertation, this definition (when taken loosely) of different systems being able to speak to each other can apply both technically and culturally. Technical interoperability, put simply within the context of this dissertation, when digital objects have been assigned metadata that can be used in broadly applicable contexts, such as multiple digital repositories. Cultural interoperability, within the context of this dissertation, implies that culture is an intelligent system within which knowledge is produced, and that forms of cultural transmission surrounding knowledge creation, such as texts and visuals, can be crafted to apply in multiple settings,

This section will first examine technical interoperability, comparing it with ideas of cultural interoperability. Then metadata standards will be examined, finishing with examples of ways that GLAM+ institutions and DCCs could apply the above principles to their data, as a method of illustrating how the principles of Interoperability function when applied to data relevant to this dissertation. This section has examples of interoperability when applied at the end of the section as the discussions about technical and cultural interoperability include information necessary to applying the principles.

In regards to technical interoperability as seen on platforms, it is helpful to think about platform protocols as discussed in relation to Accessibility. For example, Twitter has a four-image limit while Instagram has a ten image limit, while Facebook does not have an image limit on posts. By making sure to keep the set of CAMs at no more than four individual images per post, digital content creators are ensuring one facet of

interoperability of their content between platforms. This kind of thinking also applies to the length of the captions, use of hashtags, altering spelling of words to avoid censorship from platform moderators, use of generally accessible language (particularly where people who speak English as an additional language are concerned) and more. In the case of technical interoperability, there is a clear link to findability, as both require rich and standardised metadata in order to satisfy the requirements of the FAIR Data Principles, but also digital objects that can easily exist on multiple platforms will be infinitely more findable.

The principles associated with Interoperability are focused on the concept of “standards”, or policies or best practices that inform how data should be formatted, including what metadata or documentation should be included with the data.⁹⁴ There are a variety of metadata standards used by GLAM institutions (Dublin Core, Gerry Thesaurus, IIIF, etc.), and the use of these standards can allow for digital collection items to be hosted across multiple platforms, from institution specific repositories to national repositories to commercial repositories, depending on the needs of the institution.⁹⁵ Tóth-Czifra examines the complicated nature of creating metadata within the Arts and Humanities context (which includes GLAM+ institutions), paying attention to how metadata could be crafted to fit within the FAIR Data Principles, a process they note is complex, as trying to fit such a diverse dataset into existing metadata standards can result in the loss of information that does not fit into the prescribed fields.⁹⁶ Tóth-Czifra calls this data the “thick description,” in which an object has enough context provided that someone outside of the object’s culture understands what it is.⁹⁷

An illustration of cultural interoperability on platforms can be found in a viral meme started by Dolly Parton in 2020. As seen in Figure 17, Dolly Parton, who

originated this meme template, has assigned four different photos of herself to four different social media platforms, the implication being that the different photos suit the purposes of the different platforms.⁹⁸ A professional outfit is chosen for the professional networking site LinkedIn, while Facebook is more casual. Instagram is a more artistic photo, while a flirty photo has been chosen for the dating site Tinder.⁹⁹ Dolly has made herself culturally interoperable in this internet meme, highlighting how she can craft and perform various versions of herself to suit the different contexts the various social media platforms afford.



Figure 17: Dolly Parton's 2020 meme template as originally posted on Instagram

Within the context of this research, cultural interoperability could look like crafting a set of CAMs to function across multiple platforms—suiting the content to function within the culture of the various platforms. For example, an extensive use of

hashtags, as is the norm on Instagram, or keeping the content more family oriented to suit the Facebook audience. Another function of cultural interoperability is keeping up with current events and crafting content to respond in real time, using cultural capital as a way to keep audiences engaged, and making a conscious effort to craft content in a way that can be widely understood by users.

Data collected about GLAM+ institution collections have gone through a massive transformation in the roughly 150 years since “cabinets of curiosities”, as the personal collections of wealthy individuals were colloquially known, began appearing around the world, ultimately progressing into modern public GLAM+ institutions. Then, by virtue of the objects being in a personal collection, gathering and organising information on the origin of the objects and including acquisition documentation was not a necessarily a priority like it would be for GLAM+ institutions today.¹⁰⁰ The amount of metadata that GLAM+ institutions gather about their collections today is immense, as the data can cover an incredibly wide range of topics, which, when a knowledgeable individual interprets, can create an intricate picture of the object and its role within the culture it came from.

GLAM+ institution collection objects have a lengthy legacy of (meta)data that traditionally is maintained and added to by curators, who then can control the communication of this complex network of (meta)data, mediating the information to suit the needs of whoever comes asking about the object. However, if a researcher attempts to answer the same questions by looking at the object record on the website, if sufficient metadata is not provided then this “thick description,” as Tóth-Czifra puts it, is lost. Current metadata standards were designed for metadata to be created by humans, organised and maintained by humans, and ultimately interpreted and communicated by

humans.¹⁰¹ This loss of the human mediation that has come about through sharing GLAM+ institution metadata online necessitates a careful examination of these standards to ensure that they are still effective within a digital context.

CAMs similar to GLAM institutes come from a long tradition of collecting and adapting, first beginning with internet memes that existed in the real world, as studied in the 1970s and 80s. Since the creation of internet memes in the early days of the internet, the form has evolved to encompass an entirely new mode of communication. Internet memes have become their own linguistic field.¹⁰² However, Interoperability as a FAIR Principle is arguably the most difficult to apply to CAMs, as there are not metadata standards currently in existence that were designed to consider CAMs, or even social media posts more generally, particularly in a data management context. There are folksonomies—user generated systems of organising and classifying online content based on metadata such as tags or hashtags—in existence for social media posts, however there is no evidence of any kind of folksonomies having been developed for CAMS, although this idea was queried in the interviews and will be discussed later.¹⁰³

There is a potential set of metadata standards coming, although they do not yet have guidance for content creators on social media. The Coalition for Content Provenance and Authority (C2PA), which was founded in 2019, has developed an open technical standard called “Content Credentials,” which they have shortened to “CR,” in a bid to not get confused with CC, or Creative Commons, as all of the documentation on their website is licensed with CC licences. The first set of standards was released in 2021 and is continuing to be added to and adapted as needed. On their website C2PA lists the following as their overarching goals:

C2PA specifications SHOULD provide a mechanism for the producers and custodians of any given content to assert, in a verifiable manner, any information they wish to disclose about the creation of that content and any actions taken since the asset's creation. We refer to such information collectively as provenance.

C2PA specifications SHOULD NOT provide value judgments about whether a given set of provenance data is “good” or “bad,” merely whether the assertions included within can be verified as associated with the underlying asset, correctly formed, and free from tampering.¹⁰⁴

The CR standards, when applied, are an “open technical model,” as described by Andy Parsons, a representative from Adobe, who leads the Content Authority Initiative that founded C2PA. They are designed to, “provide important information like a “nutrition label” for digital content such as the creator’s name, the date an image was created, what tools were used and any edits that were made.”¹⁰⁵ This “nutrition label,” as Parsons called it, is also called an “icon of transparency” by Adobe, and can be added to any image, video, or PDF using an Adobe program. A symbol is attached to the image, as seen in Figure 18, and when a user hovers their mouse over the icon, the important metadata is visible in a dropdown.¹⁰⁶

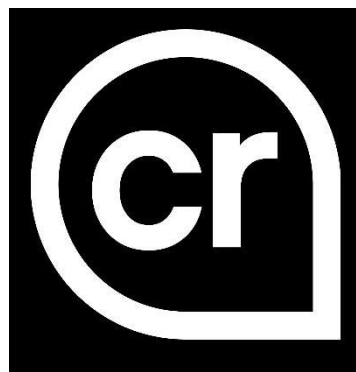


Figure 18: The Content Credentials logo

The CR standards use Adobe software to allow creators to:

...securely bind statements of provenance data to instances of content using unique credentials... Similar to a nutrition label, C2PA provides information

about who created the content and how, when, and where it was created. Content authors and publishers of provenance data may also include statements about when and how it was edited throughout its life. Users can then easily check the C2PA metadata of the digital content and make an informed decision about whether to trust the information in that asset.¹⁰⁷

The CR standards have received support from companies including Adobe, Microsoft, Arm, Intel, MIT, the BBC, GitHub, Linux, Google, Sony, and more.¹⁰⁸ In the Guiding Principles portion of the C2PA website they list the intended users of the CR standards, which includes content creators, content publishers, content consumers, and vendors and implementors,¹⁰⁹ both professional and amateur, meaning that these standards could be used by DCCs who make CAMs.¹¹⁰

It is important to note that while Instagram has run a trial period in which they included the CR standards on the platform, it backfired slightly as the algorithm that was reading the metadata to determine what images had been produced with Artificial Intelligence (AI), incorrectly flagged images as made with AI when they had instead been edited with Photoshop. The standards were immediately pulled from Meta's algorithm, and have not reappeared, with no updates on if or when CR will be returning to the platforms. While Meta and Adobe have been sorting this out, the section of the User Experience Guide for the CR standards has a heading for use on social media that says simply:

Items for future guidance:
Considering its potential reach and impact, specific guidance for implementations of C2PA technology in the context of social media will be developed, as discussed in issue #146 of the C2PA GitHub repo.¹¹¹

Currently, these standards can only be applied through the use of Adobe software, and advice for non-commercial entities applying these standards to their content is not currently available. As of 2024, Google have recently announced a partnership with C2PA, including the Google algorithm looking for CR metadata in image searches and

adding CR metadata to their ads. This is a major boost for C2PA, as this kind of adoption will lead to greater development and utilisation of the CR standards.¹¹²

In terms of the principles associated with Interoperability, GoFAIR only specifies that metadata should utilise a chosen metadata language which allows for a formal specification of the data the metadata is describing, meaning that if DCCs were to begin applying the CR standards to their images, they would fulfil I1.¹¹³ As the CR standards are an open standard that employs a globally unique and persistent identifier via the logo and the information it contains, that satisfies I2.¹¹⁴ I3., when explained on the GoFAIR website, states that someone should, “specify if one dataset builds on another dataset, if additional datasets are needed to complete the data, or if complementary information is stored in a different dataset.”¹¹⁵ If the work being described builds off of the work of someone else, it should be mentioned. CR standards directly address this issue by highlighting how the metadata they display will include edit histories, fulfilling I3. GLAM+ institutions, meanwhile, can select a wide variety of metadata standards that align with the principles of Interoperability. IIIF, for example, is a metadata standard that complies with FAIR and is commonly employed by GLAM+ institutions.

3.D: Reusability

According to the GO FAIR website, Reusability can be defined by what it accomplishes for the user: “The ultimate goal of FAIR is to optimise the reuse of data. To achieve this, metadata and data should be well-described so that they can be replicated and/or combined in different settings.”¹¹⁶ In order to be reusable:

- R1. meta(data) are richly described with a plurality of accurate and relevant attributes
- R1.1. (meta)data are released with a clear and accessible data usage licence
- R1.2. (meta)data are associated with detailed provenance

R1.3. (meta)data meet domain-relevant community standards¹¹⁷

Some additional elements of FAIR that can be sought out within the creation process of the actors to gauge the cultural and technical Reusability of their data include:

1. Does the actor want their content to be reused/remixed online? If so, how do they promote the reuse of their content? Are there any forms of reuse/remix that would not be okay with the institution?
2. How does the actor apply reuse licences and other reuse protocols, if at all, in relation to their content?
3. Is the actor trying to keep track of/monitor how often their content is reused/utilised online? Is the actor doing anything to make their content more reusable? If someone reuses the actor's content without their consent, how do they respond?

All four of the FAIR Data Principles are interlinked: for instance, findability and interoperability are both predicated on the provision of clear, standardised (meta)data. However, while the previous three principles could in theory be applied individually in an institution or a CAM account, the reusability of data is dependent on making sure that the findability, accessibility, and interoperability of the data are in place. R1 and R1.2 speak to the need for rich (meta)data, facilitating findability and interoperability. R1.3 speaks to the need for standards for the data and for the domain to facilitate accessibility and interoperability, and R1.1 addresses one of the most crucial aspects of reusability: clear and accessible data usage licenses.

In GLAM+ institutions, individual institutions have their own varying rights and reproductions policies governing the application of data usage licences that exist under the umbrella of their country's national copyright laws, and in some cases, regional law, like within the EU. In recent years GLAM+ institutions have seen a massive push from varying sources, such as researchers, governing bodies, and users to make most (if not all) of their collection content publicly available and reusable through some version of an open access licensing policy, either through the original collection object being in

the Public Domain, (and so GLAM+ institutions justify not licensing the images) or through licenses like Creative Commons.¹¹⁸ This can be a complicated task for GLAM+ institutions to accomplish as laws in different countries/regions vary. The biggest issue with opening access fully to GLAM+ institution collections is whether or not the individual works under a non-institutional copyright. For example, the Yeats collection at the National Gallery of Ireland is still under copyright with the Yeats family. Therefore, the National Gallery of Ireland cannot share the images without first paying a rights and reproduction fee to the Yeats family, until those collection objects enter into the Public Domain.¹¹⁹

From the perspective of a DCC, reuse of their content can be both a good and bad thing—one the one hand, if they are credited, reuse can lead to greater visibility for the account. However, it is easy to reuse content without crediting the original creator. Ownership of digital content has become a contentious point in the online creator community, and many copycat accounts will reuse content from other accounts (although they are not consistent in crediting the original creator).¹²⁰ Some accounts have taken to watermarking their content—superimposing their handle over the image—in order to maintain their creator credit, like in Figure 19, which is watermarked with the account @artmemescentral, although it was posted by the

account @war_h1story. The watermark is just visible on Jesus' chest, just under the PDF icon:¹²¹



Figure 19: An example of a watermarked CAM by @artmemescentral that has been reused by @war_h1story

The principles associated with Reusability differ from the previous three in that they are the culmination of the application of the principles associated with Findability, Accessibility, and Interoperability. R1. is the umbrella below which the other associated principles function, and is concerned with the Findability of the data, taking the question of “can you find the data?” a step further by asking once you have found the data, “can you decide if the data is useful in the required context?”¹²² The three sub-principles detail the kind of metadata that fulfils this requirement. R1.1 is concerned with the legal interoperability of the data, and calls for information regarding how and in what manner the data can be used to be clearly stated.¹²³ R1.2 is concerned with how

the data was accessed (generated, created) and how the party crafting the metadata would like to be acknowledged in relation to the data.¹²⁴ R1.3 acknowledges the vast range of contexts data can be used in and advocates for following relevant guidelines and standards, as data that is similar is easier to reuse.¹²⁵

One example of the application of the principles of Reusability could be a DCC utilising the previously mentioned C2PA standards to embed their CAMs with relevant metadata. However, this standard and the associated open source C2PA tool which is used to apply the CR standards is still in development and currently requires understanding of computer programming to apply correctly on images, potentially impeding the ability of DCCs to utilise them.¹²⁶ C2PA also currently seems to be aimed at commercial entities as opposed to average users online.¹²⁷ The reality is, applying these principles to CAMs would be complicated, as they were not made with social media posts in mind, highlighting the need for born-digital specific standards for content.

In the future C2PA could potentially meet this need, however the level of adoption and support across users on the Internet is not currently to a level that would then support the development of this tool beyond commercial applications, with no data published regarding usage level. The C2PA standards system could be the answer, especially if the metadata could be added to after the initial “nutrition label” is made, allowing DCCs who adapt an existing internet meme to add descriptions of their adaptations to the image into the metadata provenance, allowing for a record of adaptation on individual CAMs. This would be a valuable record of the evolution of culture as meme trends shift, similar to the mechanics on TikTok which allows for users

to see what video inspired a particular trend, along with other videos playing into this trend.

When thinking about cultural reusability, it is important to think of this principle as the culmination of the application of the previous three. By choosing platforms and content which can increase Findability by making content more visible, crafting the language within the content to be widely understandable, increasing the Accessibility, and by considering the ability of the content to speak to multiple platforms and contexts by engaging in recombinant appropriation, increasing the Interoperability of the content, the content is automatically more Reusable. Cultural reusability can manifest in many ways, but a central element of cultural reusability is fostering an environment in which users know that they can safely and easily engage in the remixing and reusing of content. This idea taps into commons theory, and the idea of using commons to foster a culture in which these ideas are prioritised. This culture of reusability has notably been adopted on the social media platform TikTok, which invites its users to engage in content creation trends as a way of joining the current conversations happening online.¹²⁸

3.E Final Thoughts

There is a precedent for the reinterpretation of the FAIR Data Principles to suit a specific context, beyond Tóth-Czifra's work to adapt FAIR within the arts and humanities field. The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance, for example, were created in 2018 directly in response to the OA movement, building off of the FAIR principles. The CARE Principles highlight how the central tenets of OA do not align with the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples, who very often have histories and knowledge that they believe should only be shared with members of their own

community.¹²⁹ The CARE principles call for researchers and other users who deal with Indigenous data to “Be FAIR, and CARE,” as seen in Figure 20.¹³⁰ The CARE Principles are formatted in the same style as the FAIR Data Principles, explicitly connecting the two sets of Data Principles in a bid to encourage uptake of the CARE Principles, particularly by those already engaging in the FAIR-ification of their data.¹³¹



Figure 20: The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance

Application of these principles is predicated firstly on the FAIR-ification of data, then calling for: Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics. These principles will now be detailed:

Collective Benefit refers to the way in which data ecosystems need to be intentionally designed to function in ways that “enable Indigenous Peoples to derive benefit from the data.”¹³² The principle of collective benefit are:

C1: For inclusive development and innovation

C2: For improved governance and citizen management
C3: For equitable outcomes¹³³

Authority to Control refers to the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples to their data, calling for the empowerment of Indigenous Peoples to exert control over that data, including how Indigenous lands, territories, resources, knowledge, and peoples are represented and identified within the data.¹³⁴ The principles of Authority to Control are:

A1: Recognising rights and interests
A2: Data for governance
A3: Governance of data¹³⁵

Responsibility refers to the responsibility of those working with Indigenous data to share how that data is being used to support Indigenous Peoples, calling for transparent accountability measures.¹³⁶ The principles of Responsibility are:

R1: For positive relationships
R2: For expanding capability and capacity
R3: For indigenous languages and worldviews¹³⁷

Ethics refers to the need to ensure that Indigenous People's rights and well-being are "the primary concern at all stages of the data life cycle and across the data ecosystem."¹³⁸ The Principles of Ethics are:

E1: For minimizing harm and maximising benefit
E2: For justice
E3: For future use¹³⁹

The CARE Principles for Indigenous Governance have been notably adopted by the Research Data Alliance in research environments, The Smithsonian Institution in collections environments, and the Open Data Charter in government environments, in addition to a wide swath of smaller organisations around the world.¹⁴⁰ The CARE Principles highlight the ability for the FAIR Data Principles to be re-interpreted without compromising the original intent of the principles. In the case of the CARE Principles,

they have been expanded for a specific context, which examines the cultural implications of the technical application of the FAIR Data Principles. This dissertation similarly posits that a cultural view of the application of the FAIR Data Principles, in tandem with the original technical view, can increase the reach and impact of content, while also revealing areas in theory and practice that need additional research and attention.

This chapter has detailed the conceptual framework within which this dissertation operates, highlighting the relevant ideas that contribute to a reinterpretation of the FAIR Data Principles. Aura, as detailed by Walter Benjamin, is the sacred in a work of art. It encompasses the artistic, historical, and cultural traditions on display in a work of art, and often inspires an emotional connection between the work and a viewer. Benjamin famously asserts that when a work of art is mechanically reproduced, this aura is lost. This phenomenon has been seen in GLAM+ institutions and sites around the world that have displayed reproductions, when viewers exhibit disappointment upon learning that an artefact is a replica of the original.

Some scholars argue that this loss of aura is precisely why GLAM+ institutions need “authentic” artefacts, while other scholars believe that this loss of aura is not a bad thing, but merely challenging how 21st century society thinks about art and cultural heritage and how it is “framed” for consumption. Benjamin argued that the loss of aura is a necessary step in distancing art and religion— they viewed aura as forcing art to be viewed as “high” culture, making it inaccessible to the average person. By removing the aura via mechanical reproduction, Benjamin argued that works of art could become accessible tools for questioning how society operates in meaningful ways. The removal

of the aura through mechanical reproduction is democratising works of art through the increased access to works.

This process mirrors the de-centralisation of the object that was discussed in GLAM+ institutions, where the priority for institutions is shifting to the quality of the interaction between the visitor and the institution instead of merely providing access to artefacts, like works of art. This idea of increased access to a resource, be it mechanically reproduced works of art or meaningful interactions with GLAM+ institutions, is central to commons theory. A current interpretation of commons theory advocates for commons-oriented GLAM+ institutions, which incorporate elements of urban, digital, and cultural commons into their central practices and methods of operating. This idea of a commons-oriented GLAM+ institution is still largely conceptual, however this dissertation suggests that a technical and cultural application of the FAIR Data Principles could be a useful mechanism for GLAM+ institutions and DCCs alike to intentionally adopt commons-oriented practices in an accessible manner.

Findability, from a technical perspective, is concerned with the generation of rich and relevant (meta)data for digital objects. This (meta)data allows for the data to be machine findable through a search engine. A cultural reading of Findability, meanwhile, asks the data creator to consider methods through which they can make their content more visible online, such as particular platforms for sharing, adapting content to tap into current news/online trends, and appealing to the content recommendation algorithms of a social media platform.

Accessibility, from a technical perspective, is concerned with how a particular piece of data is accessed, looking at the technical barriers to a user accessing data, also known as protocols. If protocols are applied, they must be open, free, and universally

implementable, and when a piece of data cannot be openly shared, the metadata pertaining to the data needs to be available. A cultural reading of Accessibility asks the data creator to consider a broader idea of accessibility, in which access to data is viewed by many as a right, that should not be withheld from the general populace. Methods of approaching cultural accessibility include crafting content in a way that can be broadly understood without specialist knowledge, sharing content on platforms that are free to engage with, and supporting the democratisation of information online.

Interoperability, from a technical perspective, is concerned with generating (meta)data that follow standards that are in line with the FAIR Data principles and can function on multiple systems without needing to be edited. This could look like collection object metadata that can operate easily on multiple digital repositories. A cultural reading of Interoperability asks the data creator to consider how their content could be crafted to suit multiple settings, situations, contexts, or users. One method of engaging in cultural interoperability is employing the adaptation style of recombinant appropriation, in which the data creator takes data from various sources and remixes them to suit a new context.

Reusability, both from a technical and cultural perspective, is the culmination of the application of Findability, Accessibility, and Interoperability. Enabling content for reuse, be it through the application of an open license or inviting other users to remix content, fosters a culture of reusability in online spaces. Reuse occurs online, no matter what, but the important thing to consider with cultural reusability is how to foster reuse that acknowledges sources and aims to benefit all parties involved.

The technical implications of FAIR are clear, as they tap into already popular ideals within the OA movement. However, the cultural implications are just as

important. As noted regarding commons theory, without intentionality, a user could take many of the actions described in this chapter but still not be engaging in the FAIR-ification of data. By considering both the cultural and technical elements of the FAIR Data Principles within data creation, users are able to critically assess their data creation process and their broader intentions and behaviours online. This process invites a culture that is more equitable and accessible, fostering a space that considers how language can impact experience, or how paywalls limit democratisation. These considerations are critical to the development of commons and spreading awareness about how commons-oriented activities can be beneficial to the online community.

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Chapter 4: Methodology

With the theoretical and conceptual frameworks in mind, this chapter will detail the methodological framework within which this research will operate. This chapter will first briefly describe the planned data-gathering process. Then each of the data-gathering methods will be discussed in turn, including relevant literature, rationale for selecting participants, crafting of the sample categories, and additional relevant information. Finally, the analysis methods and data gathering outcomes will be detailed. All three datasets are publicly available on the digital repository Zenodo.¹

4.A: Data-Gathering Overview

As noted in the Introduction, in order to understand if and how the FAIR Data Principles are at work within the creation process of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, data needed to be gathered from three different perspectives, resulting in three different datasets: a GLAM+ institution website dataset, a CAM profile dataset, and a DCC interview dataset.

The GLAM+ institution website dataset collected a sample of publicly available information from twenty-eight GLAM+ institution websites including policies, terms, statements, or web pages pertaining to their digitised collection materials, including application of copyright, dissemination of content, tracking of reuse online. This dataset was collected to understand the motivations and values of GLAM+ institutions as communicated through their public facing documentation, as would be seen by a DCC or user navigating these sites to find base content. In total sixty-two policy documents totalling over 200 pages of data were collected.

The CAM profile dataset collected a sample of publicly available CAMs from a corpus of Instagram accounts, paying attention to base content, metrics, captions,

collaborations, and advertisements. This dataset was collected in order to understand the motivations and values of DCCs as communicated through their public profile and content, as would be seen by a user on Instagram. In total 400 CAMs were collected.

The DCC interview dataset collected ten interviews with DCCs who specialise in making CAMs, with questions that were designed to capture how DCCs view their own creative practices and their own motivations and values. The questions followed the FAIR Data Principles, investigating the creations process of DCCs through a technical and cultural lens. In total, the ten interviews resulted in over 100 pages of transcripts.

These three datasets provided a rich base of knowledge for analysis. This analysis was conducted through an application of the FAIR Data Principles, as detailed in the Conceptual Framework, considering both a technical and cultural reading.

4.B: GLAM+ Institution Website Dataset

This section details the construction and procedure of the GLAM+ institution Website Dataset, which was drawn from GLAM+ institution websites and policy documents concerning institutional stances on OA images and relevant associated metadata. This includes the selection criteria for the GLAM+ institutions, the procedure for gathering the data, including tools used to gather the data, and what specific data is being gathered from the GLAM+ institutions. The dataset can be found on Zenodo as “The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation: GLAM+ institution Website Dataset.”²

In an attempt to get a wide range of GLAM+ institutions in the sample, institutions were first divided into geographical categories (UK and Ireland, Continental Europe, North America, and Oceania). These categories roughly cover the Western

world, meaning there are both cultural and linguistic similarities (most European institutions have English-language websites). The GLAM+ institution's social media presence and where they have shared their content with repositories online will be discussed as well.

Within this broad geographical frame, the next goal was to include at least one of each of the categories defined by the OpenGLAM movement within each region: Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums, and Aggregators.³ The two main requirements for inclusion in the sample was that the GLAM+ institutions had to have an online repository of some kind, meaning that they had image licensing/rights and reproduction policies or terms and conditions of use in place. After gathering a large number of potential institutions to analyse, the list was narrowed down to twenty-eight institutions (seven in each geographic region).

An initial list of categories to look for was created based on how the FAIR principles could be applied culturally and technically, as previously discussed in the Conceptual Framework. As copyright can be a dense subject matter, information explaining how and why an institution may have chosen to pursue certain policies was looked for—information which, when shared, enables the understanding of a user unfamiliar with rights and their applications—was also considered. These categories were adjusted throughout the data collection process based on what was being observed in the data—for example, if a particular element was noted repeatedly, it was added as a category, or if a category was not generating data it was removed. A few categories have a numeric element—this was employed to help make sense of some of the categories and distil the level of FAIR-ification happening in the surveyed GLAM+ institutions.

The categories are as follows:

1. Name of Account/ Institution
2. Open Access Images? (1-none, 2-some, 3-most (accounting for objects in which the copyright is still held by the artist))
3. If so, what type of license used?
4. Open Access Metadata? (1-none, 2-some, 3-most)
5. Additional info re: metadata?
6. Dedicated R&R page?
7. Section on R&R in T&Cs?
8. What is the key phrasing?
9. Link to relevant policy pages (screen captures of these pages are available in full in the Appendices)
10. Was this information easy to find? (1-not at all, 2-yes after some digging, 3-couldn't miss it)
11. Did they provide additional context for the audience to understand the policies? (1-not at all, 2-yes after some digging, 3-couldn't miss it)
12. Option to download images from site?
13. Mention being in line with government policy?
14. When did the change to OA occur?
15. Do they partner with any particular organisations?
16. Additional Notes

The procedure for collecting the data in the sample was as follows: the publicly accessible information on the websites of the selected GLAM+ institutions were examined in-depth, looking for any and all information regarding OA, copyright, licensing, rights, etc. in line with the larger themes of this research. Types of online content that would have this information included policy documents, strategic plans, image repository/website terms and conditions for users, and statements in response to government decisions, to name a few examples. The content was then recorded using a program named Print Edit WE, a Google Chrome extension which allows for webpages to be captured in the form of a PDF (unless the information was available in a downloadable format) and saved to a dedicated folder within the author's password protected OneDrive space. Information was extracted from this captured content and

recorded in an Excel workbook in line with the categories as listed above. The subsequent analysis of the dataset was constructed with the FAIR Data Principles and the definition of Open Access in mind, in order to assess how “FAIR” these organisations are. (This research cannot state for certain if an organisation is completely “FAIR.”) The results of the analysis are discussed in Chapter Five, GLAM+ institution Website Dataset.

Existing research has examined various outputs from GLAM+ institutions, capturing content and analysing it to examine the relationship between GLAM+ institutions and their audience, such as Bertrand, Wiedemann et al., Mathys et al., and Bailey-Ross et al.⁴ However, there is a lack of research examining the more technical elements of how GLAM+ institutions disseminate their content, particularly with consideration for OA policies. This quantitative method of sample and analysis forms a baseline regarding current practices that will be queried in the qualitative portion of the data gathering.

When presenting the findings of this data gathering in Chapter 5, three GLAM+ institutions are highlighted as examples of the 3 categories that arose from the dataset. These particular GLAM+ institutions were chosen as they had the most

4.C: CAM Profile Dataset

This section details the construction and procedure of the CAM profile Dataset, which was drawn from the last twenty posts in 2022 of a sample of CAM-focused Instagram profiles. This includes the selection criteria for the CAM profiles, the procedure for gathering the data, including tools used to gather the data, and what specific data is being gathered from the CAM profiles. The dataset can be found on

Zenodo as “The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation: CAM Profile Dataset.”⁵

The selection process for the accounts being considered was as follows: to get a sample that covered a variety of types of accounts, the goal was to find five accounts each within particular follower ranges. The ranges were as follows: 1,000-5,000 followers, 5,000 to 20,000 followers, 20,000 to 100,000 followers, and 100,000+ followers. Then, the account in question must not be a personal account (primarily focused on the individual running the account); it must feature over 50% memes and the memes featured had to be almost exclusively based upon classical art (as defined in the introduction). At minimum the art used had to be notable either for being in a GLAM+ institution collection, being an example of a notable artistic style, or by a notable artist. The account also had to have a significant following which fell into one of the previously mentioned ranges.

The accounts were discovered through two methods. The first was posting on a personal social media account and asking roughly 1,000 followers to share their favourite classical art meme accounts, and to share the question with their own followers as well. In total, roughly seventy-nine different Facebook and Instagram personal accounts shared their favourite CAM accounts for consideration over the course of the six-week period in which this call for input was posted on a weekly basis on stories across Facebook and Instagram, with thirty-one accounts being suggested. Then, after paring down the suggested accounts (some of which were duplicates or did not meet the selection criteria), additional accounts that met basic criteria for consideration were gathered by searching the following and followers lists of accounts

already chosen for the sample and searching frequently used hashtags on posts from accounts that met the criteria, resulting in the final twenty accounts.

The sampling procedure was as follows: twenty Instagram accounts were chosen for sampling, and the sample consisted of the last twenty posts on each account from 2022. The content was then recorded using Print Edit WE and saved to a dedicated folder within the author's password protected OneDrive space. Information from a set of categories, below, was extracted from this captured content and recorded in an Excel workbook. These categories capture the technical elements of a CAM, as a way of informing the analysis of the DCC Interviews, which are focused on the technical elements of content creation as they relate to the FAIR Data Principles. Please note that the categories "Account number" and "Meme number" refer to assigned numbers by the researcher which helped to keep the captured content organised.

1. Account name
2. Account number
3. Meme number
4. Type of account (CAM-fluencer, Mer-CAM-diser, Special Interest)
5. Date posted
6. Format of post (Still, reel, carousel)
7. Purpose of post (Meme, advertisement, personal)
8. Type of meme (emotion-based CAM, situation-based CAM, absurd CAM)
9. Name of partner (Cross-posted, advertisement)
10. Watermark?
11. Details of base art included?
12. Caption
13. Likes/comments
14. Tags
15. Original content or Repost from another account?
16. Image quality (low, medium, high)
17. URL
18. Additional Notes

This research is intentionally gathering data examining the technical elements of CAMs as opposed to a cultural/linguistic analysis of the CAMs. Given the technical elements of copyright, the FAIR Data Principles, and ideas of ownership online, an examination of the cultural crafting of CAMs is outside of the scope of this dissertation. As previously noted, existing research has examined the linguistic crafting of CAMs (and other meme templates) and their purpose/function culturally, such as Aharoni, Piata, Lou, Knobel and Lankshear, Dancygier and Vandelanotte, and more.⁶ However, there is a lack of research examining the more technical elements of creating CAMs, which this dissertation seeks to respond to.

4.D: DCC Interview Dataset

This section details the construction and procedure of the DCC Interview Dataset, which was drawn from ten interviews with DCCs who specialise in making CAMs. This includes the selection criteria for the DCCs, the procedure for gathering the data, including interview techniques, construction of the interview guide and questions, and an examination of workflows and how they were used to assist in the data gathering. The dataset can be found on Zenodo as “The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation: DCC Interview Dataset: Transcripts.”⁷

Potential participants were chosen according to the CAM profile criteria, leading to fifty-three accounts being contacted, with ten interviews ultimately being completed. The interviews focused specifically on current practices regarding the creation, dissemination, utilisation, and tracking of their respective content, with the questions broken up into categories in line with the FAIR Data Principles. The questions were crafted by adapting the individual tenets of the FAIR Data Principles to

more directly examine the creation process of DCCs. The Participant Interview Guide, which includes the questions in full, can be found in the Appendices.

The rationale for selecting participants was as follows: In addition to the requirements previously listed to be eligible for the sample, namely that they primarily create/distribute CAMs—an internet meme template whose source content is derived most usually from ‘classical art,’ or art that could be found in a GLAM+ institution. Additionally, the accounts needed to be independent, with no links to GLAM+ institutions, although they could do third-party sponsorships.

Within that delineation, accounts were selected of various sizes, the categories breaking down into 1,000-5,000 followers, 5,000 to 20,000 followers, 20,000 to 100,000 followers, and 100,000+ followers. Another delineation was the purpose of the account—are the CAMs for sale in some way? Is the account running ads? Or are they posting purely for entertainment/ education? Initial plans included dividing amongst platforms, but a number of the accounts run across platforms, so to narrow the focus of the research, all of the accounts need to exist on Instagram, but followings on the full suite of platforms will be mentioned if they exist. Realistically, however, the main factor that went into finding participants for the interviews was whether or not the DCC saw and responded to messages. This was a massive challenge and is discussed more later in the chapter.

Techniques for constructing interviews were drawn from common interviewing methods: Focussed/Semi-Structured Interviewing and Episodic Narrative Interviewing. This section will briefly explore each of these methods, examining literature regarding the techniques and explaining how the techniques function, concluding with how the two techniques were blended for this research’s interview process. Interviews were

chosen as the primary data gathering tool as interviews are more often than not a participant led data gathering format, which allows for the participant to highlight information they deem to be relevant to the discussion, often bringing to light topics and details the researcher is unaware of, resulting in a more thorough exploration of the subject.

The first method considered was Focussed Interviewing, more commonly known today as Semi-Structured Interviewing. This technique was developed by Merton and Kendall in 1946,⁸ but has continued to be developed by a number of other scholars as technology and society developed in the 20th century.⁹ Today it is the most commonly employed interview technique for data collection in qualitative studies,¹⁰ because the rigid structure is very adaptable and can work in individual and group settings, can accommodate a wide variety of purposes/research questions, and enables reciprocity between the interviewer and participant.¹¹ Often times this reciprocity allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions to the participant's responses¹² and gives the participant space to individualise their responses.¹³

Semi-Structured Interviews follow a general structure which requires the researcher to have done previous study on their topic, which informs the creation of the interview questions. The questions are crafted before the interview and shaped using an interview guide, which is shared with the participant either before or during the interview. The interview guide covers the highlights of the research and gives the interview a focused structure, by explaining the research and rationale in simple terms to the participant and giving them the list of questions, so they know what is coming next. Supplying an interview guide also gives the participant a chance to prepare/gather any information they feel is relevant, allowing for a more focused interview as the

participant has an idea of what they want to talk about. The core idea is to “explore the research area by collecting similar types of information from each participant by providing participants with guidance on what to talk about.”¹⁴

Kallio et al. have developed a framework for constructing a qualitative semi-structured interview guide, below, which highlights the need to do a testing phase of the interview guide in order to allow for any changes to be made before the interviews are conducted, in order to ensure the best responses, pictured below. This method of testing and adjusting the interview guide will be employed in this research.

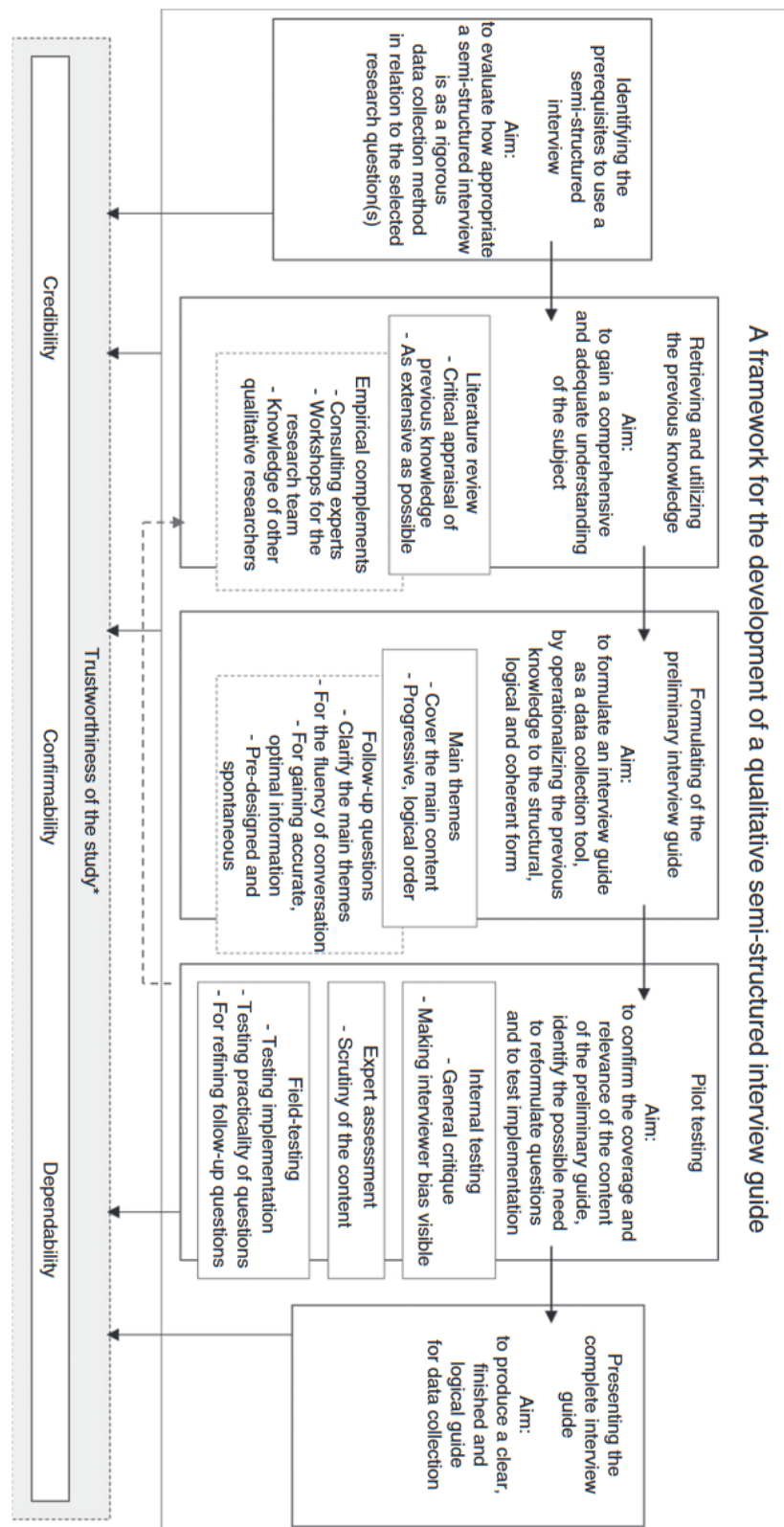


Table 2: Kallio et al.'s model for crafting a semi-structured interview guide

The second technique, episodic narrative interviewing, was developed by Robin

Alison Mueller in 2019¹⁵ out of the area of narrative inquiry, which was established

with a seminal body of discourse in the 1990s.¹⁶ Since then, several narrative approaches have been developed, including story-bridging, organizational storytelling, and narrative ethnography.¹⁷ Episodic narrative interview is a beginner-friendly technique for researchers new to narrative inquiry, due to the systematic structure, which was intentionally designed based on the idea of an “experience-centred narrative.”¹⁸ Drawing from three specific qualitative research techniques (semi-structured interview, narrative inquiry, and episodic interview), the method is as follows:

1. Select a phenomenon of interest: Researcher must identify the specific phenomenon that they wish to better understand as a result of the inquiry.
2. Describe interview process: Participants are provided with a summary of the episodic narrative interview structure and process.
3. Definition of the phenomenon: The researcher requests that the participant define or describe the phenomenon of interest.
4. Request: story about an episode: The researcher requests that the participant tell a story about a specific, bounded episode.
5. Request: story about the phenomenon: The researcher requests that the participant tell a story about the phenomenon of interest within the context of the episode.
6. Additions or amendments: The participant should have the opportunity to add to or amend any parts of the narrative that they have shared.¹⁹

Whereas semi-structured interviewing allows for a researcher to guide the responses of the participants, allowing for an in-depth interview on a narrow subject, episodic narrative interviewing allows for the participant to guide the data-gathering journey to places the researcher might not have been aware of. It places the participant’s journey at the forefront of the data gathering in a way that is distinctly different from Semi-Structured Interviewing. However, Mueller notes that the biggest drawback of this technique is that ‘empirical’ assessment of the data gathered using this technique will yield very little as the goal of these interviews is not comparative, which means finding trends across data gathered with this technique will be difficult.²⁰

After a thorough examination of these potential interview techniques, the stand-out method is the semi-structured interview. In order to generate data that highlights trends across the participants, interview questions need to be focused, and the act of crafting an interview guide and distributing it to participants before the interview will allow for their answers to be more focused. This will make the empirical data gathered from the interviews more easily worked with as the participants will have a clear understanding both of the research being conducted and their role within the scope of the research. However, some elements of the episodic narrative interview process suit this research and will be incorporated into the interview questions/guide. Namely, asking the participants to tell a story relevant to the topic, which has been incorporated into the end of the interview (see the last question in the Reusability section for both parties). Other elements like studying the phenomenon ahead of the interviews and the opportunity to amend will be incorporated, as well as giving the participant space at some point in the interview to talk about any ideas that the interview questions may have sparked in them. By intentionally giving the participants an open-ended space to bring up anything outside of the questions that came to mind, the hope is to gather some interesting outlying content that bears further study. This hybrid method will allow for the gathering of consistent information about the creative and institutional processes, while also leaving space for ideas/practices/thought processes that had not been considered that the participant may bring up.

When considering how to structure the interview questions, two studies by Kallio et al. and Mueller presented useful variations on semi-structured interviews that allowed the participants freedom to share “bounded stories of specific phenomena,”²¹ or more specifically, tangentially related but relevant stories. This was achieved by Kallio

et al. through the development of their “Guide to crafting an Interview Guide,”²² and Mueller through the cyclical process of their Episodic Narrative interviewing style.²³ Applied in this dissertation, by structuring the Interview Guide with a number of intentionally open-ended questions, the participant can deviate from the Guide as they see fit, while the Interviewer has the structure to bring the interview back to the questions when necessary. Employing this method allowed for the generation of consistent data for the later content analysis while also allowing for spontaneity in replies. The Interview Guide for this dissertation is included in full in the appendices. For an example of this open-ended style question, see this line from the introduction to the Interview Guide:

It is important to note that this is a semi-structured interview, meaning that while the interview will follow along with the questions in the guide as listed, there is room to discuss anything related to these questions that the participant finds to be relevant.²⁴

Additionally, the final interview question is, “Have any of the above questions sparked any thoughts about your creation process/the creation/dissemination of your content that you would like to share?”

The interview questions were divided into four categories in line with the FAIR Data Principles, around which the structure of this research is built. The goal of crafting the interview questions around the FAIR Data Principles was to compare how the GLAM sector approaches data sharing through a FAIR lens as seen in the sample with the manner/question of if/how DCCs go about making their data FAIR as seen in the sample and the interviews. By comparing the responses with the samples, this research was designed to illuminate gaps within their practices and how culture is created and shared online. The questions were tailored to suit the participants within each trait of

the FAIR Data Principles and include a breakdown of what each trait of FAIR is and how data can be edited to meet the requirements of the trait.

The format of each section of questions is as follows: the first two questions focus on a specific element of FAIR. For example, the first two questions in the section “accessible,” for DCCs is:

1. What protocols have you put in place for users to complete in order to access your content, if any? If so, please explain the protocols and why they were chosen. Who made that decision?
2. Do you make the metadata for your content accessible, even if the image itself is not?

Following those two questions, every section has two more questions which follow the same format:

1. Are you trying to keep track of/monitor the (x trait) of your content in any way?
2. Is there any kind of community guidelines for (relevant participant grouping) on how to make their content more (x trait) that you’ve been made aware of?

The decision to include those two questions at the end of each section stemmed from wanting to understand the DCC’s assessment strategies and how they have developed their practices and policies. By having these questions focus on specific elements as opposed to asking these two questions at the end regarding all 4 traits was to get the participant to think about their process in a more granular way, which assisted this research’s understanding of trends and decision-making in these two groups.

The rigid structure of these questions is in line with the practice of semi-structured interviews, however elements of episodic narrative interviewing were included as well, with an intentional choice to ask open-ended questions throughout the interview, including asking DCCs to detail their creation process, to describe their relationship, if any, with GLAM+ institutions, and encouraging DCCs to share any stories that came to mind during the interview that they hadn’t discussed already. The

interview questions can be found in full in the Participant Interview Guide in the Appendices.

Given the complex nature of selecting, contacting, and arranging interviews for participants, it was determined necessary to develop a workflow for this portion of the data gathering process. The term workflow, as defined by Koolen et al., is “scripts, which can be executed, reused by other scientists, becoming part of a chain of the development of scientific processes.”²⁵ In creative fields, a workflow is largely the same thing—a list of tasks, curated in a specific way, to be completed in order, so as to accomplish a goal (usually the creation of an object of some kind).²⁶ In the academic world of arts and humanities, the term “workflow” is less commonly used, however, ideas like Unsworth’s Scholarly Primitives have inspired workflow-like processes in research.²⁷

Koolen et al. makes a point to highlight the research infrastructure DARIAH as paving the way for researching scholarly workflows and crafting conceptual models for scholarly research activity that is grounded in conceptual and empirical research in the arts and humanities.²⁸ Workflows can take multiple forms, ranging from a list of tasks to complete in direct order (evoking a computer running a string of code) or a more circular process, in which tasks can have multiple outcomes that the workflow accounts for, such as Koolen et. al.’s example below.²⁹

This research takes cues from other studies which have employed an approach based on workflows in order to accomplish their scholarly tasks, (a number of which are related to work done by DARIAH) such as Koolen et al.,³⁰ Blanke and Hedges,³¹ Schriebman et al.,³² Edmond et al.,³³ and Kamposiori and Benardou,³⁴ among others. However, where as many of these models employ a more general set of terms and tasks

within their scholarly workflow, (see Koolen’s workflow), this research also takes cues from more practiced based workflows, which are granular and specific, breaking down specific tasks into completable steps. See, for example, a workflow employed in a digitisation department of a museum in Table 4.

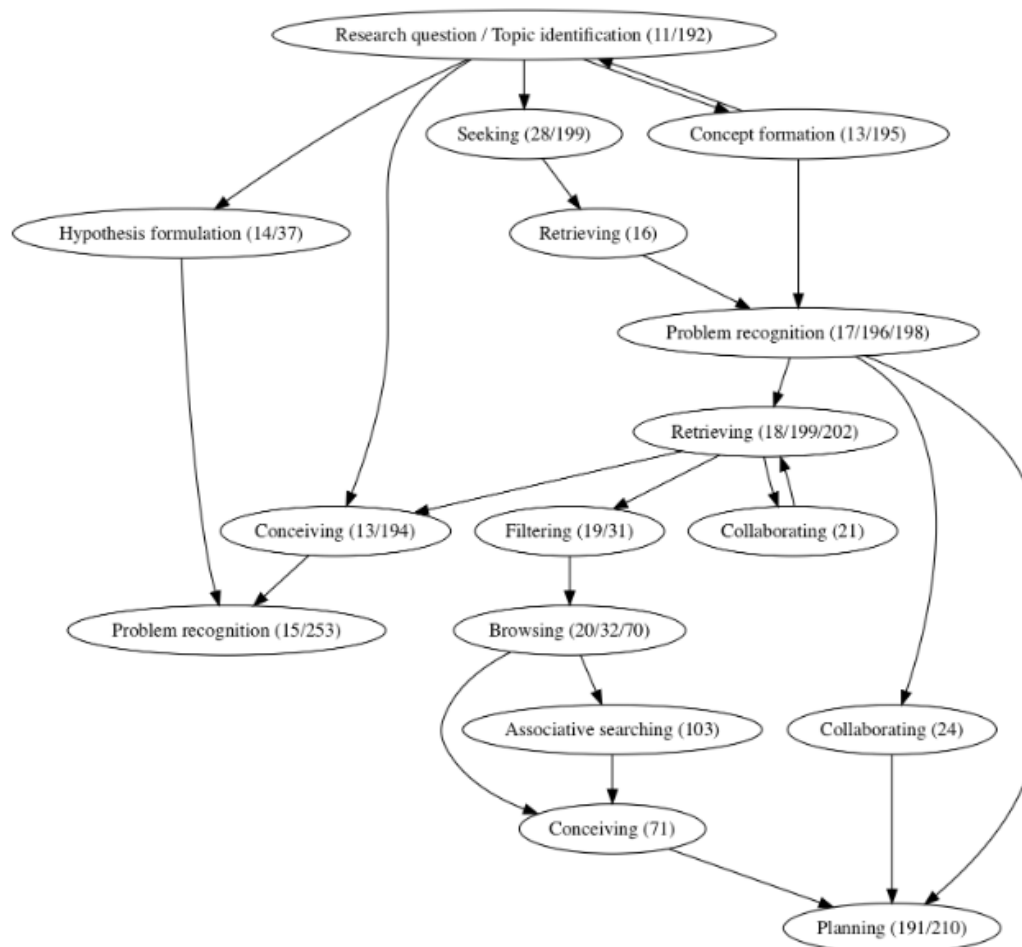


Table 3: An example of a scholarly workflow from Koolen et al.

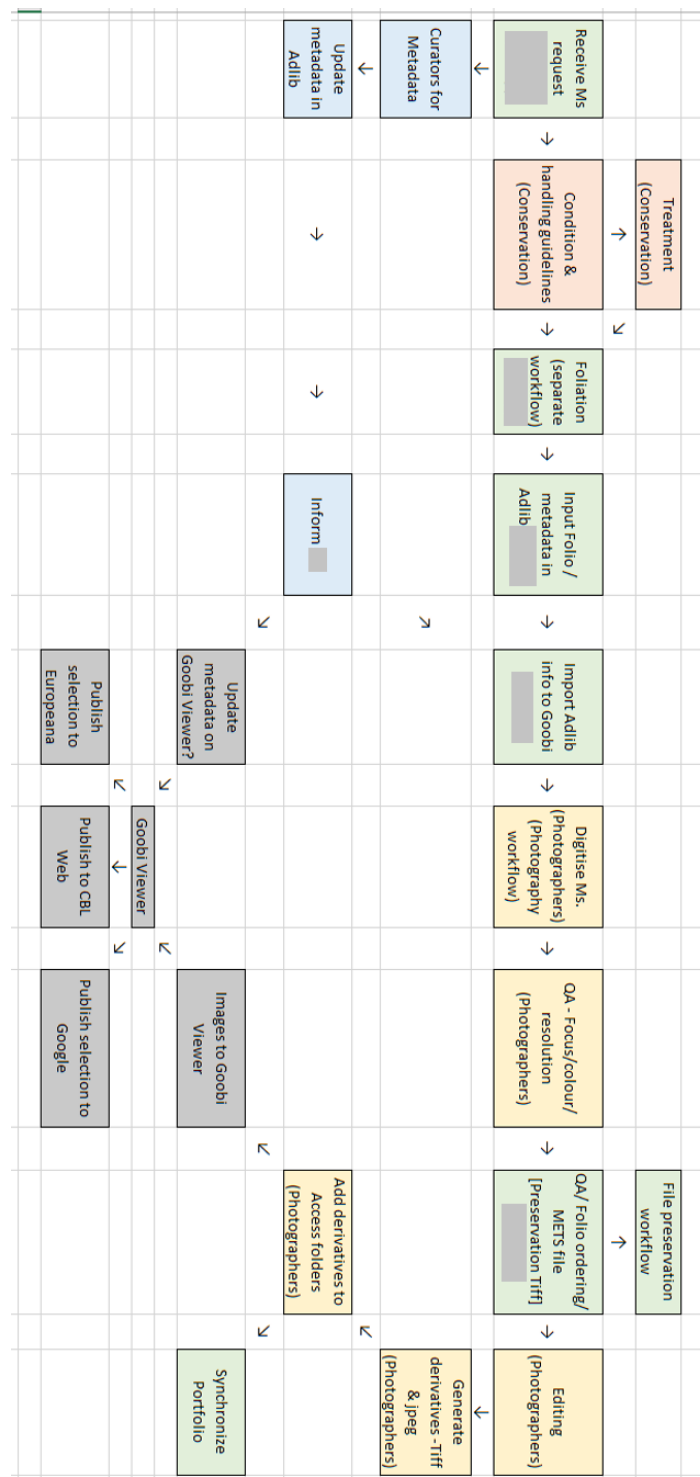


Table 4: A practice-based workflow from a GLAM+ institutionⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱ This workflow was created by the researcher within their remit as an employee in a GLAM+ institution before starting the PhD.

The workflow developed for this research is divided into four sections, and can be seen in Table 4:

1. Securing participants
2. Conducting interviews
3. Processing interviews
4. Analysing interviews

The first section is completed for each potential participant as it involves a circular process of making contact. The second and third sections are completed once per participant as it only deals with confirmed participants. The final section only needs to be completed once as it deals with converting the raw transcripts into data that can be used in the analysis portion of this dissertation.

The first section of the workflow, securing participants, begins after the process of selecting potential participants is completed. This process was tracked using Excel. A sheet was created with a list of potential participants, with columns reading Name of Account, Email Address, Contacted?, and Status. The first step in the workflow is to “Contact individual DCCs through Instagram DM with invitation to participate, track through Findings Workbook.” At this point, the workflow breaks into a looped suite of options, based on responses to initial messages, either ending in marking an account as unresponsive in the Workbook or arranging an interview. The second section of the workflow, conducting interviews, picks up at preparing for individual interviews, walking through necessary steps to ensure all of the information required for ethics approval is gathered while accomplishing the required research and data security tasks. The third section of the workflow, processing interviews, tracks the steps needed for converting the interview recordings into useable data. Tasks include transcription,

validation with participants, and initial coding of the transcripts. The final section of the workflow focuses on preparing the data for inclusion in this dissertation by ensuring accurate pseudonymisation, deleting participant data that is no longer needed per GDPR, and coding the transcripts using NVivo, finishing with the writing of the findings portion of this dissertation. This workflow guaranteed consistency in the data gathering process while also ensuring required ethical and administrative tasks were completed.

Interviews are considered one of the primary methods of qualitative research,³⁵ and while the other two data collection methods interrogate under-researched elements, it felt important to have an additional dataset that was collected through and consisted of data that has long proven useful in a research context as a way of lending credibility to the samples by showing through the interviews how some of the elements noted in the samples have impacted the participants.

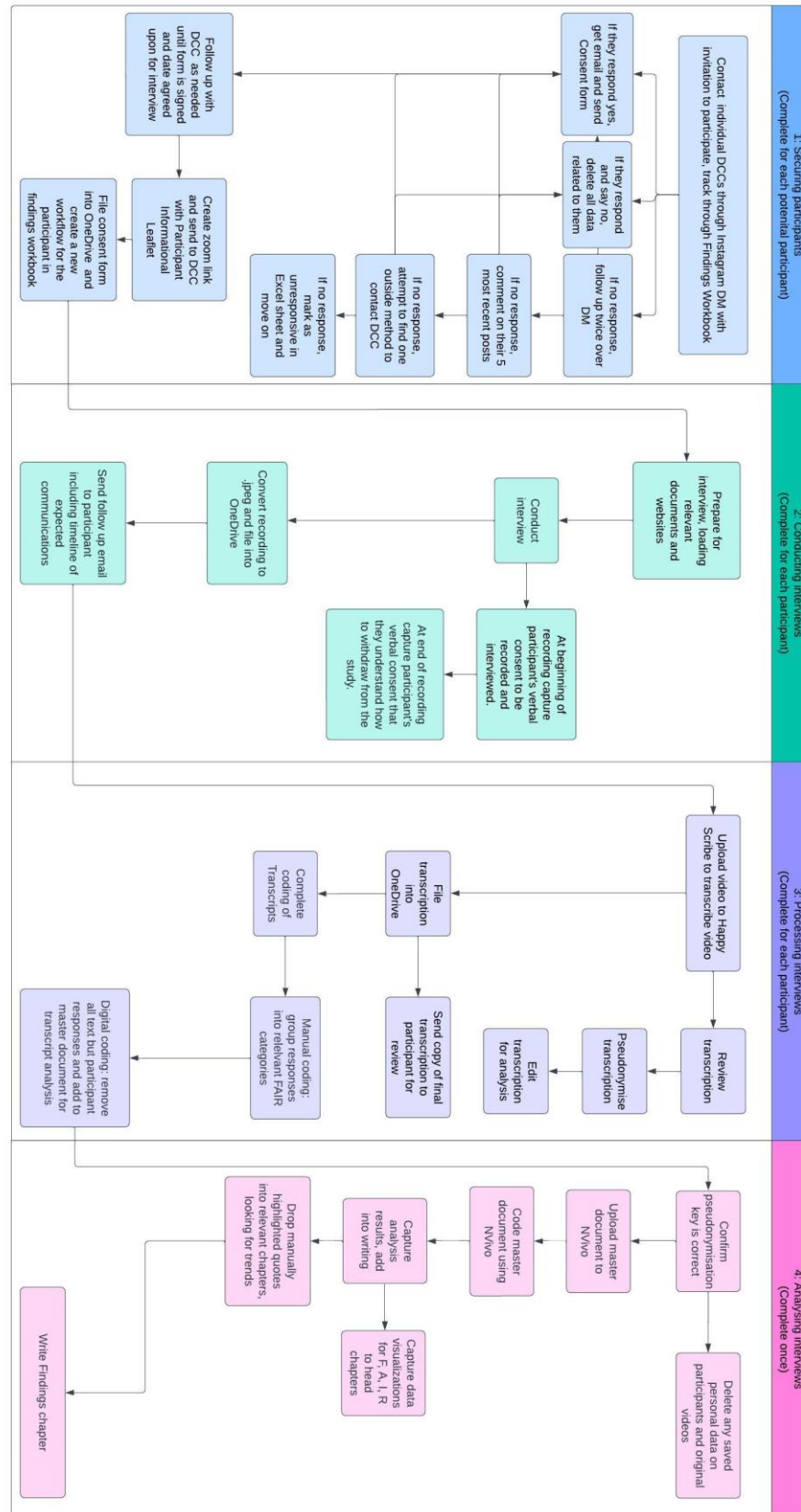


Table 5: Workflow for the DCC Interview Data Set

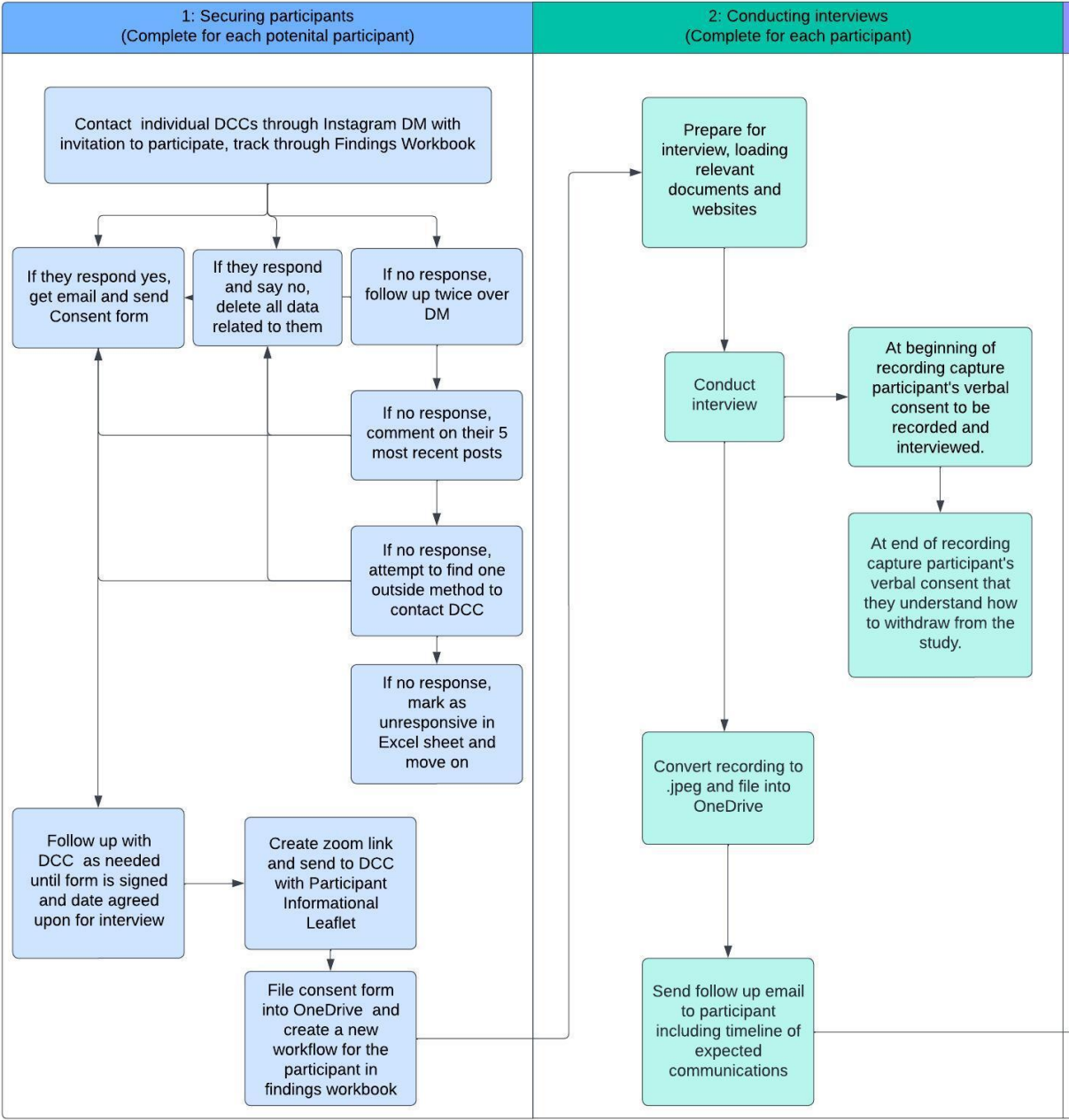


Table 6: Phases 1 and 2 of Data Gathering Workflow

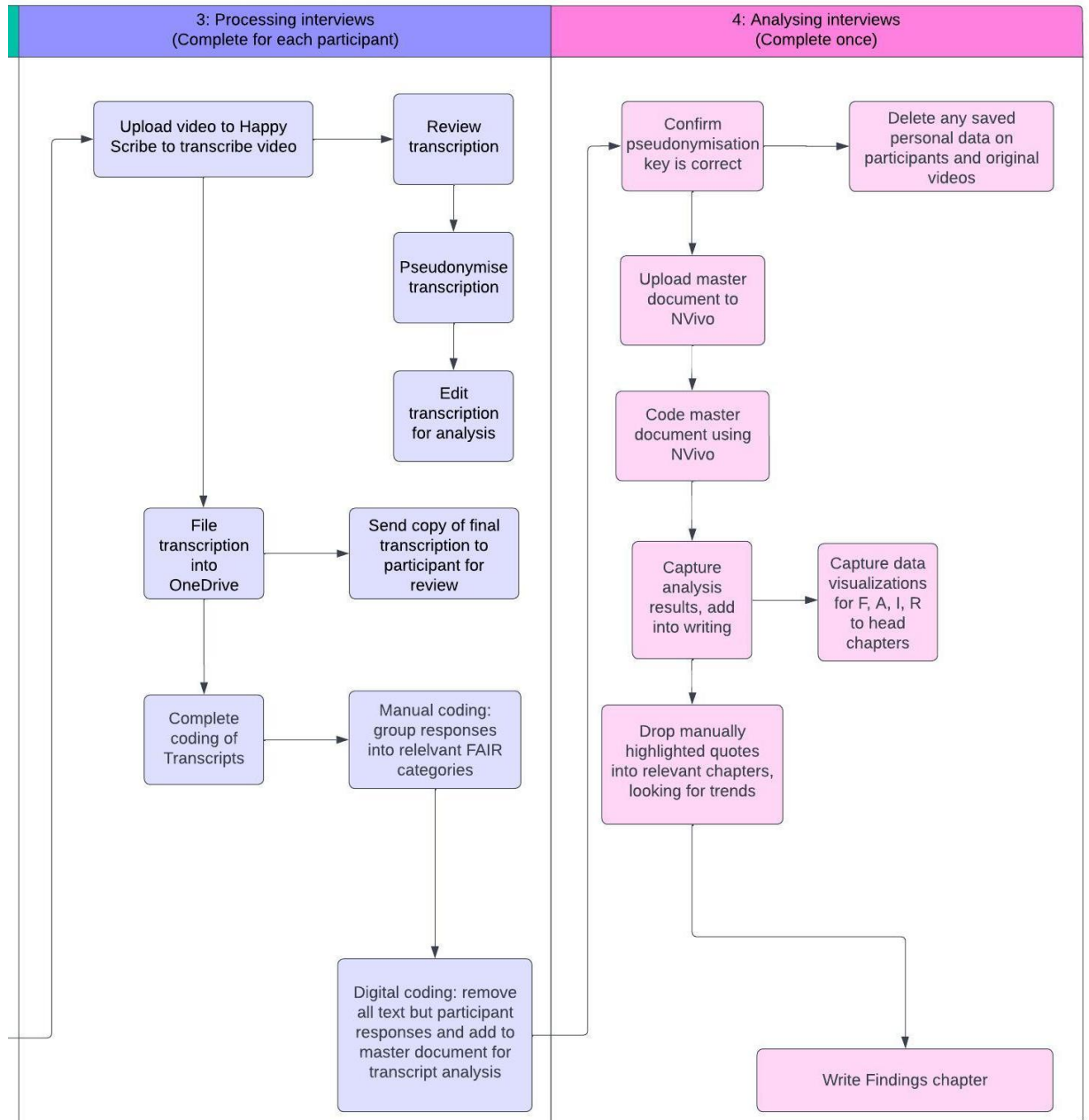


Table 7: Phase 3 and 4 of Data Gathering Workflow

4.E: Analysis

The data collection process resulted in: A GLAM+ Institution Dataset which sampled twenty-eight GLAM+ institutions' content, which consisted of sixty-two policy documents with sixteen data points collected for each institution. A CAM Profile Dataset which sampled 20 CAM accounts, which consisted of 392 CAMs and eighteen data points collected for each post. A DCC Interview Dataset which collected ten interviews with DCCs who specialise in creating CAMs, which consisted of just over ten hours of interviews, resulting in over 200 pages of transcripts. These three data sources provided a rich base of knowledge for analysis.

This wealth of diverse data was able to be analysed using qualitative methods, primarily a framework in the form of the FAIR Data Principles, as detailed in the Conceptual Framework. The framework approach to qualitative analysis was developed in the 1980's and is a popular method of qualitative analysis in the research field today.³⁶ The analysis of the collected data took four phases: Familiarisation, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

Familiarisation consists of reading the data in its entirety without analysing the text in any way, as a method of "getting a sense of the whole."³⁷ Familiarisation is important because it provides the researcher with a broad understanding of the data, which can support the noticing of trends and outliers in the data when returning with an analytical lens.³⁸

Data reduction is the process of making sense of the data, and in the context of this dissertation was accomplished through coding. The goal of data reduction is to filter out data that is not useful to the research through some kind of framework.³⁹ In

this dissertation the FAIR Data Principles were used as a framework through which to categorise and code the data as a way of filtering the wider pool of data.

The data from the GLAM+ Institution Dataset and CAM Profile Dataset were processed first through careful notations in their associated Workbooks, which were then grouped into categories within the Workbooks to allow for trends and other empirical points to be noted. As previously noted, these workbooks can be found on Zenodo.⁴⁰

The interviews were processed first by converting interview recordings from Zoom's internal format to an MP4 file, which was saved within this research's OneDrive. The MP4 files were then uploaded to HappyScribe, a GDPR compliant transcription service. HappyScribe produced initial transcriptions and facilitated editing to ensure the transcriptions were accurate. Once the transcriptions were complete within Happy Scribe, they were exported to a Word document and saved within the OneDrive. The transcripts were then completed in Word, adopting Edited Transcription methods, which transcribe every word but remove pauses, filler words, and fix any grammar mistakes in order to make the transcription as clear as possible in its meaning. This also allows for any irrelevant material to be removed in order to maintain readability.⁴¹

Following the completion of the transcripts, coding was completed to facilitate the analysis by two methods: manual and assisted. Coding a document for use in computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is a circular process, involving multiple careful readings and annotations of the text. The manual coding divided the contents of the transcripts into four categories: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable. While the code book is available in full in the appendices, other manually derived codes included: capturing of GLAM+ institution content,

adaptation of GLAM+ institution content, and dissemination of CAM content, among others. The assisted coding was completed using NVivo,⁴² a CAQDAS that is considered to be one of the best for use in qualitative research.⁴³ NVivo includes automatic coding functions which allow for a much more granular coding process, making connections between themes throughout the interviews that had not been visible previously. Once the transcripts were fully coded, themes were grouped into families, the results of which will be discussed in the Findings chapter.

A set of initial codes was created by referring to the interview questions, creating larger categories of Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable. These codes were applied to the interviews deductively while simultaneously capturing new codes from the interviews inductively as themes emerged. A second set of codes was created covering the new themes, including the creation process, meme culture, GLAM+ institutions, and platforms. Codes were adjusted throughout the coding process, including merging codes, deleting codes that were not resulting in citations, and reclassifying citations as needed in order to keep the code book both well-organised and frequently applied to the text. In full, the codebook contains twenty-five codes in four family groupings: the FAIR Data Principles, GLAM+ Institutions, the Creation process, and Meme Culture. The code book can be found in full in Table 6. In total, the application of these codes resulted in over 2000 statements being encoded within the interview transcripts, resulting in a richly annotated text. Finally, the coded transcripts were analysed, with the results being discussed in Chapter Six, DCC Interview Dataset.

DCC Interview Dataset Codebook			
Code family	Code name	Sub code name	Code definition
FAIR Data Principles	Accessibility		Section of the interview focusing on Accessibility and mentions of topics relevant to Accessibility from other places in the interview
	Findability		Section of the interview focusing on Findability and mentions of topics relevant to Findability from other places in the interview
	Interoperability		Section of the interview focusing on Interoperability and mentions of topics relevant to Interoperability from other places in the interview
	Reusability		Section of the interview focusing on Reusability and mentions of topics relevant to Reusability from other places in the interview
GLAM+ institutions	Art		Theoretical thoughts about art and its function within the world from DCCs
	GLAM+ institutions mentioned		Any mentions of GLAM+ Institutions
		GLAM+ Institution Collaborations	Discussions from DCCs about any collaborations they may have done with GLAM+ institutions
	Copyright		Discussions from DCCs about original artworks and the copyright restrictions attached to them
	Acquisition of GLAM+ institution content		How the base content is gathered by the DCC
		Inspiration	What the creator is looking for in art to turn into an internet meme
	Adaptation of GLAM+ institution content		How the content is adapted from art into an internet meme by the DCC
		Humour	Discussions from DCCs about humour and how it is applied to their work

	Dissemination of GLAM+ institution content		How the content is spread online
		Community Guidelines	Any mentions of community guidelines that DCCs may or may not employ
		Platforms	Any mentions of platforms and how they operate
		Tracking	Any mentions of ways that DCCs do or do not track their content online
Meme culture	CAM accounts mentioned		Mentions from DCCs of other CAM accounts and meme accounts that have interacted with their content
	Follower interactions		Discussions from DCCs about their interactions with users who consume their content
	Feelings		Discussions from DCCs about how they feel about the account and how the account makes them feel
		Founding of account	Discussions from DCCs about how the account came into being
		Monetisation	Discussions from DCCs about whether or not they have leveraged the account in some way to make money
		Original art meme account	Discussions from DCCs about what account was the original art meme account
		Ownership	Discussions from DCCs about their content and how they feel when someone else uses it
		Rivalry	Discussions from DCCs about rivalries with other CAM accounts
	Meme functions		Comments from DCCs that highlight how an internet meme functions online

Table 8: Codebook for DCC Interviews

The third phase of analysis, data display, involved selecting important passages/images to use in the final text as a method of displaying the key points of the data within the written analysis.⁴⁴ Within the first two datasets, images were the primary form of data display, highlighting various GLAM+ institution webpages with relevant content and a selection of CAMs which highlight examples noted through the coding process. The third dataset, meanwhile, focused on quotes from participants that captured the various codes noted within the transcripts.

The final phase of qualitative analysis is drawing conclusions, in which statements about the data gathered, themes and outliers noted, various codes and their contents, and meaningful statements connecting them all are drafted,⁴⁵ “drawing meaning from displayed data.”⁴⁶ In this phase, the FAIR Data Principles as detailed in the Conceptual Framework were deployed, providing structure to the analysis. Each dataset was examined through the lens of Findability, from a technical and cultural viewing, discussing examples from the dataset which highlight alignment or disconnection from the principles. This was repeated for Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability. This is part of the reason that the FAIR Data Principles are such a useful tool within the context of this research. They provide a framework in which the data can be examined in a consistent manner that lends itself to productive analysis.

4.F: Research Ethics

The central ethical consideration of this research has been how to best protect the identities of the participants (or if their identities should or could be protected). In theory, by anonymising or pseudonymising, participants potentially feel safer to be more honest about their workflows, including techniques/processes that may not be fully legal or publicly acceptable, as their anonymity protects them from fallback.

However, any contextual information used (for instance, mentioning the response of a European aggregator or a specific CAM that was posted) could potentially make that anonymisation ineffectual.

Furthermore, there is debate within the academic community over the idea of anonymisation versus pseudonymisation, primarily centring around which technique is more ethical. Anonymisation is the process of removing any and all direct identifiers (i.e. name, address, contact details) from all elements of research, to the point at which even the researcher cannot identify a specific participant.⁴⁷ This process is irreversible, and makes the data not subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), as it no longer contains personal information of any kind.⁴⁸ Pseudonymisation is the process of replacing any and all direct identifiers from all elements of the research with some kind of pseudonym, most often a code.⁴⁹ The accepted best practice for accomplishing this is maintaining a key to these codes in a separate location,⁵⁰ allowing the researcher to go back and identify participants as needed.⁵¹ This process is reversible, and it leaves the data subject to GDPR, as there is still personal data intact.⁵²

This research is participatory in nature, particularly in regard to the interview element of the data-gathering, which involves communicating with and building a relationship with the participant in order to secure an interview, conducting the interview, and allowing the participant to review their transcripts. While pseudonymisation does not fully protect the participant from being identified, it does allow for the data that is shared in the research to be more comprehensive and affords participants special legal protections that anonymisation does not. It is generally considered best practice to adopt pseudonymisation when the data is being used for a specific purpose, and some level of personal information will assist in achieving that

purpose.⁵³ This research will therefore be pseudonymising the participation of DCCs. To that end, an ethics application was made, citing the desire to utilise human participants, which was successful, and can be found in full in the appendices, which details risk assessments, and data protection. It is followed by a comprehensive data management plan.

Potential participants were initially contacted by DM on Instagram. See the “Recruitment Materials” in the appendices. If they said yes, they were sent an “Informational Leaflet,” in the appendices, which detailed the planned research, asking for their informed consent and signature. If this was signed, then they would be sent a “Participant Interview Guide,” in the appendices, which introduced the relevant topics and provided the participants with the questions they would be asked. A Zoom link was sent, and participants were asked at the beginning of the call if they consent to be recorded, if they understood their interview would be transcribed, pseudonymised, and used in a dissertation, how the recordings would be deleted after transcription, and how they could withdraw from the study at any time, per GDPR. If they again consented on the recording, the interview proceeded. Evidence of this can be found in the DCC Interview Dataset. The original recordings were stored in a password protected OneDrive folder, and were deleted after the transcriptions were complete, as contact information and emails. The transcripts were pseudonymised before coding the transcripts for analysis, and were stored in the password protected OneDrive folder.

It is important to note that the theme of mental health emerged organically in the interview conversations—none of the questions posed to participants focused on mental health, these thoughts were offered in the context of responding to questions about the creation process.

4.G: Data gathering outcomes

There were significant challenges and significant surprises within the process of data gathering for this research. The biggest challenge within the scope of data gathering was managing to interview participants. Reaching out to someone on social media can often be a challenge, with messages getting lost in inboxes, especially if the recipient has an active inbox. So when contacting an account with tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of followers, actually managing to speak with an account was rare. Because of this, an extensive contacting procedure was developed. As mentioned in the workflow, the process was:

1. Initial message via Instagram DM
2. If no response, follow up via DM
3. If no response, follow up again via DM
4. If no response, comment on the 5 most recent posts with an invite to talk
5. If no response, try to find an external means of contacting
6. If no response, mark “unresponsive” in workbook

At any point if a DCC responded, the process shifted into:

1. Ask for an email address
2. Send on invitation email with consent form
3. Get consent form signed, file away, and name a date for interview
4. Confirm interview by sending on Participant Information Leaflet and a Zoom link

At any point in the above process, if an account did not wish to participate, they were marked as a “no” in the workbook and the research moved on. In the end, 53 accounts were contacted, with an initial message into their Instagram inbox. Of those accounts, only 28 ever responded to a message (at any point in the above process). Interestingly, the practice of commenting on the first 5 posts was particularly effective at getting accounts attention, getting 9 unresponsive accounts to respond. 5 accounts declined to

participate, and 13 accounts stopped responding before an interview could be set up, Over the course of communicating, 10 accounts were interviewed.

The biggest surprise in this data gathering process was just how much data was collected—many of the sources had much more available data than initially anticipated. The wealth of data this gathering process captured highlights the need for more research in order to fully grasp this unique online space. Many of the interview participants mentioned never being asked about or even thinking about much of their creation process from a more technical perspective and had quite a bit to say—one interview took over 4 hours because the particular DCC had so much to say about how they find their content and their considerations for copyright. Moving forward, the biggest challenge is going to be figuring out how to configure all of this data in a way that can be sufficiently analysed. This process highlighted how under-researched this area is and suggests that more research needs to be done. Avenues for further research based on this research will be discussed in the conclusion.

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Chapter 5: Public Access to GLAM+ Institutional Digitised Cultural Heritage Materials

The previous chapter detailed how the data in this dissertation would be gathered, in the form of three datasets. The next six chapters will present the findings from the three datasets, which capture three unique viewpoints within this research. The first is that of a DCC acquiring content from a GLAM+ institution, which demonstrates the current levels of FAIR-ification across GLAM+ institutions as communicated through their publicly accessible content. The second is that of an user consuming CAMs on Instagram, which demonstrates the current levels of FAIR-ification across CAM accounts as communicated through their publicly accessible content. The third is that of a DCC creating CAMs, which demonstrates the current levels of FAIR-ification throughout the creation practice of DCCs as communicated through interviews with a sample of DCCs who specialise in the creation of CAMs.

To that end, this chapter analyses the GLAM+ institution Website Dataset, as described in the Methodology. This dataset focuses on GLAM+ institutional policies related to OA, reuse of digitised cultural heritage materials, copyright, and addresses the fourth aim of this research – examining the role of GLAM+ institutions as mediators of cultural heritage online, paying attention to issues of accessibility, both culturally and technically, which can illuminate gaps in current practice that can be adjusted to better facilitate cultural creation by their users. The dataset can be found on Zenodo at “The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation: GLAM+ institution Website Dataset.”¹

It is important to note that this dataset has limitations. As it is collected from publicly available documentation from GLAM+ institution websites, a level of human mediation of this data is missing. For example, Terms and Conditions for using a

website are often written by or in consultation with a legal representative, as they are the legal rules a user accepts by interacting with the website and its associated content. The language used in the Terms and Conditions often reflect this purpose and are written in a particular style that is not accessible to the average user and would benefit from a representative of the GLAM+ institution in question interpreting these policies for the context of an average user. This issue is reminiscent of the previously discussed concern about “losing the thick description,” in which researchers are concerned about a loss of human mediation of GLAM+ institutional metadata about digitised cultural heritage materials, impacting the average user’s ability to comprehend and interpret metadata to its fullest extent.

In the context of this dissertation, a DCC may agree to a website’s Terms and Conditions without necessarily comprehending or fully understanding what they are agreeing to, depending on how the Terms and Conditions are communicated. This limitation is highlighted to show that while this dataset captures what a DCC would be able to find on a GLAM+ institution website regarding OA and copyright on their digitised cultural heritage material, these policies rarely benefit a DCC’s understanding of how to apply these policies in the process of data creation. Some institutions do intentionally release additional documentation of some form which is intended to assist the user in comprehending these policies and are highlighted accordingly.

A second limitation of this dataset is its inherent focus on the technical processes and implications of OA and copyright. These policies are written with a specific goal, of communicating the legal requirements of using the website and reusing associated content. Much of the dataset is specifically focused on the technical methods through which content can and cannot be reused. When applying the conceptual

framework of the FAIR Data Principles to this dataset, there was not as much material to analyse with the cultural lens of the FAIR Data Principles. However, as with the previous limitation, some institutions have released additional documentation which does facilitate a cultural lens and will be highlighted accordingly.

A policy is defined in a general context as a “set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organisation, a government, or a political party.”² In GLAM+ institutions, policies build on the above definition, not only as officially agreed upon plans and ideas, but Vincente et al. postulate that policies are also a set of publicly noted methods of operating that are used by GLAM+ institution staff to hold institutions accountable and regulate actions and processes.³

Within the scope of this dissertation an institutional policy can take many forms, ranging from a document outlining the institution’s chosen practice regarding a specific matter, sometimes also called a “statement,”⁴ or a “whitepaper,”⁵ or there may be more formal documentation that employs legal terminology, like “Terms and Conditions.”⁶ Other examples are a few lines on a webpage,⁷ or a formal webpage dedicated to rights.⁸ The policies that institutions adopt are hugely influential both on internal operation and public interaction with them, with Vincente et al. noting that institutions that adopt “innovative” policies are more adaptable to cultural, technological, and political changes, increasing the efficiency, viability and longevity of the organisations.⁹

Vincente et al. define innovation as the extent to which an organisation creates new products and services based on new or updated knowledge gathered from outside parties, such as guests, stakeholders, or technologies.¹⁰ Innovations such as Open

Access (OA) and FAIR-ification of data have significantly impacted GLAM+ institutions over the last fifteen years. Institutional policies are guided by government decisions (such as new or amended laws), funding opportunities, internal goals, directives, or strategic plans.¹¹ In Europe, government decisions are particularly important as GLAM+ institutions are primarily government-funded, as opposed to the US and the UK, which adopt a more flexible model of mixed private and government funding.¹²

Publicly available policies indicate to users (online) and visitors (in person) how they can expect the organisation to operate: see for example the National Museum of Australia's publicly accessible policies, thirty-two in total, ranging from decommissioning collection pieces to volunteers to publishing to radiation safety.¹³ Policies also inform the public how they should conduct themselves within and in regard to the organisations.¹⁴ Policies are important both for users and organisations as a way of mediating a mutually beneficial relationship that serves both parties by laying out rules and expectations for the interaction(s) they will be conducting, such as attending an online event, using the website, or understanding the rights attached to images. Policies regarding rights allow for the institution to inform the user what content they can and cannot reuse, how they can and cannot reuse it, and the ramifications that can be expected if these rules are not followed.

It is important for organisations to make this information as clear as possible so that the user can follow these guidelines. For the user, it is important to know how, where, and why they can and cannot use certain content, as it informs what data they choose to reuse and protects them from infringing on copyright (if that is important to the user), and potentially a legal case. It is also important to note that many users do not

care or do not realise when they are infringing on copyright,¹⁵ but that when this does occur, GLAM+ institutions have the right to pursue legal action if they feel the infringement is significant.

There are dedicated professionals within GLAM+ institutions to handle the issuing of rights and licences, and also to pursue copyright infringement cases.¹⁶ These individuals often manage email accounts dedicated to rights and licensing, which are often displayed on pages with relevant rights information that the public would be consulting.¹⁷ Having this information both easily accessible and easy to understand is a critical part of the work of GLAM+ institutions to make their content more “open,” and can significantly impact the creation process for DCCs.

An overview of the data gathered and trends noted will be presented in this section, followed by an analysis of three institutional websites that typify some of the trends within the sample, ranging from how their policies are displayed and discussed to how their rights applications function practically to any additional or clarifying information they provide on the use of their content. The aim of this analysis is to capture the experience of an user (like a DCC) on GLAM+ institutional websites, highlighting how these websites can potentially impact their creation process.

5.A: Dataset Overview

Within the GLAM+ Institution Website Dataset, which includes over 200 pages of GLAM+ institution policies in a variety of formats, there are a few trends that stand out as useful for framing a discussion of the data captured. As a way of organising this discussion, the examined GLAM+ institutions can be divided into three categories according to their level of public adoption of OA traits and policies. The first category is OA innovators, which indicates GLAM+ institutions that have publicly adopted OA

traits and publicly highlight the impact of their OA content within and outside of their organisation. The second category is OA adopters, which indicates GLAM+ institutions who have publicly adopted OA traits, however the impact of adopting OA traits has not publicly been discussed beyond their repository. The third category is OA potential, which indicates GLAM+ institutions who have not publicly adopted OA traits and have clear points on their publicly available platform where OA traits could be adopted (from a technical standpoint). It is important to note that this categorisation is merely a tool for organising information and does not indicate success or failure in any respect by the GLAM+ institutions discussed. The institutes included in the dataset are listed below, with their location, type of institution, and the position within the above categories. This dataset and subsequent analysis highlight the ways in which GLAM+ institutions are (or aren't) enabling their digitised cultural heritage content for reuse under FAIR conditions, directly addressing the research questions of this dissertation.

Name of GLAM+ Institute	Type of Institute	Category	Location
Art Institute of Chicago	Museum/Gallery	OA innovators	North America
Auckland Museum	Museum	OA innovators	Oceania
Berlin's Egyptian Museum	Museum	OA innovators	Continental Europe
British Library	Library	OA innovators	UK/Ireland
British Museum	Museum	OA innovators	UK/Ireland
Digital NZ	Aggregator	OA innovators	Oceania
Digital Public Library of America	Aggregator	OA innovators	North America
Digital Repository of Ireland	Aggregator	OA innovators	UK/Ireland
Europeana	Aggregator	OA innovators	Continental Europe
Metropolitan Museum of Art	Gallery	OA innovators	North America
Museum of New Zealand of Te Papa Tongarewa	Museum	OA innovators	Oceania
National Archives UK	Archive	OA innovators	UK/Ireland
Rijksmuseum	Museum	OA innovators	Continental Europe
Smithsonian Institution	Museum/Gallery/ Aggregator	OA innovators	North America
Chester Beatty	Library/Museum	OA adopters	UK/Ireland
LACMA	Gallery	OA adopters	North America
Louvre	Gallery/Museum	OA adopters	Continental Europe
National Gallery of Ireland	Gallery	OA adopters	UK/Ireland
Paris Musee	Aggregator	OA adopters	Continental Europe
Van Gogh Museum	Museum/Gallery	OA adopters	Continental Europe
Library and Archives Canada	Archive/Library	OA potential	North America
Museum of Modern Art	Gallery	OA potential	North America
National Gallery of Australia	Gallery	OA potential	Oceania
National Gallery London	Gallery	OA potential	UK/Ireland
National Gallery of Victoria	Gallery	OA potential	Oceania
National Library of Australia	Library	OA potential	Oceania
National Museum of Australia	Museum	OA potential	Oceania
Uffizi	Gallery/Museum	OA potential	Continental Europe

Table 9: GLAM+ institutions included in the dataset

Of the twenty-eight GLAM+ institutions sampled in the dataset, all made at least some of their digitised collection images accessible for reuse under a variety of different licensing strategies. Seventeen of the GLAM+ institutions (roughly 61%) had adopted Creative Commons (CC) licenses of some kind for their organisation's images. Fair dealing legislation of some kind was the second most common licensing strategy, employed by six of the institutes (roughly 21%). Fair dealing legislation varies across countries, but means that an user is allowed to copy intellectual property as long as it is

for non-commercial purposes (such as research) and does not negatively impact the Copyright holder.¹⁸ The remaining five organisations (roughly 18%) did not explicitly state a type of licence being employed for images. Twenty-two of the organisations (roughly 78%) had an image licensing/rights page on their website of some kind, and twenty-four of the organisations (roughly 86%) had a dedicated section within the terms and conditions of using their respective websites that addressed licensing/rights. All of the organisations had at least one dedicated space to discussing image rights, be it a dedicated page with licensing/rights information or a section within the terms and conditions covering licensing/rights. Information regarding metadata was much harder to find—only eleven institutions (roughly 39%) made an explicit mention of metadata at all, and only three (roughly 11%) mentioned rights in relation to their metadata. Only one institution did not offer the option to download images from the website. eleven institutions explicitly mentioned being in line with their local government policy.

The categories for evaluation of the GLAM+ institution websites are as follows:

Does the GLAM+ institution provide OA images of collection content for their users? (accounting for objects in which the copyright is still held by the artist/are not shared for cultural sensitivity)

If so, what kind of licenses do they utilise?

Does the GLAM+ institution provide OA Metadata?

Is there any additional information regarding metadata?

Does the GLAM+ institution have a dedicated Rights/Reproductions (R&R) page on their site?

Is there a dedicated R&R section within the Terms and Conditions for users for using the site or repository?

When was the decision to adopt OA made? If not OA, any plans to move that way?

If OA images are on the website, what type of licence used?

What is the key phrasing of the GLAM+ institution's policies on OA?

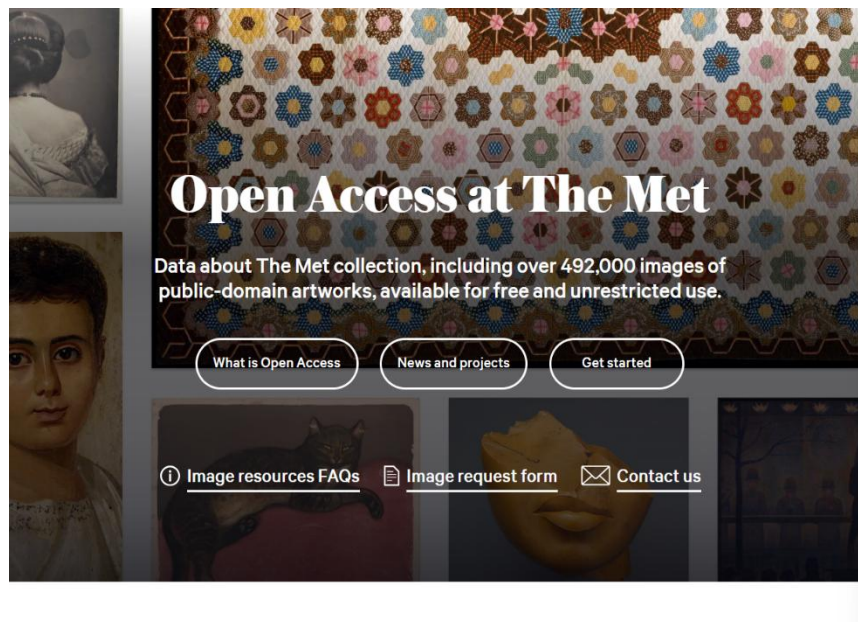
Link to relevant policy pages (screen captures of these pages are available in full in the Appendices)

Does the GLAM+ institution make a point to mention being in line with government policy?

Does the GLAM+ institution make a point to highlight any particular partnerships relevant to OA?

When looking at the OA Innovator GLAM+ institutions, the main trait that stood out was a transparent approach to the design of their websites and their policies. For example, the Metropolitan Museum of Art opens their webpage on OA with a number of simple statistics—when the organisation made the shift to OA, what specific type of license they have chosen to apply to all of their content, and an update on their Open Access Initiative in the form of view and download statistics. Its five sentences, but it very clearly communicates the Met's effort to make their online collections as open as possible, and their progress along the way, providing the user with valuable information. Additionally, they link to pages including "What is Open Access," "News and Projects," and "Get Started."¹⁹ Users who have never considered the Copyright on GLAM+ institution images would be able to find the information they need and develop

an understanding of OA and its goals and how they are being applied in the Met. See Figure 21 for an image of this page:



What is Open Access?

In February 2017, [The Met introduced its Open Access Initiative](#) which makes all images of public-domain artworks and basic data on all accessioned works in its collection available for unrestricted use under [Creative Commons Zero \(CC0\)](#). Now anyone can download, share, and remix images and data about artworks in The Met collection.

The [Open Access](#) initiative represents an incredible body of ongoing work by curators, conservators, photographers, librarians, cataloguers, interns, and technologists over the past 151 years of the institution's history—new images and data are added each year. It is also an important statement about The Met's commitment to increasing access to the collection in a digital age.

In the last four years, Open Access images and data have been viewed over 1.2 billion times and downloaded over 7 million times from The Met's site and on our partner platforms.

Figure 21: The OA landing page of the Met's website

Of the organisations who are classified as OA Innovators, there is a consistent pattern across all ten GLAM+ institution websites, in which there is a landing page like the Met's, which covers rights/OA. The pages share a very simple introduction to the

data, and links to more basic information, as the Met has done, and/or an FAQ, as seen on the British Museum's landing page for OA (see Figure 22).²⁰

FAQs

<u>I am a doctoral candidate. Can I use British Museum content in my thesis?</u>	+
What if my thesis is chosen for publication?	+
Can I use British Museum content on social media sites?	+
Can I use British Museum content in my article if it's published in an Open Access journal?	+
What if the journal is published by a charity?	+
I found a 3D photograph of a British Museum object on your website. How can I use it? Can I print it out with my 3D printer?	+
Can I use British Museum content for text and data mining?	+

Figure 22: FAQ section on the OA landing page of the British Museum's website

This information is often tailored to suit the needs of people who frequently use GLAM+ institutional content, such as researchers. This can be seen in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, which specifically addresses the question: I am a doctoral candidate. Can I use the British Museum content in my research? (Answer: yes, as long as credit is given and the research is also OA.²¹) This landing page format allows for a user to easily navigate the various pages associated with OA on the websites that they find relevant, giving the user the option to engage with as much or as little of the OA content as they desire by requiring the additional step of following a link to access the information they are interested in.

Institutions that are classified as OA adopters, of which there are ten, presented the information that the OA Innovators had, but they lacked a clear landing page for content related to OA. This made their websites less intuitive to use and therefore more difficult to find the needed information. Often on these GLAM+ institution websites, in order to find the necessary information for the sample, the Terms and Conditions for using the website would need to be consulted, or a Google search with the GLAM+ institution's name and "Open Access" had to be used in order to drill down through the layers of webpages to the relevant information. An example of this can be seen on the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongerewa website, which, while it has a vast OA collection of images, does not make this readily apparent on their website. From the home page, you need to click the "About" menu, then select "Media sales and licensing," and then select "License images," at which point you finally get one line of information about OA images on the website: "Many of our images are free to use under a Creative Commons licence. The rights and use options for each image are shown on its Collections Online page."²²

Compared to the OA Innovators, these websites require more effort from the user to get basic OA/copyright information, and studies show that generally, users will not follow a trail of links to get the relevant information.²³ While the average user may find this information sufficient, from the perspective of a DCC who is conscious of copyright law, this category of GLAM+ institutions technically provide the necessary information, however, it is not intuitive to locate like on OA Innovator websites.



Figure 23: An image on the Collection Explorer of Te Papa’s website

While the Collection repository is intuitive to use (particularly in regards to the rights information), and the website technically meets many of the criteria for the sample, finding information about OA at Te Papa is more challenging. In fact, the only piece of information on the website about OA at Te Papa was a news bulletin from 2014, which noted the launch of Te Papa’s OA image collection, which originally consisted of 30,000 images.²⁴

Similarly, while the Louvre famously released their entire collection (over 480,000 objects) under OA licenses in 2021,²⁵ there is no mention of this on their main

website or their image repository, except in their Terms and Conditions (T&Cs). The Louvre's T&Cs can be found by scrolling to the very bottom of any page on the collection repository site, and then navigating to sections 4.1.1-4.1.2 which cover the rights information. However the language employed is legal terminology, which is not friendly to the casual internet user.²⁶

The sections state that images not protected by copyright (in the case of the Louvre, these would be artists still alive or recently deceased) are allowed to be used freely for non-commercial purposes with attribution. This would be the equivalent of a CC-BY-NC licence, if the Louvre had chosen to apply Creative Commons licences, which they did not. Other information can be found on their OA policies through news outlets, but this same detail is not given anywhere else on their website. Despite their collections being OA, because of the lack of guidance around how OA operates in their institution, the accessibility of the collection is reduced. The clear communication of OA practices within an institution to the user is just as important as the OA principles—if the user does not know about or cannot understand how to make use of OA content, then they will likely not utilise the content.

GLAM+ institutions that were categorised as “OA potential” institutions, of which there are eight, do not feature OA as a priority on their site. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is a fascinating example of this, because they are in many ways a leader and innovator among GLAM+ institutions with their content online. They have an active social media presence,²⁷ thriving research partnerships,²⁸ and a massive collection of OA images.²⁹ However their website features relatively

little information on OA images and use/reuse of images, even in their image repository, as seen in Figure 24.³⁰

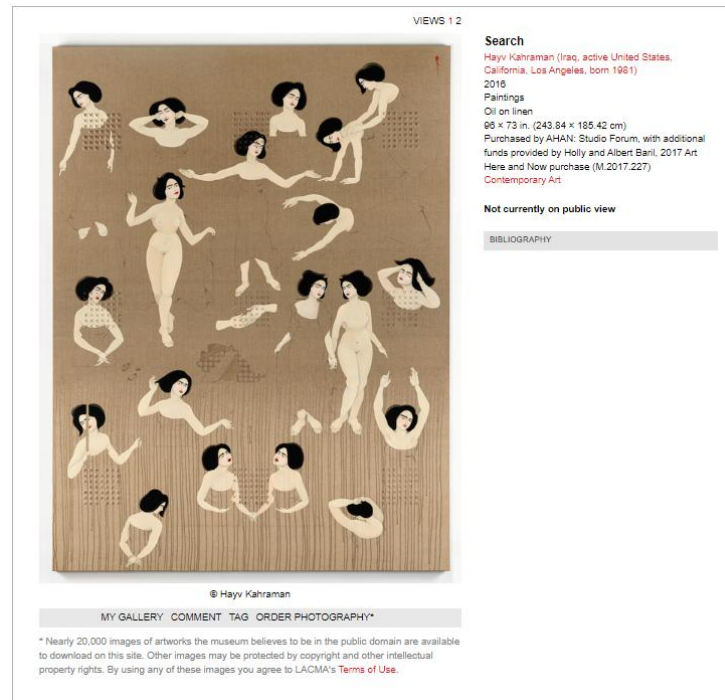


Figure 24: An image on the Collection Explorer of LACMA's website

Of note, there is a blurb below the image which reads:

* Nearly 20,000 images of artworks the museum believes to be in the Public Domain are available to download on this site. Other images may be protected by Copyright and other intellectual property rights. By using any of these images you agree to LACMA's Terms of Use.³¹

It is important to note, however, that this blurb does not clarify if this image in particular is considered to be in the Public Domain (PD), or where to find that information. It is only after making an account and exploring other images in the collection that it becomes apparent that the only way to distinguish if an image is within the PD or protected by Copyright is via the presence or absence of one link in the grey ribbon directly below the image. This can be seen when comparing Figure 24, Search by Hayv Kahraman, to Figure 25, Virgin of Guadalupe by Manuel de Arellano,

both from LACMA's Collection Explorer on their website. The only functional difference between the two records is in the bottom centre, in the ribbon under the image, compared side by side below:

	ENLARGE
MY GALLERY	MY GALLERY
COMMENT	COMMENT
TAG	TAG
ORDER PHOTOGRAPHY	SHARE
	DOWNLOAD IMAGE

When the "ORDER PHOTOGRAPHY" button is clicked, a pop-up window appears with a lengthy form bearing the header:

Rights and Reproduction Order Form
This image is protected by copyright.
For permission to reproduce this artwork from LACMA's permanent collection, please complete all fields in this form.³²

The form is comprehensive, asking for intended uses, duration/number of uses, publishing information, website information, etc. This form is normal within the sector, but the point is that this header on the form is the only place that confirms that the work is under copyright. For the average user, thinking to click into this form as a way of confirming copyright status is unlikely. LACMA also notably does not have a dedicated Rights/Licensing page, although when you click the “Order Photography” button, it pulls up a form for the user to fill out which is sent to the relevant parties within LACMA. The form does include contact information for these parties.³³

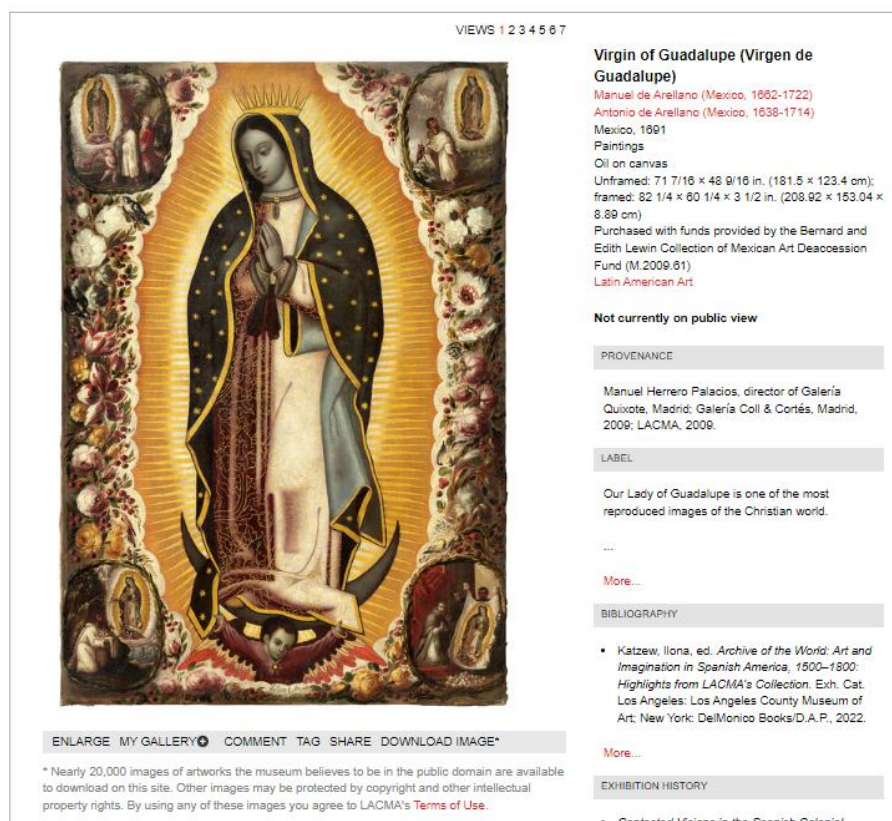


Figure 25: An image on the Collection Explorer of LACMA’s website

The National Gallery in London (NGL) is also an OA potential institution, and does not seem to make OA policies a priority. Users can download low resolution

images from the website, but they are specified as being for personal use only. And notably, the images are in such low resolution (800 pixels maximum on one side) that they're not useful for anything other than casual viewing. For any commercial needs, a user needs to purchase a license from NGL. Similar to LACMA, the only instance this information is presented in any way is when you click the "Download Image" button on item within the Collection Explorer on the NGL website.

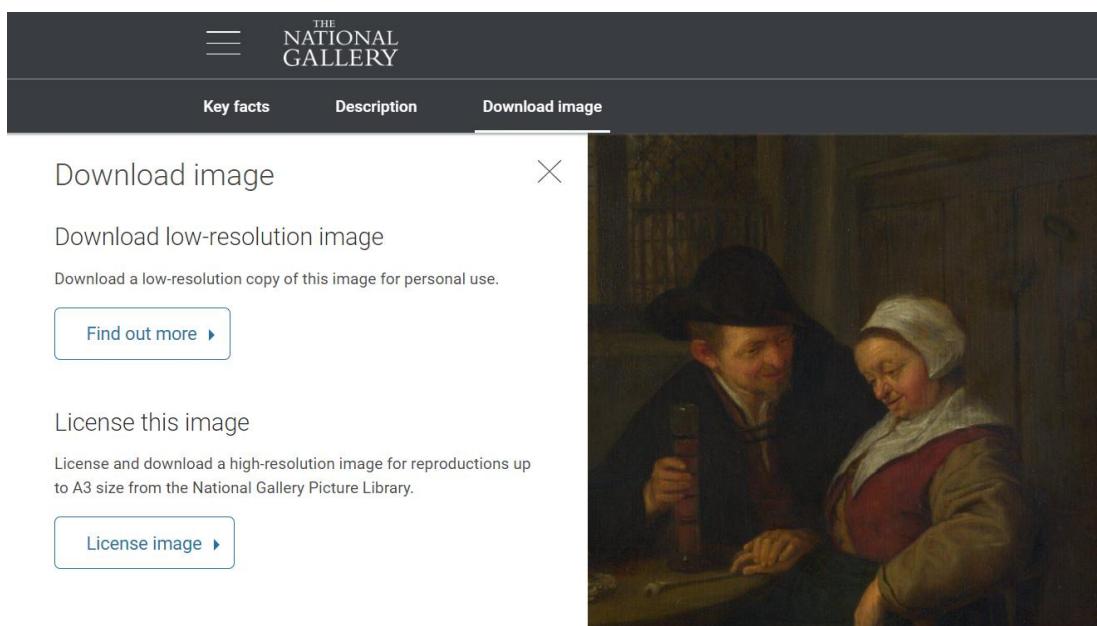


Figure 26: An image on the Collection Explorer of NGL's website

When a user follows the link "Find out more," below the header "Download low-resolution image, as seen in Figure 26,³⁴ NGL provides more information on the policy and how to implement it:

This image is licensed for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons agreement.

Examples of non-commercial use are:

- Research, private study, or for internal circulation within an educational organisation (such as a school, college or university)
- Non-profit publications, personal websites, blogs, and social media

The image file is 800 pixels on the longest side.³⁵

The text notably includes a link to the Creative Commons website, thoroughly explaining the chosen licence and how it operates, however, the fact that this information was behind so many layers of content on the website makes it less useful for a user unfamiliar with licensing policies than if this copyright statement was included on a dedicated rights/licensing page, or visible on every layer of the collections pages, as in some of the OA innovator institutions. Licensing the image for anything other than personal use is incredibly difficult through the online web portal, and as there is no dedicated rights/licensing page, it is unclear who within the organisation to contact regarding the reuse of images. This lack of transparency about who to contact or what a user's rights are pertaining to images is a consistent trait across the OA potential institutions.

5.B: Institution Highlights

This section will present three examinations of particular GLAM+ institutions from the Dataset, which typify each category as described in the previous section. These institutions were chosen for this analysis as they had the most examples of the traits discussed above, allowing for a comprehensive discussion surrounding each category. The framework for the examinations is the tenants of the FAIR Data Principles, as published by the GO Fair website and discussed in the Conceptual Framework, and GLAM+ institution specific questions that tease out the principles, utilising publicly available data that a DCC would be able to find. The institutions being examined are:

the Art Institute of Chicago as an OA Innovator institution, Paris Musées as an OA Adopter institution, and the National Museum of Australia as an OA Potential institution. As mentioned above, these examinations are conducted using only publicly accessible information, both from the Dataset and from the wider internet as needed, such as news articles, forums like GitHub, and public aggregators like Wikimedia and Google Arts and Culture.

5.B.i: OA Innovator: The Art Institute of Chicago

The first institution to be examined is the Art Institute of Chicago (ARTIC). ARTIC launched a redesigned website in 2018, one of the features of which was a bank of 52,438 images released into the PD under a CC0 licence,³⁶ as noted in a blog post by ARTIC's director at the time.³⁷ They also included much higher-resolution images and better tools on the repository for users to examine the artwork. The move was widely reported on,³⁸ and in the years since, the amount of the ARTIC collection available online has increased. They have a section of their website dedicated to "Open Access," under which there are three further pages—"Public API," "Open Source Code," and "Open Access Images."³⁹ As discussed previously, this model of landing page—in this case the "Open Access" page—followed by additional pages which feature links to additional information facilitating a deeper understanding of the policies is a trait typical of the OA Innovator institutions in the Dataset. ARTIC's OA pages cover not only how to use the collections repository to download images, but what a CC0 licence is and how it works, going on to detail how to use the licence correctly with ARTIC content.⁴⁰

5.B.i.1: Findability

With regards to metadata standards, ARTIC follows the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF), which is digital toolkit including a set of image metadata standards optimised for use in APIs, enabling interoperability of data between different organisations' platforms and programmes. An API is an application programming interface and is defined by IBM as "a set of rules or protocols that enables software applications to communicate with each other to exchange data, features and functionality."⁴¹ In practice an API is a programming interface that allows for data to be collected, organised, and shared by developers between a variety of other programs. APIs are highly customisable, meaning that for APIs to function at their best, data needs rich and consistent metadata.⁴² It is also important to note that APIs are designed to be machine-read, highlighting a consideration for machine-readable metadata by anyone who adopts IIIF. ARTIC specifically follows IIIF Image API 2.0.⁴³ ARTIC is following an internationally recognised formatting of their image metadata that allows for a web service to "return an image in response to a standard HTTP or HTTPS request," as defined by IIIF.⁴⁴ This decision is discussed by ARTIC in their API documentation, stating that, "When a tool is built to be IIIF-compliant, its easier to adapt it to consume images from any number of institutions that offer IIIF-compliant APIs."⁴⁵ Other institutions that have adopted IIIF metadata standards include the Wellcome Collection in the UK, the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, the Smithsonian in the US, Europeana in Europe, the Vatican Library in Italy, and a host of other institutions (especially universities) around the globe.⁴⁶

ARTIC has taken a number of measures above and beyond the adoption of IIIF to make their content more findable online. In 2021 ARTIC published their API

(Application Programming Interface) in full as open-source data and code, allowing users to adapt the ARTIC data, code, and programming into their own data and outputs.⁴⁷ At the time, it was the largest public API released by a GLAM+ institution, and the first of its kind, as it offers access to all of the museum's data, from their foundation in 1879 to today, in one searchable space.⁴⁸ ARTIC's API links in to data from their collections, their digital publications, interactive displays in the galleries, associated mobile apps, merchandise-related data, and more.

As briefly mentioned, the code associated with these data sources have been made OA as well.⁴⁹ ARTIC has made the blueprint they have used (and still use and update regularly) to create their digital presence available to anyone who wants to use it to either work with ARTIC data or build a framework for a new dataset. Some of the projects ARTIC highlights on their API webpage show what users can create with this API. For instance, ARTIC worked with Google to develop a Chrome extension called the "Art Tab." When installed to Google Chrome, whenever a user opens a new tab, the extension will query ARTIC's API data and pull a random artwork from ARTIC's collection to appear in the new tab.⁵⁰ Then, instead of a blank new tab (usually populated with frequently visited site links or a search window), an artwork from ARTIC will be presented.

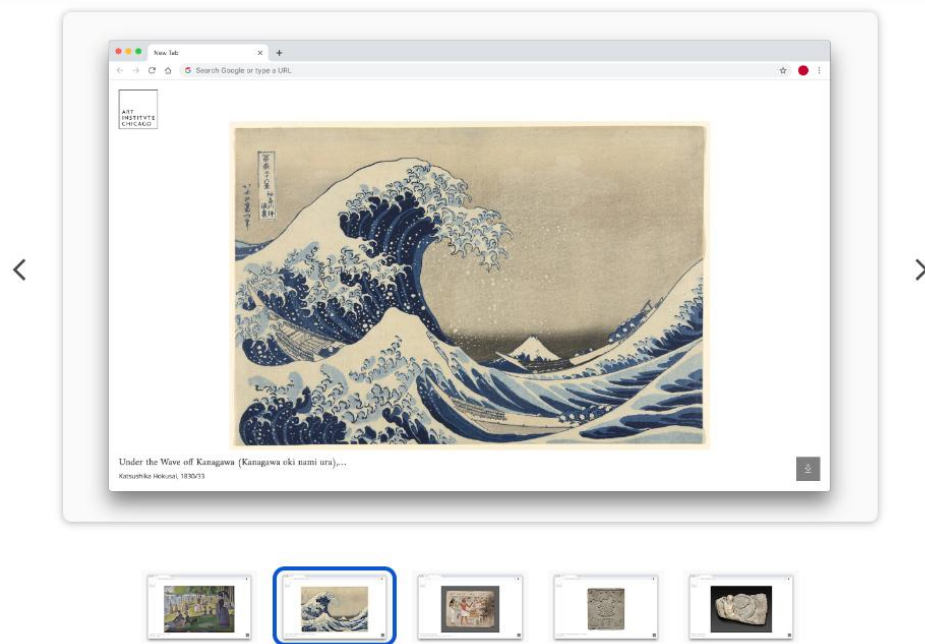


Figure 27: A screengrab of the “Art Tab” from the Google Store

A notable example of APIs from multiple institutions being put together can be seen in the “Water Lilies Challenge,” in which the V&A partnered with ARTIC to query their respective APIs to try and discover who had the most water lilies in their collection (spoiler: Its ARTIC at 2,839 versus the V&A’s 176).⁵¹ How was this done? The metadata from the respective collections was queried for any mention of “Water Lilies.” See an example of how the queries are completed below:

Water Lilies in Chicago

First we see how many Water Lilies the AIC have in their collection:

```
import requests
req = requests.get("https://api.artic.edu/api/v1/artworks/search?q=Water%20Lilies&fields=title,id")
results = req.json()
print(f"The AIC has {results['pagination']['total']} objects mentioning 'Water Lilies'")
```

The AIC has 2839 objects mentioning 'Water Lilies'

Water Lilies in London

Next, how many the V&A have in the collection:

```
import requests
req = requests.get("https://api.vam.ac.uk/v2/objects/search?q=Water%20Lilies")
results = req.json()
print(f"The V&A has {results['info']['record_count']} objects mentioning 'Water Lilies'")
```

The V&A has 176 objects mentioning 'Water Lilies'

Figure 28: A comparison of the queries used in the “Water Lillies Challenge”

Projects like this are important as they enable the data from the collections to be used in new and unexpected ways. Other examples of this kind of innovation emerging from within the ARTIC including partnering with Getty to allow their collection to feature in the Animal Crossing video game,⁵² a virtual tour via Alexa,⁵³ a command-line script that rendered ARTIC works as ASCII code,⁵⁴ a now-defunct Twitter bot tweeting a work from the collection every six hours,⁵⁵ and more. The impact of these projects can be seen most clearly in engagement metrics, such as likes on social media, video views, image repository downloads, and other similar ways that users can engage with content online, though the likelihood that these projects would also have inspired fellow institutions and creatives alike cannot be ruled out.

In a blog post announcing the release of their API to the public, a representative of ARTIC shared that part of the website redesign included the creation of a “Data Hub,” which had a significant influence on how they constructed their API and operate

it still today. This Data Hub is not publicly available outside of a section describing its function on their Open Access home page⁵⁶ and a blog post introducing the Data Hub's impact on the API.⁵⁷ However, The Data Hub is a particularly exciting development related to the ARTIC's API-based data management structure because it provides a leading example of how institutions of any kind might manage their data and engage in tracking metrics much more easily than before. As seen in Figure 29, the previous model of ARTIC's data streams highlights just how many varied types of data were coming into the organisation, feeding into a number of organised areas within ARTIC, resulting in a chaotic flow of data into the API. With the introduction of the Data Hub, the influx of data is streamlined, allowing for much more careful monitoring of incoming data.

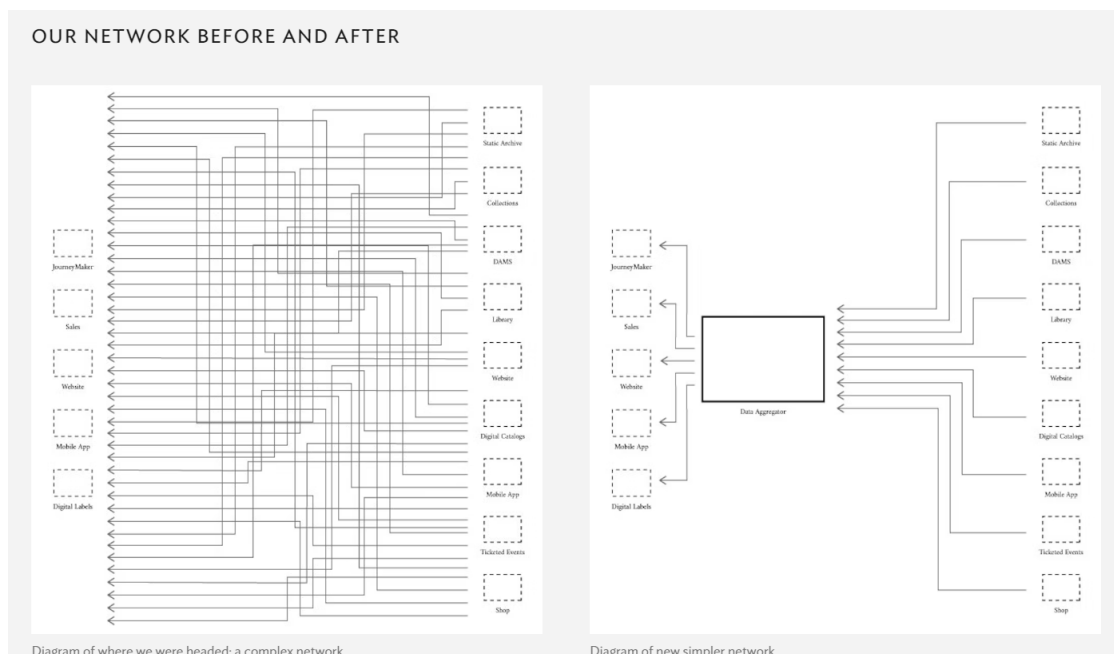


Figure 29: A model of ARTIC's data streams before and after creating the "Data Hub"

This structure makes the task of distinguishing between various forms of engagement, i.e. website downloads, likes on Instagram, comments on the API GitHub, etc., much easier as the more streamlined data flows make data within the ARTIC's purview infinitely more findable.

5.B.i.2: Accessibility

ARTIC has made a conscious decision to forego extensive protocols for the most part, although protocols are almost impossible to avoid entirely—users can download images from ARTIC's repository without making an account, and the CC0 licence applied to the vast majority of their content allows users to do whatever they wish with the images without needing to credit the artist or organisation, for personal or commercial use. ARTIC designed the repository to highlight these elements, including having the licence status of any item of content appear in the bottom left corner and a button to share or download the image in the bottom right.⁵⁸ The Terms and Conditions of the site, while technically a protocol, do not impact the user's experience, as use of site implies agreement with the Terms, unlike other platforms which make an user "agree" to the Terms and Conditions through a pop-up window.

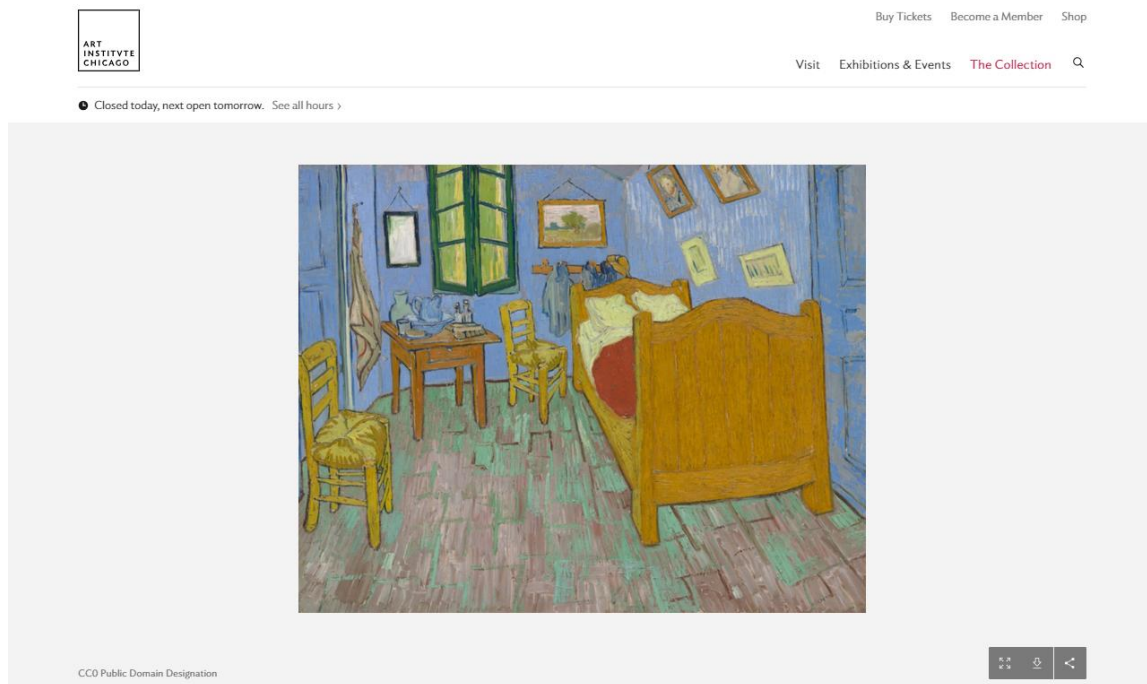


Figure 30: An image on the Collection Explorer of ARTIC's website

They have also created a brief guide on how to access their content, highlighting the few protocols that they may need visitors to follow in order to use the content in a variety of ways, further enabling the accessibility of the site.⁵⁹

The metadata for all of ARTIC's content is accessible through their OA API, which, as previously discussed, has been released in full in multiple formats online. The Open Access Images page on the ARTIC website⁶⁰ includes instructions for how to access all of the collections' metadata, linking to an in-depth guide⁶¹ giving instruction as detailed as how to code basic queries for people not familiar with how to interact with an API. The metadata is also included on each object's record on the digital repository, with a link to its IIIF Manifest, which has the associated metadata in full in a downloadable format, which would still be accessible without the image.⁶²

Artist	Vincent van Gogh	VIDEO	Vincent van Gogh's <i>The Bedroom</i> Art Institute Essentials Tour
Title	The Bedroom		
Place	Saint-Rémy-de-Provence (Object made in)	EXHIBITION CLOSED	Van Gogh's Bedrooms Feb 14–May 10, 2016
Date ⓘ	1889		
Medium	Oil on canvas	HIGHLIGHTS	Impressionism
Dimensions	73.6 × 92.3 cm (29 × 36 5/8 in.); Framed: 88.9 × 108 × 8.9 cm (35 × 42 1/2 × 3 1/2 in.)		
Credit Line	Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection	HIGHLIGHTS	What to See in an Hour
Reference Number	1926.417		
IIIF Manifest ⓘ	https://api.artic.edu/api/v1/artworks/28560/manifest.json		
PUBLICATION HISTORY		+	
EXHIBITION HISTORY		+	
PROVENANCE		+	
MULTIMEDIA		+	

Figure 31: Metadata on the Collection Explorer of ARTIC's website

5.B.i.3: Interoperability

Because of ARTIC's choice to adopt IIIF metadata standards, their content is able to be shared on a much broader scale by virtue of its interoperability, particularly with institutions that employ IIIF standards themselves, without modifying their metadata to suit the specific repositories. ARTIC content can be accessed on the ARTIC institutional repository, but also through Wikimedia,⁶³ Google Arts and Culture,⁶⁴ ArtStor,⁶⁵ GitHub,⁶⁶ and Getty Images. ARTIC does not publish on their website where else their images are being shared outside of their own repository, such as Getty or other similar aggregators.

ARTIC does alter its content when presenting it on various platforms—a collection item as featured in their repository is going to look different to how it is posted on

social media, in a blog post, in an exhibition, or in one of their own API project outputs. For example, ARTIC has talked about the painting *Yellow Dancers (In the Wings)* by Degas on both their Instagram account and their collection repository.⁶⁷ As seen in Figure 32 and Figure 33, the way they both display and discuss the artwork has been adapted for the targeted audience.

Yellow Dancers (In the Wings)	
1874/76	
Edgar Degas French, 1834-1917	
Edgar Degas first painted dancers as an independent subject in 1871. He was to devote almost half his output as an artist to this subject, observing countless performances and rehearsals at the Paris Opéra. Here he placed the viewer in the wings, as if among the elite Opéra subscribers who roamed and socialized backstage. Dance subjects allowed Degas to contemporize his lifelong interest in showing the human body in complex movement, shifting the scene from ancient history to modern Paris. He finished and signed the present canvas in time for the second Impressionist exhibition, in April 1876.	
Artist	<u>Hilaire Germain Edgar Degas</u>
Title	Yellow Dancers (In the Wings)
Place	France (Artist's nationality:)
Date ⓘ	<u>1874-1876</u>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Inscriptions	Inscribed at lower right: Degas
Dimensions	73.5 × 59.5 cm (28 15/16 × 23 7/16 in.)
Credit Line	Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Palmer, Mrs. Bertha P. Thorne, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur M. Wood, and Mrs. Rose M. Palmer
Reference Number	1963.923
IIIF Manifest ⓘ	https://api.artic.edu/api/v1/artworks/18951/manifest.json

Figure 32: Metadata on the Collection Explorer of ARTIC's website



Figure 33: An Instagram post by ARTIC

On the ARTIC repository, information is divided into a variety of categories, providing intricate detail and including links to further information. In the repository, the language employs a very formal writing style,⁶⁸ which, as the authoritative record of the object, it makes sense. Meanwhile the caption of the Instagram post about the painting utilises informal language, including explanations of terms associated with Degas and his works, serving as a more casual introduction to the work. Note that the more formal information about the painting—full name of the artist, full title of the painting, object number, provenance, etc.—is included in a separate comment so as to keep the caption informal.⁶⁹ This is an excellent example of the concept of cultural interoperability, described previously, which here involves utilising different styles of communication to make a piece of art relevant across multiple cultural settings.

While this information seems obvious, it is important to note the efforts to adapt curated information for different parties, as it highlights efforts by the GLAM+ institutions to have their collections and associated data be accessible and understandable in a variety of settings, with a variety of understandings of the content. This kind of cultural interoperability is key to building parasocial relationships with users, which can facilitate influencer-like stickiness to the GLAM+ institution.⁷⁰

5.B.i.4: Reusability

ARTIC has worked hard to make their content reusable and remixable, as is clearly demonstrated by the previously discussed choices with regard to their website. The first is adopting the internationally recognised metadata standard IIIF, which was specifically created for making data reusable.⁷¹ The second was adopting the internationally recognised licensing system, Creative Commons, which was created for making it clear how and when content is reusable and remixable. They also chose to apply the most open form of this license framework, the CC0, which allows for reuse and remixing of any kind, for any purpose, be it personal or commercial.⁷² The third choice was releasing their API to the public, a move which was made with the intention of enabling users to reuse/remix ARTIC content, as they highlight on the API's page of the website:

To demonstrate the creativity that our API provides, our engineers have used it to build a few new tools. People outside of the institution have also built some fun tools! Here are just a few...What will you build? There's a lot we're planning on doing with our API, and plenty you can do too. Visit our API homepage to find documentation on how to access the API.⁷³

The page features a wide variety of projects utilising the API, as previously discussed.

In regard to constraining user-facing reuse protocols, as much as possible ARTIC has chosen not to adopt any unless the artist is still alive and wants to retain

their copyright, in which case they have a dedicated licensing page which has contact information and directions for how to obtain a licence. Regarding the tracking of reuse, they clearly are doing so to a certain extent at least, as their API page highlights projects that were made with their API by outside parties. However, reuse information can be more difficult to track (versus engagement, for example), as the outputs may not be running through the ARTIC Data Hub, which has been discussed previously at length. The challenge of tracking reuse of institutional content is an issue that has been noted in a number of research publications, as discussed in the Literature Review. This analysis of the OA Innovators in the Dataset highlight in what manners and methods GLAM+ institutions have embraced various tenets of the OS movement and by extension, elements of the FAIR Data Principles. This level of incorporation of these ideas into the creation process of GLAM+ institutions indicates a willingness to incorporate elements of the FAIR Data Principles into the institutional creative practice.

5.B.ii: OA Adopter: Paris Musées

The second institution to be examined is the Paris Musées (PM), which is considered an online content aggregator, and within the context of this Dataset, is an OA Adopter. In addition to their large body of OA digital cultural heritage materials, Paris Musées manages 14 GLAM+ institutions located in Paris city, including: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Maison de Balzac, Musée Bourdelle, Carnavalet Museum History of Paris, The Catacombs, Musée Cernuschi Museum of Asian Art, Musée Cognacq-Jay, Archaeological Crypt of Notre-Dame, Musée Galliera, Museum of the General Leclerc and the Paris' Liberation – Jean Moulin Museum, Petit Palais City of Paris Museum of Fine Arts, Musée de la Vie Romantique, Maison de Victor Hugo Paris/Guernsey, and the Zadkine Museum.⁷⁴ Paris Musées has existed in some shape or

form since 1985, first as a non-profit and then a public contractor, but was formally established as a public institution in 2013, with online access to the collections going public in 2016.⁷⁵ The collection contains a total of over a million artworks.⁷⁶

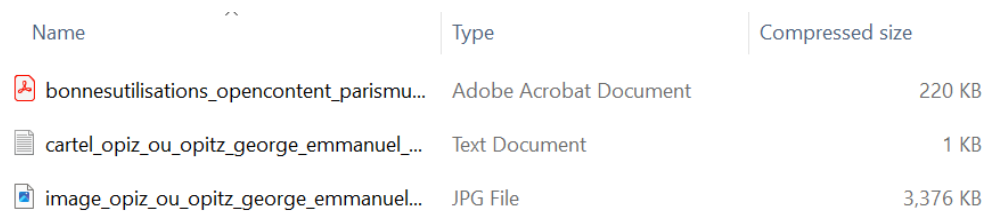
In January 2020, Paris Musées announced that they would begin releasing images of objects thought to already be in the PD under a CC0 license. The first set of images comprised of just over 150,000 collection objects.⁷⁷ The images are being released set by set to ensure the copyright statuses of the images are able to be “carefully evaluated,” in the words of Philippe Rivière, the Head of Communications and Digital.⁷⁸ For any images not considered within the PD, they will be able to still be viewed on the website, although in lower resolution.⁷⁹

This move was widely reported on,⁸⁰ which Paris Musées suggests is due to their being the first French GLAM+ institutions to move toward OA.⁸¹ The news bulletin PM put out includes information that would be very helpful for someone using the repository for the first time, such as how to access OA images via the collections portal or their API, and links to more helpful information. This is information that might usefully be collected together into one landing page for OA activities at PM, but unfortunately PM, like the other middle-scoring institutions, does not have a central page for OA/rights information. The website does not have a dedicated rights/licensing page, making it quite difficult to ascertain whom to contact in the case of rights questions.

Comparing PM with ARTIC is instructive because they offer many of the same services to users, however, it is the user interface (UI) design on the respective websites that makes the main difference. Both GLAM+ institutions have a large online collection of OA content available under a CC0 designation, both have released their API

publicly, and both regularly update their image database with new high-resolution OA images and metadata. However, information about OA and its adoption within PM could only be found on the PM blog archives. PM has not offered any additional information for how to understand the policies on their website—not even a link to Creative Commons when discussing the application of the CC0 designation in the news bulletin announcing the move to OA.⁸²

However, when a user downloads an image from their website, it comes as a zipped folder that also contains a .PDF document explaining the terms of use for the image, a high-resolution jpeg of the image, and a txt file with the object metadata.



Name	Type	Compressed size
 bonnesutilisations_opencontent_parismu...	Adobe Acrobat Document	220 KB
 cartel_opiz_ou_opitz_george_emmanuel_...	Text Document	1 KB
 image_opiz_ou_opitz_george_emmanuel...	JPG File	3,376 KB

Figure 34: Contents of a zippered download folder from PM

The PDF contains information for the user about CC0 licences and how they can utilise the image they have downloaded. This information is first printed in French, then English, and then Spanish. The one page of text per language is relatively thorough (although it does not include links to any additional information), first explaining what a CC0 licence is, what the user can do with an image under a CC0 licence, legal terms of use, and how to access the image. The instructions also include a section encouraging users to share information about their commercial and non-commercial products with PM, giving both a postal and email address.

5.B.ii.1: Findability

PM has published very little on their website about their metadata policies, with the only clear answer coming from France's Ministry of Culture website.⁸³ An article was published by the French Ministry of Culture, highlighting PM as a notable adopter of IIIF, among other GLAM+ institutions, including details about how IIIF impacts day-to-day operations in GLAM+ institutions (as compared with ARTIC and the Getty Center, who also utilise IIIF but use their APIs in different ways from PM). No other information about this decision seems to be currently available on their website. Regarding making content findable, PM are on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, Dailymotion, Weibo, and Weixin, as advertised in the bottom ribbon on their site.

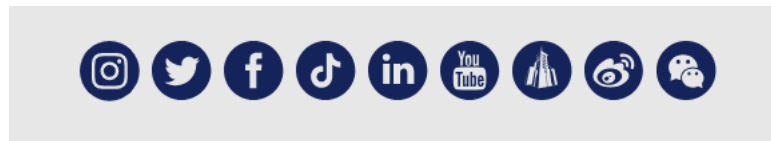


Figure 35: Social media icons included on the base ribbon of PM's website

During the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020, PM published a news article on their site that featured a variety of ways to engage with the various PM sites and their associated collections from home, including the platform Museosphere, their own collection repository, their YouTube and Daily Motion channels, 4 PM associated apps, VR walkthroughs, and a Sketchfab database.⁸⁴ Additionally, at the same time that they launched their OA image collection, PM made their API publicly available, although again this information was difficult to find, as it was only mentioned in passing in a news bulletin announcing the OA images.⁸⁵

These decisions: to adopt IIF, release OA image collections, and release their API, were discussed by a PM representative in a 2020 interview with Europeana, highlighting how they wanted to contribute to the OpenGLAM movement. This idea inspired them to follow the example of other organisations, e.g. with the adoption of commonly accepted standards, such as applying CC0 licences to objects in the PD, applying IIIF standards to metadata in order to make metadata work on various platforms, and to make their API usable publicly.⁸⁶ By adopting globally recognised standards, their content became instantly more findable through its inclusion in the growing pool of content available online utilising IIIF and Creative Commons licences.

5.B.ii.2: Accessibility

Similar to ARTIC, PM has made a conscious decision to forego protocols for the most part—users can download images from their repository without making an account, and the CC0 licence applied to the vast majority of their content allows users to do whatever they wish with the images without needing to credit the artist or organisation, for personal or commercial use. They designed the repository to highlight these elements, including featuring the licence status of the content in question in the bottom centre via a CC icon with an arrow and a button to share or download the image in the upper left, in the shape of a globe, as seen in Figure 36.

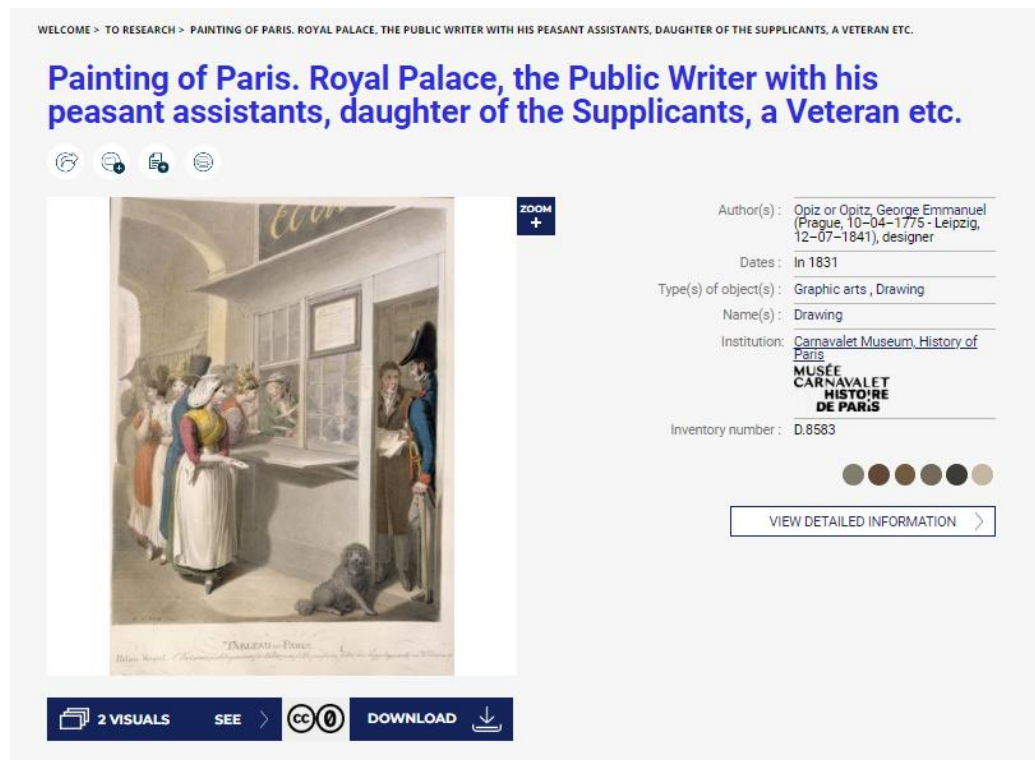


Figure 36: An image on the Collection Explorer of PM's website

PM makes all of their collection metadata freely accessible, through either the API or the repository website. For example, see the link displayed to the right of the image in Figure 36 and the icon in the top left, of a page with a + symbol. This is displayed on the non-OA images as well, which are still able to be seen, but are displayed in a much lower resolution and not available to download.

5.B.ii.3: Interoperability

In the previously mentioned Europeana interview, PM notes that they plan to host their content on other popular aggregators, saying they would announce partnerships soon.⁸⁷ It is worth noting that this interview was conducted in early 2020, and there does not seem to have been any kind of announcements online about partnerships between PM and other aggregators since. However, because they have employed IIIF

metadata standards, they would not need to edit their metadata to make it compatible across a number of repositories, so they could easily share their content with other aggregators in the future.

In 2016 they made their online repository publicly accessible, and while the images were not available to be downloaded, they could be viewed in a low resolution. This policy of only providing low-resolution images for downloading was standard practice for most GLAM+ institutions at the time, with some of these institutes still following this practice. As a way of fostering engagement with the materials now available to view online, they launched a program called “Parallels,” which saw PM collaborate with 10 popular Instagram artists, asking them to recreate famous artworks from the PM collection.⁸⁸ In a press release for PM at the time (translation provided by Mashable⁸⁹), the task as put to the artists was simple:

Ten Instagrammers with different styles and different backgrounds worked with Paris’ municipal museums, coming face-to-face with ten different works – but only one creative guideline, namely to reinvent what they encountered.⁹⁰



Figure 37: A side-by-side comparison of an original painting from PM and the Instagram recreation as part of “Parrallels”

These recreations bring to mind the wave of recreations of art people made from home at the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdowns, in which users were challenged by various parties to participate in the creation (or recreation, in this case) of art, giving them a connection to the art that may not have previously existed, as they are now connecting to the piece physically as they recreate it. As previously discussed with ARTIC, when compared with the collections repository page, it is clear that the goal of PM’s strategy on social media is to make the art relatable and relevant to a modern audience.

While it is possible PM employs a kind of Data Hub like ARTIC, they have not published anything about tracking use and reuse across platforms. However, a few hints regarding tracking efforts can be found across the sources that give users a glimpse

behind the scenes at PM. The first of these is the informational PDF included with image downloads, which in which one section reads:

Paris Musées encourages users to send it any commercial or non-commercial products created with works under CCØ licence or inform it for the record of any re-use of its files:

> by post: Paris Musées, service informatisation et numérisation, 27 rue des Petites Ecuries 75010 Paris

> or at this e-mail address: photo.parismusees@paris.fr⁹¹

While a low-tech solution, this will in theory at least over time provide PM examples of use/reuse of content across any number of platforms and media. The next clue is found in the interview with Europeana which has been mentioned previously. The question was posed, “How will you measure the impact of open access?” to which PM responded:

We will monitor the impact of our publication activities carefully. This will include web analytics, naturally, but we also want to see how we can best stimulate creativity through, for instance, hosting events in our museums to engage digital start-ups, or engaging citizens to reuse and remix our images.⁹²

Clearly then, there is some interest in tracking use and reuse across a variety of platforms and outputs, although PM may not have had interoperability in mind when designing their tracking systems.

5.B.ii.4: Reusability

As can be seen from projects like “Parallels,” and the decision to release images under a CC0 license, PM clearly wants their content to be reused/remixed online. They have promoted this through social media campaigns, by publicising their new licensing strategy, and by regularly updating both the image database and online exhibitions.

Regarding use/reuse that PM might not allow, PM advocate in the Terms and Conditions located on their website for the use of common sense, respecting the

creators of the works, but they also clearly state that they will resort to legal action if needed:

For any exploitation of the Images, the user is required to respect the moral rights of the author which confers on the author in an inalienable and perpetual manner the right to respect his name, his quality and his work... Violation of these provisions exposes the infringer and all persons responsible to legal action for infringement, subject to civil and criminal sanctions. Paris Musées reserves the right to take legal action against any person who has not respected the above prohibitions.⁹³

While the manner of legal action is not clear, this statement is more than many other institutions in the sample said will happen if the terms and conditions of use of their content are not met/broken.

In regards to reuse protocols, again, similar to ARTIC, as much as possible PM has chosen not to adopt any protocols unless the artist is still alive and wants to retain their copyright, in which case they have a listed an email to contact so that the user can obtain a licence. A CC0 licence has been applied to collection items that are considered to be in the PD, meaning there are no restrictions on the use/reuse/remixing of these images. Regarding the tracking of reuse, as has been mentioned for PM previously, they do seem interested in tracking the reuse of their content, although unlike ARTIC, they have not shared examples of their content being reused/remixed online.

5.B.iii: OA Potential: National Museum of Australia

The third institution to be examined is the National Museum of Australia (NMA), which is an example of an OA potential institution. Established in 1980 via a government act, the museum opened to the public in 2001.⁹⁴ Very little is available online regarding the development of digital policies or strategies in NMA., but they have published a “Digital preservation and digitisation policy.”⁹⁵ It is important to note,

however, that this policy was published in 2012 and there are no signs of updates on their site (although other policies have been updated as recently as November 2022⁹⁶).

5.B.iii.1: Findability

According to what information is publicly available about their data policy, NMA follows the AGLS metadata standards, which were created by the Australian government in 1997.⁹⁷ NMA notes that they will, “conform to the requirements of major metadata standards that have been developed to enable the sharing of digital resources. These include AGLS and the OAI – Protocol for Metadata Harvesting.”⁹⁸ In theory, this could mean that they will continue to conform to major metadata standards as they have developed since 2012, including changing their standards, as the Australian government has taken down the AGLS website and retired the standard,⁹⁹ which, while they are still available, have therefore not been updated since 2010.¹⁰⁰ Its worth noting that AGLS is a metadata standard not only created by the Australian government, but for use within the Australian government outside of the context of GLAM+ institutions, making the adoption of these standards by NMA challenging, to say the least. Metadata standards involve fairly specific vocabularies, which is why most metadata standards used by GLAM+ institutions were made with them in mind. The likelihood that AGLS is fully compatible with the needs of NMA and the Australian government concurrently would be low.

NMA released their API to the public in 2018,¹⁰¹ giving access to the complete collection metadata under a CC-BY-NC 4.0 licence, as well as about 20,000 images (about a quarter of their collection) either under the PD or a selection of CC licences.¹⁰² On the API documentation page on GitHub, users are instructed to query the API using “fields from common vocabularies,”¹⁰³ giving the users options between Dublin Core

(last updated in 2020¹⁰⁴), FOAF (last updated in 2014¹⁰⁵), OAI-ORE (last updated in 2008¹⁰⁶), and schema.org (last updated in 2024¹⁰⁷), which are all different metadata or ontology standards from different time periods, meaning that they will all employ different common vocabularies, and may not have been updated to match technological developments.

There are two reasons this can be seen as an impediment to the findability of their content via their API. The first is, on other APIs, it is made clear what data organisation standards were used in the creation of the API, as seen in the previous discussions surrounding ARTIC and PM's APIs. By naming this upfront and then directing the user to employ those vocabularies, the user is given the correct tools to work with the API. If, for example, most of the metadata in NMA's API was created using AGLS standards, but the user employs FOAF vocabularies, the categories the user is looking for may or may not be described in the same way. For example, a born-digital image under one vocabulary may be noted differently than a physical photograph which has since been digitised—the born-digital image may be categorised with a “media ID,” while the photograph may be described with an “object ID,” while in another vocabulary they may both be classified as “collection IDs.” This can prove confusing to the user, preventing them from finding what they are looking for and ultimately becoming a deterrent from utilising the API.

The second reason is that by not choosing a more commonly used metadata standard (if the published policy is to be assumed to be current), there is no chance for linking with other collections in the way that ARTIC and PM have been able to through their use of IIIF standards. While on initial glance this is more of an interoperability issue, the connections provided through the linking of collections are invaluable.

ARTIC has been able to share their content with Getty as they use the same metadata standards, a move which massively increases the findability of their content online. PM similarly has the ability to share their content with Europeana, giving a massive boost to the findability of their content, as it is now exposed to a much wider audience through the visibility of such a large aggregator.

NMA is on social media—Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram—according to the home ribbon on the bottom of their website.¹⁰⁸ The major method NMA seems to be employing to expose their content to a wider audience is the “Australia’s Defining Moments Digital Classroom,” a project created in tandem with a Collection Highlight on their Collections Explorer entitled “Defining Moments in Australian History.”¹⁰⁹ The collection highlight features over 100 items and is added to regularly.¹¹⁰ The website includes a detailed timeline of Australian history from earliest recorded human settlements in Australia through today,¹¹¹ each of which links to a “Defining Moment” page that includes an item from the collection and a explanation of why it is important to Australia’s history. If a user includes their grade level, the content is tailored for their ages or learning ability.¹¹² The website includes a wealth of “Learning Resources,” ranging from games to quizzes to images, and this section in particular utilises a great deal of the collection content.¹¹³

There are no other indicators on their website of any attempts to make their content more findable, such as sharing their collection images with other repositories. As with the other organisations, they likely have the ability to track Findability through their API, but they have not published anything to this effect. Similarly, their collections explorer could potentially track findability through search bar entries, if it has been programmed to save user search histories, a tactic that is common across

popular search engines such as Google, shopping sites such as Amazon, and even web browsers.¹¹⁴

5.B.iii.2: Accessibility

The protocols on the NMA website are notably different from ARTIC and PM in that NMA actually has a protocol in place in order to download images, one which would in theory promote the tracking of reuse of the content. When searching through the collection, there is an option to make an account, though it is not required in order to access and download content.

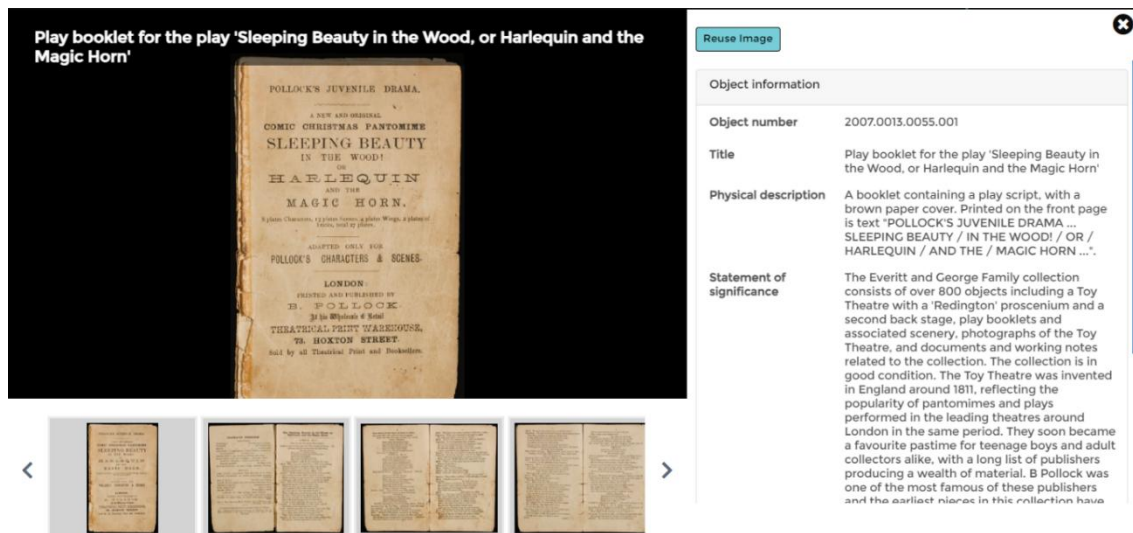


Figure 38: Images on the Collection Explorer of NMA's website

Once a user clicks into a specific object, a small selection of metadata is made visible, along with the image(s). In order to download images, the “Reuse Image” button needs to be clicked, which takes users either to a form which they need to fill out in order to download the image, or to a page that says the item is copyrighted and permission will need to be given—see the two options below. The form is particularly interesting as it asks for the user(s) to describe how they plan to use the image, at which

point the image can be downloaded in low resolution for free or can be purchased in a higher resolution.

Reuse this image

You are free to reuse this image without permission as it is in the [Public Domain](#).

Download this image

Image reuse

How do you intend to use this image?

Select an option

Please tell us more so we can continue to improve access to our collection.

Tell us more about how you will use the image...

Download . OR . Purchase

Download image:
1028 x 1600, 399.81 KB

Higher resolution image available.

Attribute this image

National Museum of Australia
<https://collectionsearch.nma.gov.au/icons/piction/kau2/index.html#home?usr=CE&umo=22874091>

Conditions of use

Images marked as in the Public Domain have, to the best of the National Museum of Australia's knowledge, no copyright or intellectual property rights that would restrict their free download and reuse. Images marked with a Creative Commons (CC) license may be downloaded and reused in accordance with the conditions of the relevant CC license. Please acknowledge the National Museum of Australia and cite the URL for the image so that others can also find it.

Figure 39: Options on the Collection Explorer of the NMA website when selecting “Reuse Image” on a collection item not under Copyright

Reuse this image

You need permission to reuse this image. Photography, supply and licensing fees may apply.

Request Image

Figure 40: Result on the Collection Explorer of the NMA website when selecting “Reuse Image” on a collection item under Copyright

Regarding accessible metadata, while the collections explorer does not provide all of the metadata associated with the objects, the API does, under a CC-BY 4.0 license. However, given the multiple metadata vocabularies, this may not be as helpful as it sounds. Additionally, in order to access the API in full, users need to register for an API key, which is free but requires sharing information with NMA regarding plans for how to use the API.¹¹⁵

5.B.iii.3: Interoperability

From what is available online, NMA does not seem to share their content with any other repositories. If they did, they would more than likely have to change the format of their metadata, assuming their previously discussed policy of using the deprecated AGLS standard is still current.

Regarding modifying content, NMA does adjust its approach to talking about their collection when on social media, adopting a much less academic tone versus on the repository, highlighting a commitment to making their content diverse and accessible across platforms. For example, on their Instagram account they run a series asking users to guess the week's mystery object. The posts have been published for at least the last year, and subjects have covered a variety of topics, ranging from dentistry tools, to prehistoric objects, to musical instruments.¹¹⁶ The descriptions of the objects are kept short and simple, with the aim of the posts being engagement (they ask for users to participate in the game by commenting), as opposed to a full education on an object. They do not include a link to the object as seen on the Collection Explorer, which indicates the likelihood of a lower priority on driving traffic to the institutional website, or using the posts to build more extensive user engagement.

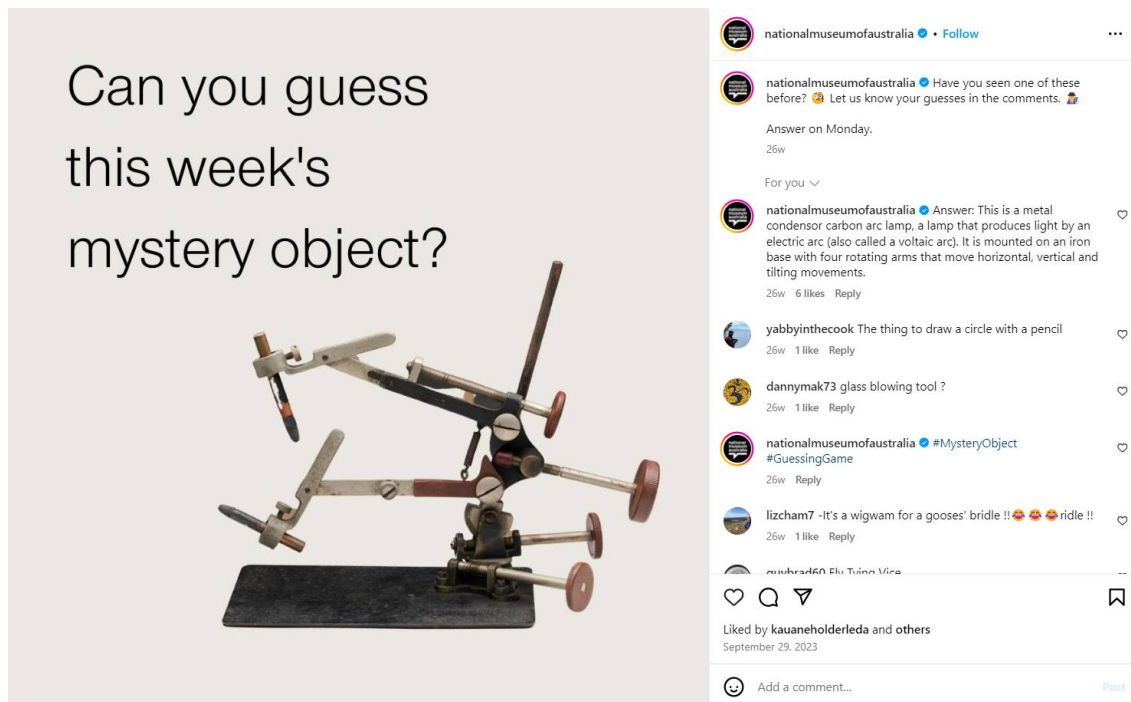


Figure 41: An Instagram post by NMA

5.B.iii.4: Reusability

It does seem like NMA wants their content to be reused online in some ways, as they make a point of providing access to low resolution images of about a quarter of their collection through their Collection Explorer, and to all of their metadata through their API. Beyond this, however, there is not much that indicates an investment in promoting reuse of their content. They haven't shared any projects users have produced utilising their content, like ARTIC and PM have. They are conservative in their offering of OA content, requiring users to learn how to work with their API in order to access metadata, and only providing free access to low resolution images. While they do not indicate any particular kinds of reuse that would not be considered acceptable, they do make a point to mention Fair Dealings in their copyright notice, which asks the user to use common sense in their use of images.¹¹⁷

The application of reuse licences and other reuse protocols at NMA is also not clear at first glance, as many large collections within the institution are digitised, but not able to be licensed, or the licensing information is difficult to locate. There may, however, be specific reasons for this. The first point to consider is that they hold a large collection of indigenous materials, and that indigenous Australians have different views concerning reuse and remixing of art and images created by their community, particularly when they depict someone who has died. NMA have a small notice on the bottom ribbon of their website that reads, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware this website contains images, voices and names of people who have died.”¹¹⁸ Due to exploitation concerns, many institutions will not license indigenous Australian materials for reuse, rightfully out of respect for those peoples. It is worth noting that other GLAM+ institutions’ websites in the sample make this point more obvious on their site, including Te Papa, Digital NZ, and the National Library of Australia, in line with the previously noted CARE Principles for Indigenous Governance.¹¹⁹

The next point of consideration is how a user would find these notices of reuse licences and protocols. As discussed previously, the only way to reveal reuse information on the digital repository is to click on the blue “reuse image” button in the collection record of any individual object, which gives you a screen saying that the object is available to reuse, or the object is not available to reuse without checking with NMA first. Both options require the user to disclose their planned reuse of the image, and only the low-resolution version of the image can be accessed for free. In order to access a higher resolution image, the user needs to contact NMA and pay a fee.¹²⁰ The

metadata associated with the images has varying Copyright distinctions depending on

where the user looks. On the API homepage, it describes the API as having:

over 85,000 object records including around 20,000 images that are either in the PD or available for use under a Creative Commons licence... You are free to use this API for non-commercial purposes under a CC-BY-NC licence.¹²¹

However, when you access the API documentation on the GitHub page managed by NMA, which includes instructions how to access and use the API and has a detailed copyright section, you find slightly different information, including that the metadata, but not the API, may be used for commercial purposes. While this practice of applying different licensing strategies to metadata versus images is not uncommon, the fact that the information concerning NMA's metadata varies across websites is a source of concern. See the GitHub page below for comparison with the NMA website statement:

Copyright

Data

The metadata records in the API are copyright to the Museum, but are made available as [Open Data](#) under a Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial \(CC BY-NC 4.0\) licence](#). This includes the labels, descriptions, etc. but not the media (see the next section). The metadata records may be used for any purpose (including commercially), *with* attribution to the National Museum of Australia.

Media

The Museum does not own copyright for all digital images or media in the API. Each record contains details of the media rights or media access licence available:

Code	Rights or licence	Media usage
Public Domain	Public Domain	Media may be used for any purpose (including commercially), no attribution is necessary
CC BY-SA 4.0	Creative Commons commercial use	Media may be used for any purpose (including commercially), <i>with</i> attribution and any changes re-distributed under the same licence
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0	Creative Commons non-commercial use	Media may <i>only</i> be used non-commercially, <i>with</i> attribution and any changes re-distributed under the same licence
All Rights Reserved	All Rights Reserved	Media may <i>not</i> be used without permission of the copyright holder

If no media rights or licence is specified, then the media's copyright is [All Rights Reserved](#) and the media may *not* be used without permission of the copyright holder.

Figure 42: The Copyright section of NMA's API documentation on GitHub

This may have been NMA's original intent with what they wrote on their main website, but this differing information could confuse a user, ultimately dissuading them from using NMA's content. It also gives the impression that these sections were written by different members of NMA staff, and that as policies have changed, older information has not been adapted to reflect these changes.

5.C: Final Thoughts

This research started being planned in 2019. Since then, policies and the prevailing ideas around digitised collection items have changed rapidly, primarily spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of GLAM+ institutions which had not had OA image repositories before pushed to go as digital as possible in light of lockdowns and distancing restrictions. Some of the institutions from the sample that made significant enough changes that they were captured in the news included Paris Musées,¹²² the National Gallery of Ireland,¹²³ and the Louvre¹²⁴. Meanwhile, the amount of newly accessible digitised content was picked up by a number of DCCs across a variety of platforms, including CAM accounts, allowing for a wealth of new content to be created and a number of the accounts in the CAM sample were started during the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020.

The GLAM+ Institution Dataset highlighted a few key points: As previously discussed in this dissertation, the key issue in the copyright of GLAM+ institution images is that legally, while a piece of art may be out of copyright, the image of the art has a copyright that is owned by the person or organisation who took the photo. So, for example, "The Girl with a Pearl Earring" is out of copyright as Johannes Vermeer died in 1675. Copyright of an artistic work lasts for seventy years after the death of the artist, therefore the painting has been out of copyright and in the PD for over 200 years.

Because of this, many users have mistakenly assumed that any image of the painting would also be in the PD. However, the photograph of the painting would have a copyright belonging to the “Trustees of the Rijksmuseum.” In most of the institutions examined, while this label of “Copyright of the trustees of the _____ museum” applies to the images and is recorded within the metadata for the image, they waive this copyright by applying a licence, usually a Creative Commons licence, which allows users to freely reuse and remix the image, sometimes only for non-commercial purposes, but sometimes for any purpose, depending on the institution applying the license, or the artwork in question.

One of the foremost issues highlighted by this sample is the need for standardisation. Every single website presented their rights policies slightly differently, making finding this information tedious, time-consuming work. Some websites had site maps, some had expandable drop-down menus, and some were not organised in a way that facilitated correct use of the content. Some of the repositories had rights indicated through a sentence on the webpage, some through a symbol, and some not at all. Some of the rights statements on the page linked to a further explanation of the rights associated with the image, while some linked to a rights page, a rights form, or an email for a rights department. It becomes quickly apparent why anyone regularly sourcing content from these sites would either A) not bother following the rules at all, or B) pick a single organisation to source content from, as it would be difficult and/or confusing trying to keep track of all of the different ways to go about clearing use of an image from these institutions.

Another example of the need for standardisation can be seen in the plurality of approaches to licensing OA content. The National Archives of the UK apply an Open

Government License to their OA content, which is UK specific.¹²⁵ Europeana, meanwhile, apply CC licenses.¹²⁶ Almost all of these licenses include some kind of “Fair Use” policy that notes if the images are for non-commercial research, they can be used with appropriate credit. Derivative works are also a consideration, as CAMs are legally considered derivative works, as noted in the Theoretical Framework. Under most OA licenses derivative works are allowed to be created without permission.

As noted in the beginning of the chapter, this dataset is largely focused on the more technical issues of FAIR-ification, however some important cultural dimensions arose that bear discussion. The first is the consideration of OA Innovator institutions in crafting supporting content which aids the user in understanding how precisely their copyright policies are applied. Most often these kinds of information were found on the OA landing page of these institutions, such as the British Museum’s FAQ section on their copyright page.¹²⁷ This was noted as a defining factor in considering an institution to be an OA Innovator. This practices not only increases the cultural accessibility of their policies, but ultimately contributes to the cultural reusability of their digitised cultural heritage materials.

Another point of consideration is the intentional cultural interoperability that comes from GLAM+ institutions promoting the creative reuse of their content in another setting, like PM’s Parallels project.¹²⁸ This kind of promotion of creative reuse of content indicates to users ways through which digitised cultural heritage materials can be reused that are outside of the framing of a GLAM+ institution. More importantly, however, it indicates to users that GLAM+ institutions want their digitised cultural heritage materials to be reused in creative ways, indicating that a shift in context of the works is not only allowed, but supported by GLAM+ institutions.

This dataset provides a valuable base of knowledge from which to understand the DCC Interviews, highlighting ways in which GLAM+ institutions are already employing elements of the FAIR Data Principles and places within their practice, as publicly seen, which can be adjusted to better employ the FAIR Data Principles, both from a technical and cultural perspective. A question that was not answered within the scope of the GLAM+ institution sample but bears further study is: How many of the institutions sampled had policies change significantly within the last ten years? Some organisations shared this information, but most did not, and that information was not readily available from news sources. Following that question, it would be worth analysing whether there was any demonstration of the impact of these policy changes within the organisations. For example, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has published a great deal of information discussing the impact of OA on their organisation, including increased engagement with content on various platforms, an increase in the quality of their images being used, and exciting research opportunities for research projects.¹²⁹ Additional research is needed to determine if this level of impact is consistent across other international GLAM+ institutions.

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Chapter 6: Reuse of Classical Art as CAMs on Instagram

The previous chapter demonstrated how different kinds of GLAM+ institutions indicate readiness and willingness to see their data reused under FAIR conditions, illustrating how the wide range of practices and messages, implicit and explicit, are communicated to potential users. In order to better understand who those users are and what they might need, the analysis now turns to the second of the three datasets assembled for this dissertation, namely the CAM Account Dataset as described in the methodology. This dataset focuses on the more technical elements of CAMs that inform the creation of metadata, for example, hashtags or location tags. The dataset can be found on Zenodo at “The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation: CAM Profile Dataset.”¹

As with the analysis of GLAM+ institution websites above, following an overview of overarching trends in the data, the accounts will then be shown to fall into three categories following different patterns of activity and having implicitly different requirements in terms of base content. Then three CAM accounts will be examined in depth in order to demonstrate the functional variations in practice between the different types of accounts, with analysis ranging from how their content is crafted and disseminated to the role of the creator within the account to any activities taken by the account outside of Instagram, including posts outside of the sample as needed, as a way of understanding how these accounts function online before delving into the experiences of DCCs in Chapter Six.

6.A: Dataset Overview

Within the CAM dataset, which includes 392 posts from twenty accounts (8 posts were co-posted between two accounts included in the sample) which captured the

last 20 posts of 2022, there are a few particular trends that stand out as useful for framing a discussion of the data captured. As a way of organising this discussion, the sampled CAM accounts can be divided into three categories according to their style of revenue generation (or lack thereof). The first of these is CAM-fluencers, who adopt an influencer-style marketing approach to generating revenue, running regular ad campaigns on their pages and offering discounts to followers on various products. The second group is Mer-CAM-disers, who generate revenue through the sale of their own products, which are inspired by the CAMs made for the account by the DCC. The third group is Special Interest CAM accounts, which are run by DCCs without the intent to generate revenue. It is important to note that this categorisation is merely a tool for organising information and does not indicate success or failure in any respect by the DCCs who manage the CAM accounts discussed. The CAM accounts included in the dataset are listed below, along with the category the account falls into, followed by the categories for analysis. This dataset and the subsequent analysis highlight the ways in which DCCs are (or aren't) enabling their content for reuse under FAIR conditions, and like the last dataset, provide a knowledge base from which to better understand the DCC interviews.

Name of account	Category
@artmemescentral	CAM-fluencer
@ancientcringe	CAM-fluencer
@classicalcringe	CAM-fluencer
@classicaldamn	CAM-fluencer
@classicalsarcasm	CAM-fluencer
@classicalfuk	CAM-fluencer
@captainhanna	Mer-CAM-diser
@arthistoryvandelay	Mer-CAM-diser
@_varkey	Mer-CAM-diser
@textsfromyourexistentialist	Mer-CAM-diser
@punkhistory	Mer-CAM-diser
@fatcatart	Mer-CAM-diser
@classical_art_memes_official	Mer-CAM-diser
@morathanenough	Special Interest CAM account
@medievalistmatt	Special Interest CAM account
@fromthefaintingcouch	Special Interest CAM account
@depressedartmemes	Special Interest CAM account
@chronicallycandidmemes	Special Interest CAM account
@arthistorycaps	Special Interest CAM account
@arteart_official	Special Interest CAM account

Table 10: CAM accounts included in the CAM Profile Dataset

The categories for evaluation of the CAM accounts are as follows:

How often do they post? (Timeframe for the twenty posts in the sample)
 What format are the posts in? (Single still image, carousel of images, reel?)
 Are any of the posts paid-partnerships? If so are they relevant to the content?
 Does the account feature any non-meme posts? What are they about?
 Is the account selling merchandise based on their CAMs?
 Do they give details on the art?
 Was the meme of their own making or are they cross-posting another account?
 If they are, are they crediting the original creator?
 What types of CAMs (Mimetic, Narrow-scope, Source-focused) are they posting? Are there trends?
 Do they have this account on other platforms? What platforms?
 What, if any, hashtags are being added to posts? Are there trends?
 What, if any, tags are being added to posts? Are there trends?
 Are the base content images high resolution?

The purpose of the content will also be considered (Is the content just a stand-alone meme or is it in conjunction with a paid partnership, or promoting sales of goods in any way? Is the meme able to be purchased on merchandise?), as well as the reach of the

content (how many likes, comments, shares can be easily accessed? Has the meme been cross-posted by another account or to another platform?).

The first category is the “CAM-fluencers,” a descriptor that highlights the ways in which these accounts follow digital influencer practices, such as being focused on making sure that content is posted every day (no matter the creator of the CAM, often without credit), and running advertising campaigns that appear to be paid partnerships. These practices serve to work with the Instagram algorithm, which tends to push content from creators who post regularly.² This shows a clear consideration for ensuring online visibility, a key trait for digital influencers to develop, as noted by Cotter.³ Traditionally, an influencer would undertake a paid partnership to promote a product they feel is relevant to them and the focus of their account.⁴ However, in this case, the ads for seemingly unconnected products, such as sex toys or mental-wellness apps.⁵ This merchandise, interestingly, does not necessarily reflect the accounts’ self-branding at first glance, but does highlight a consideration for the kind of humour deployed on the account, which is often low-brow humour, such as sex jokes.

CAM-fluencers do not create merchandise based on their content and do not seem to prioritise⁶ making original content, often posting CAMs from other creators or recycling previously posted CAMs. The posts are almost always a single static image, although if the post is a paid partnership, then the post will usually have a CAM in the first image and the advertisement in the second image, which is usually a video. While no advertisement of this nature appeared within the window of the sample, an example is being included to highlight the juxtaposition which is typical of paid promotions from these accounts (See Figure 43, which reflect the two image formulae described above.). This will be discussed more later, but paid partnerships tend to be deleted after a period

of time. The bios section of these accounts is of particular interest, as they are used as vehicles for paid promotions, including phrases like “DM for collaborations,”⁷ a link to a product being promoted,⁸ or a linktree to a variety of sites.⁹ A linktree is a tool DCCs use on Instagram which allows for users to easily locate links to information mentioned by the DCC, such as products in specific web shops or petitions for specific causes - something a user sees when they navigate to the home page for the account.

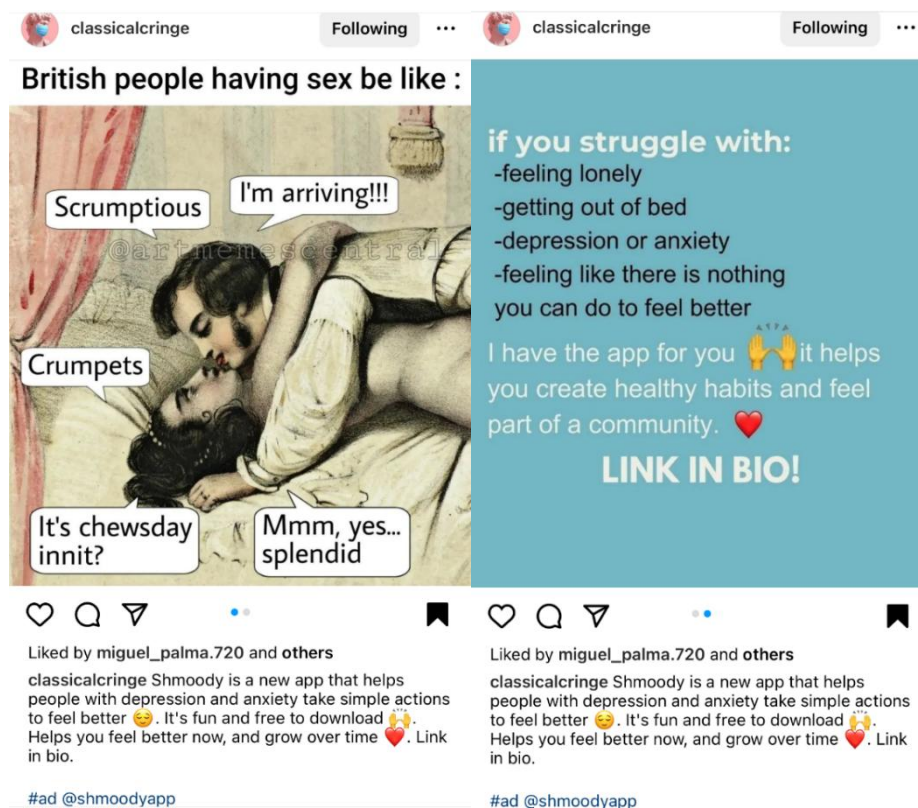


Figure 43: Two images from a paid partnership post from @classicalcringe

These accounts are anonymous, and never have posts of a personal nature, instead focusing on self-branding which focuses on the internet memes instead of their creators. Examples of this type of account from the sample include @classicaldamn, @classicalcringe, @artmemescentral, @classicalsarcasm, @ancientcringe and @classicalfuk.

An additional point of interest regarding the first group of accounts is the appearance of an unofficial partnership between a few of these accounts—namely, @classicaldamn, @classicalcringe, and @artmemescentral. Within the data sample of twenty posts per account, @classicaldamn and @classicalcringe shared “collab posts” (a feature on Instagram which was launched in 2021 and allows for a post to appear on both account’s feeds as a post as opposed to just being tagged and appearing only in the tagged portion of an account, a feature that was created to drive engagement¹⁰) four times over the span of ten days. See Figure 44 for an example of this, which is the first collab post between @classicaldamn and @classicalcringe from the sample.¹¹



Figure 44: A collab post from @classicalcringe and @classicaldamn with an @artmemescentral watermark

Additionally, within the sample @classicaldamn posted CAMs watermarked as created by @artmemecentral four times. Of note, @classicaldamn only posted two CAMs watermarked as created by @classicaldamn, but the formatting of the

watermarking is identical for both accounts from the font of the watermark itself to the way the watermark is made translucent by a photo editing program (Compare Figure 44's watermark to Figure 45¹²). Further evidence of an unofficial partnership is found in the likes on each post—for all of the posts sampled from these three accounts, they have all liked each other's posts. No other accounts in the sample have liked other CAMs in a consistent way like this.



Figure 45: A post from @classicaldamn with a watermark formatted identically to the previous figure

This kind of partnership between the accounts could have significant impact on the reach of their content, providing their content with increased online visibility. This use of the newer mechanics of Instagram is encouraged by those who advise on how to work with the algorithm, noting that use of newer features of Instagram will be promoted by the algorithm.¹³

The second category of accounts is the “Mer-CAM-disers,” which aim to generate revenue through the sale of merchandise based around their original CAMs. This second type of account is less focused on posting every day, but their content is

always original, and they only advertise merchandise which features their CAMs in some way, highlighting a commitment to self-branding. In a polar opposite move to the previous group, there is little to no visible interaction between these creators on their accounts. About half the posts sampled within this category have a watermark, see Figure 46 for an example.¹⁴ This is a notably higher rate of watermark usage than the previous group, again highlighting a commitment to self-branding.

While the previous group, CAM-fluencers, very rarely discuss their base content in any way and generally use low-resolution images, the Mer-CAM-diser accounts almost always include some details on the base content and are always high-quality images. These details are often more than enough for an interested user to find the work of art in a digital repository, and in a way, is a vehicle of accessibility to art for users, as these CAMs and their associated information connect the users with art they may not have otherwise ever come into contact with.



Figure 46: A post from @art_memes_official with a clear watermark

Within this group is a divide between creators who focus on merchandise that highlights the origin as an internet meme, leaving content in the image macro format

memes are so well-known for, as seen in Figure 47, and creators who aim to turn their CAMs into art, removing hallmarks of the image macro format for a more organic integration of the CAM into their own art, as seen in Figure 48.¹⁵ This sub-group takes the most liberty with the base content, often doing extensive manipulations, such as distorting images to look like drips.¹⁶



Figure 47: A post from @textsfromyourexistentialist with a popular meme from their page featured on a t-shirt—the meme, in an image macro format, has not been edited in any way from the original post



Figure 48: A post from @fatcatart featuring Zarathustra the cat edited into the image into the place of a horse, which diverts from the image macro format by extensively manipulating the image and not including any text

The creators behind these accounts tend to identify themselves, and generate some personal posts, though they are still rare. In the context of this dissertation, personal posts are posts which deal with the life of the DCC instead of a CAM. By identifying themselves and building an online persona for users to interact with, DCCs are facilitating the building of parasocial relationships with their followers. This is critical for developing “stickiness,” as discussed by Hu et al., a critical aspect of developing their online business.¹⁷ It is also worth noting that the style of humour employed by these accounts tends to be more nuanced than the previous group, often citing current events, obscure academics or artists, or other topics more commonly associated with a well-educated audience.¹⁸ The style of humour employed in CAMs is important to consider as it speaks to the self-branding of the DCC. Examples of this group from the sample include @punk_history, @_varkey,

@textsfromyourexistentialist, @arthistoryvandelay, @captainhanna, @fatcatart, and @classical_art_memes_official.

These accounts all have Linktrees (or a related format, like substack, a platform where DCCs can put written content behind a paywall¹⁹) in their bios which link to a sale site of some kind where their merchandise can be purchased. Particularly interesting was a reel from @captain_hanna, which while not in the sample window, is worth sharing, as they share the information that they have been receiving death threats for “stealing” Van Gogh artwork for their products, captioning a humorous clip of a man telling someone to calm down, “Apparently kids aren’t taught about the PD anymore?!?!?!?”²⁰ The comments are filled with people who are confused, highlighting how copyright laws like the PD aren’t necessarily common knowledge. These kind of interactions with users highlight a desire to protect art from what they view as illicit reuse, which is an interesting tension—once the DCC has merchandised art, as opposed to sharing it as an internet meme that has no visible form of profit for the DCC, it becomes illicit? Where is the line between acceptable reuse and unacceptable reuse for users?

The third category is the “Special Interest” CAM accounts, which are non-monetised and generally focus on a special interest of the DCC, such as medieval manuscripts and marginalia or chronic illness.²¹ These accounts make the identity of the DCC (specific to how they relate to the special interest) central to the page, allowing for a parasocial relationship between the DCC and the user to be built, in which the user feels seen within the DCC’s online persona and their special interest, developing a parasocial relationship with the DCC. While not posting copious amounts of personal

information, they do work elements of their personality and how they connect to the special interest into much of the content.

See for example, how @chronicallycandidmemes is open on their page about being chronically ill themselves (without disclosing specific details), with many of the internet memes reflecting on their experiences in the world as a chronically ill person, allowing for users who may be chronically ill to develop affinity within @chronicallycandidmemes's content.²² This highlights the central function of these accounts, which is to form an affinity space online regarding their special interest, allowing for users to develop an emotional connection with the account and a parasocial relationship with the DCC via their investment in the special interest of the account. Examples of this kind of account include @medievalistmatt, @depressedartmemes, @arthistorycaps, @chronicallycandidmemes, @morathanenough, @arteart_offical, and @fromthefaintingcouch.

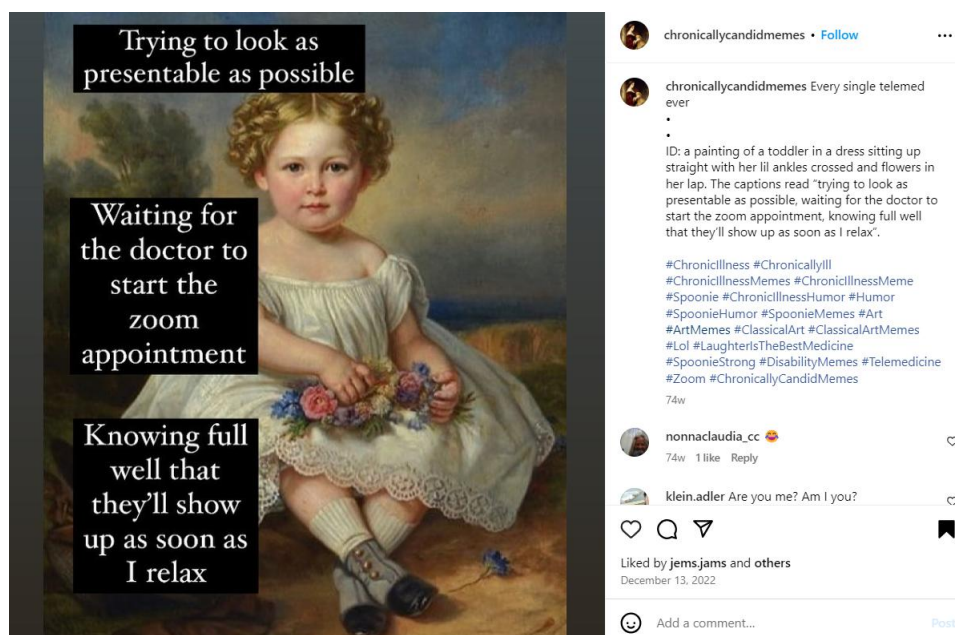


Figure 49: A post from @chronicallycandidmemes talking about their experience with a telehealth appointment.

Accounts in this category consistently have the smallest followings, as they are not focused on building a massive audience, but rather a smaller audience of similar interest. These creators often prioritise creating a safe space on their page over building a following, with instances in which they will delete comments they view as inappropriate or block users on Instagram who they feel violate the rules they have set on their page.²³ These efforts foster positive parasocial relationships, and foster the creation of a safe affinity space within the wider Instagram space for their followers.

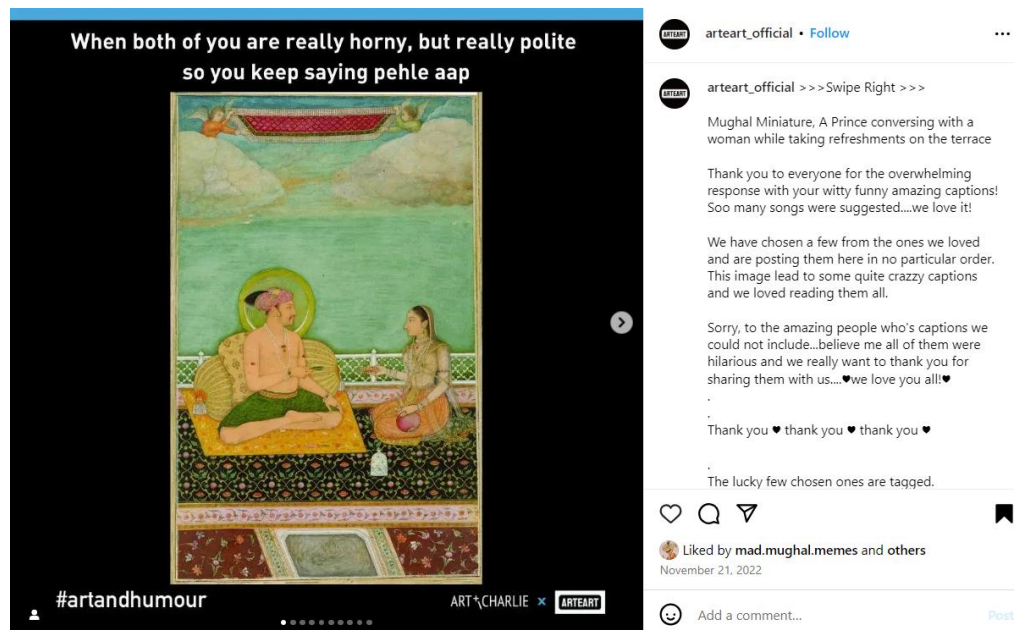


Figure 50: A post from @arteate_official with a variety captions created by participants at an event with the organisation Art + Charlie.

This group uses high resolution images for their base content but is less consistent in mentioning information about the art/artist in comparison to the Mer-CAM-disers. They also seem to be less concerned with watermarking their work in comparison to both other groups. While they do not create/advertise merchandise, some of these accounts do leave a link to some kind of money sharing app, giving users the opportunity to compensate them for their work creating CAMs in the form of financial

donations. @fromthefaintingcouch and @chronicallycandidmemes have a link to a service called Ko-Fi, which allows for users to “buy the creator a coffee,” by sending them a small amount of money (around the cost of a cup of coffee). Users can do this as a once off or set up a monthly subscription.²⁴ @depressedartmemes has their PayPal in their Linktree, humorously labelled, “If ur a man in my message requests.”²⁵ These pages enable the further development of parasocial relationships between the DCC and their followers, as they invite their followers to contribute towards the continued creation of CAMs.

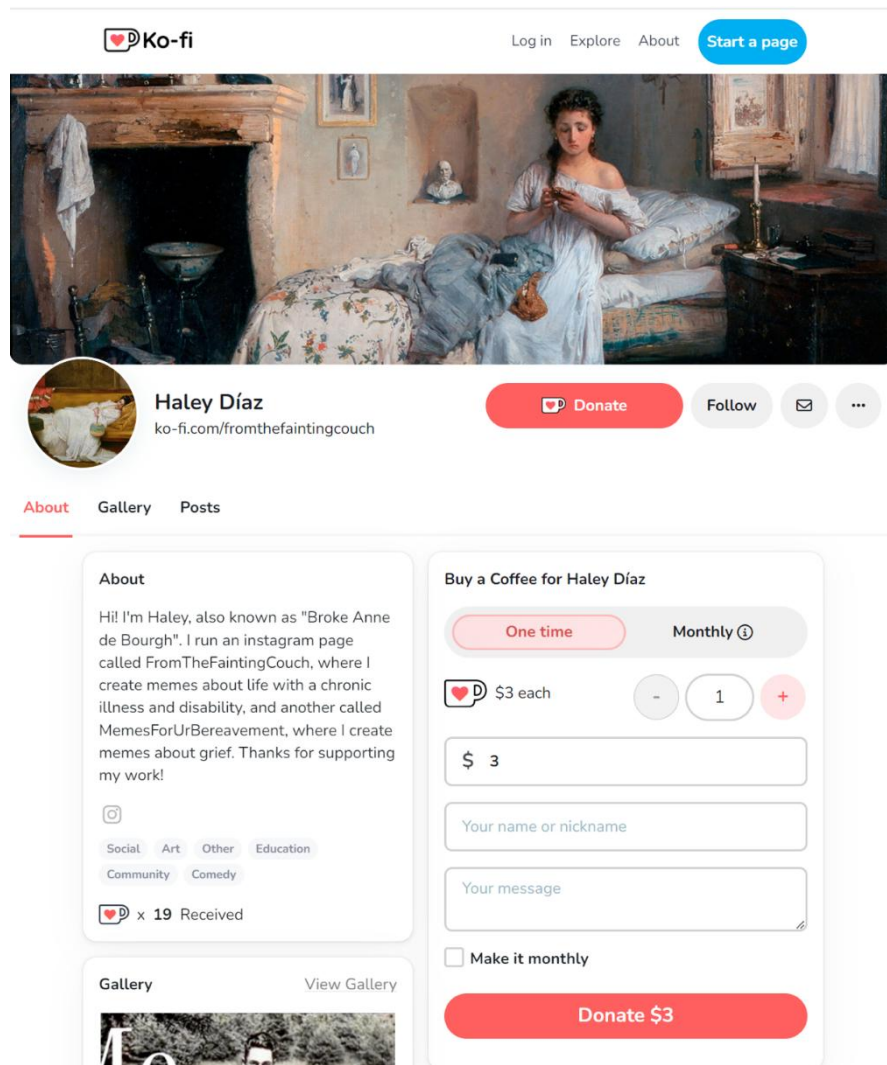


Figure 51: @fromthefaintingcouch's Ko-fi page

This group also seems comfortable transitioning onto other platforms, primarily TikTok, which @morathanenough and @fromthefaintingcouch post on more regularly than Instagram.²⁶ This consideration for the online visibility and interoperability of their content by posting across multiple platforms is unique among the accounts in the dataset. It is also worth noting that content posted on TikTok is inherently more reusable, as the app is designed around reusing sounds from other creators for new content, particularly if the audio is humorous.

6.B: CAM Account Highlights

This section will present three examinations of particular CAM accounts from the sample from each DCC category as described in the previous section. The examinations will look at the sample posts, and then move beyond the sample itself to discuss the basic functions of the account, ranging from types of posts to how the account is used to connect with their audience, generate revenue, and develop a persona in line with ideas around online visibility and self-branding as discussed in the Theoretical Framework, and technical considerations in line with the FAIR Data Principles as discussed in the Conceptual Framework. The accounts being examined are: @artmemescentral from the CAM-fluencer category, @punkhistory from the Mer-CAM-diser category, and @depressedartmemes from the Special Interest category. As with the previous chapter, these examinations are conducted using only publicly accessible information, both from Instagram profiles and posts and from the wider pool of resources online. For the purposes of illustrating the traits of accounts within the categories, occasionally posts from outside of the sample window will be discussed. The initial data gathered was for the purpose of having a comparable quantitative view of CAM creation, however in

some cases drawing from outside the sample provided the analysis with examples that provided a particularly rich qualitative view.

6.B.i: CAM-fluencer Account Highlight: Art Memes Central

This first account highlight looks at an example of a CAM-fluencer account, @artmemescentral (AMC). Within the sample, all twenty posts were memes, with no advertising (that can be seen, its possible there may have been advertising that has since been deleted), and no posts of a personal nature. The posts also included no reels, carousels, or collab posts. Only five posts within the sample are watermarked, and those watermarks are all for AMC. Only one post had any information on the base content: on December 29th a post included a link to an artist's Instagram account, but no other information.

All of the posts within the sample are static single images, and predominantly fall into the narrow scope category of CAM, which uses witty language to interject emotion into a depicted situation. This type of internet meme is the easiest to craft as it does not require responding to the work as intentionally as a mimetic meme (which uses witty language to provide a situation to fit a depicted emotion), and would allow for reuse of meme templates.

This can be seen in two of the posts within the sample, which utilise the same manipulated base content, see below. Note that with the exception of the text within the bubble, the images and the posts are almost identical—same caption (although different coloured versions on the same emoji, one red and one green), exact same hashtags, (while AMC does have a set of base hashtags that are used in all of their posts, the amount and variety of hashtags do change slightly from post to post), and only slightly different cropping on the base image—in the first post from December 23rd, this

difference is most apparent when examining the bottom right corner of the image. There is a monk on his knees, facing towards Bhudda with his hands folded in prayer. In the post from December 28th, the monk's back is cropped out of the image.²⁷



Figure 52: AMC posts from December 23rd, 2022 (top), December 28th, 2022 (bottom)

This style of reusing and remixing internet memes along the lines of a template has been an important part of the development of internet culture,²⁸ and within the CAM affinity space, employing an internet meme template is primarily done by the CAM-fluencer accounts, likely because it allows them to create more content easily. However other examples of this idea of meme templates can be seen in TikTok trends,

which encourage users to create content based around an agreed upon template, with the early templates consisting of dances to particular songs.²⁹

AMC boasts an impressive following, reaching 500K on November 11, 2023.³⁰ This is the highest following within this category of the sample, as well as the second highest following for any CAM account on Instagram included within this research. (The highest following on any platform is Classical Art Memes Official on Facebook, which has over 5M followers, with their Instagram account coming in at 809K,³¹ however, reach like this is otherwise unheard of among CAM accounts on Instagram.) As previously noted, studies have been conducted on statistics relating Instagram followers, such as this report published by mention, a social media management company, shared in Figure 10. This study places AMC in the top 1.8% of Instagram accounts with the highest number of followers.³²

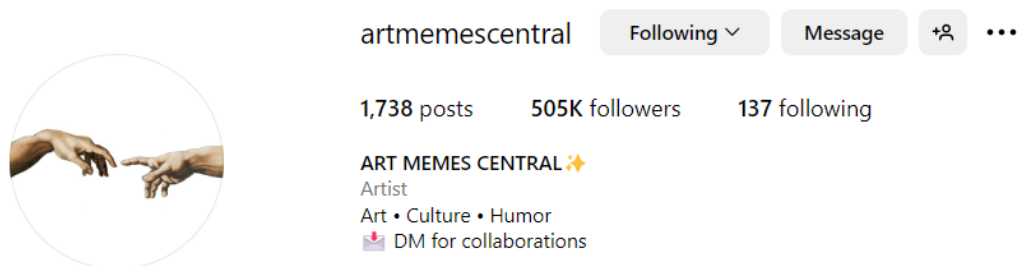


Figure 53: Header from AMC's page on Instagram

When viewing @artmemescentral's page on Instagram, their bio simply says:

Art • Culture • Humor
✉ DM for collaborations³³

The prominence given to advertising collaborations on the page highlights their influencer-style practices, making this influencer-style revenue generation a clear top priority for the account. They do not include any story highlights, a function used frequently throughout the sample, which makes this account stand out from the other CAM-fluencers in particular, as the other accounts use their story highlights to advertise,³⁴ to give more information about paid partnerships,³⁵ and highlight favourite content.³⁶

AMC does frequent advertisements, including for GalArtsy, a company that uses classical art on clothing,³⁷ Dr. Harness, an erotic accessories company,³⁸ and Onegee lifestyle, a self-titled “party accessories” company (they sell drug paraphernalia),³⁹ among others. The trend generally for their paid partnerships is erotic accessories and drug paraphernalia, which is also seen across the other CAM-fluencer accounts. It is worth noting that AMC deletes past paid partnerships from their account once they are no longer working with the brand, making tracking of paid partnerships a bit tricky. This is most likely due to the partnership ending. If the account did not want to continue to promote the product without being compensated, then they could simply delete the post, a practice that has been noted among influencers and marketing companies,⁴⁰ again aligning the account with influencer practices.

AMC has collaborated with a few Instagram accounts, including @arts.compass⁴¹ and @classicaldamn (as previously discussed) via co-posting, which seems to be the only way they give credit to other accounts for content. As previously noted, this is a technique that increases online visibility, particularly as co-posting shows the content to all of the followers of both accounts. What this can mean is that people who only follow one of these accounts may see the post and decide to follow the

other account. They do not collaborate on posts often, however, with only 4 collaborative posts noted on the account in 2022 and 2023. They also rarely seem to credit outside sources, with only five AMC watermarked posts within the sample, one post clearly made by AI, and fifteen uncredited CAMs. Did AMC steal the other posts in a bid to stay on top of a rigorous posting schedule? If another account flagged the post as belonging to them, how would AMC respond?



Figure 54: Collab post between AMC and @arts.compass

The account is not active on any other platforms. This is consistent across the category of CAM-fluencers, likely due to the static nature of the content, which would not intuitively work on video-based platforms that have adopted Influencer-style marketing, such as YouTube or TikTok. It is interesting to note, however, given the level of commitment to achieving online visibility through following the rules of the algorithm, that these accounts would not consider increasing their online visibility by having an account on another social media platform. This also potentially impacts the findability of their content, as there are less places online where their content may be

found in comparison to other accounts that have branched out into other social media platforms.

6.B.ii: Mer-CAM-diser Account Highlight: Punk History

The second account highlight examines @punkhistory (PH), which is an example of a Mer-CAM-diser account. Within the sample, all twenty posts were internet memes, with no advertising or posts of a personal nature. The type of CAM used in the sample was overwhelmingly narrow-scope (situation-based), at 14 of the 20 posts. The other 6 were mimetic (emotion-based). No reels, carousels, or collab posts were in the sample, although this category is in general much more flexible with the style of post they feature—many of the accounts in this category include reels of their works in progress, such as @captainhanna, or posts advertising their merchandise, such as @textsfromyourexistentialist. All twenty posts were watermarked with @punkhistory and all twenty included some information about the base content, usually the name of the painting, artist, and the year it was completed, which is the most information about the base content from any account in the sample.

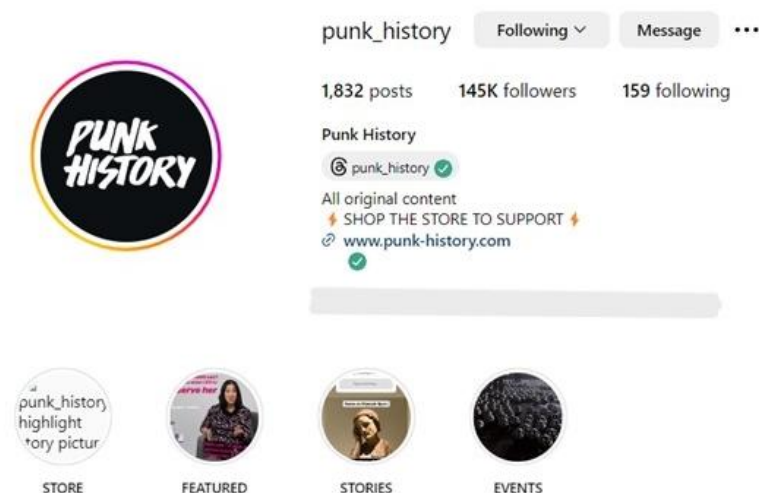


Figure 55: Header from PH's page on Instagram

PH has the most professional appearance of any account within the sample, with story highlights on the page that advertise merchandise, showcase times that CAMs from PH have been featured in a variety of articles both online and in magazines, share past Q&A sessions with users, and commemorate events the DCC was involved in as a representative of PH. The bio supports this professional appearance, simply noting that all of their content is original and providing a link to their store.⁴² Self-branding is a clear motivation for PH, with a bespoke logo, immediate connections to their business via links, testimonials, and advertisements for their merchandise at the forefront of the page. These practices also appeal to the Instagram algorithm, heightening PH's online visibility. It is also important to note the impact of self-branding on the findability of their content, as the account has a distinct name, logo, shop, and Instagram page, giving users multiple avenues through which to locate PH if they wanted to.

PH has a notable following with 145K followers, although @fatcatart, @textsfromyourexistentialist, and @classical_art_memes_official have at least 100K more. This places these accounts in the top 5.3% of Instagram accounts with the highest number of followers.⁴³ The focus of this account is to further the work of the DCC in both of their roles: as a content creator on Instagram, but equally as an artist, albeit through a non-traditional method, supporting themselves financially through the sale of their own CAMs as merchandise.

Looking at PH's website, the intention is clearly to highlight the role of a CAM as the main form of artistic output, with emphasis on maintaining the feel of an Instagram meme, with all of the content in the traditional image macro format. This can be seen in the shop website's bio on the home page, which reads:

Official Store of @Punk_History
Originating on Instagram and created for Art Enthusiasts, Creative Spirits, Sarcasm Aficionados, Punks-at-Heart, and everyone in between. Select from a wide variety of quality products with vivid eye-catching designs, guaranteed to bring a smile.⁴⁴

Once on the shop website, there are two methods through which users can acquire merchandise. The first is the traditional method on shop websites, which is to break up the merchandise, by category, in this case Women, Men, Kids, Accessories, and Home. The second method is to shop by the CAM featured on the merchandise, which have been organised into capsule collections, five in total. For example, the “Argument,” collection has seven items available for purchase: a postcard, a mug, an “Eco Tote,” a print, a long sleeve shirt, a short sleeve shirt, and a laptop sleeve.⁴⁵

The CAM consists of a painting of a young woman in a turban, holding the head of a man on a platter, with the text “I could have handled that better,” superimposed onto the image. Once a user has clicked into an individual object on the shop, there is information about the base art below the “Add to Cart” button. In this instance, the website says that the original painting is by Guido Reni and is called Salome holding the head of John the Baptist, a biblical story often depicted in classical artwork.⁴⁶ However, the art is actually misattributed.

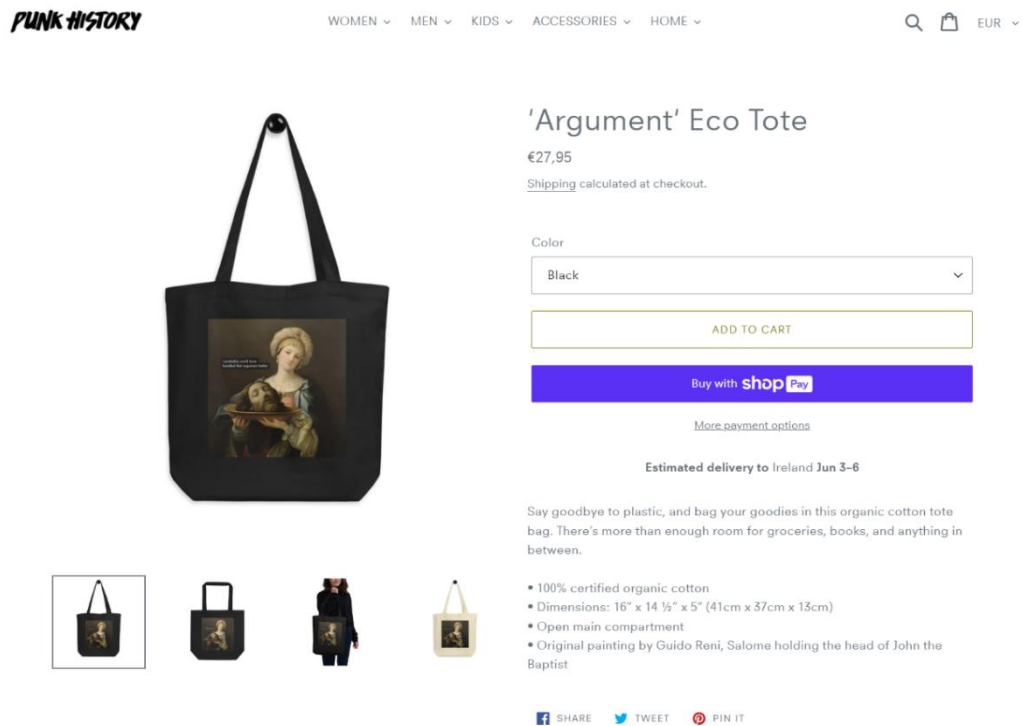


Figure 56: Punk History's shop including additional information about the art below the "Add to Cart" button

Guido Reni is a noted Baroque master painter, who created more than one famous painting depicting the Biblical story of Salome and John the Baptist sometime between 1630 and 1635. The original painting “Salome with the Head of John the Baptist” by Guido Reni can be seen in Figure 58.⁴⁷ In the Baroque period this story was painted often, in particular the moment in which Salome presents her father with the severed head of John the Baptist. At that time a number of art schools had been founded across Europe, in which students would very often copy the works of masters. Guido Reni’s painting of Salome and John the Baptist was one of these often-copied paintings.⁴⁸



Figure 57: Guido Reni’s Salome with the Head of John the Baptist

When comparing the paintings in question (see the work used by PH in closer detail in Figure 59⁴⁹), the first noticeable difference between the Guido Reni image and

PH image is the head of John the Baptist. In the Reni image, the head of John the Baptist has a bright yellow halo, indicating his saintly status, even in death. There is no halo visible in the PH image. The curls in John the Baptist's hair are more defined in the Reni Image, with a downturned mouth. In the PH image, the curls are more unified, while the mouth pulls up slightly below the left nostril. The face of Salome also differs between the two works, with the PH image depicting much softer features, with small, delicately pink lips and a slender nose, contrasted with defined eyebrows.. The Reni image has larger, redder lips and a slightly thicker straight nose, with small eyebrows that fade just above the pupils.

Art UK reports at least seven different copies of this painting across their digital collections. They are all copies of the original (which is at the Palazzo Corsini in Rome⁵⁰) and were all at one time or another were misattributed to Reni.⁵¹ Monticello has another copy of the Reni painting, although they note the actual painter is unknown.⁵² PH's image is one of these copies by a student, painted by Benjamin West in 1763, property of the Ferens Art Gallery in Hull in the UK, and digitally hosted by Art UK.⁵³



Figure 58: A screengrab of an image-macro styled tote bag with a CAM from Punk History's shop



Figure 59: Benjamin West's copy of Guido Reni's Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist

There seem to be only two sources for this image on the internet that are of high resolution, making them suitable for use in merchandiser. One is a watermarked stock image that required a user to pay to use it,⁵⁴ (making it an unlikely source for PH as they are a small shop) and the other being Art UK. The Art UK webpage with the image of the painting has very clear copyright information, stating:

This image can be used for non-commercial research or private study purposes, and other UK exceptions to copyright permitted to users based in the United Kingdom under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, as amended and revised. Any other type of use will need to be cleared with the rights holder(s).⁵⁵

By using this image on their merchandise, which is classified as a commercial purpose, PH is almost surely infringing on Ferens Art Gallery's copyright on this image. Was the misattribution an honest mistake or an attempt to avoid copyright? If PH downloaded the image from one of these websites, it would have been impossible to miss the correct name of the artist, and that it was a copy of a Reni painting, not actually a Reni painting. The original painting is listed on WikiArt as in the Public Domain, meaning if PH had used the original painting instead of West's copy, they would not have been infringing on copyright. This example is particularly important to this research as it clearly demonstrates an instance in which the creative practices of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs are not aligning, resulting in misattribution of an artwork and infringement of copyright.

6.B.iii: Special Interest CAM Account Highlight: Depressed Art Memes

The third account highlight examines @depressedartmemes (DAM), an example of a Special Interest account. The focus of this account (and the other accounts within this category as well) is on building parasocial relationships with their followers and creating a community for their shared special interest. In the case of DAM, the special

interest is mental health as it is tied to the experience of being a woman, presented via a self-deprecating view on struggling to manage within modern society that largely informs their self-branding on the page.

Looking at the posts in the sample, all twenty were CAMs, with no ads or posts of a personal nature. This category typically features the most personal content, however DAM posts their more personal content into their stories and their Linktree. Examples of this kind of content can be found in DAM's story highlights on their page, which primarily include Tinder horror stories (indicated in the below image with the poop emoji),⁵⁶ and DAM's Linktree, which includes links to political causes and personal pages for the DCC.⁵⁷

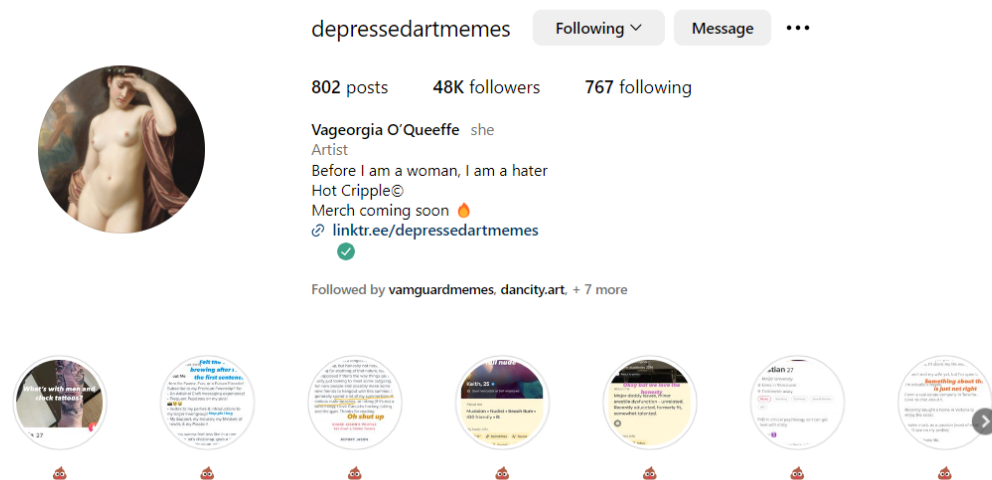


Figure 60: Header from DAM's page on Instagram

None of DAM's posts within the sample were watermarked, all included details of the art used in some way, usually the artist, and all of the images were high resolution. All of the posts are in the form of a carousel of matching images in which the text changes from image to image, see example below,⁵⁸ except for one post, in which they ask their followers if they want a carousel of internet memes based on

different art (the comments indicate that they did not).⁵⁹ The posts are almost evenly distributed between mimetic (emotion based) and narrow-scope (situation based) types of CAMs, at nine and eleven of the twenty posts, respectively. Notably, DAM does not produce CAMs that fall within the absurd image category, which is atypical for the Special Interest CAM account category. Perhaps this is because the account seems to predominantly choose images depicting women, and images evocative of the Romantic art tradition, which has very soft lines and provides juxtaposition against the often sad/chaotic/bizarre texts of the CAMs.

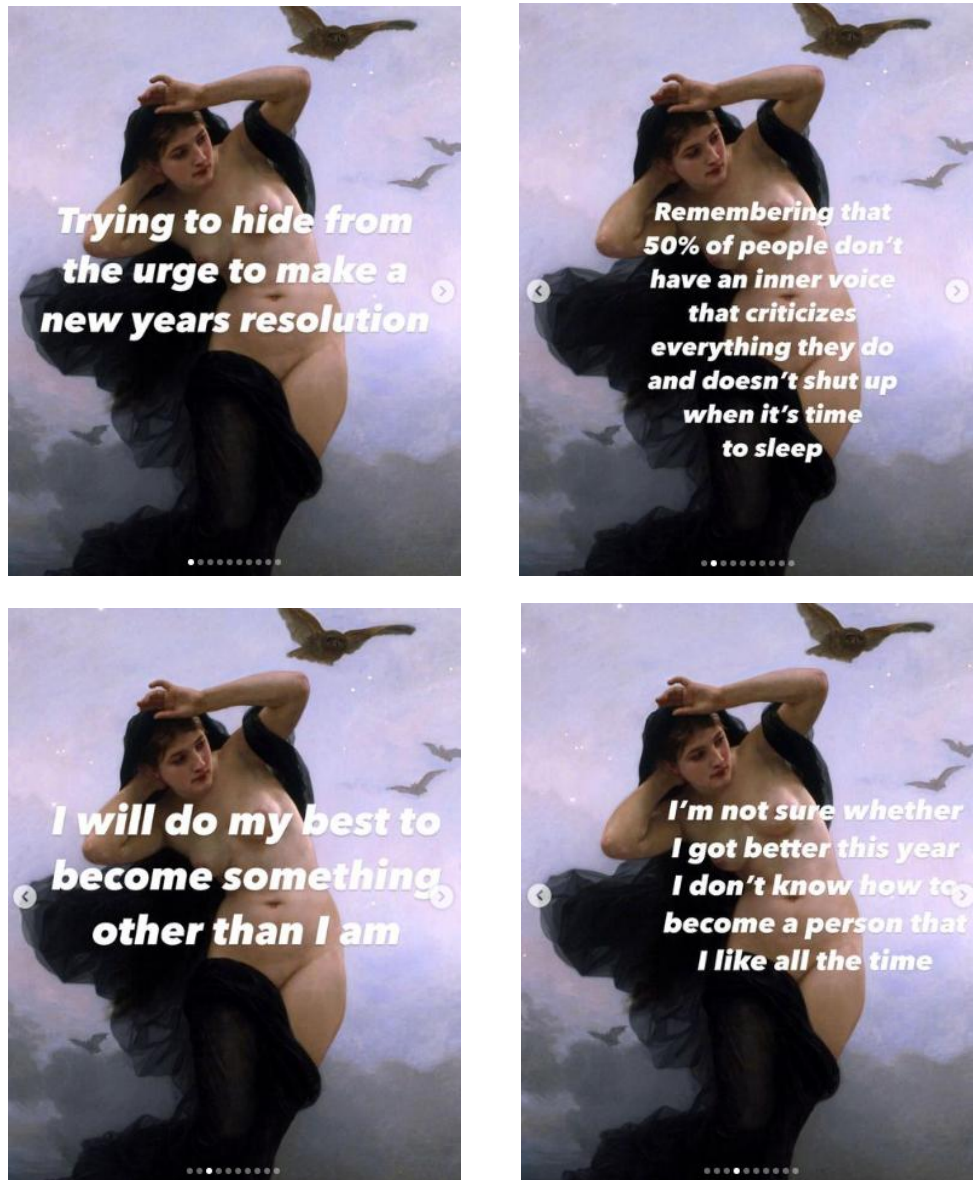


Figure 61: A carousel post on DAM's page of identical images and different jokes

DAM is not on any other platforms, which is not typical of the category, but ultimately reflects DAM's come-and-go nature in relation to the account. Outside of the context of the sample, this account seems to oscillate between posting daily and taking months-long breaks, and does not seem to communicate with followers about this like other accounts do.⁶⁰ They have 48K followers as of spring 2024, a number which is in a

fairly typical range for this category. Trends across the internet memes DAM post regularly include: dealing with problematic men,⁶¹ dealing with symptoms of depression and anxiety,⁶² and disillusionment with modern society, all filtered through the persona of a politically and sexually liberated, queer, chronically and mentally ill woman named Vageorgia O’Queeffe. This persona is supported by the inclusion of a variety of relevant links in the Linktree featured in DAM’s bio, and the bio itself, which reads:

Vageorgia O’Queeffe (she)
Artist
Before I am a woman, I am a hater
Hot Cripple©
Merch coming soon 🔥
linktr.ee/depressedartmemes⁶³

In the Linktree are links to a variety of websites, the first being the DCC’s Substack, which is a platform for writers to share their work on, which has tools to facilitate publishing new works and connecting users with the content. The next four links are to petitions and other forms of civil engagement regarding human rights around the globe, although the first two links are broken, leading to blank webpages. From the dates on the petitions and the topic, women’s rights in Iran, this Linktree does not seem to have been updated since 2022.⁶⁴ The next link is labelled, “If ur a man in my message requests,” and when clicked, directs the user to DAM’s PayPal page,⁶⁵ a humorous nod to a long-standing issue on Instagram in which women receive unsolicited messages from men, usually romantic and inappropriate in nature.⁶⁶ The final link is to a service called NGL, which is an acronym for “not gonna lie.” This service allows users to send anonymous questions and messages to the account that posted the link. This type of interaction was trending online in early 2022 after

launching in November 2021,⁶⁷ supporting the idea that DAM has not updated their Linktree since 2022, which in turn supports the idea that DAM regularly takes breaks from the account and does it for personal reasons as opposed to as a way to make money.

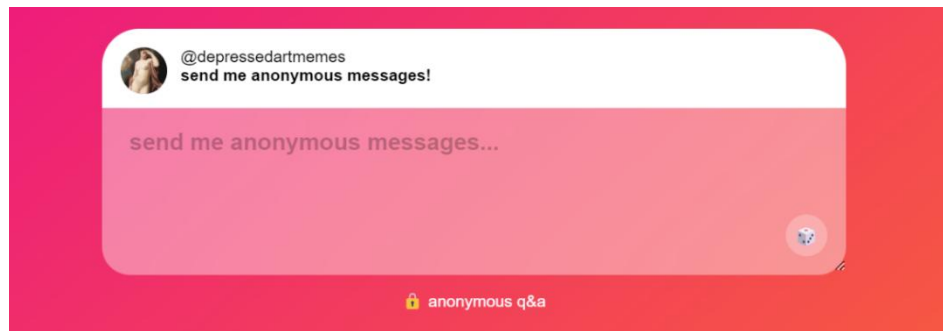


Figure 62: DAM's NGL page, a service which gives users the opportunity to anonymously connect with DAM, who often features responses to queries in their stories

The inclusion of links to a variety of personal and political sites is a consistent trait across this category and highlights the efforts made by this category of DCCs to build parasocial relationships with their followers. The links tell the followers what political causes and parties the DCC are likely aligned with, while the more personal sites allow for followers to connect through providing financial support (Kofi and PayPal), engagement and conversation (NGL and SubStack), and these accounts often run stories where the followers can reply to an image with their own text, allowing for a joint creation process. DAM has done this, saving the favourites in their story highlight section, at the end. Allowing for the user to be involved in the content creation in this way deepens the parasocial relationship by giving a clear point of connection that the user can refer back to. It is important to note that these special-interest accounts are uniquely engaged in political discourse, often as a facet of their special interest.

Internet memes are a radical way of interacting with culture today that allows for the current generation to take back their power in the cultural landscape, which feels dominated by rich, old, white men.⁶⁸ Ayesha Habib addresses this idea by likening meme culture to philosopher Albert Camus' notion of absurdism, highlighting the myth of Sisyphus, pushing a boulder up a hill for eternity. Camus compared society to Sisyphus, in which human existence is a torment, suffered anew daily. Camus felt that the very act of living is absurd. However, Camus argued that if Sisyphus could embrace this absurdity, perhaps he could find meaning from it, perhaps even be happy. Similarly, then, Habib posits that meme culture, with its dark humour and signature eccentricities, has become a method of coping for many users, and sometimes even fighting back.⁶⁹

This idea is seen at work in the large number of users who started re-creating artworks from home during the COVID-19 lockdowns, a time during which many users, stuck at home and unable to engage in culture in person, found the sharing of internet memes to be a "balm."⁷⁰ Participants D and E also noted how consuming, creating, and sharing internet memes became a central way for them to get through the COVID-19 lockdowns.⁷¹

6.C: Final Thoughts

When examining the CAM sample, these three groupings of creators highlight some important differences in priorities that will be further explored through the lens of the DCC interviews. The first difference has to do with the acquisition of their base content. The first group shows great variations in the quality of their base content, suggesting that it wasn't acquired from a repository, which is not an issue if you aren't doing anything more with the CAM after posting it. However, for the second group,

having high-quality base content is a clear priority when looking at the CAMs and merchandise they create with it. While the third group is not creating merchandise, their dedication to high resolution images is clear from an examination of their posts, suggesting a commitment to professionally created images. How do these various DCCs find and then capture their base content? Are they following the GLAM+ institutions' rules where they find them?

The first group, CAM-fluencers, seem to have no issue with their content being used by other accounts given the level of co- and cross-posting, both credited and uncredited, happening between their accounts, but are the second and third groups more proactive about preventing their content from being reused? While they actively watermark their content, there is no clear evidence of reactions to illicit reuse of content. One would guess that at least the accounts in the second and third groups who are taking the time to watermark their content are paying attention to the use/reuse of their content. Is copyright a consideration for creators for either institutional content or their own content? Are creators trying to track reach and engagement or just satisfy the requirements of the algorithm?

The second group, Mer-CAM-disers, represent a blend of personal and anonymous approaches to running their respective accounts. The first group is entirely anonymous, with no posts of a personal nature, while the third group builds their account around a specific facet of their personality. What influences these decisions to share or withhold personal content? Are any of the accounts worried about dealing with copyright /Intellectual Property complaints? A number of the accounts from groups two and three have had their content reposted by accounts from group one, often without credit. Does sharing (or not) any personal content assist in selling merchandise in any

way? How does the DCC also taking on the role of salesperson impact their relationship with their account, their art, or their followers?

The third group, Special Interest CAMs, build their account's appearance online around a specific special interest, but how did the special interest become connected for the DCC with classical art? Some special interests align naturally with classical art, such as medieval life, but when did other accounts connect their special interest with classical art? How did that connection come about? What does that connection and the community built around these specialised CAMs indicate about how society relates to classical art?

Kim Wilkins studies CAMs within the scope of research on medieval literature and notes the previously mentioned idea of juxtaposition expressing itself in two ways regarding CAMs: in addition to the incongruity between the past and present, Wilkins addresses the contrast between high and low culture.⁷² Wilkins lists the Bayeux Tapestry as an excellent example of this phenomenon. While regarded as an important artefact, even being listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, it has also been the source of many CAMs. Scholars have pointed out that it "is usually the advocates of high culture that disdain low culture texts and look down on low cultural forms attempting to employ elements of high culture,"⁷³ however Raivio asserts that in the case of CAMs, it seems to be the opposite, with "the vulgarization of high culture artefacts that takes place in certain instances, such as the Bayeux Tapestry memes, which can be a deliberate move to approach high culture from the bottom, juxtaposing the enduring and the shallow, the specialist and the populist."⁷⁴ These qualities highlight the radical nature of both internet memes in general and CAMs specifically.

In the more specific context of CAMs, through their negotiation of both high and low culture, CAMs radically de-sanctify both art and GLAM+ institutions by recontextualising works that previously felt inaccessible through the use of humour. Returning to the idea of aura, this research posits that CAMs are an extension of the aura of a work. A general sense of aura travels with the work by virtue of its appearance as a piece of classical art, particularly the general association of classical art with “high” culture and sense of the sacred attached to GLAM+ institution objects. This element of aura is what allows for the text of the CAMs to be as impactful as they are. The joke then becomes a part of the aura of the work, firmly placing the CAM within a more modern context that is both different to and building from the aura of the original work, similar to how a CR tag is intended to log edits made to an image over time.

Jasmine Burns addresses this idea in their assessment of digital surrogates of GLAM+ institution materials, noting that, especially for objects that live in storage that are subsequently digitised, that “Benjamin’s “aura” is not only retained, but it is preserved and amplified to an extent that the singularity and originality of the physical archival source depends almost entirely upon the existence of its digital markers.”⁷⁵ So, too, for CAMS. When a new CAM is created and shared online, the aura of the original work is not lost. There is still an air of mastery about the work. However, the inclusion of humorous language makes the work of mastery approachable. The aura is adapted, and users who connect with the base content now have an avenue through which to reconnect with the original work and its aura, even sometimes building such a strong connection between the base content and the user that they are motivated to find the original work.

A realm of questions that were not answered within the scope of this sample but bear further study beyond this research is the relationship between DCCs who manage these different types of accounts and their followers. Research has been done examining the linguistic development of internet memes and even CAMs, but what about the users who consume this content? How does this parasocial relationship that has developed with many of these accounts impact users and their relationship with the CAMs and art in general?

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Chapter 7: GLAM+ Institutions and Their Content Through the Lens of DCCs

The previous chapter demonstrated how different kinds of CAM accounts operate online, as viewed by a user. The analysis highlighted the wide range of practices and messages, implicit and explicit, that are communicated to users by DCCs through their content. In order to better understand who those DCCs are and what they might need, the next four chapters will examine the third and final dataset assembled for this dissertation, namely the DCC Interview Dataset as described in the Methodological Framework. This dataset focuses on the creation process of DCCs as communicated by DCCs themselves and examined through the lens of the FAIR Data Principles, as a way to demonstrate the current levels of FAIR-ification of their content. The dataset can be found on Zenodo at “The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation: DCC Interview Dataset: Transcripts.”¹ The interview questions can be found in full in Interview Guide in the appendices.

The next four chapters will present the DCC Interview Dataset Findings in thematic groupings that relate to the FAIR Data Principles and their technical and cultural implications, making connections with the ideas discussed in the Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks.. These themes are: GLAM+ institutions and their content through the lens of DCCs, platforms perceptions, cultural mediation and data curation, and ownership, reuse, and the circulation of CAMs.

The participants in this research have had their identities pseudonymised, meaning that while their words are being used, their identities have been intentionally hidden. To that end, the participants have been given nicknames, and some relevant contextual information about them will be provided, in the Table 9.

The intention of the nicknames and additional information is to assist the reader in keeping track of the participants, and to restore a sense of personhood to the participant's contributions to this dissertation that the pseudonymisation process had taken away, without revealing their identities. A few trends in this table are worth noting: There is only one CAM-fluencer account represented in this data. CAM-fluencers were very difficult to get in contact with when trying to arrange the interviews and were very protective of their identities and creation processes. The other interesting point is that there is a split in the participants between those who have a background in arts/culture and those who do not. As will be discussed in this chapter, this background has an impact on the ways in which the participants approach ideas of copyright and the methods employed in their creative processes.

Participant (as identified in transcripts)	Nickname	Type of CAM account	Relevant background in arts/culture?
A	Avery	Special Interest	Yes
B	Blake	Mer-CAM-diser	Not noted
C	Charlie	Special Interest	Yes
D	Drew	Special Interest	Yes
E	Emerson	Mer-CAM-diser	No
F	Frances	Special Interest	No
G	Georgie	Mer-CAM-diser	Yes
H	Harper	Mer-CAM-diser	Yes
I	Izzy	Special Interest	Not noted
J	Jamie	CAM-fluencer	Not noted

Table 11: Participant Information

This chapter examine discussions around technical and cultural findability as seen through the acquisition of base content and how DCCs interact with GLAM+ institutions. Every CAM must begin from a process of discovery. So how do content creators find their material? Do they use Google or institutional websites to find specific images? Some creators have committed to using legal methods as much as

possible—open repositories, or institutions that release their content with a CC license, which enables anyone to download, remix, reuse, or sell the images.² Some creators get their content from anywhere they can find it online, be it legal or not.³ This process of discovery is important as it illuminates the market for OA and CC licensed material, and reveals how and when DCCs interact with GLAM+ institutions.

7.A: Acquisition of Base Content

Participants fell into three patterns in terms of their approach to the acquisition of their base content, which corresponded with both the level of energy participants put into finding content and the method through which they acquired the content. The first group is the most active in seeking their base content, as they go in person to physical museums and capture their own base content. Avery is the only DCC within the interview pool to do this, a move which also allows them to sidestep the majority of copyright concerns.⁴ However, Emerson and Harper both noted that in the past, they used this method for acquiring their base content.⁵

Within the sample of ten DCCs interviewed, five described a moderately active approach to seeking out their content, a combination of actively seeking content and waiting for content to be delivered via an algorithm. This group, which includes Blake, Charlie, Drew, Georgie, and Harper, have a working knowledge of art in general, in particular in the realm of art they primarily create CAMs from.⁶ These creators vary in terms of whether they follow copyright rules, however they generally aim to source OA content when possible.⁷ This group is comfortable going to a GLAM+ institution website and finding the content they want, and they generally know what they are looking for when they seek content, primarily sourcing content from GLAM+ institution sites or through targeted searches of image aggregators or search engines.⁸

Charlie and Drew highlighted utilising museum blogs as a way to filter through the vast amount of content on GLAM+ institution websites, which they both noted can be overwhelming at first glance.⁹ They do also follow art-centric Instagram accounts that provide inspiration and occasionally base content.¹⁰ These are accounts dedicated to sharing a particular painting style, artist, or subject which almost exclusively post artworks on their accounts, almost always high-resolution images, sometimes including any combination of the artist, medium, year completed, current physical home, and details about stylistic choices or historical context. They will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The other DCCs are more passive when it comes to sourcing their content. This group, which includes Emerson, Frances, Izzy, and Jamie, primarily source their content through art-centric Instagram accounts they follow or when an algorithm suggests art-centric content, including on the Discover page of Instagram, which shares content with a user which aligns with their accounts' activity.¹¹ These DCCs wait for the algorithm to present them with base content, screenshotting images directly from Instagram.¹² They will occasionally source content or higher quality images from Google or aggregators like Wikimedia.¹³ This group is also the most passive about following copyright rules. These approaches to copyright highlight a point raised in the GLAM+ institution website dataset, which is that if users have to follow multiple steps to access content, they often will not do it.¹⁴ In this instance, half of the participants in this research do not view the process of acquiring their content from GLAM+ institution repositories as worth their time, instead seeking intermediaries (or taking the images themselves). Frances even said, "I do not care to go any further than those two steps. I see the picture like it and screenshot it and that's got to be enough."¹⁵

Participants highlighted a few GLAM+ repositories as major sources of base content for them, including: the Asian Art Institute in New York City, the Art Institute of Chicago, the British Library, Galilca manuscript repository, the Bodleian Library, the Getty Institute, The Brooklyn Art Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (mentioned by five participants), The Morgan Library (three mentions, including two institutional partnerships), Yale University, Harvard University, and the Rijksmuseum (two mentions).¹⁶ However, it is important to note that eight participants said that they never bother with GLAM+ institution sites if they require protocols, such as a username and password, to download content.¹⁷ Three of the participants do not deal with GLAM+ institution websites at all, exclusively getting their base content by screenshotting from Instagram accounts.¹⁸

Charlie, Drew, Georgie, and Harper acknowledge that they utilise GLAM+ institution sites as needed, but only Georgie exclusively sources their content from GLAM+ sites, as their base content has to be high resolution in order to meet their needs when crafting CAMs.¹⁹ Harper also needs high resolution images, but only for their merchandise, so for their normal CAMs they primarily utilise screenshots.²⁰ Blake admitted that “in general, my personal use on the Internet, I do not really have patience,” referring to online protocols.²¹ This is similar to Charlie, who admitted that their “policy is governed by my innate laziness. I'm not going to use anything that isn't freely accessible online. So none of my content is coming from any repository that needs some university access or login information.”²² These responses are a confirmation of the previously noted idea that if it takes multiple steps to acquire digitised cultural heritage materials then users will not do it.²³

In addition to GLAM+ repositories, a frequently mentioned source of content was auction houses. Avery, Drew, Emerson, and Harper source content directly from auction houses, including Sotheby's, Christie's, and Bonham's.²⁴ Sotheby's even did direct partnerships with Avery, Emerson, and Harper, which will be discussed later.²⁵ Avery and Drew took their own images of works in auction houses (Avery still does this while Drew has moved to only using professional photography) while Emerson and Harper source exclusively from the auctioneer websites.²⁶ Drew highlighted a particular reason why auction houses can be such a good source for base content— auction houses very often publish their sales records, including images of the items sold, meaning that even if a painting is now in a museum or a private collection that does not provide access to images of the artworks, the image of the work is still available through the sales records, enabling DCCs to access content that would otherwise never be seen.²⁷

An example of this can be seen in the viral Hesitant Bride trend on Instagram and TikTok in 2023, an example of which is shown below.²⁸ In this case, a painting by lesser known Impressionist artist Auguste Toulmouche was turned into an internet meme, spotlighting an unhappy looking woman in a wedding dress being comforted by three other women.²⁹ Sotheby's records show that the original painting was displayed in the Paris Salons twice shortly after it was finished, subsequently being sold to a private buyer. The painting later reappeared in Christie's in New York in 1990 where it was sold to a private buyer, before being sold by Sotheby's in New York in 2005, again to a private buyer.³⁰ If Sotheby's had not digitised the painting for the 2005 auction, chances are the image would not have gone viral when it did, if ever.



Figure 63: An example of the Hesitant Bride meme

The second main source of base content for participants is image aggregators. These are platforms outside of GLAM+ repositories and social media which assist in filtering GLAM+ institution content for users. Charlie and Drew noted that they can get overwhelmed by the amount of content on GLAM+ repositories, and that having an outside platform to help them filter through this content is immensely helpful.³¹ For Charlie, two tools stood out as the most helpful in filtering the immense amount of content available— GLAM+ institution blogs, like the British Library's, and Pinterest, an image sharing platform that allows users to curate collections of images that are linked to their original source.³² According to Charlie, "The British Library blog is

another way that points me to different manuscripts, especially ones with interesting content. And whoever is doing the blog has already narrowed things down for me.”³³ This sentiment is echoed by Drew, who stated: So sometimes what I do is I go through blogs of people that write about history and those kinds of content...it becomes a bit easier.³⁴ By utilising these intermediaries, DCCs are able to save time and energy and focus on other aspects of running their accounts. Intermediaries mentioned by participants include Google Images, Google Arts and Culture, Wikimedia, Pinterest, and MutualArt.³⁵

The final source of base content participants highlighted was “art-centric” Instagram accounts.³⁶ Seven of the participants mentioned sourcing some of their content from these kind of accounts, almost exclusively via screenshot, with five participants manning these accounts as their primary source of base content.³⁷ Frances and Izzy almost exclusively source their content from these kind of accounts.³⁸ Accounts mentioned by participants include @ladiesinpaintings, @justarthistory, @weirdmedievalguys, @arthistorydetail, @classicalartdetails, @painters.paintings, and @smilingbeetroot.³⁹

These accounts have notable followings: @classicalartdetails has over 250 thousand followers, which is the average following of the accounts listed.⁴⁰ This places these accounts in the top 5% of Instagram accounts with the highest number of followers.⁴¹ A typical post from one of these accounts is below, and includes a high-resolution image, as well as metadata related to the artist, title of the painting, year it was completed, and a small assortment of related hashtags.⁴²

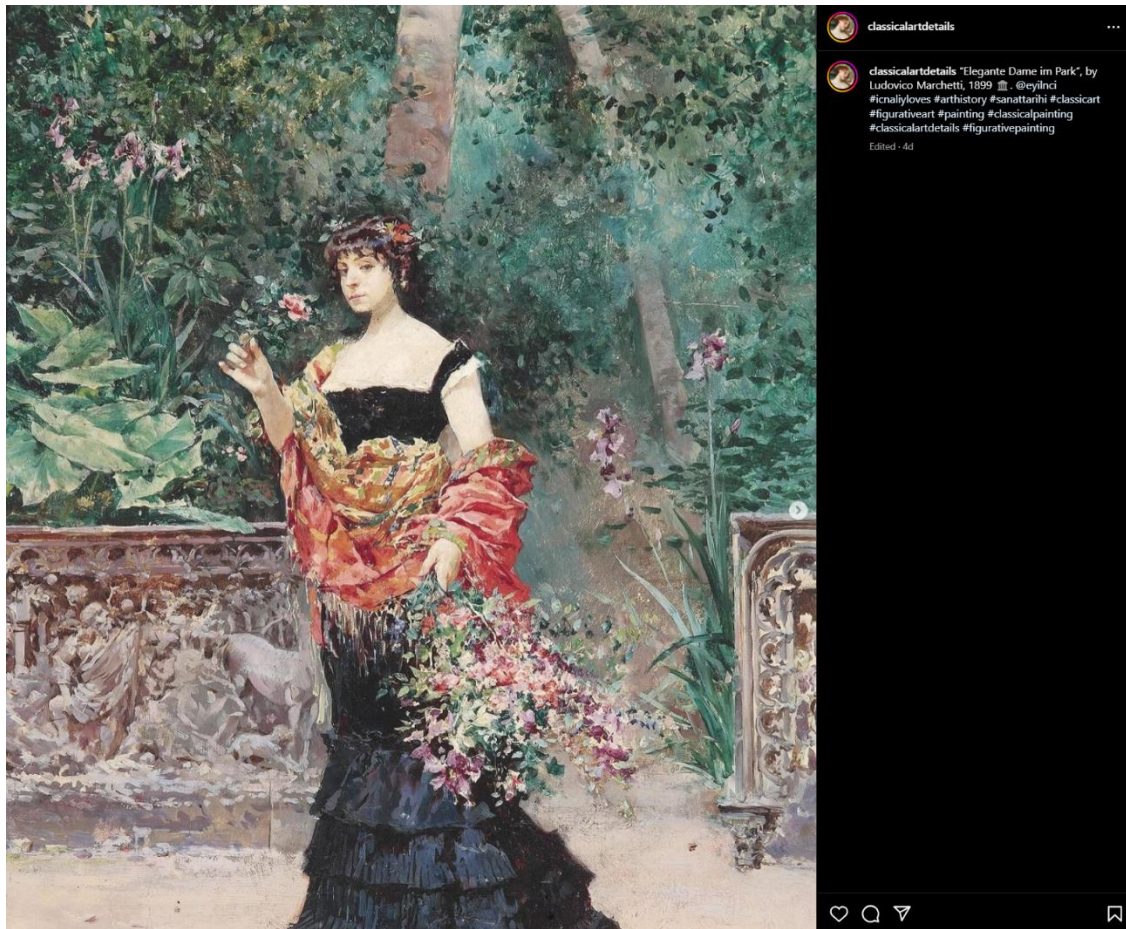


Figure 64: a typical post from an art-centric account

The Instagram algorithm tracks the kind of content users view and sends similar content to them subsequently, as noted in the Theoretical Framework.⁴³ It makes sense then, that many of the DCCs, after looking for base content on Instagram via these kind of accounts, would then be sent more similar accounts by the Instagram Algorithm. Izzy exclusively sources their base content from whatever the Instagram algorithm sent them, noting:

I usually just look at my For You Page on Instagram and let the algorithm do the work for me. Sometimes I'll follow accounts that I find good base images on, but generally I just scroll through my FYP. I exclusively find images on Instagram, from many various accounts.⁴⁴

Emerson, Frances, Harper, and Jamie similarly source the vast majority of their content through the Instagram algorithm. Emerson and Frances noted that they will screenshot a post they like and save the image into a folder on their phone as a way to establish an image bank to come back to later when they have a joke in mind, while Harper and Jamie noted their acquisition process was more active—they have a joke or template in mind and find base content to suit it.⁴⁵

7.B: DCCs and Their “Relationship” with GLAM+ Institutions

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was a relationship, or complete lack thereof, between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions. There was also a sense of GLAM+ institutions being disconnected in the minds of the participants from elements of their creation process that, in reality, should be intrinsically connected to GLAM+ institutions as the caretakers of the DCC’s base content. The responses within this theme consisted of: relationships with GLAM+ institutions, thoughts on art, and thoughts on copyright (as applied to the base content).

7.B.i: Relationships with GLAM+ Institutions

Avery, Drew, Emerson, Georgie, and Harper reported positive direct interactions with institutions, with each of them entering into a partnership of some kind with a GLAM+ institution in which the DCC would make CAMs with the institution’s content.⁴⁶

Avery discussed their work with the Morgan Library and also with Sotheby’s in New York, one of the main branches of the famous auction house.⁴⁷ An interesting take on a relationship with GLAM+ institutions is Avery, Charlie, and Emerson mentioning that they are followed by multiple GLAM+ institution staff who regularly engage with their content.⁴⁸ This engagement with the content is viewed by Charlie as a “tacit approval”

of what they do.⁴⁹ Drew has worked with a handful of GLAM+ institutions, noting that they had been asked to come and make memes out of collection pieces as a way of advertising for exhibitions and shows:

One was for International Museum Day, one was, two were for exhibitions that were happening in their spaces. So they said, why do not you use them? And it becomes like this collab kind of a thing. Like, so it works out like that and they're open to it, honestly, they want works to be engageable after a certain point...So if that is how people are consuming content, why not give a different spin to the artwork and put it out into the universe through a different channel, a different way?⁵⁰

Emerson has also collaborated with the Morgan Library and Sotheby's in NYC, Harper has worked with Sotheby's repeatedly, and Georgie has even had GLAM+ institutions commission them for work for specific events.⁵¹

Avery, Blake, Charlie, and Drew reported that they had been contacted by a GLAM+ institutions to either tag the institution or take the post down.⁵² Drew highlighted an important point, however, which is that most of the big institutions who may be able to claim ownership of the images DCCs are utilising as base content for their CAMs are probably too busy to do anything about it.⁵³ These instances will be explored further in the context of ownership of content.

7.B.ii: Thoughts on Art

The participants all noted some level of love for art, with multiple accounts sharing that they felt that art is not being properly disseminated in the world. Blake highlighted this love of art and desire to spread knowledge as a reason for starting their account. "I'm always trying to learn about weird thinkers or weird archaic writers and people from the past. I like their thinking. I kind of wanted to give that to people."⁵⁴ Similarly, Drew noted a gap in representation of art online, both in terms of sources of

art and accessible opportunities to engage with art. This passage, while long, contains some important points that will be discussed subsequently.

Why do I need to intellectualise art to an extent that only some people get it. People already feel so intimidated when you talk about art...I'm like one person whose family, nobody from my family has ever worked in the arts or has anything to do with the arts, when I tell them, oh, let's go to a museum...they were like, no, you go, it's fine...You enjoy it. Like, we do not mind you enjoying, it's just that, what are we gonna do? How are we gonna understand? Like, no, you come along, you look at it, it's pretty or it's ugly, doesn't matter. You tell me what you feel about it.

And as more and more I interacted with people...the more I realised that people really, even students who are studying about art, even, they find it intimidating to enter a gallery or enter a museum...so how do I make this art more accessible...how do I make it enjoyable to people who do not want to maybe understand the entire history of it...They just want to look at art, but they are not able to do so because somehow the academia and the over intellectualisation of art kind of stops them from venturing into those spaces. So for me, honestly, art memes were, like, the best way to go around it...

Problem is how many of us actually go to museum websites and actually look at the images that are there that are not on display. Very rarely. Like, I've studied arts, I've done a BFA, done an MA...Except when I'm researching, I do not necessarily go log on to British Museum's website and start looking at their miniature collection or look at their Jamini Royce and the other artworks of the world. I wouldn't do that. Nobody else does that. So only the images that they put out on their Insta page or on their social media is the one that...I'm consuming as such...

So many people were enjoying it. Like, fine, maybe I should continue...It's like, why not? Why does it have to be over intellectualised? I'm not making it for the art world. I'm making it for just about every other person who's not in the art world, which is the entire population.⁵⁵

This quote echoes the assertions of researchers who identify the AHD as the reason people from all walks of life do not feel welcome in GLAM+ institutions. It also identifies precisely why CAM accounts are so important for the dissemination digitised cultural heritage content. In line with the idea that if it takes multiple steps to acquire digitised cultural heritage materials then users will not do it, Drew highlights how users are not going to spend time casually looking through GLAM+ institution repositories to

encounter art.⁵⁶ To that end, CAM accounts (as well as art-centric accounts) are doing the work of ensuring that users encounter digitised cultural heritage materials online, increasing the findability and accessibility of digitised cultural heritage materials.

This idea of CAMs in fact connecting users with art they never would have seen before was echoed in the discussions about utilising auction houses for base content, and even in discussions of senses of humour, with Charlie sharing that at the end of the day, no matter how their CAMs perform online, “I’m still drawing people to the resource. I think I’m in some tiniest little way, not just maybe putting a smile on people’s faces, but I’m bringing this rich tradition in front of people and they can continue to pursue it.”⁵⁷ Blake, Charlie, Dew, Emerson, and Harper explicitly mention wanting to expose their audience to new kinds of art and/or make art accessible to their audience as a motivating factor for starting their accounts.⁵⁸

Frances feels the opposite, however, noting that they got into making CAMs purely because they found the juxtaposition of classical art and modern jokes funny:

If anything, I think it inherently is funny to put modern concepts on these old paintings. Like, that just is hilarious. So, like, that’s my angle with it. Like, its not me trying to educate anyone in classical art. And often people are like, who’s. What’s. Who did the painting?...And I’m like, I’m not an art historian. I just love the paintings. I think that they’re funny. If you put, you know, crass or, like, modern, you know, girl pop things on them, its just the best.⁵⁹

Between these quotes from Drew and Frances is the idea of art being appreciated for art’s sake. Removing the preconceived ideas about how a person is supposed to think about, approach, and consume art, stripping away any feelings of not belonging. CAMs invite the user into this affinity space by utilising language and humour that are familiar to the user, recontextualising the art into something more approachable and accessible.

Another point that bears discussion is the tension between culturally Western ideas about art and the art styles that exist outside of that. South Asian art, for example, is underrepresented in Western culture, and a major factor contributing to this issue is colonisation—Drew highlights how as a South Asian person, they feel like Western ideas of South Asian art have been reduced to the depictions of gods that were stolen by white colonists.⁶⁰ Later in their interview Drew raises this issue as they note that much of their base content is held in Western institutions that do not facilitate access to the works, or do so only in unusable formats, contributing to the works being under-represented.⁶¹ Drew, despite being comfortable in the world of the arts and GLAM+ institutions, feels that the source of this under-representation of art and the inaccessibility of arts spaces lies with the institutions themselves, highlighting the need for these institutions to continue to find ways to make their spaces more accessible to users outside of the arts world.⁶²

7.C.iii: Thoughts on Copyright

The next point of disconnect between GLAM+ institutions as the caretakers of base content and DCCs comes when discussing the idea of copyright, specifically as it applies to that base content. There is a clear divide between participants about whether or not they even know how, or if, copyright applies to their base content.

Charlie is the most knowledgeable about copyright within the pool of participants in this research, shortly followed by Georgie and Harper, who are also committed to using OA base content as much as possible.⁶³ Charlie goes a step further, sharing that within the context of their work creating CAMs that if they cannot find attribution information about their base content then they do not use the image.⁶⁴

Charlie, Georgie, and Harper make a point to use OA sources as much as possible, which influences the platforms they utilize for base content.⁶⁵

Charlie details their rationale for this practice, noting that if they come across an image that is potential base content, they do everything within their power to find the image's host institution, utilising tools like Google reverse image search if there is no metadata directing them to the original home of the content. Part of this commitment for Charlie stems from an idea about novelty:

Well, a meme is to me novel...Its something new. If you were to ask me about my own research, a lot of my research is about the compilation of sources in the Middle Ages...almost like an anthology...Well, is an anthology novel? Is it its own creation or is it no different from the contents that its bringing together? So similarly, a meme, there's a caption, say, and then there's an image. Now, I do not own the image. Its not mine, and I didn't create it. But the caption is definitely mine...most of my stuff is derivative. Its very medieval. You know, the medieval world of knowledge is not derivative, but it starts with the existing tradition and then innovates it...So nothing I do is entirely original, but I kind of make it my own.⁶⁶

There are echoes of this idea of the novelty of CAMs throughout the other interviews. For example, Blake shared a past experience in which a GLAM+ institution asked them to take content down, which they felt was incongruous with the spirit of the work in question. They noted that the artist had made the base content in question had made their living through derivative works.⁶⁷ This moment hearkens back to the guiding question of this dissertation, "who owns cultural heritage?" In this instance, legally, GLAM+ institutions do, and regulate reuse of cultural heritage as they see fit. However, this moment also highlights the potential for shifting ideas of ownership, as previously discussed. How might this interaction between a DCC and a GLAM+ institution gone differently if there was an "ownership layer" or "joint authorship" on the internet, as advocated for by researchers?⁶⁸

On the opposite end of the spectrum, because Frances sources all of their content from art-centric accounts on Instagram, copyright has never been a concern for them. In fact, they didn't know that copyright can be applied to the image even if the original work is in the Public Domain.⁶⁹ This is seen throughout the other interviews, with Jamie stating that they simply screenshot images on sites that do not allow downloads if they want the image for their base content. They also later claimed that the content they use is not copyrighted and "everyone else can use it indefinitely," adding that as long as their base content is older than 70 years then they have avoided copyright.⁷⁰ Blake and Izzy share similar beliefs about copyright, with Blake stating that information online should be "free," while Izzy openly admits to not thinking about copyright within their creation process.⁷¹

Other participants adopt more of a hybrid approach to copyright. Drew utilises OA materials as much as possible, but if South Asian content is behind a paywall or not available to download, they will screenshot the content and move on, justifying this move with two points: first, they prioritise images that are of artworks that are in the Public Domain. Their second reason is a compelling anti-colonialism move: "And also its my content. Its, its literally my country's content. I do not want to be dependent on some people giving me access to it."⁷²

For the majority of participants, their rule is that if the artist has passed away or is no longer creating, they consider images of their work fair game, as mentioned previously with Frances. A few of the reasons for following this practice include:

Avery: These are not like, living artists who could use a bump... if it were, like, somebody's creative material and they put it in and this is how they're paying rent. Absolutely. Give them credit. I'm not really losing sleep over not crediting Michelangelo.⁷³

Frances: My rule is the artist has to be dead. That sounds awful, but, like, I literally am just like, if they're dead, I'm good with it.⁷⁴

Harper: In the very beginning...I used current artworks too. I stopped doing that almost immediately because although there was no backlash, I didn't want any artists to be offended or upset that their art was being appropriated for memes.⁷⁵

Izzy: I try to use content that is over 100 years old because in general that's the length of a copyright. I've never run into anyone/any institutions claiming ownership over paintings I use.⁷⁶

While these views about what art to use or not use take into account the considerations of artists, it does ignore a point that Charlie brought forward, which concerns the GLAM+ institutions that house and preserve most of these artworks: "I think people deserve to know where the original came from as well. Not just who the author was, not just who the illustrator was back in medieval time, but the library that's spending the money to digitise this content."⁷⁷ While referring to a manuscript in a library, this idea applies across GLAM+ institutions and different artistic media.

While these participants are clearly not expressing malice towards these institutions, there is a bit of a disconnect between the works and their physical homes. The participants are noting that they see art as creative expression, while ignoring the commercial value of art for GLAM+ institutions, in spite of some of these participants using the art for commercial purposes. This disconnect is likely due to a lack of understanding more than anything else, highlighting a need for publication and transparency about how these works are digitised, and the cost and work involved, in order to highlight the full life cycle of these works. Charlie mused on this idea of a disconnect as they discussed their ethical qualms with making merchandise with their CAMs: "Is that appropriate for me to be making money on a meme that, yes, is original in one way, but still contains content that you could say there is ownership by a digital collection because it's not... I obviously didn't create the image."⁷⁸

7.D: Final Thoughts

When discussing Findability, the DCCs highlighted methods of finding base content that were unexpected, particularly the idea of an “art-centric,” Instagram account serving as an intermediary to filter the vast amount of digitised cultural heritage materials available online. These intermediaries will be explored further in the subsequent chapters; however, it is important to note the impact of these accounts on making GLAM+ institution content findable through their selective highlighting of digitised cultural heritage materials. For some of the participants, these accounts have become the primary, if not only, way that they are interacting with GLAM+ institution content.

However, despite filling a gap for these DCCs, these art-centric Instagram accounts fail to communicate information that is important to GLAM+ institutions, such as conditions for reuse or comprehensive metadata about the work of art. This mimics the idea of losing the “thick description” that Tóth-Czifra discusses, in which users cannot get the full context of a work of art due to the constraints of technologies associated with creating digital copies of the artwork.⁷⁹ In this instance, the context supplied by GLAM+ institutions, which includes comprehensive metadata, reuse conditions, and other elements such as multiple file types or sizes, is stripped back to include a selection of metadata and one image in one type and one size, due to the constraints of Instagram. DCCs then encounter these works in this stripped back presentation, without encountering the data intended to be shared by GLAM+ institutions. While these intermediaries are making GLAM+ institution content more findable, that findability is coming at the cost of important contextual information.

In another part of the interview, Drew highlighted important issues that are preventing Casey's vision for a Participatory GLAM+ institution and Avdikos et al.'s vision for a commons-oriented GLAM+ institution, as noted in the Conceptual Framework, from becoming a reality, namely that many people are "afraid" of GLAM+ institutions, feeling like they do not belong in such a high-culture space, evoking the ideas of the AHD.⁸⁰ However, almost in direct opposition to this idea, multiple Participants, including Drew, highlighted co-hosting captioning contests on their account with various GLAM+ institutions.⁸¹ A captioning contest is when a DCC posts an image to their account, asking users to come up with the text version, co-creating CAMs. Often the DCC (and/or a partnering GLAM+ institutions) will post their favourites to their story or main feed, such as the Morgan Library did when they partnered with @arthistorigcaps, one of the CAM accounts from the dataset in Chapter 5, as seen in Figure 67.⁸² The engagement with these kinds of participatory events was quite high, as noted by Drew, Emerson, and Harper.⁸³



Figure 65: Morgan Library’s website announcing a collaborative captioning competition

A comparison of these two situations highlights a change in the “framing” of the interaction—whereas a physical visit to a GLAM+ institution may be daunting, there is evidence for online interactions being less intimidating, evoking the discussions around framing from the Conceptual Framework, in which the way a work of art is encased for view, in this case, in a physical space versus a digital one, can have an impact on how someone interacts with the work. In this case, it seems that the digital framing is less intimidating to users than a physical visit to a GLAM+ institution.

Looking to the CAM Profile Dataset, @artmemescentral co-hosted a captioning competition with the account @artscompass, an intermediary “art-centric” account, which can be seen at Figure 55.⁸⁴ This act of co-creation of CAMs can be viewed as a form of democratising digitised cultural heritage content, by firstly disseminating

digitised cultural heritage content that the users involved in the captioning contests would otherwise have had no reason to come into contact with. Then, inviting the user into the interpretive process both de-sanctifies the base content, allowing the user to feel more welcome in “high” culture spaces, and simultaneously evokes the end goals of a “performing” museum as described by Casey.⁸⁵

The divide between participants in how they find their base content is also notable. As noted, participants feel overwhelmed by the amount of digitised cultural heritage material available, and as Drew noted, the average user, even one with a background in arts and culture, is not going to casually scroll through a GLAM+ institution’s repository, making the images that the GLAM+ institutions chooses to share on social media platforms and their institutional repositories the only images that most users will interact with.⁸⁶ Users need some kind of intermediary who can filter through large amounts of digitised cultural heritage material and share smaller collections of notable images. As noted, these intermediaries can take the form of blogs, platforms like Pinterest, and art-centric Instagram accounts. These intermediaries are filling a needed gap in the creation process of DCCs and highlight how reuse of digitised cultural heritage materials can increase the findability and accessibility of content, but also serves to further democratise information and culture online.

Notes

¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts.”

² Creative Commons, “About CC Licenses.”

³ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 26, 32-33, 84, 96, 110, 138-139, 153, 174-175, 178, 183-185, 191-192.

⁴ Thompson, 3, 7, 14.

⁵ Thompson, 109, 178.

⁶ Thompson, 21, 25, 41-44, 82, 96-97, 161-162, 174.

⁷ Thompson, 32-33, 53-55, 84, 164, 167, 174-175.

⁸ Thompson, 21, 25, 41-44, 82, 96-97, 161-162, 174.

⁹ Thompson, 42-43, 97.

¹⁰ Thompson, 42-43, 54, 97, 109-110, 127, 134, 174, 183.

¹¹ Thompson, 109-110, 127-128, 134, 137, 183, 190-191.

¹² Thompson, 109-110, 127-128, 134, 137, 183, 190-191.

¹³ Thompson, 96, 110, 138-139, 153, 183, 185, 191-192.

¹⁴ McConaghy and Holtzman, “Towards An Ownership Layer for the Internet,” 3.

¹⁵ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 142.

¹⁶ Thompson, 4, 13-14, 16, 41-42, 44, 79, 161, 181.

¹⁷ Thompson, 26, 32-33, 84, 96, 110, 138-139, 153, 174-175, 178, 183-185, 191-192.

¹⁸ Thompson, 110, 134, 183.

¹⁹ Thompson, 41-44, 96-97, 161-162, 174-178.

²⁰ Thompson, 175.

²¹ Thompson, 25.

²² Thompson, 53-54.

²³ McConaghy and Holtzman, “Towards An Ownership Layer for the Internet,” 3.

²⁴ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 14, 82-83, 109, 178.

²⁵ Thompson, 14, 109, 178.

²⁶ Thompson, 14, 82-83, 109, 178.

²⁷ Thompson, 82.

²⁸ “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend.”

²⁹ “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend.”

³⁰ Auguste Toulmouche, “(Lot #108) Auguste Toulmouche, The Hesitant Fiancée,” Sothebys, 2005, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2005/19th-century-european-art-n08121/lot.108.html>.

³¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 42-43, 54, 97.

³² Thompson, 42-43, 54.

³³ Thompson, 42-43.

³⁴ Thompson, 97.

³⁵ Thompson, 42-43, 54, 97, 109-110, 127, 134, 174, 183.

³⁶ Thompson, 109-11.

³⁷ Thompson, 21, 42-43, 54, 97, 112-113, 127, 134, 183, 189, 195.

³⁸ Thompson, 134, 183.

³⁹ Thompson, 109-110, 127-128.

⁴⁰ @classicalartdetails, “Classical Art Details on Instagram,” Social Media, Instagram, accessed August 12, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C-anYCCIGFN/?img_index=1.

⁴¹ mention, “Instagram Followers.”

⁴² @classicalartdetails, “Classical Art Details 1,” Social Media, Instagram, August 8, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C-anYCCIGFN/?img_index=1.

⁴³ Narayanan, “Understanding Social Media Recommendation Algorithms.”

⁴⁴ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 183.

⁴⁵ Thompson, 109-110, 127-128, 134, 137, 174, 199-191.

⁴⁶ Thompson, 14-15, 87, 98, 125, 161-162, 180.

⁴⁷ Thompson, 14-15.

⁴⁸ Thompson, 15, 67, 123, 126.

⁴⁹ Thompson, 67.

⁵⁰ Thompson, 98.

⁵¹ Thompson, 14-15, 87, 98, 125, 161-162, 180.

⁵² Thompson, 16, 32-33, 46, 66-67, 84, 97.

⁵³ Thompson, 97.

⁵⁴ Thompson, 28.

⁵⁵ Thompson, 77-80.

⁵⁶ McConaghy and Holtzman, "Towards An Ownership Layer for the Internet," 3; Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 79.

⁵⁷ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 44.

⁵⁸ Thompson, 21-23, 43, 65, 78, 82, 177.

⁵⁹ Thompson, 148.

⁶⁰ Thompson, 79.

⁶¹ Thompson, 77-80.

⁶² Thompson, 77-80.

⁶³ Thompson, 43, 53-55, 164, 164, 174-175, 178.

⁶⁴ Thompson, 54.

⁶⁵ Thompson, 43, 53-55, 164, 164, 174-175, 178.

⁶⁶ Thompson, 56.

⁶⁷ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 32.

⁶⁸ McConaghy and Holtzman, "Towards An Ownership Layer for the Internet"; Leung, "Internet Memes and Copyright."

⁶⁹ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 138-39.

⁷⁰ Thompson, 191-192.

⁷¹ Thompson, 32-33, 183, 185.

⁷² Thompson, 84, 96.

⁷³ Thompson, 14.

⁷⁴ Thompson, 153.

⁷⁵ Thompson, 178.

⁷⁶ Thompson, 183.

⁷⁷ Thompson, 46-47.

⁷⁸ Thompson, 56.

⁷⁹ Tóth-Czifra, "The Risk of Losing the Thick Description: Data Management Challenges Faced by the Arts and Humanities in the Evolving FAIR Data Ecosystem."

⁸⁰ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 77-78.

⁸¹ Thompson, 87-88, 98, 125, 180.

⁸² The Morgan Library, "Instagram Competition," The Morgan Library & Museum, October 4, 2017, <https://www.themorgan.org/instagram-competition>.

⁸³ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 87-88, 98, 125, 180.

⁸⁴ @arts.compass, "ARTS COMPASS on Instagram."

⁸⁵ Casey, "The Museum Effect," 9.

⁸⁶ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 78.

Chapter 8: Platform perceptions

This chapter examines discussions around technical and cultural accessibility as seen through platforms, specifically how DCCs interact with them and how their functionalities serve the creation process for producing CAMs. How are DCCs choosing platforms for their content to best facilitate access to their work? Considerations include accessibility of online platforms, ranging from institutional repositories like the Rijksstudio, to social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok, and other issues of accessibility, such as paywalls, accounts, usability, etc. From the perspective of a DCC, ensuring accessibility to their content is less of a technical problem, as their content is generally shared on platforms that are accessible, like Instagram and Facebook, that do not put content behind a paywall. But how are these platforms addressing wider issues of accessibility, and how do DCCs feel about these platforms? This chapter will first examine discussions about the wide variety of platforms employed in the creation process of CAMs, then shifting to focus on the technical affordances and frustrations DCCs have with Instagram and its algorithms.

8.A: Wider Ideas about Platforms

While this research focuses on CAMs posted on Instagram, the participants utilise a large number of platforms beyond Instagram, including: Bored Panda, BuzzFeed, Cameo, Facebook, Google Arts and Culture, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Reddit, Snapchat, Substack, Threads, TikTok, Tinder, Tumblr, Twitter, Wikimedia, and YouTube.¹ When responding to queries about what DCCs do to make their content accessible, there was a shared belief across all ten participants that access to their content should be free for everyone, with no one employing any kind of a paywall, like Patreon, in the provision of their content. (In contrast, Classical Art Memes Official, which was not one of the

DCC's interviewed, does have a Patreon account, which they publicly say on their Facebook is the only way to get into contact with them.²⁾

All of the DCCs post content on Instagram, with Blake, Charlie, Drew, Emerson, Frances, Harper and Izzy exclusively posting CAMs on Instagram (although Blake also has a Substack for poetry, and Frances has a website, but it is for their book).³ Georgie and Harper have merchandise on their website, with Georgie posting content across the most platforms, noting that although it was only their website from 2011-2014, since then they post on a number of social media platforms, having developed a routine for the order in which the post content on the various platforms they utilise: "Now I post every picture on my site, then post a link on FB , the picture on IG, and story the link to the site. Also, I post pictures with the link to my site on Pinterest. Twitter works as an automation via IFTTT."⁴ For context, IFTTT is an automation software.⁵

Charlie, Drew, and Emerson tried to post their content onto other platforms and felt that it was not providing enough interaction to justify the work it was requiring, as noted in the previous chapter.⁶ Izzy shared that they have considered posting their content onto other platforms, but, "its more work for me and I do not see a big enough payoff in doing the extra work."⁷ Charlie and Emerson tried Twitter without adjusting their content at all, hoping the simple image and text combo would transfer into Twitter's algorithm with the same success as they experienced on Instagram, but felt that their content did not generate much, if any, traction.⁸ Drew did make the conscious choice to adapt their content for Twitter, although they also felt that it was a failure.

Somehow when you move from Instagram to Twitter, the idea completely changes. On Instagram, the image is the hero. On Twitter, you want the text to be the hero. So on Twitter, what we did was initially I would just put the same memes. And instead of explaining, instead of just writing the caption, I would sometimes explain the work as well, because people like reading on Twitter. But again, my text, the text character count would fuck up with it...But somehow

Twitter just bombed...I would be getting, like, 600 likes on them on an image on Instagram and three likes on Twitter...after a couple of months, you're like, is it really worth putting it all that effort on Twitter when its literally giving me nothing? Translation from Instagram to Twitter doesn't necessarily flow very well.⁹

Participants shared similar feelings of distaste for Meta's newest app, Threads, which operates on the same premise as Twitter, seemingly in a bid to replace the app after it was purchased by Elon Musk and subsequently declined in popularity.¹⁰ Drew noted that they felt like Threads was, "nice initially, and after a point, I feel like people just got bored."¹¹ This was also mentioned by Frances, who said while laughing, "Who cares about Threads?"¹² Georgie said that while they were currently trying out Threads, that they were, "not impressed."¹³

Avery, Georgie, and Jamie share their content on multiple platforms. Avery creates their content in TikTok because of the UX design on the app for making videos, but then posts their content to TikTok, then removes the TikTok watermark via a third-party site and then posts the edited content to Instagram, YouTube shorts, and Facebook.¹⁴ Avery noted that they remove the watermark because they heard that it could impact the reach of their videos on other platforms. "Instagram supposedly will try and slow down or suppress reels that they see have a watermark from another app on it."¹⁵ They do edit the hashtags in the caption depending on the platform, with YouTube shorts (a function on YouTube intended to compete with TikTok and Reels on Instagram¹⁶) and Instagram receiving fewer hashtags in the caption than when posted on TikTok:

I put much fewer hashtags on YouTube shorts because I'm just putting them out there to have more people see it. And I'm not really confident on how YouTube shorts work and how many people really use them... Because the algorithm doesn't quite work the same in terms of showing people...Just based on general interest they have, like TikTok does. Yeah, I may put fewer hashtags on Instagram and on YouTube.¹⁷

Again, a participant is noting both frustration and confusion with the workings of the algorithms on Instagram and YouTube shorts.

Georgie has an entire routine for where and in what order they post their content, starting with their website:

My site gives the most detailed story, close-ups, etc, Facebook is a link, or a single picture with the link to my site for details, Instagram is a picture and close-ups with the part of the story, the Facebook/Instagram story is a picture with the link to my site, Pinterest is a picture with the link to my site. I use hashtags only on Instagram and Twitter.¹⁸

They also noted that they do adapt their content to each platform, choosing from a variety of images of the CAM, some cropped, some zoomed in to specific details, others with varying aspect ratios.¹⁹

Participants view the various platforms they utilise in very different ways from each other. For example, Avery loves TikTok—in fact, they are the only participant currently posting content onto this platform.²⁰ Meanwhile, Blake, Charlie, Drew, Georgie, Harper tried TikTok and do not like it at all.²¹ Part of this is due to the differences in functionality between these two platforms—Instagram is all about the hero image, as Drew put it. “On Instagram, the image is the hero. On Twitter, you want the text to be the hero.”²² Similarly, on TikTok, video is the hero. Because Avery’s content is video based, it makes sense that their content would translate to TikTok well. Other creators noted this issue, with Charlie feeling like the still images that are normal for their account would not translate well to TikTok. However, they learned recently that someone had screenshotted their memes and put them into a video and uploaded them to TikTok.²³

Uploading still images to TikTok in a video format is not new, and it is not an unsuccessful method—the Hesitant Bride, the viral meme mentioned in the previous chapter, is a still image that went viral as a video. An epic soundtrack was added and the

format on TikTok was expanded to multiple slides while the sound plays in the background. Each slide had the same Hesitant Bride painting, but a different line of dialogue on each slide.²⁴ This adaptation of meme templates could allow for CAM accounts to transition to TikTok, but a number of participants shared that they do not feel the push. Both Blake and Emerson noted that they felt too old for TikTok, noting that they, as elder millennials, felt like the platform was not designed for them, but for younger users.²⁵ Meanwhile, Avery felt like TikTok serves a different purpose online than Instagram:

Instagram is just a worse place to be, you know what I mean? ...It is mostly cantered around your familial and friend circles and maybe one or two adjacent. Outside of that, you're just seeing people you kind of know posting the most extreme, best or worst moments of their life. And for you to be scrolling and just seeing people's moments of their lives... And that's the fantastic thing about TikTok, that its just anybody in the world who is an expert in anything or has a fun opinion on anything, its not related to you. You are just learning and experiencing a new thing.²⁶

Avery shared this in the midst of their concerns about the Restrict Act, which was passed in the US and could potentially lead to TikTok being banned in America.²⁷

Avery views this as an accessibility issue, noting that TikTok's user interface for making videos is much better than Instagram's. If the wider community of content creators lose access to that tool, Avery worries that content creation as a field will suffer, as well as the experience of users online.²⁸ This is a valid concern, as TikTok, in addition to being a social media platform, has become a vehicle for the democratisation of information online, with Avery noting that many average users do not have time to research random topics in-depth, but they can watch a TikTok.²⁹

Twitter is another platform that DCCs mentioned frequently, although only Georgie posts to the platform.³⁰ Blake, Charlie, Drew, and Emerson have attempted to

transition their accounts onto Twitter only for them to perform so poorly that the accounts were subsequently deleted.³¹ Charlie speculated that within the constraints of the Twitter platform, content is not very findable.³² Hashtags are minimal in comparison to Instagram, they note, and it is a common practice to jump onto whatever hashtag is trending at the time, an issue with Twitter that both Avery also pointed out.³³ Twitter as platform, Charlie mused, is simply “not apt for sharing the type of stuff I share...Twitter would be great if I wanted to fight with people intellectually, which I don't. Twitter, I find just so just bleak...I might be wrong about Twitter or X, but I think they're there more for ideas and debate and news sharing, perhaps.”³⁴ Drew said that they felt that their content “bombed,” on Twitter, highlighting that in the end, it was too much work with little to no engagement to show for their efforts, a line of reasoning that was echoed by Charlie and Emerson.³⁵

One platform that surprised participants was Pinterest. Mentioned as a source for base content by Charlie and Georgie,³⁶ Charlie noted being initially reticent about the app, but was pleasantly surprised by the algorithm on the platform adapting to their interests:

One of my biggest shortcuts is Pinterest. Pinterest, believe it or not, it is now catered to everything I need. It allows me, because people have already gone and taken the odd and the interesting and made different boards...And as soon as you press on one image, it opens up just a swath of hundreds more similar related images.³⁷

These kind of image intermediaries (including art-centric accounts on Instagram), fill an important role for DCCs of sifting through the vast quantities of GLAM+ institutions content to find images that will work as their base content. Multiple participants noted needing assistance in sifting through potential base content for the unique and interesting.³⁸

8.B: Instagram and the Algorithms

A significant theme within the interviews was frustration with the technical affordances of Instagram, particularly how to work with the Instagram algorithms, appearing across every section of the interviews, in response to questions about Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability, in different capacities. This highlights how central to the creation process of CAMs the chosen platform for sharing is. This section will examine these discussions in two thematic groupings: Approaches to ensuring content is shared widely by the Instagram algorithms, boosting the findability of content within Instagram, and approaches to tracking content, as a method of measuring the findability, accessibility, and reusability of content.

As noted in the Theoretical Framework, Instagram's algorithms look for "signals," as they call it, based on activity on the DCC's account and activity on various users' accounts, which indicate to the algorithms what accounts should have particular content shared with them.³⁹ While DCCs do not have control over the activity of users, which indicate to the algorithms if the user will be receptive of particular content, they do have control over their activity and its impact on how widely the algorithms share their CAMs. Participants showed clear consideration for this process, indicating a need to ensure the findability of their content through activity which is in line with what various sources indicate "please" the algorithms, resulting in the sharing of their content.

8.B.i: Approaches to the Instagram algorithms

When looking to ways that DCCs approach making their content findable, responses encompassed wildly varied methods with varied results, which all concerned different strategies for working with Instagram's algorithms, tying this process to the

concept of “online visibility” as noted in the Theoretical Framework.⁴⁰ Four participants noted that while Instagram does provide information about how to increase the reach of their content, that information is not always reliable.⁴¹ Six of the participants noted feeling unable to understand how to “beat” the algorithm and make their content more visible/findable.⁴² This section will first present the various feelings of frustration surrounding the algorithm. This section will then examine strategies promoted by Instagram, as noted by participants, which centre around work to “please” the algorithm, including diverse hashtags, posting regularly, driving engagement in the comments, posting at the “correct” times or at a consistent time each day, playing into the new trends such as making reels, and following the Community Guidelines.

Harper called the algorithm, “fickle,”⁴³ while Blake felt that their content was no longer “favourable” in the Instagram algorithms.⁴⁴ Drew laughed when the algorithm was mentioned, outlining their struggles with Instagram’s algorithms:

Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work. Its like, if I honestly start following Instagram's rules, it just becomes...the same information all over again. So, after a point...its okay to grow organically...For me, its the idea of putting it out and someday its going to work a bit more and someday its not going to work great, and its fine. Like, right now, Instagram is not happy with me, so the reach is so limited...And sometimes you just put some, anything random and it just works like magic. And you're like...what do you want me to do for it to work properly? But, yeah, after a point, you just give up. You're like, fuck it.⁴⁵

In a similar train of thought, Charlie is very concerned with making sure their content “breaks through” the algorithm, even though they’re unsure of the Instagram algorithm’s impact on their general account growth:

It'll continue this slow growth, because the people who like my stuff, they share it, and that's how it gets new eyes on things. I do not know if the algorithm is so much controlling it as the people who follow it share it to their own and they have their own connections.⁴⁶

This idea that once an account is a certain size the reach of the account is independent of the algorithm is echoed across other participants, including Avery, Charlie, Drew, and Frances.⁴⁷ Despite these feelings of frustration with how Instagram's algorithm works, Charlie noted that they appreciate Instagram for the niche it fills for users online:

But Instagram, I hope it stays around for a bit. I do not think its going anywhere because I think each of these social media platforms fill a certain type of transmission of material, of content. And they're all unique in some ways that I think I just hit the right platform, although I might be wrong in saying that.⁴⁸

Despite their complex feelings regarding the technical affordances of Instagram, the DCCs have no plans to move to another social media platform.

Hashtags are a popular way to add additional information to a post, particularly on Twitter, which operates by tracking popularly used hashtags and promoting them within the main feed on Twitter.⁴⁹ While some participants always use hashtags, many expressed concern about their efficacy online.⁵⁰ Charlie and Frances discussed how when one looks at their Instagram analytics page, a pie chart highlights the various methods through which end users come across their content, and that hashtags do not produce many views.⁵¹ Frances held their phone up to the screen, showing off the pie chart for their account, saying:

You can see impressions and it says from home, from other, from profile, from Explorer. And then if you get people finding it from hashtags, it'll also list from hashtags there. And it rarely says that anyone is finding them from the hashtags. So, like, I feel like those are unnecessary.⁵²

Still, all ten participants noted using specific sets of hashtags of some sort on all of their posts.⁵³ For example, Izzy utilises hashtags regarding their special interest as a way of making sure their content is found by the group it is intended for.⁵⁴ Avery noted

in their interview the importance of using specific hashtags as many have become so popularly used that it ultimately hinders the ability to find specific content.

So I do not ever put funny, I do not ever put sketch because its like... Instagram is inundated with everybody saying like, oh, this is sketch, or this is it. You know what I mean? And its like, its a wash. It doesn't really mean anything. So I try and be more specific. And I'll usually put a total of maybe five hashtags of something like philosophy, dogs, shoes, whatever.⁵⁵

Seven of the participants explicitly noted thinking that hashtags do not really do anything to boost the findability of their CAMs, and yet they all still use them, hinting at the tension between the DCCs and what they feel are ineffectual constraints of the platforms they utilise.⁵⁶ Emerson detailed how their process regarding hashtags has changed since the account got started in 2013:

We used to do a lot of hashtags to get to be findable when we were starting out, and then once we got more followers, we didn't do that as much. And we would sometimes, depending on what the meme was about. Tag something or someone. Include the location. Most recently, for some reason, I've just been tagging, like, random neighbourhoods in New York and LA just because that's where me and my partner live. And I've just been doing one hashtag and sometimes a few hashtags, but most recently just one and then tagging...where I sourced the image from.⁵⁷

As noted in this quote, Avery and Emerson, who commented on having large followings, highlighted that they do not really have to do as much work to please the algorithm as their followers spread their content for them, through likes, comments, and shares.⁵⁸ This is an interesting note, as many of the participants have noted dissatisfaction with the workings of the Instagram algorithm—is there a point at which attaining online visibility through the machinations of the Instagram algorithm is no longer necessary? According to the DCCs, yes. However, that hinges on building a following that is sticky, as discussed in the Theoretical Framework.

Another commonly mentioned strategy for working with the Instagram algorithms is posting on some kind of schedule. Blake, Charlie, Drew, Harper and Izzy

make a point to post at specific times/with particular regularity that they feel helps the reach of their content.⁵⁹ Charlie religiously posts content at 4-5 PM EST, finding that after some trial and error it seems to be the time their content has the most reach.⁶⁰ Frances noted that they create their content at night before they go to bed, drafting four to five memes. Then in the morning, they review and post them.⁶¹

Avery noted some unconventional methods of driving engagement with their content that they discovered by watching videos posted from digital influencers who specialise in helping other content creators work with platform algorithms.⁶² One trick they adopted was if the DCC makes an intentional mistake somewhere in the video, then people will comment correcting them. “They’re commenting and they’re angry,” they note, “but the reality is they’re driving engagement because the more comments you have, the more it pushes it out to other people.”⁶³ Another method that Avery has employed is not including the artwork information in the captions of their post, noting that this practice:

...helps in the algorithm of just having people comment, because people will always comment, oh, my God, where is this? Oh, my God, what is this painting? I need it. Blah, blah, blah, whatever. And then there are other people who are interested and knowledgeable about art history who can be like, its Mount Vesuvius from 19 oh-whatever, 18 whatever.⁶⁴

Harper has a similar practice.⁶⁵ This practice is similar to that of Frances’s commitment to community building by responding to every comment and DM,⁶⁶ something Avery also does if they feel the engagement with their content has been low:

I’ll only do it if there’s a video...that’s not doing great, needs a little help, I will respond to every comment. Because if somebody comments, oh my God, this is so great, and then you comment back, oh, thank you so much, blah blah, or you start some conversation, you make another joke. That’s just another reason for the person to come back to the video, which helps the algorithm and so on and so forth. So engaging with the people who are engaging with your content also helps it get pushed out.⁶⁷

While these approaches come from different motivations, the results are the same—posts with numerous comments (or other forms of engagement) get pushed by the algorithm.

Drew highlighted an instance of this happening unintentionally with one of their posts, in which they were looking for a research intern to help for a short-term contract. Over the course of two weeks the post had over 5,000 comments and the account had gained 1,200 new followers. In the end, they received over 500 applications for the internship from all over the world.⁶⁸ Harper flagged a similar unintentional strategy for getting engagement through comments, highlighting that they will employ hyper-specific references to current events in their CAMs, and while some people will get it, other people will comment asking about the reference, driving engagement and boosting the reach of their content.⁶⁹

Another strategy for working with the algorithm that was noted in the Theoretical Methodology, and seen in the CAM Profile dataset is working with the current functional trends on Instagram. In this case, 3 participants discussed Reels. Blake noted that their content does not suit reels, so they have opted to simply add a still image into the Reel format, which has noticeably helped their reach, as Instagram has noted they prioritise content in the Reels format.⁷⁰ Charlie noted being paid by Instagram to make reels when the function first launched on Instagram, highlighting the platform's commitment to beating out other video formats, like TikTok and YouTube shorts.⁷¹ Emerson noted that another method of disseminating their content that they have employed was a partnership with another CAM account, in which they would collaborate on posts and tag each other.⁷² Frances has been approached by another account to do the same thing, but they were not interested.⁷³ Emerson and Frances noted

paying Instagram to boost the reach of their content, a function added to Instagram in 2013.⁷⁴

Another issue mentioned by Blake, Frances, Georgie, and Izzy was frustration with Instagram's policies surrounding nudity, with many of their posts being flagged despite what they noted was a lack of inappropriate content, especially in the case of Georgie, who has repeatedly had Instagram mistake a cat in their CAMs for a nude woman. There is significant impact for DCCs when this occurs, as Frances describes:

One of my paintings, it was like, my laundry, and then it was, like, me, an ethereal being. I posted it last week or maybe even this week, and Instagram flagged it for nudity, and I had to take it down, and I was like, great. So, when that was flagged, you get a little notification, and then its like, your account can't be recommended to people...I just deleted the post, and we're now good again. My content could be recommended. Again," nudity." I was like, okay, its a post about laundry. Like, come on.⁷⁵

As noted in the Theoretical Methodology, violations of Instagram's Community Guidelines and Recommended Guidelines can have significant impact on the reach of content. The Instagram algorithms will not share (Frances refers to this as their content being "recommended"⁷⁶) content with users who aren't already following the account the content is posted from.⁷⁷ This can, in turn, impact engagement with content, and as such, is a significant concern for the participants.

8.Bii: Approaches to Tracking

All of the DCCs noted that while they try (through various methods) to track their content online in regards to how people are finding, engaging with and reusing their content, they do not have good tools for doing so, despite Instagram offering creators an analytics page with numerous mechanics.⁷⁸ There is a desire to understand what elements enable users to find their content, and a frequently mentioned frustration about not knowing how to accomplish this.⁷⁹ Interestingly, a few creators highlighted

their reticence to track much of anything relating to the dissemination of their content in an effort to protect their mental health.

Frances stated that they fully refuse to look at their Instagram Analytics page, although they made an exception for their interview.⁸⁰ Avery echoed a similar sentiment, noting that once they post content they immediately throw their phone across the room out of embarrassment.⁸¹ Charlie also noted feelings of embarrassment just after posting.⁸² 6 participants noted that they do not try to keep up with the metrics because they do not feel like they need to, for the sake of their mental health.⁸³ This idea will be discussed later.

Eight of the participants said that they are not actively tracking the engagement with, or access to, their content, only briefly checking Instagram's analytics tools out of curiosity.⁸⁴ For example, if a post is doing particularly well, as Blake, Charlie, and Emerson mentioned.⁸⁵ Only Georgie tracks metrics of any kind, and they employ a number of programs to do so, listing Facebook and Instagram insights, Google Analytics, and Yandex metrics,⁸⁶ an independent service that tracks web analytics.⁸⁷ Frances noted that while they do not track metrics out of concern for their mental health, they do make a point to respond to every comment and DM they receive:

I do not check the likes. I try to reply to every single comment...because I just think that's good community building. And I always reply to all my messages. Sometimes people are like, oh, my God. Can't believe you replied. I was like, I am literally just a girl. I will reply to everybody. Like, if there's a DM, I'm going to reply to it.⁸⁸

This idea of community building and parasocial relationships with their followers is an idea noted by a number of participants who shared that while they do not aim to keep track of the reach of their content, their followers do, sharing news with DCCs via comments and DMs. Frances shared, "I know what's going on because my followers send

me everything.”⁸⁹ Charlie noted a similar experience, sharing that their followers regularly notify them of uncredited reuse of their content.⁹⁰ Avery, Drew, and Georgie flagged similar experiences.⁹¹

When discussing attempts to track reuse of their content online, participants noted that it is impossible to do fully, as actions like screenshotting “remove the authorship,” as Charlie noted.⁹² Instagram does not have tools to prevent screenshotting of content and does not have an ability to track reuse of content that is not tagged with the creator’s Instagram handle. Harper notes a similar feeling when discussing other accounts posting their content without credit:

I put a watermark in the painting, and have noticed that sometimes meme pages will even cover over it when they repost, which is even more irritating as they are blatantly trying to take credit or eliminate any trail that might divert their followers to me.⁹³

This again highlights the need for a re-examination of how the internet approaches ownership and IP, as noted in the Theoretical Framework.

An example of this in practice can be seen in Multiple participants who noted a moment when a CAM of theirs went “viral.”⁹⁴ Within the context of this research, virality is more about the idea of something passing quickly from person to person than a specific metric count. Participants noted their content being shared on platforms they have never posted on, such as Reddit, Facebook, Twitter, even TikTok, with the images turned into videos.⁹⁵ One of the main reasons for DCC posts going viral is their content being reshared by a large aggregator account. In this instance, aggregator is not referring to GLAM+ institution content, but instead a “meme aggregator account,” as Charlie called them, an account that reshapes memes from a variety of accounts online, curating a feed of memes for their followers.⁹⁶ An example of this is found in Emerson’s interview, when they recount the story of the content being shared by an

account called “The Fat Jewish.”⁹⁷ This account resharing one of their CAMs was when Emerson first noticed that their account was getting a lot of followers.⁹⁸ Similar instances have been mentioned by Blake, Charlie, and Frances, who all mentioned that they knew when a big account had reposted their content because they started to get a bunch of new followers. However, they had to find this out through context clues, instead of being aware of this reuse of their content.⁹⁹

8.C: Final Thoughts

This chapter examined the platforms utilised by DCCs in the creation process of CAMs and how Instagram, the platform through which DCCs and users access CAMs, is helping and hindering the ability of DCCs to disseminate their content. Tracking engagement with their content is not a priority for most of the participants, particularly with the tools provided by Instagram. However, multiple participants highlighted a commitment to responding to engagement via comments and DMs, building a community within their followers. This practice enables the development of parasocial relationships and helps to develop followers with “stickiness.”¹⁰⁰ For the DCCs that have businesses attached to their accounts, this is critical for developing customers who are loyal. Instagram is helping to facilitate the development of these affinity spaces.

Frustration with an inability to effectively track content is a major theme within the interviews, with participants highlighting a desire to be more engaged with the finer points of how and why their content has the reach it does. Despite Instagram offering creators analytical tools on the app, DCCs still feel they are not as aware of their content’s life online as they would like to be. Georgie even employs external tracking services to keep track of their content.¹⁰¹

Multiple participants noted that they have been unfairly subjected to restrictions on their account due to perceived violations of the Community Guidelines, primarily due to their content being flagged as containing nudity.¹⁰² This is frustrating for these participants as this results in their content no longer being shared by Instagram's algorithms. This, coupled with a lack of understanding surrounding how the Instagram algorithms work, has resulted in the participants being overwhelmingly frustrated with the technical affordances of Instagram. This level of platform governance, paired with secrecy around the algorithm, means that making content for Instagram is not particularly accessible, as it requires a significant investment of time and energy to learn how to "appease" the Instagram algorithms and governance mechanisms. These expressions of frustration echo Duffy's idea of "algorithmic precarity," in which platform affordances impact the mental health of digital influencers.¹⁰³

When looking beyond the Instagram's affordances, as noted by Drew in the previous chapter, the average user is not going onto GLAM+ repositories to trawl through their collection images online.¹⁰⁴ This idea is echoed by Avery in their discussion on TikTok and the Restrict Act, noting that most people do not have the time to go to the library or research on JStor to learn about things that interest them.¹⁰⁵ Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are serving as the intermediaries of GLAM+ institution content, connecting users with content that they never would have had the time or knowledge to access. By extension then, ensuring access to these platforms becomes a wider cultural issue of accessibility as they are the tool through which the average user is accessing GLAM+ institutions content. The act of disseminating CAMs, then, becomes a radical act of democratising cultural heritage information online, in direct opposition to ideas of the previously discussed AHD.

This idea of accounts helping each other to get followers and engagement is interesting, as another major concern discussed within this dissertation is the idea of CAMs being “stolen,” by other accounts, when a participant’s content was shared by another account without credit.¹⁰⁶ Sometimes, the moment of virality and the moment of theft happen synonymously. Emerson noted that they had to ask the account “The Fat Jewish” for credit when they reshared Emerson’s content.¹⁰⁷ While “The Fat Jewish” acquiesced, Charlie noted multiple instances of asking accounts to credit them, only to have to resort to blocking the account after even more their CAMs were shared without credit.¹⁰⁸ This tension between virality and having ownership of content is complex. A CAM going viral is good, it democratises cultural heritage materials and can get a DCC new followers. However, if the impetus for the virality is theft, and the account who shared the CAM when it went viral is not willing to supply credit, the DCC loses out on potential followers. The content is democratised, but the provenance is lost. This idea of ownership of CAMs will be interrogated in Chapter 10.

Notes

¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 8, 22, 25, 27-28, 45, 47-48, 84, 89-90, 109, 115, 121, 136-137, 163, 165, 175-176, 184, 191.

² @classicalartmemesofficial, “Classical Art Memes 1.”

³ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 22, 45, 84, 110, 136, 174, 184.

⁴ Thompson, 165, 175.

⁵ IFTTT, “IFTTT - Automate Business & Home,” IFTTT, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://ifttt.com/>.

⁶ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 45, 57-58, 84, 89-90, 109, 115, 121.

⁷ Thompson, 184.

⁸ Thompson, 57-58, 109.

⁹ Thompson, 89-90.

¹⁰ Deryk King, “Is Threads the New Twitter (or X)? What Marketers Need To Know About the Latest Social Trend,” Brafton, August 11, 2023, <https://www.brafton.com/blog/social-media/is-threads-the-new-twitter/>.

¹¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 90.

¹² Thompson, 136.

¹³ Thompson, 165.

¹⁴ Thompson, 5-6.

¹⁵ Thompson, 6.

¹⁶ Dade Hayes, “YouTube Shorts, A Response To TikTok, Launches Beta In U.S.,” *Deadline* (blog), March 18, 2021, <https://deadline.com/2021/03/youtube-shorts-tiktok-launches-beta-in-us-video-1234717149/>.

¹⁷ Thompson, 5.

¹⁸ Thompson, 163.

¹⁹ Thompson, 165.

²⁰ Thompson, 8.

²¹ Thompson, 27, 46, 90, 121, 165, 175-176.

²² Thompson, 89.

²³ Thompson, 58.

²⁴ “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend.”

²⁵ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 27, 123.

²⁶ Thompson, 17.

²⁷ Erin Hale, “Why Has the US Passed a Bill to Ban TikTok, and What’s next? | Technology News | Al Jazeera,” *Aljazeera*, March 14, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/14/why-has-the-us-passed-a-bill-to-ban-tiktok-and-whats-next>.

²⁸ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 17.

²⁹ Thompson, 17.

³⁰ Thompson, 163, 165.

³¹ Thompson, 57-58, 89-90, 118.

³² Thompson, 57-58.

³³ Thompson, 5, 57-58.

³⁴ Thompson, 58.

³⁵ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 90.

³⁶ Thompson, 42, 162.

³⁷ Thompson, 42.

³⁸ Thompson, 42, 43, 54, 97, 109-110, 127, 134, 174, 183.

³⁹ “Understand How Instagram Algorithms Work and How They Impact Rankings.”

⁴⁰ Cotter, “Playing the Visibility Game.”

⁴¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 10, 51, 59, 88, 149.

⁴² Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 7, 23, 48, 85, 176.

⁴³ Thompson, 176.

⁴⁴ Thompson, 23.

⁴⁵ Thompson, 85–86.

⁴⁶ Thompson, 53.

⁴⁷ Thompson, 7.

⁴⁸ Thompson, 58.

⁴⁹ DeVito, Gergle, and Birnholtz, "Algorithms Ruin Everything."

⁵⁰ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 5, 46, 53-54, 140, 181.

⁵¹ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 49, 140.

⁵² Thompson, 140.

⁵³ Thompson, 5-6, 22, 45-47, 84, 112-113, 136-137, 164, 179, 189, 196.

⁵⁴ Thompson, 191.

⁵⁵ Thompson, 5.

⁵⁶ Thompson, 136, 179.

⁵⁷ Thompson, 112-113.

⁵⁸ Thompson, 5-7, 22.

⁵⁹ Thompson, 23, 47-48, 51-52, 59, 177, 183, 186.

⁶⁰ Thompson, 52.

⁶¹ Thompson, 150-151.

⁶² Thompson, 10.

⁶³ Thompson, 10.

⁶⁴ Thompson, 14-15.

⁶⁵ Thompson, 177.

⁶⁶ Thompson, 143.

⁶⁷ Thompson, 10-11.

⁶⁸ Thompson, 99-102.

⁶⁹ Thompson, 177.

⁷⁰ Thompson, 23-24.

⁷¹ Thompson, 55.

⁷² Thompson, 116.

⁷³ Thompson, 162.

⁷⁴ Aaron Taube, “Michael Kors’ Widely Hated Instagram Ad Was Actually A Massive Success,” Business Insider, accessed April 12, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/michael-kors-wins-with-first-instagram-ad-2013-11>; Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 116, 141.

⁷⁵ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 149.

⁷⁶ Thompson, 149.

⁷⁷ “Instagram Community Guidelines FAQs.”

⁷⁸ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 6, 48, 52, 84, 88, 140, 170, 194.

⁷⁹ Thompson, 5-7, 26, 52, 68, 85-86, 92-93, 98, 115, 136, 143-144, 155, 163, 167, 170, 186.

⁸⁰ Thompson, 136, 148.

⁸¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 4.

⁸² Thompson, 47-48.

⁸³ Thompson, 47-48, 79-80, 136, 186.

⁸⁴ Thompson, 5-7, 26, 52, 68, 85-86, 92-93, 98, 115, 136, 143-144, 155, 186.

⁸⁵ Thompson, 26, 52, 115.

⁸⁶ Thompson, 170.

⁸⁷ “Яндекс Метрика – Система Веб-Аналитики,” Яндекс Метрика – система веб-аналитики, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://metrika.yandex.ru/promo/product>.

⁸⁸ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 171.

⁸⁹ Thompson, 140.

⁹⁰ Thompson, 45-46.

⁹¹ Thompson, 7, 88, 161, 167.

⁹² Thompson, 46-47.

⁹³ Thompson, 179.

⁹⁴ Thompson, 48-49, 74, 98-99, 113, 163, 194.

⁹⁵ Thompson, 7, 45-46, 58, 120.

⁹⁶ Thompson, 46.

⁹⁷ Thompson, 124-125.

⁹⁸ Thompson, 124-125.

⁹⁹ Thompson, 48-49, 74, 98-99, 113, 163, 194.

¹⁰⁰ Hu et al., “Understanding Followers’ Stickiness to Digital Influencers.”

¹⁰¹ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 167.

¹⁰² Thompson, 31, 149, 170, 180.

¹⁰³ Duffy, “Algorithmic Precarity in Cultural Work.”

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts,” 79.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, 17-18.

¹⁰⁶ Thompson, 15, 33-34, 49, 58, 68-69, 92-93, 88, 98, 125, 140, 155, 167, 179, 186.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, 124-125.

¹⁰⁸ Thompson, 73-74.

Chapter 9: Cultural Mediation and Data Curation

The idea of the platform, as discussed in the previous section, and the various ways it requires users to develop/post to suit its unique needs is incredibly important for understanding the way that GLAM+ institutions and DCCs craft their content, as they have to take both technical and cultural interoperability concerns into their creation process. This chapter examines discussions around technical and cultural interoperability as seen through the context of DCCs creating CAMs. The idea of Interoperability, particularly in the context of the creation process, produced rich discussions amongst the participants, particularly when discussing cultural interoperability as it related to how they craft their content. How do the affordances of platforms impact how content is developed? Do the various standards between platforms help or hinder the creation of content? This chapter will examine the process of creating CAMs, as detailed by the participants, who have clear ideas about the steps that need to be taken in order to produce content that is relatable and able to be widely understood. Themes within this discussion include inspiration, both for launching their accounts, and for making individual CAMs, how they approach adapting the base content, use of meme templates, and ideas about humour.

9.A: Approaches to Creating CAMs

Questions about how precisely DCCs craft their content to be widely understood by users were some of the most in-depth answers from the participants, illuminating their understandings of the both the function of humour within their content and a consideration for the taste of the user. The only DCCs who showed any preference for well-known pieces as base content were Blake and Georgie.¹ Instead, Avery, Blake, Charlie, Drew, Emerson, Frances, Harper, Izzy, and Jamie intentionally look for

paintings that are not well known so that the user does not bring any preconceived ideas about context into their perception of the CAM. They instead prefer to make the artworks relatable through their crafting of language while adapting the base content into a CAM.²

Avery shared that while they are “mindful” of the user, and include pop culture references, they try to do so “obliquely,” as they feel that it will date their content.³ They offer an example in which they loosely referenced the Johnny Depp and Amber Heard trial, which was the subject of frenzied media attention in spring 2022.⁴

...that one starts out with the King saying, like, “He wrote it in blood. That's kind of creepy.” That was a reference to the Johnny Depp trial that was happening at the time because Johnny Depp wrote some bullshit, whatever he wrote on a mirror, like in blood, making fun of his wife. And so rather than making it explicitly about Johnny Depp, you know what I mean, that gives the opportunity of, like this is just an engaging starting off point. And if somebody picks it up, then they can reference that in the comments or they can talk about that.⁵

Avery continued that they worry about finding the balance between specificity and generalisations in their references, as they want to appeal to a larger group of people, sharing that they feel that, “people want to feel like they're in on something...that's how you really connect with people.”⁶

Blake shapes their content in almost the opposite way, highlighting that they started the account because they loved learning about abstract thinkers and creators. “I'm always trying to learn about weird thinkers or weird archaic writers and people from the past. I like their thinking. I kind of wanted to give that to people.”⁷ Blake later reaffirms this idea when they state that they do not make their content intentionally accessible or understandable in terms of the subject matter.

I mean...that's kind of the nature of my account. Like, I thought I had all these weird thoughts that no one would, like, get or whatever. I started making my account, and people would be like, oh, this is me, this is me, this is me. So I do

not really make it accessible because people get it. But then people fall in love with artists that I post. So that's what keeps me going a little bit...

Recently, I made a meme with mentioning Evelyn Waugh from *Brideshead Revisited*. And I do not know, I want people to get it, but I do not want people to get it. So I do kind of do it from a modern perspective... That's one of my favourite things to do is just... help people learn about weird stuff and beautiful stuff at the same time.⁸

By intentionally crafting their content to highlight more abstract or unknown artists and other creatives, Blake is hoping to redirect the user to look for more information about the subjects of their CAMs. For the users who understand the references Blake is making, there is a feeling of inclusion, or being “in the know,” which can establish a further level of parasocial relationship with the account, similar to Avery noting that users want to feel “in on something.”⁹

Charlie admits that as an academic, they can't help but notice patterns in the kinds of content their audience responds to. “I find the more academic, the more cerebral, the more technical, the less well its going to do because the less relatable it is. If I want a meme that's going to be surefire tomorrow, I'm going to involve Taylor Swift in it.”¹⁰ Charlie goes on to describe a type of meme that they have dubbed a “low effort meme,” in which they choose a topic they know people will respond to.¹¹ Examples provided by Charlie included trebuchets, the Library of Alexandria, and later again, Taylor Swift.¹² Referring to the Library of Alexandria, Charlie notes, “I can post anything on it. It pulls our heartstrings. Library of Alexandria. I do not know what it is. Its almost a caricature. You know about the first twenty comments on a post involving the Library of Alexandria, too soon. Everyone. Its the first twenty comments, too soon.”¹³ They go on to note that they find that posts that “won't be understood next year,”¹⁴ referring to a hyper-specific reference to current events, are the kind of posts that typically do the best, as they are so niche that users need to have a very specific

cultural context to be in on the joke, again facilitating a feeling of inclusion for users who understand the references.

Drew provided an insightful assessment about the idea of “cultural interoperability,” particularly in reference to their base content. They simply cannot pick artwork that has a historical context that would be widely known, because they primarily work with Southeast Asian art.

So there are a lot of context that we do not necessarily know that much about. At least the younger generation wouldn't...Its very elaborate. Its intensely elaborate. So believe me when I say this, people following the context of them is impossible. So better to use them for the context that I can understand.¹⁵

The context that Drew is referring to here is their positionality as a DCC, which includes discussions of mental health, dating, and generalised themes of oppression, particularly those experienced by women and non-gendered people. “None of the memes that I've ever put out have come from a male perspective. I do not fall for that. And people like that. Its like, why not?”¹⁶

Emerson, similarly, is quick to position themselves within their work, noting that while their intention is to create content for a variety of people, they know that “I am in my own bubble, what I think is a variety maybe isn't. I am a progressive, LA living, millennial, queer friendly, you know, all that stuff. So, yeah, I feel like I might have a skewed idea of that, but I do.”¹⁷ However, within that positionality, they do utilise current events and trending meme templates to assist in their creation process. They do note that their creation process is about a 50/50 split between utilising current events and trends and looking through an image bank and stored jokes to see if anything pops out at them.¹⁸

Frances has a very similar creation process to Emerson, noting that they have a clear audience and a clear creation process. Firstly, they make content that while initially aimed at Bookstagram, (a classification of users on Instagram, predominantly women, who are very interested in romance and fantasy novels, making their online accounts centre around these books) they feel they now cater to a new audience: the girlies (a classification of users on the Internet. which while it has traditionally been a term of endearment for female friends, has since 2022 come to represent a person who is rekindling their love for things traditionally associated with being a young female child.)¹⁹

Frances shares their own definition of “the girlies,” saying, “The girlies are not necessarily females. The girlies are anybody who are the girlies. Like, if you're a girly, you just know. So, like, that's who I'm posting for. I'm posting memes for the girlies.”²⁰ For context, while they used to post about book tropes like enemies-to-lovers, they now post about pretty much anything, specifically naming mental health, dating, burnout, and more, prioritising the idea of “relatability” in their content.²¹ While their content still responds to events in the Bookstagram world, the account is more focused on the DCC’s process of writing a book, utilising memes to respond to their own process and to fans responding to snippets of their writing that they have shared.²² They summarised their creation process rather simply, stating, “The more relatable I can make my content, the more it is shared, and the more people find me. That's, like, the exact pipeline of my work.”²³

Georgie found a unique way of making sure that their content is widely understood: they do not utilise language in the image, instead focusing on their cat. The

juxtaposition of a cat artfully embedded into the surrounding artwork is enough, as they aim to make their work, “surprising.”²⁴

Harper makes a point to avoid jokes that play off of current events, noting that the question “How can you make this content be understood by a variety of people?” is one that is always on their mind.²⁵ They tend to use “Broad, relatable captions or jokes,” adding that whenever they do use a specific reference to something, it drives up the comments on their post.²⁶ They also made a point to position themselves within their work, noting that, “I would say my content skews feminist, heteronormative and LGBTQIA+, pro-choice, liberal/left, and has also been called grand millennial.” They note that they generally follow their intuition about what jokes to make and how to craft their content.²⁷

9.B: The Creation Process

Discussions around the creation process in the interviews highlighted a few key aspects of the creation process for DCCs as they make CAMs: inspiration, both for the founding of the account and for making individual CAMs, adaptation of content, meme templates, and humour. Each of these themes highlights a different aspect of how interoperability manifests in the cultural data reuse processes of DCCs,

9.B.i: Inspiration

Within the idea of inspiration, a number of participants discussed the inspiration for starting their accounts. Drew, as previously discussed, saw a gap in representation of and discussion surrounding art online, so their account looks specifically to South Asian art, and writes jokes from a female perspective, noting:

So a lot of these jokes that I see walking, passing around are, like, sometimes, like, they offensive to a lot of genders, except for the male gender, which I feel like its a bit like, its nice, but its also sometimes a bit crass humour. Its not really very intellectualised humour. Not that humour needs to be intellectualised, but

sometimes you do feel like its a beautiful painting. Why are you making it so stupid? So the idea was also in one capacity to talk about humour, but from the other side of the room, like, from a female perspective, from a non-gendered perspective, instead of just the usual male perspective that we see everywhere.²⁸

Its a very subversive premise for the account, given the dominance of male humour specifically within wider meme culture online, which predominantly depicts young, white men and their ideas.²⁹

Blake's inspiration for starting their account, also mentioned previously, was sharing the weird and unusual in the arts and academia, citing creatives like philosopher Walter Benjamin, *Brideshead Revisited* author Evelyn Waugh, poet and author Edgar Allen Poe, artists Pablo Picasso and Pierre Huyghe and filmmaker Jean-Luc Goddard, noting that they intentionally want to introduce their viewers to concepts and people that they had not encountered before.³⁰ Their goal with the account is to simply introduce users to these people.

But I wasn't even trying to get people to follow me or anything. I wasn't searching for that. I was just doing it. I made the account for me, really?... That's kind of why I wanted to start the account in a weird way, because I'm always trying to learn about weird thinkers or weird archaic writers and people from the past. I like their thinking. I kind of wanted to give that to people... My cultural accessibility is I want people to know about these things.³¹

Although their approaches to generating content are very different, these DCCs both highlight seeing a gap in public understanding of art and artists and seeking to fill that gap in existing common knowledge through their content.

Charlie has a similar mission in mind for their account. As an academic, Charlie is well-versed in finding gaps in existing knowledge and started the account as a method both to connect with their students and to get them engaged in the materials they were working with, which happened to be medieval manuscripts.³² Knowing that

their account gets to introduce users to medieval manuscripts is a thought that Charlie noted motivates them.³³

Emerson, Frances, Georgie, and Harper were inspired to start their accounts through their professional pursuits. Emerson was working in an auction house in 2013 when they and a friend started taking pictures of the works coming in for sale and posting them on Snapchat, eventually leading to them needing more content and checking out Google, museum websites, and more.³⁴ Frances is an aspiring author and started making memes for the Bookstagram community and kept seeing art on their Discover page on Instagram, inspiring them to start turning the art into memes.³⁵ Georgie is an artist by trade and started making classical art memes in an effort to add some beauty into their experience of meme culture, which, in 2011, they described as, “rather primitive and quite ugly.”³⁶ Avery, Izzy, and Jamie did not mention what inspired them to start the account.

Looking to the inspiration DCCs have when making individual CAMs, Avery, Drew, Frances and Georgie have very clear ideas about what elements they are looking for in their base content, which overlap in one very specific way: dynamic poses. Avery looks very specifically for paintings with dynamic posing, noting that Renaissance paintings are some of the best to work with.

What I'm looking for is a painting where there are usually at least three figures. They do not have to be people, but they could be animals, whatever, but it tends to work the best for, like, interplay between them. If there are three people who are in dynamic positions, right, not necessarily all looking out or all looking at the same thing, there needs to be some I do not know, some difference in how they are positioned. So it makes sense that they would be thinking or speaking about or putting their focus on different things.³⁷

These poses enable Avery to envision a series of conversations the characters in the painting may be having, leading to humorous snippets of video. In Drew's case, they

find that the miniatures that they use for base content feature characters in interesting poses or making interesting expressions that they feel are good for making CAMs.³⁸

Frances is very clear about one boundary in their CAM making process: they do not make CAMs with men in them.

I always prioritise women in images. I do not have a lot of memes with dudes... So I look for women, and then I also look for facial expressions, like, expressive type things, and gestures. So, like, if there's a woman and she's sitting like this, I'm like, oh, perfect. Like, I, like, you can do so much with that. Or, like, if someone's pointing at something gold or, like, people holding hands is great, because then its like, me and whatever.

Like, I just, like, can see the meme formats in my head. And so I look for images that would make good memes according to those formats in my head. The kind of meme setups that I adhere to. Like, I just can tell now, and I do not even know how to describe it, except its literally like a baby light bulb. It'll be like, that would make a good meme. Like, that's as simple as it is.³⁹

Georgie notes a similar experience, in which the various poses their cat strikes will remind them of paintings, inspiring them to work the cat into classical works.⁴⁰

This kind of clear vision enables these creators to more efficiently seek out base content, but it also gives their account a unique positionality within the online affinity space that is CAMs. Other mentions of inspiration for day-to-day meme making included Blake's claim that they are "really inspired by Venus. Like Botticelli's women are some of my favourite. I like to centre things on them."⁴¹ Charlie, meanwhile, has narrowed the scope of the base content they employ, specifically focusing on medieval manuscripts, particularly marginalia⁴² (illustrations in the margins of medieval manuscripts⁴³). Harper mentioned that "the best most expressive portraits are the most fun to caption."⁴⁴

Seven of the participants cited their creation process as both spontaneous and passive, regarding inspiration. Spontaneous inspiration is when a DCC is inspired to make a CAM based off of a current trend or event, responding in time and seeking out

base content or the language needed. Passive inspiration is when the DCC is inspired to make a CAM based off of an artwork or joke they have come across, responding to the image or joke outside of current events and trends.

Avery noted that their process is fully passive, waiting for the correct artwork to come to them as they walk through galleries, going on to note that they are moved to remix paintings that they can see potential for stories in.⁴⁵ Charlie and Emerson said that their process is fully spontaneous, with Charlie making a point to say that from an idea to a posted CAM takes about ten minutes.⁴⁶ Drew, Frances, and Harper noted that their process is more of a feeling, with all three saying variations of “whatever catches my eye.”⁴⁷ Frances realised while answering the question that their process generally includes spontaneous CAMs in their story while their passive CAMs end up posted to their feed.

Harper similarly notes a mixed approach to inspiration, in which spontaneous and passive inspiration both factor into their creation process:

Its a passion not a job so I do not schedule it in and I have no control over when inspiration comes! My inspiration comes from the image most of the time, I see the caption almost materialise on the image. If there’s something incredibly topical I will prioritise posting that so I can strike while the iron’s still hot and attempt to partner those posts with trending hashtags! But generally, I post directly when an idea strikes me, or sometimes I’ll create 5 memes back-to-back and then post them over the next two or three days.⁴⁸

Participants I and J expressed similar thoughts in response to this question.⁴⁹

9.B.ii: Adaptation of Content

Some participants had very clear understandings of their creation process and what it entails, in particular how they go about adapting their base content into CAMs. The common characteristic between these participants is background in a profession

that requires articulation of process as a function of the role—for instance, Charlie, as an academic, has to regularly explain their thought processes and defend their decisions to funding and management bodies—why that topic? How have you come to your conclusions?⁵⁰ Drew works through similar circumstances as an arts manager,⁵¹ and Georgie, as an artist, has to be able to detail their creation process in applications for funding and as a method of disseminating their works—what makes this work unique? What choices have you made to differentiate this work from others?⁵²

These professions are reflected in the descriptions of their processes of adapting their base content. For Charlie, the structure of an academic is clear within their creation process. Charlie exclusively creates content from six-seven AM every morning over a cup of coffee:

I give myself an hour just to wake up, scroll through my phone... Well, at first it started by looking at other memes because that's how I would normally wake up and I would drink my coffee and I just scroll and amuse myself. And immediately... what I would do is I would take a meme that's modern and I would re-imagine it historically. And to me, it was the easiest thing to adapt. It was an existing template and I would just simply adapt it.

Or if I saw something that reminded me of a manuscript image... here's another good example. Every year, there's the Met Gala in New York City, where all the stars wear the craziest fashion they can. I look at this fashion and I recall manuscript images... I saw... Taylor Swift in a beautiful dress, and it was rose and yellow ... And I'm like, I have seen this dress before, except it wasn't on a woman. It was on a man in the 14th century. I hunted down that image, and I basically, I did who wore it better or something, like an existing meme, but I just put it in a historical context...

When it comes to hashtags, I have a note file, and there's about six different groups of hashtags that I can just quickly copy and paste just for the ease of getting it to connect with as many people as I can...

One of the things I try not to do is modify the image. And this isn't simply to kind of honour the source from which I received the image. Just as an academic, I do not want to alter kind of the images from the past in any way... I want the viewer to see the image as it existed. If there are any changes to it, I'll tend to put it in two frames so the original somehow is still there, and then they'll get the benefit of seeing any alteration I do, and that the alteration is clear.

So if I'm trying to deliberately tap into the cultural consciousness, I will think about the news and I will think about what's current and I will think about what's popular and I'll see if there's an association... Is there anything in this Valentine's Day, you know, there might be holidays that I'll try to tap into and I might kind of recycle.

Another thing I do is I recycle my own stuff. Like, I'll go back and I'll see, oh, that was actually kind of funny and clever. I'm going to do that again just with new content... So that's, the process is varied. I do not think about it much consciously, but if I have to articulate it, that's kind of what's going on.⁵³

While this quote is lengthy, it highlights just how much of the creation process Charlie has taken the time to think through and articulate as their process, much like how an academic would approach their own research workflow. Charlie highlights a clear time in which they create their CAMs, the tools they utilise, the method of adaptation, and highlights clear sources. Additionally, they are committed to the integrity of the original image, wanting to ensure users are aware of edits to the original work. Charlie has outlined a research workflow that they have unconsciously adopted as their creative practice.

While the intention of Charlie is to bring people into the world of medieval manuscripts, highlighting how effectively modern meme templates can be placed onto the works within their original context, Drew takes an almost opposite approach. They want to bring the art forward, stripping any context that viewers may have and instead reframing the work into a modern context through their application of language.⁵⁴ The reason for this is due to a major difference between Western and non-Western cultures. In Western culture, knowledge about the religious sources of many works from the same period of art that Drew utilises still exist today. As previously mentioned, whereas Western culture has art focusing on Christian motifs, such as the Madonna and

baby Jesus, South Asian art is based on many different religious and cultural contexts that do not transfer into Western culture as easily.

People were fairly serious about art because art, unlike in Western context, art for art sake, didn't necessarily exist...Like, you weren't creating art for like, oh, my God, I'm going to be the next Leonardo da Vinci, and I'm going to create all of this. Art was created for people to take it home, to put it in their manuscripts, in books, to put it in very specific religious formats, of very specific cultural formats...⁵⁵

Drew referred to this idea of Western versus non-Western art throughout their interview, describing the idea of “cultural capital,” as mentioned in the Literature Review. Cultural capital is generally known, shared cultural knowledge, like how Western culture is intimately familiar with the stories and principles in the Bible, as Christianity has been the dominant religion in Western culture for the last millennia.⁵⁶

The fact that internet meme culture is built on the premise of Western cultural capital speaks to a larger issue of power imbalance both today and historically, as the predominance of Western culture is deeply entrenched in a history of colonialism and oppression, silencing other cultures like those found in Southeast Asia, resulting in many of their artworks, religious practices, and folklore being excluded from being carried on from generation to generation as a predominant source of cultural capital. Drew posits that art is also simply not viewed in the same way in Southeast Asia, with Western artists becoming celebrities.⁵⁷ Drew is careful to be mindful of all of these issues when creating their content, working to strike the balance between not over-intellectualising art and introducing new users to the works they utilise as their base content.⁵⁸

Georgie has past experience as an artist, and their assessment of their creation process is largely concerned with the actual tools used to manipulate the images. First, they acquire a high-resolution image of a famous painting, then they get images of their

cat (who loves to pose) in various positions. They edit the photos of the cat to see which pose may fit best within the artwork, and then carefully photoshop the base image, trying to make the cat look like they were originally included in the artists' vision.⁵⁹ Georgie is careful to emulate the style of the original artist, although they try to make sure the cat is not too blended into the photo, as the CAM must still have an "internet <<cute kitteh>>".⁶⁰ They produce their CAMs in resolutions of up to 20,000 pixels, or even print them for exhibition.⁶¹ This commitment by Georgie to making their CAMs a work of art evocative of pieces by old masters is an intentional choice on their part, hoping to keep the tradition of producing grandiose artwork alive.⁶²

Looking at the creation processes as presented by the other DCCs, they often have a particular element of the creation process that they view as the most important, or as what drives their overall process. For example, is Avery, notes that they do not know or care about the history of art or the specific works they utilise.⁶³ Instead, they are keenly focused on dialogue and storytelling when making their content, which they film themselves in GLAM+ institutions:

Once I find a painting that I think could work, I stand in front of it for a while without my phone, and I just think about what about it seems weird to me. What about it seems funny and then I will take a stab at just speaking out loud what that person could be thinking or saying. And I do that over and over until I find what the next person is saying. Is somebody reacting? Is somebody agreeing? Is somebody disagreeing?

...I'll do that for maybe twenty minutes or so. And then I will start to get my phone out to try and get, like, the choreography part of it. Like, when am I looking here? When are we zooming in? When they are emphatic? Am I, like, zooming in or zooming out on a sigh or a breath? And then almost inevitably, whatever I've been working on, I realise is not funny. And so then there will be a new joke that comes to me just in the process of something somebody else says. I'm like, oh, that's actually the funny thing. That's what's going on here. And then I will continue to do that and iterate on that.

And once I have what I think is funny, once I have what I think the order of what people are saying is, then I do it over and over to get the timing right of

when we're looking at somebody, when we're looking at somebody else, when we're zooming in and zooming out. And so that'll take me about forty-five minutes to an hour in total of just standing there...

And then I need to edit and then you need to cut things down. Maybe I did a joke that was too long and it should just end here. And that's when I add in the text. And the text should be--there are different fonts, as you know, that TikTok allows you to use. And so each person will sort of get their own font. So its just very clear when somebody is speaking and the positioning of where the words are and when they come in also because if the words come in before the person starts speaking, somebody can read the joke.⁶⁴

Within their process, Avery highlights a dedication to storytelling and building relationships and dialogue within the painting. Avery has, in a way, come together collaboratively with the artwork, assessing what is present and can be expanded upon, or worked with. This level of narrative building with the work invites the viewer to examine these artworks in a new, and much more in-depth manner—on a level that many users have likely not examined a painting before.

Frances has a particularly interesting creation process, noting that it is “chaos,” and a constant ongoing process.⁶⁵ While they cannot pinpoint how and why they think things are funny, they note that they have a “sense:”

I'll look at one, and I'm like, there's a meme there. There's just something funny happening. Or I look for ones where there's some kind of an action. Someone is handing someone something, and I'm like...there's a meme to be made there, or there's a funny expression, or its just like, a really pretty woman. And those are always easy to just do something with. I can just figure. I, like, look at them, and I'm like, oh, I see.⁶⁶

Frances uses this sense to collect images throughout their normal scrolling on a day. They have a folder on their phone called, “Lemon Time,” a reference to tags on fanfic sites,⁶⁷ and they utilise this folder as an image bank where they store all of the potential images of base content they have come across.⁶⁸ They also keep a running note in their phone:

It looks like an insane person's ramblings, but this is where if I think of text for a meme, I'll write down the text...And these are all with no, like, context. In my head, I'll be at a bar, and I'll be like, oh, when she shows up bleeding on his doorstep. And I write it down.

When they have to cuddle to stay warm. The audacity. Sorry, I'm just a girl. Sorry, I'm just a girl who, like, you know what I mean? Like, if someone doesn't hold me in a gentle yet possessive way soon, I'm gonna scream.

I do not think that one, like, made the cut a couple weeks ago when I did that, but, its in here. I'd rather be blank right now if I do not know what the term is gonna be. I just put blank in all capitals, and I just wait. I'm, like, the vibe I bring to the function. The feminine urge to be a pain in the ass.

So, basically, like, I have this whole list of meme prompts that just come to me when I'm scrolling Instagram or anywhere if I'm out in the world. And then I'll look for a picture in the folder, like, to match it, or I'll find a picture, and I'll be like, that's a meme. And then I'll look in here for the text for it.⁶⁹

This idea of an image bank and some kind of storage system for potential jokes is a process also loosely mentioned by Emerson, although they have their images and texts in a shared folder with the person they run the account with so they can collaborate on their content.⁷⁰

9.B.iii: Meme Templates

The theme of meme templates is concerned with discussions surrounding how and why memes are so popular online (of note, academic literature and Know Your Meme call them templates, the participants sometimes call them formats).⁷¹ A meme can be crafted in such a way that if you leave the structure of the joke but change the base content, the joke still works. An example of this can be seen in the previously mentioned Dolly Parton meme. Charlie discussed how they have used this template repeatedly in their own work, in particular with Henry VIII instead of Dolly Parton.⁷² In fact, the template inspired quite a few GLAM+ institutions to respond with their own

versions,⁷³ including this one from the Met, which is captioned: You can also find us on canvas, paper, marble, terra cotta...and Tinder. 😊:⁷⁴



Figure 66: The Met's response to the Dolly Parton meme

The idea of playing into a meme template is one that was mentioned by Avery, Blake, Charlie, Emerson, and Frances.⁷⁵ Charlie makes a point to play into meme templates, as previously mentioned. They noted that while scrolling casually online, they would, “take a meme that's modern and I would re-imagine it historically. And I would just... And to me, it was the easiest thing to adapt. It was an existing template and I would just simply adapt it.”⁷⁶ Later clarifying that they very specifically like to reimagine modern memes within a medieval context.⁷⁷ One template that is particularly popular is, “when I'm showing people in scandalous dress in the Middle Ages. I do not

know why. I do not I talk about something being sexy. That just connects with people.”⁷⁸

Blake noted meme templates were an integral part of their creation process, saying that they “wax on a current meme format,”⁷⁹ going on to highlight one in particular that they love to use for their content:

Like, there's like, new memes format, it says, when so and so said, I love you, but Edgar Allen Poe said, Blah, blah, blah, blah. I was like, I love this trend. And then I did a couple of it, just like Roland Barthes and Evelyn Waugh and I was like, oh, I could do this all day.⁸⁰

When asked about this process they noted that they specifically like to take current popular templates and reimagine them with particularly uncommon characteristics. For Blake, the account focuses on talking about feelings, and they noted that their creation process is predominantly them, “talking about my feelings in a current meme format way.”⁸¹

Emerson also shared an affinity for adapting current meme templates, particularly since they came back to the account in 2021 after taking a long break.⁸² Part of this decision was due to them feeling like they had become “too old,” for current online humour, and wanting to get revenge for perceived theft of their idea:

And sometimes in terms of what to caption it or how to meme it, I've recently had this attitude of, like, so basically I took a big break. I got really burnt out. 2021, like around Covid, 2020 to 2023 or so. I only started posting again like a year ago, I want to say. And in that time is when memes, as you probably know, like, really took off. I mean, they've always been taking off, but I feel like because we're all stuck at home, like, exchanging memes was like a form of camaraderie or coping. And also the memes changed a lot. Like, sense of humour changes. Like, Gen Z humour, I feel like, is more important to incorporate sometimes. Like, I realize I'm very millennial now.⁸³

Harper also noted worries about their age, calling themselves a “grand millennial,” while Blake called themselves a “Luddite,” referring to their inability to keep up with technological developments, like TikTok.⁸⁴ This idea of adopting meme templates to

keep up with “Gen Z humour,”⁸⁵ highlights a long-standing tradition in internet meme subculture of playing into the current collective template. Meme templates have dominated the development of the genre, with highlights such as the “Success Kid,” or “Grumpy Cat,” being broadly adapted to the context of various users.⁸⁶ This practice is a part of the idea of “virality,” in memes, when the template passes from user to users, much like a virus passes from person to person.⁸⁷

Frances makes a point to tag the source of the template if they are aware of it, highlighting a recent example: “I tagged Sunday scaries today because my post was, like, their meme format, which is like, slams laptop shut until Monday. Like, they made that up. And people do that all the time.”⁸⁸ This is a commonly employed practice, especially on TikTok, where users can link their take on a meme template to the original video.⁸⁹ Frances, while discussing their creation process, noted that they have a mental rolodex of meme templates and they can visualise these various templates when they look at potential base content.⁹⁰ “Like, I just, like, can see the meme formats in my head. And so, like, I look for images that would make good memes according to those, like, formats in my head. The kind of, like, meme setups that I, like, adhere to.”⁹¹ This is evocative of how people who learn a second language have noted that they visualise the new language they are trying to speak. In fact, internet memes and their creation are becoming recognised as a new linguistic style, with many scholars calling for additional research into this emerging communication style.⁹²

Meme templates accessibly facilitate the process of recombinant appropriation, in which a DCC creates a CAM from a wide selection of seemingly disparate sources, infusing new meaning into the sources through the particular combinations of sources. For example, variations on the Reluctant Bride trend on TikTok facilitate recombinant

appropriation in which the base content and the formulation of the joke stay the same within the CAM, but the music could change or the references in the text could change. This style of adaptation also highlights the cultural interoperability of internet memes and CAMs in particular, as they facilitate the shifting of content to suit varying contexts.

9.B.iv: Humour

Another notable trend within the interviews was discussion of humour. Participants had clear ideas about what rules of comedy work when crafting CAMs, what topics are off-limits to make jokes about, and thoughts on if they find their own content funny. Charlie noted their own sense of humour, was “strange,” ultimately describing the reason that CAMs work in regard to what might be considered “rules of comedy,” or generally agreed upon strategies for making successful jokes, nothing that, “I am deliberately taking sources out of context. I am making them relate perhaps to a contemporary audience in a way that was never intended.”⁹³ This is the central function of CAMs—taking digitised cultural heritage materials out of their intended framing and recontextualising them for a modern audience. Charlie noted this while reflecting on the nature of humour, and how they do not like humour made at the expense of others. “I do not want to laugh at somebody else's expense. Luckily, when you're doing historical material, the laughter is at the of art being taken out of its context.”⁹⁴

The punchline in a CAM is juxtaposition or stylistic incongruity, the concept of two opposing ideas, in this case a piece of art that would traditionally be considered “high” culture, being paired with intentionally “low” culture in the form of a crass joke in the text applied to the work, which startles the viewer, eliciting a laugh.⁹⁵ Frances captures this idea perfectly when they comment on why they make CAMs, saying it is “inherently funny to put modern concepts on these old paintings. Like, that just is

hilarious...If you put, you know, crass or, like, modern, you know, girl pop things on them, its just the best.”⁹⁶

The key to making CAMs that are funny, multiple participants note, is to make content that is relatable. Avery, Frances, and Harper make specific statements about the relatability of their content, which are similar in structure: the adaptations of the base content shift the context of the work, making the CAM relatable, which makes it shareable through the juxtaposition of the modern and old, making users laugh and build connections with the art. See their statements below:

Avery: Because people want to feel like they're in on something or they know about something, and that's how you really connect with people. And as long as its not super alienating to other people, that's how I think I make it a little more accessible in the content.⁹⁷

Frances: So the more relatable I can make my content, the more it is shared, and the more people find me. That's, like, the exact pipeline of my work...I craft it in such a way that anyone watching my stories has the potential to feel like they relate to me or feel like we're besties or whatever.⁹⁸

Harper: I tend to use broad, relatable captions or jokes and only sometimes make the memes hyper specific to a current topic, whether it be cultural or political. Some people understand the reference and some people don't.⁹⁹

These arguments for making relatable content echo the idea of authenticity, as noted in discussions about digital influencers in the Theoretical Methodology.

Authenticity and relatability are two critical traits for digital influencers to develop as they allow for users to identify with the digital influencer, building an emotional connection which can manifest as a parasocial relationship or involvement.¹⁰⁰

Beyond the basic rules of what makes something funny, participants have a clear idea about what subjects they will not make jokes about. Charlie, for example, is committed to humour that “doesn't put anyone down,”¹⁰¹ citing a moment where they created a CAM referring to the Kate Middleton drama in January 2024. Middleton, the

Duchess of Wales, had not been seen in public in a few months, and the internet made a variety of jokes about where she could be, ranging from recovering from a Brazilian butt lift to learning the drums to join Slipknot on tour.¹⁰² However, after weeks of speculation, Middleton came forward to share that she had, in fact, been diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing treatment, prompting a wave of regret from those who had made jokes, including Charlie.

I do not like humour that is poking fun at things people can't control, like who they are, their sex, their race, etc. I'm not trying to... Well, I just do not want the controversy...I do not like politics.

But getting to the point that I was really making is when the whole thing involving Kate Middleton came up. And there were people that were mocking Kate. I did a meme about it very soon after the whole Photoshopped image thing...And of course, now, could you imagine, knowing what she's experiencing, how horrible, right?...

But also there's other topics that are completely off, that are just not acceptable for me personally. In religion, I do not mock. You notice all of my memes? This is the Middle Ages. Every other image in the Middle Ages is Jesus or the Holy Family, or its honouring somebody for their great deeds...This is because of my own beliefs, but my humour is not going to come at the expense of mocking people that personally I think should be honoured.¹⁰³

Following this, Charlie went on to note that they are very cognizant of their audience, wanting to create a safe space from the rest of the chaos of the world on their page.¹⁰⁴

Drew is similar, noting that they intentionally craft content from a non-male perspective to provide a space for non-male users online, highlighting that in their view, a male sense of humour is “a bit crass,” and “stupid,” highlighting how their perspective on the account is one that experiences “oppression.”¹⁰⁵ Avery is also careful in the crafting of their jokes, not wanting to “alienate” anyone, and so intentionally making the content focus on what is happening in the painting and not about current events, outside of “oblique” references to current events.¹⁰⁶

A number of participants shared, often times indirectly, that they struggle with finding their own content funny. Avery struggles with this when creating, noting that it is an iterative process, with a number of different combinations of jokes made all at once that they then edit down into their content.¹⁰⁷ Charlie has also noted this feeling that they are not that funny, feeling like the CAMs they put the most effort in to never do well:

And now for me, the rarest one, that somehow has just connected with people's sensibilities. And by the way, they're always the ones I hate. The content that I make that I enjoy the most, people do not get, people do not like. They're the ones that do. They're the middling ones. Its the ones that are the low effort, just phoned it in. I just need to post something today. So here it is. And then I'm like, why is this 60,000?¹⁰⁸

This has happened to other participants as well, including Harper, who shared that generally, the less time they spend on crafting jokes, the better the CAM ultimately is received online, adding that “More often than not the memes I think are funny do not track as well as the memes that I spend very little time coming up with or consider tests or throwaways.”¹⁰⁹ In more creative practice-based fields, such as theatre or various medias of visual art, this kind of phenomenon would be explained through confidence—trusting the intuition that years of training and practice have developed.

However, many DCCs do not feel like they have a unique voice and process, or that what they have to say is not worth hearing. Charlie mentions this when they note:

...When I make these things, I immediately get embarrassed and never want to see them again.... But I only care about something for twenty-four hours because when I look back at them, I cringe, I do not like them at all...I've been told I'm way too old to even be doing anything remotely close to this stuff, act my age, et cetera...So there's... Yeah, again, this is... I almost feel like somebody who's... I've developed expertise in this subject, and this is my medium, and this is my work, but its not.¹¹⁰

However, DCCs clearly do have a unique voice, with each CAM account having a slightly different perspective that they are sharing with the world, as evidenced by how

thought out many DCCs' processes are. And the proof of this is seen in how far their content goes online.

9.C: Final Thoughts

This chapter examined the creation processes of DCCs, highlighting trends from the interviews, including inspiration for starting their accounts, how inspiration strikes when producing individual CAMs, the steps they take to create CAMs, engaging with meme templates, and thoughts on the styles of humour employed in their CAMs. These discussions showed a clear consideration amongst the participants for ideas around the cultural accessibility and interoperability of their content, particularly in relation to what they look for in base content and how they craft the language included in their CAMs. In both cases, the intention is to create a piece of cultural transmission that can be widely understood and is relatable to users in a variety of contexts. Multiple participants also noted intentionally crafting their content into whatever the most popular meme template at the moment was, a move which increases the findability and reusability of their content as they play into the cycle of cultural production.

As a way of making sense of the interviews, and particularly the responses related to the steps taken in the creation process, this section will present a workflow detailing the steps that the participants flagged as being central to their creation practices. In the context of this research, "practices," as defined by Knobel and Lankshear are, "socially developed and patterned ways of using technology and knowledge to accomplish tasks." Practices thus comprise technology, knowledge, and skills organised in ways that participants recognise, follow, and modify as changes emerge in tasks and purposes as well as in technology and knowledge.¹¹¹

As noted in the Methodological Framework, workflows are a list of tasks, curated in a specific way, to be completed in order, so as to accomplish a goal—in this case, the creation of CAMs. This workflow takes cues from both scholarly and practice-based workflows, adopting a branching pattern reminiscent of Koolen et al.’s scholarly workflow in Table 3, while noting more granular tasks, similar to the GLAM+ institution workflow in Table 4.¹¹² This workflow also accounts for the variety of approaches DCCs noted taking in the process of creating CAMs.

Participants overwhelmingly cited their creation practice as a combination of passive and spontaneous traits, and so this workflow is divided into two pathways, dividing again between an image-led creation practice and a joke-led creation practice. Two main modes of acquiring content were noted by participants: the first employs long term storage in order to have materials needed for creating CAMs when inspiration comes to the DCC. In this method, the DCC keeps a folder of images that they think can be base content to make into CAMs. Emerson and Frances also flagged keeping a running log of joke ideas, employing both collections in their creative practice as needed.¹¹³ The second method is based upon knowledge of various intermediaries that can be searched through as needed for base content, often in response to an event, such as a current event becoming an internet meme or a new internet meme template becoming popular.

This workflow, while originally intended as a method for making sense of the data gathered, is a valuable resource for users who may be considering making CAMs and trying to figure out their own creation practices. It would allow them to try out multiple pathways to making CAMs and discerning what practices suit them and what practices do not. This workflow is also a valuable resource for GLAM+ institutions, as

it details the precise ways in which DCCs are creating and disseminating digitised cultural heritage materials, which can assist in informing policy creation.

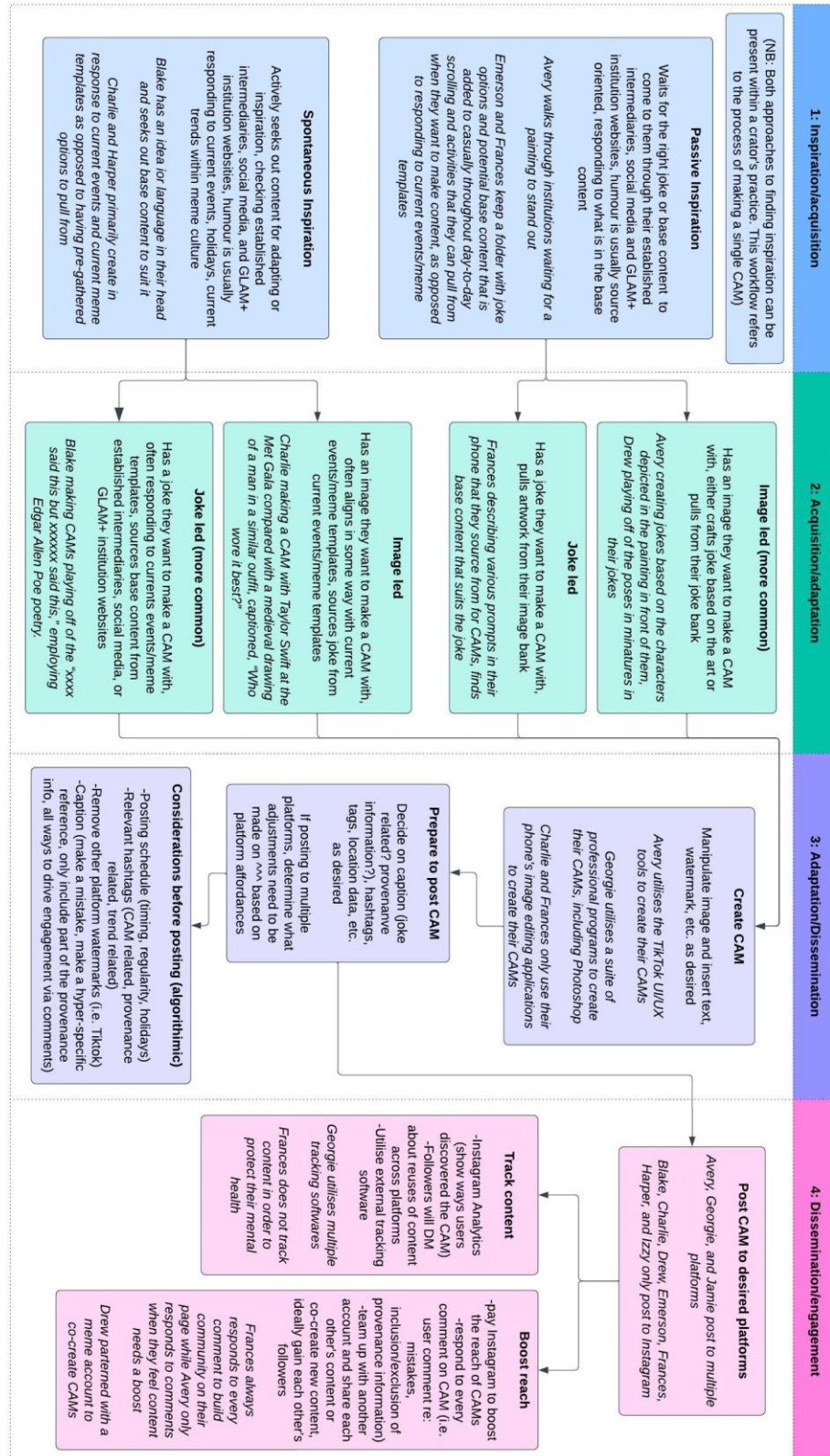


Table 12: Workflow of the creation practice of DCCs

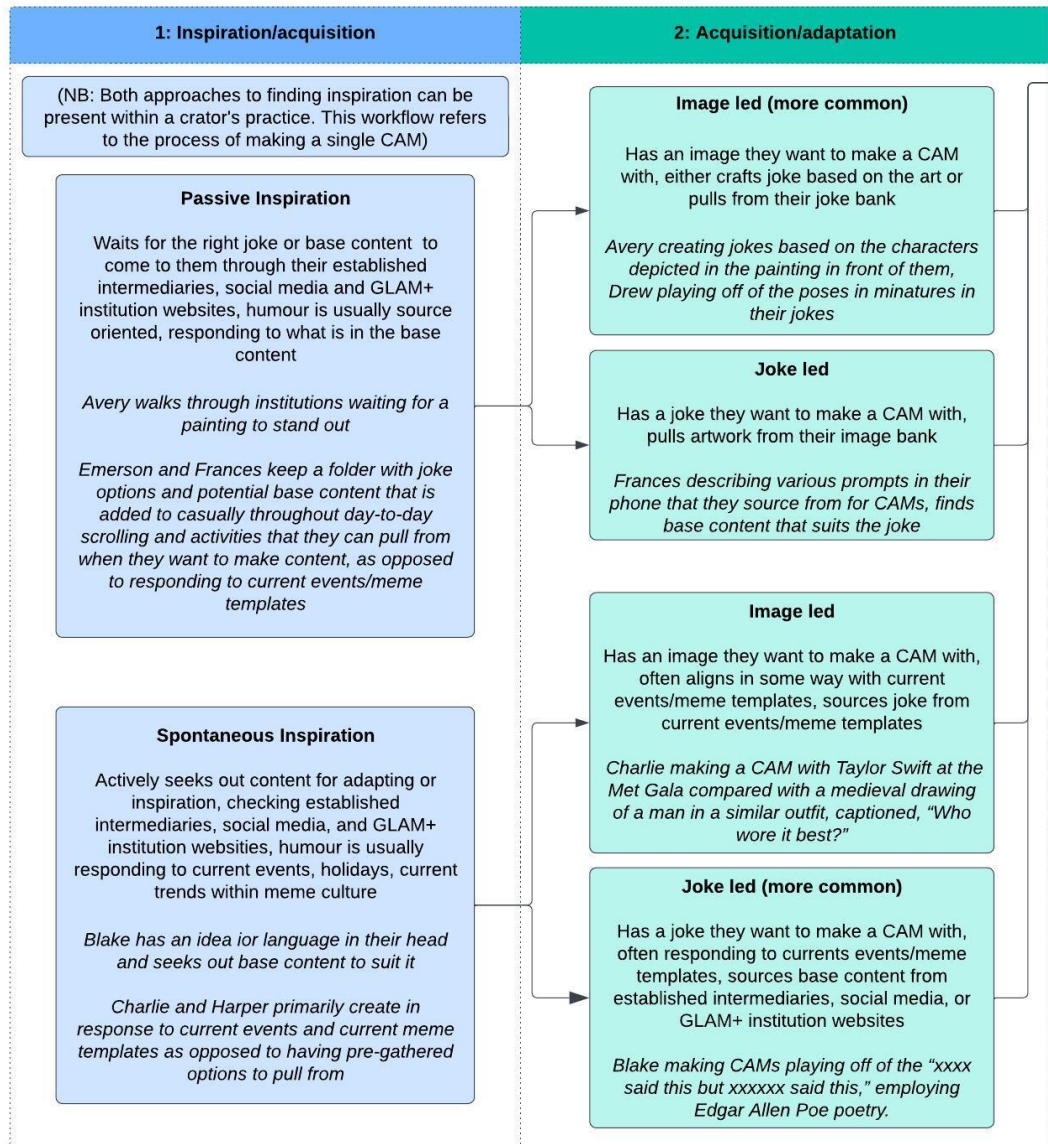


Table 13: Phases 1 and 2 of DCC Workflow

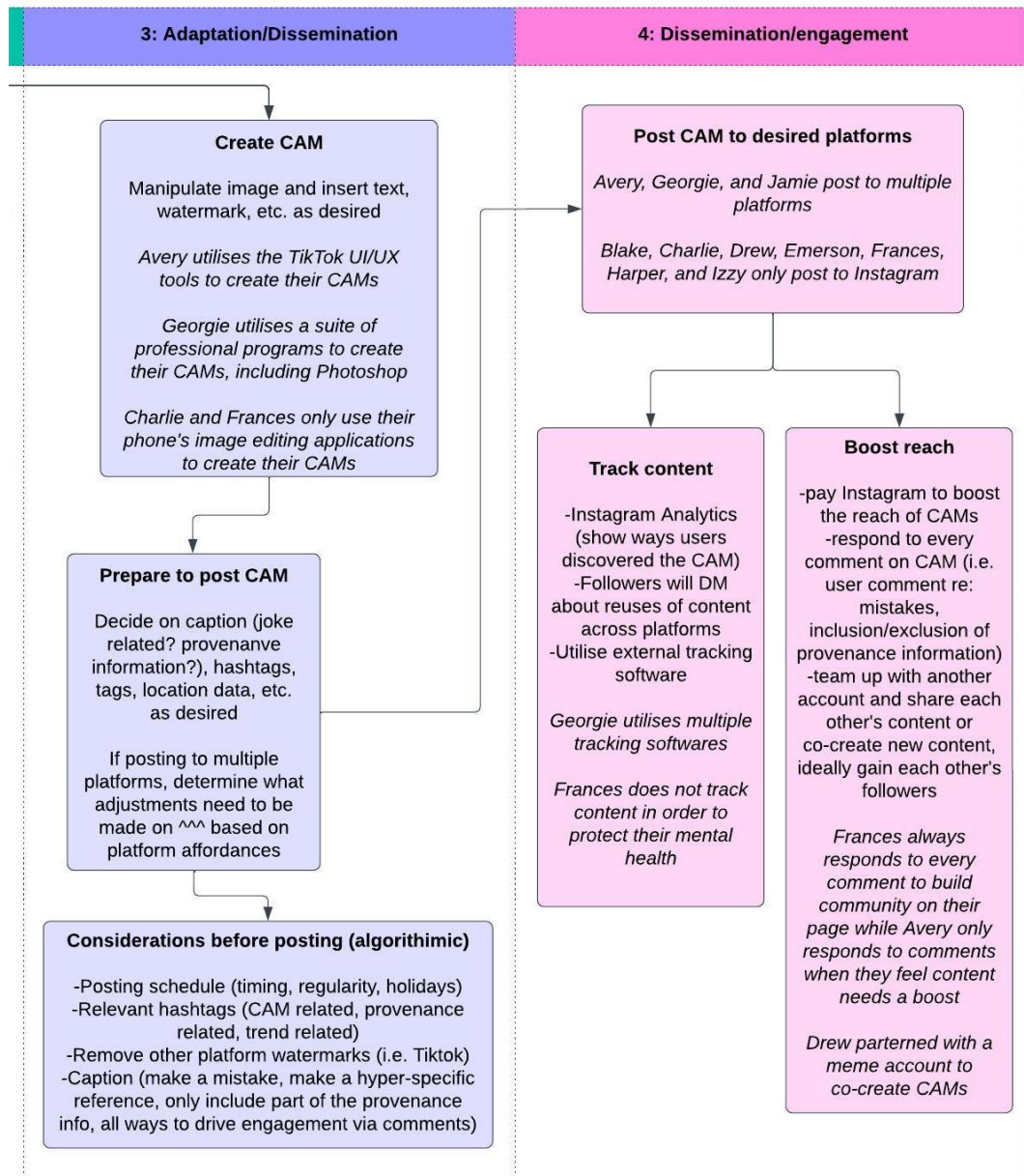


Table 14: Phases 3 and 4 of DCC Workflow

Notes

¹ Thompson, 21, 161.

² Thompson, 3, 13, 43, 65, 78, 82, 122, 134, 146, 148, 151-153, 177, 185.

³ Thompson, 11.

⁴ Thompson, 11-12.

⁵ Thompson, 11-12.

⁶ Thompson, 12.

⁷ Thompson, 28.

⁸ Thompson, 29-30.

⁹ Thompson, 12, 29.

¹⁰ Thompson, 61.

¹¹ Thompson, 61.

¹² Thompson, 61.

¹³ Thompson, 61.

¹⁴ Thompson, 61.

¹⁵ Thompson, 91-92.

¹⁶ Thompson, 78.

¹⁷ Thompson, 119.

¹⁸ Thompson, 119.

¹⁹ Rosalind Moran, "The 'Girlies' Trend Shows We Need to Imagine Better Futures for Women," Missing Perspectives, March 18, 2024, <https://www.missingperspectives.com/posts/the-girlies-trend-shows-we-need-to-imagine-better-futures-for-women>; Sarah Cantavale, "Bookstagram: What It Is and How It Works," The Pixartprinting blog, accessed April 12, 2025, <https://www.pixartprinting.co.uk/blog/bookstagram-what-it-is/>; Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 134, 146.

²⁰ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 146.

²¹ Thompson, 146-147.

²² Thompson, 148.

²³ Thompson, 152.

²⁴ Thompson, 166.

²⁵ Thompson, 177.

²⁶ Thompson, 177.

²⁷ Thompson, 177.

²⁸ Thompson, 77-80.

²⁹ Nishita Iyengar et al., *Exploration of Meme Culture and Sexism*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.21096.75529>; Shilajit Kumar Roy, "Meme Culture and Gender Equality: Beneath the Surface," *NSU LAW BLOG* (blog), March 3, 2024, <https://nsulawblog.com/2024/03/03/meme-culture-and-gender-equality-beneath-the-surface/>; Brown, "The Surprising Power of Internet Memes"; Caitlin Dewey, "The Hidden Biases of Internet Memes," *Washington Post*, April 6, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2015/04/06/the-hidden-biases-of-internet-memes/>.

³⁰ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 22, 28-29.

³¹ Thompson, 22, 28.

³² Thompson, 39.

³³ Thompson, 43.

³⁴ Thompson, 109.

³⁵ Thompson, 134.

³⁶ Thompson, 163.

³⁷ Thompson, 3, 13.

³⁸ Thompson, 95.

³⁹ Thompson, 134.

⁴⁰ Thompson, 161.

⁴¹ Thompson, 22.

⁴² Thompson, 42.

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⁴⁵ Thompson, 13.

⁴⁶ Thompson, 65, 122.

⁴⁷ Thompson, 96, 152-153, 178.

⁴⁸ Thompson, 180.

⁴⁹ Thompson, 185, 192.

⁵⁰ Thompson, 39.

⁵¹ Thompson, 77-79.

⁵² Thompson, 163.

⁵³ Thompson, 40-41, 66.

⁵⁴ Thompson, 80, 91-92.

⁵⁵ Thompson, 94.

⁵⁶ Thompson, 78-79, 91-92, 94-96.

⁵⁷ Thompson, 94-95.

⁵⁸ Thompson, 93-96.

⁵⁹ Thompson, 169.

⁶⁰ Thompson, 169.

⁶¹ Thompson, 169.

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⁶³ Thompson, 14-15.

⁶⁴ Thompson, 3-4.

⁶⁵ Thompson, 151.

⁶⁶ Thompson, 134.

⁶⁷ Shannon Johnson, "Library: Fanfiction 101: Customizing Your Superheroes: Definitions," Purdue University, accessed April 12, 2025, <https://library.pfw.edu/c.php?g=16316&p=89230>.

⁶⁸ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset." 135.

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⁷⁰ Thompson, 120.

⁷¹ Nissenbaum and Shifman, "Meme Templates as Expressive Repertoires in a Globalizing World"; "Meme Templates."

⁷² Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset." 70.

⁷³ Liscia, “The Art World Has Discovered the Dolly Parton Meme Challenge.”

⁷⁴ @metmuseum, “The Metropolitan Museum of Art on Instagram 1,” Social Media, Instagram, accessed February 17, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/B7rh2d1F9oc/?utm_source=ig_embed.

⁷⁵ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 31, 40-41, 61-62, 70, 111, 136, 151-152.

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⁷⁷ Thompson, 41.

⁷⁸ Thompson, 61-62.

⁷⁹ Thompson, 32-33.

⁸⁰ Thompson, 29-30.

⁸¹ Thompson, 31-32.

⁸² Thompson, 111.

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⁸⁴ Thompson, 27, 111.

⁸⁵ Thompson, 111.

⁸⁶ “Success Kid / I Hate Sandcastles”; “Grumpy Cat | Know Your Meme,” in *Know Your Meme*, accessed April 12, 2025, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/grumpy-cat>.

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⁸⁸ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 136.

⁸⁹ Brandwatch, “Essential TikTok Tips for Maximizing Your Engagement in 2025,” Brandwatch, accessed April 12, 2025, <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/tiktok-tips/>.

⁹⁰ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 151-152.

⁹¹ Thompson, 151-152.

⁹² Dancygier and Vandelanotte, “Internet Memes as Multimodal Constructions”; Gee, *SITUATED LANGUAGE AND LEARNING: A Critique of Traditional Schooling*; Archakis et al., “Linguistic Varieties in Style”; O.s and D.e, “VERBAL IN FINE ARTS”; Gumkowska and Toczyski, “Global Digital Genre-Communication Forms in the Process of Flow to Local Polish Memosphere.”

⁹³ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 36, 61-62.

⁹⁴ Thompson, 61.

⁹⁵ Piata, “Stylistic Humor across Modalities.”

⁹⁶ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 148.

⁹⁷ Thompson, 12.

⁹⁸ Thompson, 146-47.

⁹⁹ Thompson, 177.

¹⁰⁰ Hu et al., “Understanding Followers’ Stickiness to Digital Influencers.”

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¹⁰² @THISisLULE, “Y’all Said Kate Middleton Got a BBL and 2 Days Later Her Mother Is Driving around with a Madame Tussaud’s Wax Figure in the Passenger Seat,” Social Media, Twitter, March 4, 2024, <https://x.com/THISisLULE/status/1764731759340462360>; @SkeletonOscar, “Slipknot Sacked Their Drummer a Few Months Ago, and Suddenly Kate Middleton Is Nowhere to Be Seen? Surely Not a Coincidence, She Must Be Locked in Rehearsals Frantically Learning Their Tour Set List and Getting a Horror Mask Fitted.,” Social Media, Twitter, February 28, 2024, <https://x.com/SkeletonOscar/status/1762746987785461939>; Anna Russell, “The Kate Middleton Conspiracy-Theory Swirl,” *The New Yorker*, March 8, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-kate-middleton-conspiracy-theory-swirl>; Elise Taylor, “A Timeline of the Medical Issues—And Conspiracy Theories—Surrounding the Princess of Wales,” *Vogue*, March 12, 2024, <https://www.vogue.com/article/kate-middleton-drama-conspiracy-theories-timeline>.

¹⁰³ Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 64-65.

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, 65-66.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, 78-79.

¹⁰⁶ Thompson, 11.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, 3-4.

¹⁰⁸ Thompson, 49.

¹⁰⁹ Thompson, 177.

¹¹⁰ Thompson, 50.

¹¹¹ Knobel and Lankshear, “Online memes, affinities and cultural production (2018 update),” 236.

¹¹² Marijn Koolen, Sanna Kumpulainen, and Liliana Melgar-Estrada, “A Workflow Analysis Perspective to Scholarly Research Tasks,” in *Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval, CHIIR ’20* (New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2020), 183–92, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3343413.3377969>.

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Chapter 10: Ownership, Reuse, and Circulation of CAMs

When discussing the FAIR Data Principles in the Conceptual Framework, it was noted that technical reusability is only achieved through the implementation of the principles relating to findability, accessibility, and interoperability.¹ In a similar way, cultural reusability is a culmination of considerations around the cultural aspects of findability, accessibility, and interoperability. Making data more findable by considering online visibility strategies contributes to data being viewed as culturally reusable by allowing users to come into contact with the data, allowing them to reuse it, while making sure that data is accessible to users on the platform it is housed within again contributes to the reusability of the data. However, there are also issues related to cultural reusability that are unique considerations. To that end, this chapter examines discussions around reusability as seen through the context of DCCs sharing their CAMs online and how they interact with various ideas about and within “meme culture.”

10.A: Meme Culture

Meme culture, or the culture surrounding the creation and dissemination of internet memes, is difficult to strictly define, as different corners of the meme-making community approach different elements of their creation process differently. Its a term that is used rather ubiquitously, as seen when Emerson stated, “But meme culture,” in response to the observation that DCCs approached to participate in this research seemed to be very protective of their identity.² Meme culture, which in the context of this research, is the general observations or practices DCCs noted that they and other DCCs participate in. These observations include whether or not they have monetised their account in some way, interactions with their followers, the impact of running the account on their mental health, who founded the original CAM account, ideas

surrounding ownership as it pertains to CAMs, and the idea of rivalry with other CAM accounts.

10.A.i: Monetisation

As noted in Table 9, the DCCs and their accounts were able to be broken up into the account types presented in Chapter 6 which is based on the style of revenue generation: CAM-fluencers follow digital influencer practices the closest, and only utilise third-party advertising. Mer-CAM-disers make merchandise with their own CAMs as well as some third-party advertising. Special Interest CAM accounts do not make merchandise or engage in third-party advertising, although occasionally they will accept money from services like Ko-Fi. The DCCs interviewed include one CAM-fluencer account, Jamie, four Mer-CAM-diser accounts, Blake, Emerson, Georgie, and Harper, and five Special Interest CAM accounts, Avery, Charlie, Drew, Emerson, Frances, and Izzy. Of the ten participants in the sample, eight have monetised their content in some way, shape, or form. Avery, Drew, Emerson, and Harper have done partnerships with GLAM+ institutions, like Sotheby's, that were paid in some capacity.³ In these instances, they were paid to create new content in which the base content was provided to them by the GLAM+ institution. Charlie, as previously noted, mentioned that for a short while, Instagram was paying content creators to make reels.⁴ Blake, Georgie, and Harper have merchandise for sale that features CAMs they had made in the past.⁵ Avery, Emerson, Georgie, and Jamie have done paid partnerships where they promote a businesses' products on their page, like those discussed in relation to digital influencers in the Theoretical Framework and within the CAM Account Dataset.⁶

Despite this, participants do have conflicting thoughts about the concept of making money off of their CAMs. Avery does not agree to make content if the

organisation wants to have the rights to the content:

When people reach out, there will be larger accounts that have you sign these non-exclusive agreements just so everything is above board. And I just make sure that it says, I keep the rights to everything. Its non-exclusive. And those are the two things that are important to me. If somebody wants to pay money for one of those, I have said no every time just because they often will want then in perpetuity for us to be able to whatever. And I'm like, this is great and cool, and I love doing it, but I'm not doing this for money, and I do not want to give rights away to somebody else forever on something.⁷

This is the first mention of contracts of any kind from Participants, however, this is a valuable anecdote as it highlights this idea of “ownership” that will be explored later.

CAMs are already an amalgamation of pop culture references, GLAM+ institutions content, open-source fonts, and humorous ideas, and the thought that such an amorphous form of content could be “owned” feels incongruous with the basic understanding of what an internet meme is and how it functions.

Interestingly, of the three accounts who sell merchandise on their site, Georgie and Harper, who mentioned only using OA base content, have not reported any copyright issues regarding their merchandise. In fact, they both noted that they have only had positive interactions with GLAM+ institutions.⁸ Meanwhile, Blake is not concerned about following copyright rules, stating, “Nothing digital for me that's not free.”⁹ Blake has had two parties contact them regarding their content: the first, a GLAM+ institution, was previously mentioned.¹⁰ The second was an artist. “He wrote to me telling me not to sell the postcard that I made. And interestingly enough, I asked him to maybe collaborate with me. He said 100%, so I guess I just had to ask.”¹¹

Charlie is contemplating monetising their account, but shared ethical concerns:

I've looked into, can I put a meme, one of my memes on a mug?... Now, I do not own the image. Its not mine, and I didn't create it. But the caption is definitely mine... But now the question is, is that appropriate for me to be making money on a meme that, yes, is original in one way, but still contains

content that you could say there is ownership by a digital collection...

One of the things that makes this an enjoyment for me is its not a job, and I'm not dependent on it for money. I would hate to be a slave to social media and just coming up with things constantly being driven to make myself relevant because my paycheck is dependent on it.¹²

While this quote has been discussed from another perspective, it is important to discuss as these concerns echo Avery's about signing away the rights to their content in a way.¹³ While Avery is concerned about larger accounts claiming Avery's IP, Charlie is worried about claiming the IP of the base content.

Drew is in the process of building a website for their content,¹⁴ but that is the extent of their plans regarding monetising the content beyond Instagram, although they are not opposed to being paid for their work creating CAMs:

The idea is not to earn money from it. I work, its fine. The idea is to put out this information. The idea is to put out all this what I'm finding these amazing works and out for the public...What sometimes what I do is I collaborate with museums and galleries. So that helps me with, sometimes they pay me money...¹⁵

Much like Charlie, Drew already has a full-time job, and so they are happy with their account being a hobby as opposed to a job. Both Participants noted that they worry that they would lose the "joy" in their accounts if it became "work."¹⁶

In regards to paid partnerships, Emerson noted that while they are not flooded with invitations, the work is relatively consistent, with an "ebb and flow."¹⁷ Emerson noted that they have worked with a jewellery rental company and a few small beverage companies, turning down an offer from a "goth clothing" company, as they felt it did not fit in with the identity of the account.¹⁸ They also were paid by Reader's Digest to have their CAMs featured in a book, are working on a website, and hope to develop merchandise for the site in the next year.¹⁹ While Jamie did not flag paid partnerships of any kind in the interview, an advertisement was running on their page when they were

interviewed that featured a clothing company, and their bio on their page invites DMs for paid promotions.

Frances and Izzy are explicitly not interested in monetising their CAMS, with Izzy flagging that they are not sure it is worth the effort it would take to get their content beyond Instagram.²⁰ Frances noted that they had been recently thinking about the idea of monetising, saying:

Its funny you ask about this, like, the whole monetising thing. Truly, my account really, like, just recently started kind of taking off and, like, people have reached out to me for stuff, and I'm thinking about what I want to do with it in the future and, like...I do not really know. Like, the answer might be different in a month, but, like, yeah, not sure.²¹

Frances does have a website with merchandise for sale, but they make a point to note that this is for their work as an author, and none of the merchandise features their CAMs.²²

10.A.ii: Follower Interactions

Another theme within the interviews was interactions with followers, which can be broken down into four categories: notifications of illicit reuse of content, requests for provenance information, parasocial interactions, and requests for specific content. The relationship between DCCs and their users is predominantly positive, with users being fiercely protective of DCCs and their IP in the form of their CAMs. Frances notes this in a discussion of tracking their content, noting that they largely do not need to track reach or engagement as their followers do it all for them:

I know what's going on because my followers send me everything. They send me my memes when they show up on other people's accounts. They send me my memes when they show up on Facebook. I do not even have a Facebook. My memes are on there all the time and they'll screenshot them and send them to me and be like, I was on Facebook and I saw your meme and I was like, tight.²³

Charlie, Drew, and Georgie have also noted this practice amongst their followers,

regularly being sent messages notifying them of their content appearing on other platforms,²⁴ with Georgie noting their followers will even report illicit uses of their content to the platforms they find them on.²⁵

A frequent point of interaction between the DCCs and their followers is in regards to provenance information. Blake, Charlie, Drew, Emerson, Georgie, and Harper make a point to share some kind of provenance information within the caption of their CAMs. Blake simply adds a hashtag with the name of the artist.²⁶ Emerson shares basic info in the caption, hashtagging the art-centric Instagram account they sourced the base content from.²⁷ Charlie, Drew, and Harper share more detailed provenance information in the caption.²⁸ For Charlie, this is in an effort to prevent them future work.

Because people are going to inevitably ask me in the comments. Inevitably. Today I posted something. It had probably eight different manuscript images. And when I'm doing a collection post like that, I'm not writing every single reference down. But inevitably in the comments, somebody has asked me, where did this one come from? Well, I'm going to go and I'm going to find that reference. I try to be pre-emptive and put it in the description all the time.²⁹

Avery has an opposing view, noting that they intentionally do not include provenance information partially as a way to drive engagement with their content, an idea that has been discussed previously.³⁰ Avery has also noticed that this practice leads to their followers interacting in the comments.³¹ These interactions in the comments could be considered “community building,” as the users are forming connections through the touchstone of the CAMs on the page. This idea of community building is one that Frances is very aware of, acknowledging that they make a point to respond to every comment and DM on their page explicitly as a method of “community building.”³²

Frances is aware of the concept of a “parasocial relationship,” in which an user who follows a DCC believes that they have formed a relationship with the DCC through

the consumption of their content, as discussed in the Theoretical Framework.³³ They mention that the “best case scenario” for them is when:

...Someone sees my meme and goes, oh, my God, same. Like, or you. She gets it. Like, that's exactly me. Like, those comments are always the best, because I'm like, that's. You're my audience, you know?³⁴

This has been a double-edged sword for Frances, however, as they note that people can sometimes want too much from them:

Everyone has a very parasocial relationship with me. So I get a lot of DM's that are just that are way too personal where its clear that, like, they think they have something with me that they do not have. Like, I have crafted this so that you will feel that way...Like, if you do not have my phone number and we have never met in person, then we're not actually friends...You feel that way because my content is so relatable, and I want it to be that way. I want to build this community of like-minded people, but boundaries can be crossed sometimes. Like, and I do get people who want something from me or, like, whatever, and they feel that they're owed it because they feel so close to me.³⁵

Still, despite this, Frances enjoys their relationship with their followers, frequently posting replies to their messages, especially in relation to the book they have been writing, which they promote on their CAM page.

I, posted a couple of (CAMs), because people right now are, like, making reactions to my book, which is just sending me into the moon. They're so funny. And so I posted those, and then I posted a painting, and then in the middle it was like, you guys keep me young.³⁶

Frances goes on to note that they had no intention to educate anyone about the paintings that they post, as they do not know anything about them, they just think they're pretty.³⁷ However, the lack of provenance information on the CAMs they post often leads to increased engagement from the comments, as previously discussed.³⁸

Blake cites parasocial interactions on their account as why they made the account, noting that when they first started posting their content that they thought that:

I had all these weird thoughts that no one would, like, get or whatever. I started making my account, and then weird things would become really people being like, oh, this is me, this is me, this is me...But then people fall in love with

artists that I post. So that's what keeps me going a little bit.”³⁹

This idea of relatability is at the foundations of CAMs and why they are so popular online, as discussed previously in relation to digital influencers in the Theoretical Framework, and in relation to how DCCs adapt base content.

The final kind of user interaction is requests for specific content, as noted by Avery, Blake, and Georgie, highlighting an interesting distinction between these accounts and the other participant accounts.⁴⁰ The aforementioned participants have built their platform utilising specific art and artists that are well known. While they do adapt lesser-known base content, reportedly some of their most popular CAMs are adaptations of very famous works, with the focus of the accounts predominantly on the base content as opposed to the punchline.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Charlie, Drew, Emerson, Frances, Harper, Izzy, and Jamie make the focus of their work adapting CAMs much more focused on the actual jokes themselves, often referring to current events, trends or holidays. The artwork, while important, is not the focus of the account, as an unknown work allows for the user to focus predominantly on the joke, with the artwork as a support to the text.⁴²

Another way to think of this distinction would be that the DCCs are either suiting their adaptations to the original context of the work or are suiting their adaptations to the context of the modern joke. For the accounts adapting into the context of the modern joke, making CAMs with specific works of art as the base content does not really align with the style and mission of the accounts. Meanwhile, because Avery, Blake, and Georgie, are more focused on the works of art, adapting them outside of current events, they are more suited to adapting specific works.

For example, Avery builds characters and scenarios within the painting, as

opposed to bringing a modern context to place onto the work.⁴³ Similarly, Blake adapts works with their feelings, preferring subjects like Botticelli's Venus, trying to highlight how even a goddess gets feelings, making the content relatable through the process of making a highly touted figure of beauty experiencing human emotions.⁴⁴ It makes sense, then, that users want to see how these DCCs would then adapt works they know and love, bringing those works into a new light for the user.

Another idea related to user interactions that was brought up by participants is the idea of creating a safe/welcoming online space for their users, which has been touched on in discussions around humour.⁴⁵ This desire is part of the reason that Charlie is so careful with what topics they will make jokes about in their CAMs:

I have my own rules...Its just if everybody that followed me came into a room, we would be at each other... And so what I post, and I do know this is why a lot of people follow me, its mostly not controversial. I try to I try to make it just humorous without bringing people down or causing people fights.

...I think some people see Instagram as an escape, and they do not want the American election when they scroll through it. There's Twitter that they can get that from. They do not want all of the wars raging...But my account is meant to just be pleasant, be humorous and appealing. That itself, I think, is what draws a lot of people because they know its not going to contain that content...

So is there anything light-hearted, is there anything that I could bring into this treatment that isn't going to offend? And its not that I think we should create a world where no one takes offense. I mean, that's impossible to control, but I just do not want to invite the controversy.⁴⁶

Harper expresses a similar sentiment when they discussed reuse of their content: "Big meme pages aside, I really appreciate when followers share (Harper's content) to their networks because it hopefully makes people smile and relate and laugh, which is the whole reason I do this."⁴⁷ Other participants highlighted their commitment to this idea in the care they take with their followers, such as Frances sharing kind words from their

followers to their stories,⁴⁸ and Avery highlighting that they intentionally make only vague references to current events so as not to “alienate” anyone on their page.⁴⁹

10.A.iii: Mental health

The next theme within the interviews was the idea of mental health, specifically, the mental health of the DCCs and how they go about protecting their mental health in relation to the running of their accounts. It is important to note that this theme emerged organically in the analysis process—none of the questions posed to participants focused on mental health in any way, these thoughts were offered in the context of responding to questions about the creation process. Participants who directly addressed their mental health included Avery, Charlie, Drew, Emerson, Frances, and Izzy.⁵⁰

Avery has a love and hate relationship with posting, as previously discussed, noting that right after they post content, they immediately throw their phone across the room and only go back to look at it when they “need to feel good about myself,” adding, “And then I’m like, well, does anybody even like this?”⁵¹ Throughout their creation process they also struggle to feel like the jokes they are coming up with are funny, over-producing content and then having their partner help them narrow down the jokes until they have a video that is short enough to be posted.⁵² Charlie also noted this struggle with appreciating the content they create, noting that as soon as they post content, they get “embarrassed and never want to see it (the CAM) again, adding that, “when I look back at them, I cringe, I do not like them at all. As soon as I think of it, I try to get it out there because the critical part of me, the professor, because I’m an actual professor.”⁵³

Charlie was very candid in their discussion of their mental health throughout the interview, highlighting a fear that people they know in a real-world context will find out

about the account:

Well, a lot of my colleagues and my peers aren't even aware of anything that I'm doing, and I kind of want to keep it that way... I do not know if I'd want the higher ups at any of these institutions to be aware of my account. I'd worry that they would think I'm tarnishing the tradition and misusing the content.⁵⁴

They later went on to highlight how they will never post their content to Facebook, as Facebook is where their friends and family are online and follow them: "I'm not imposing it on unwilling people, and especially people who aren't nerdy and do not appreciate the niche humour I do."⁵⁵ This almost timidity around upsetting anyone is evident in their reasoning for their careful policing of the topics they cover in their CAMs, with them explaining:

I just do not want to invite the controversy...I'm a very sensitive person, and, you know, I do not like when people might misunderstand or take offense to something. And while it may only be one person and it might even be a troll, that's the type of thing that continues to bug me for the next few weeks. So just for my own sanity, because this is...a lot of this I do for my own mental health. Its an outlet. I just do not want to bring any of the controversy to the account.⁵⁶

This assertion is later bolstered when they noted an user's comment on one of their posts, in which the user called them out for not using their account to talk about the war in Gaza, a region of Palestine that has been experiencing intense warfare for decades, but that ramped up in intensity in late 2023.⁵⁷

I was once accused of, How can you be posting something so stupid? War is happening. I was accused of being insensitive, and I said, Its not my purpose to... Its not that I'm not sympathetic. In fact, if you were with me in my own personal life, you would see how affected I am by these topics.⁵⁸

This idea of Charlie crafting their account and its online space as one for users to escape to is fascinating, especially given the fact that Charlie is the oldest DCC interviewed, identifying themselves as a member of Generation X, and therefore a few generations removed from most of their followers on Instagram.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, the self-identified

millennial accounts, including Blake, Drew, Emerson, and Frances that engaged with ideas of mental health were much more direct in discussing their own experiences with mental health within their content.⁶⁰

Drew used their account as a tool for processing their feelings throughout Covid, sharing that they lost family to the illness, which impacted the content they were creating.

If you go through the page, you'll realise there's a lot of memes about mental health, because I was dealing with it. I lost family members to Covid. So for me, mental health aspect of it was like, it reflected, because that's what I'm thinking. Its going to come out in some way or the other.⁶¹

At one point, Drew shared that they had to start sourcing ideas for memes from current events, because “how many times can I talk about my anxiety issues and my depression issues and how I am? Like, I feel awkward around people? Like, after a point you're like, let's mix it up.”⁶² However, they are being proactive in protecting their mental health by setting boundaries around how much work they will do for the account, noting in discussions around monetisation that they, “do not have the capacity to give it that much of time required to create the content that gets me that kind of money.”⁶³

They later went on to explain the reason for continuing with the account, sharing that,

The idea is to have fun. The idea is to just have my own self something that I'm doing outside of my job, which is interesting for me. Like, actually, I need to be proud of what I'm putting out and I am proud of what I'm putting out and the reasons why I'm doing it.⁶⁴

This line of reasoning is similar to that of Frances, who has set strict boundaries with themselves to protect their mental health in regards to their account, particularly when it comes to tracking the reach of their content.⁶⁵ They detailed these boundaries, holding their phone up to be seen, pointing at the notifications section of their Instagram home page:

...at all times, my notifications look like this. It says 100 comments, 100 likes, 100 followers. And that's not because I just gained that just now. That's because it stops counting them at that point...So I just keep it like that. I just let it sit there. So I truly do not see any likes. And I can't see when people have tagged me. Like nothing...if someone shares a meme and mentions it in their story, I do not see that because that's where that notification would appear. I would have to click in there and see the whole list...I can tell when something is blowing up, but I do not always know how much and I do not really want or need to know. That's the way it...stays fun for me. I'm like, if I start getting in on these numbers and being like, oh, this post did bad, this one did good, I'm going to lose my mind.⁶⁶

This strategy is reminiscent of the Instagram decision to hide the number of likes on posts, an effort that was launched in 2020 in the hopes of assisting users and DCCs in protecting their mental health.⁶⁷

Emerson shared that they actually had to take a lengthy break from their account after feeling burnt out by the work.⁶⁸ This idea is echoed in a statement from Izzy, who makes a point to be kind to themselves around their posting schedule, saying that “I try to post on a schedule but when my own health (mental or physical) gets in the way, I give myself grace to deviate from the schedule and not post every day.”⁶⁹ These instances demonstrate how some of the strategies presented by social media management firms and Instagram for appealing to the Instagram algorithms can be detrimental to the mental health of content creators, as was noted in the Theoretical Framework.⁷⁰

10.A.iv: The “Original” Art Meme Account

In the introduction to this dissertation, the account that popularised CAMs as a unique internet meme style was stated to be Classical Art Memes Official on Facebook, which has been on the platform since 2014 and has just over five million followers.⁷¹ However, both Blake and Emerson claimed that they were, in fact, the original art meme account and that Classical Art Memes Official and other CAM accounts stole their original idea.⁷² Blake noted that they started their account in 2014, stating that

“Everyone's kind of a copy. Everyone, like people started doing the art memes, like, after I did. So its kind of interesting.”⁷³

Emerson, in the context of discussing their creation process noted that part of the reason they like to employ popular meme templates as much as they do is that they're getting payback for everyone else copying them. “Okay, so we have this, me and my partner, like, we were the original art meme account. So now we have all these copycats and we're like, we should copy the copycats because its essentially our idea anyway.”⁷⁴ Emerson had earlier noted that the account started on Snapchat in 2013.⁷⁵

But then, when discussing the founding of their account, Georgie shared that their account got started in 2011 as an experiment to see if art could work in internet memes, which they felt at the time were rather “ugly and primitive.”⁷⁶ The initial 10 CAMs that Georgie had created and posted to their personal website ended up going viral over the next couple months, with Georgie transitioning from having just a website to adopting a suite of social media accounts in 2014.⁷⁷ While it is not within the scope of the research to speculate as to who might have been the first art meme account, this timeline is illuminating.

10.A.v: Ownership and Rivalries

The final two themes from the interviews that bear discussion are feelings are ideas of ownership that DCCs over their CAMs, and ideas of rivalry with other CAM accounts. These two ideas will be discussed jointly, as they feed into each other, even if they are distinctive— these feelings of rivalry stem from a sense of ownership over their content. This can be seen in Avery's discussion of whether they have any kind of relationship with other content creators,

Well, the struggle is like, nobody else does what I do because it requires, I think, a confluence of things, including, like, you have to be funny. Plenty of people

are funny, but you also have to be willing to do the embarrassing thing of like, it is embarrassing to stand in these public museums with your phone or just standing there muttering jokes, you know what I mean? Six inches from a painting. You have to put yourself out there, and that's a very awkward position to be in. I've been acting and I've been improvising for a very long time. So those skills I've honed to an extent where I can look at something and be like, what's the unusual thing here? If this is true, what else is true? What's the honest response from this person to this person? And then just, like, following the tangents there. And that's a very specific skill on top of being willing to do the embarrassing thing. So there are people who, you know what I mean, put mouths over, you know what I mean, paintings and make funny jokes, and that's great, but that is just different than what I do.⁷⁸

The interviews highlighted a sad truth: DCCs are largely isolated from each other, rarely following other CAM accounts, largely considering them rivals. Meanwhile, they happily follow other non-CAM meme accounts, utilising them as inspiration for their CAMs, as they can take the modern joke and adapt it to their base content. Charlie mentioned this as well, noting that they do not follow any other DCCs who specialise in CAMs, noting a feeling of rivalry that they think stems from the competitive nature of their background in academia.⁷⁹ This isolation only serves to further pit DCCs against one another, fuelling these rivalries.

Participants had mixed feelings on how they approach reuse of their content without their consent. Frances, while annoyed, admits that they do nothing, as it is “not their business.”⁸⁰ Blake said something similar when they noted that while they could try to respond to people who reuse their content illicitly, stating that it would be an ultimately unsuccessful venture, so why try?⁸¹ When asked how they would respond to someone using their content online without their consent, Avery joked: “(Voice goes serious) I find where they live. (Laughter) No, I do not keep track of it.”⁸²

While every participant addressed ideas of ownership in some way, shape, or form, Blake, Charlie, and Frances had some of the clearest thoughts on the topic, ranging from individual CAMs and CAM templates being stolen to concerns about the

ethics of claiming an adapted artwork as one's own. Blake shared their concerns about their ideas being stolen regularly, sharing one experience in particular:

Some people try to pull it up, make it their own. Some people actually will straight up take the text and put it in a different format, like this one guy, he, like, took my text and then he put it in his book... he had like a whole different image and like, it was like a text bubble situation. Like, I was like, "weird," and it was like my words and like he published it in his book and it happens sometimes.⁸³

Frances has given up on trying to get accounts that reuse their content to credit them, musing, "I know that the content is elsewhere. I know its gone. Its going. And every day when I post another meme, I'm like, who knows where that one's gonna go? Like, I have no idea."⁸⁴ They later went on to note that while someone else reusing their content without their consent bothers them, they feel conflicted about trying to do anything about it:

There's only so mad I can get at somebody stealing one of my memes, because at its core, I am stealing the art...I don't, in my head, think its stealing, but someone could argue that I am building a platform off of someone else's art. So I can't get that mad...But it does annoy me. Like, when someone is constantly posting my stuff, I'm like, stop...Especially if that post does really well, and everyone's like, oh, my God, this is hilarious. I'm like, that's my post. I made that, and, yes, it took me 30 seconds, but still, that is not you...I am by no means the biggest or the first classical art meme account, but I do think I have a bit of a unique voice in this space, a voice that I recognise when other people are using it.⁸⁵

One way that DCCs have started trying to combat theft of their CAMs is by adding watermarks, as mentioned previously. Izzy recently started adding this feature to their CAMs, although they have mixed feelings about it:

I've recently started watermarking my content. I always felt weird about watermarking, since I didn't create the original artwork, but after 3 years of my content being spread without crediting me, I decided I should put my insta handle on it so at the very least, people can find me if they want to.⁸⁶

There is an odd sense of dualism in these sentiments, in which the creators acknowledge that they are not the sole creators involved in the creation of CAMs, but wanting their IP

in the form of the text to be protected. Charlie notes that illicit reuse of their content is their biggest pet peeve, even if they have no plans to make money off of them. “I’m still a little vain and egotistical,”⁸⁷ they joke, before going on to discuss how they have tried to keep the watermark on their content as “surreptitious”⁸⁸ as possible in an effort to preserve the integrity of the original work.

A number of CAM accounts outside of the participants were mentioned in regards to ownership and rivalry, with more than one participant noting that they have blocked other accounts that steal memes. For example, Charlie has blocked the account @ancientcringe and their backup account, @classic.art.memes, after they started stealing dozens of Charlie’s original CAMs.⁸⁹ Emerson noted that they blocked the account @classicalfuk after the account initially approached Emerson offering a post for post sharing system to get followers. However, after they noticed how much content was being stolen from other creators on the account, Emerson decided to block them.⁹⁰

Drew and Frances mentioned accounts reaching out to them for similar partnerships, with Drew sharing that they had a positive experience, although the account was focused on history, not CAMs.⁹¹ Frances, however, was not interested in this partnership, as they felt that the DCC in question had stolen their idea to convert their Bookstagram account into a more general CAM account.

So, there's an account...She's now making art memes, and they're very similar to mine...When I was spiralling about doing my taxes three weeks ago, or whatever it was, she made a meme about taxes in the Renaissance style. She'll rip off my headlines of, like, sorry, you can't come. I'm busy reading about fairies. Sorry, I can't. She just uses the same log lines that I use, and I'm just like she follows me, so she sees my stuff, whatever. And that annoys me because I'm like, why do not you come up with your own shit? I bet you could come up with your own funny shit, but, like, stop taking mine. Like, and I know that you're doing your own spin on it technically, but, like, its so similar to me.

And she just DMed me yesterday, and she was like, hey, bestie, blah, blah, blah. She was like, we should collab for a giveaway. And I was like, no... the way she

phrased it was so, like, she just wanted my followers or something, and I was just like, look, let's all just grow at the rate we're going to grow.⁹²

Other instances of rivalry that DCCs mentioned came when asked if they follow any other CAM accounts, to which almost all of the participants said no. Blake does not want to see what they perceive as their “work being copied,”⁹³ while Charlie admitted that they are competitive, so they do not follow any other CAM accounts:

So, no, I'm not following, to my knowledge, any classical art meme accounts. Also, maybe its a professional rivalry thing too. Its like academia almost. I know some academics who are true academics that voraciously and happily seek out new articles that are written by their peers and read them with such delight. I do not want to read anyone's work, no offense to them...Its more critical..⁹⁴

Emerson said the same thing in a much shorter fashion when they stated, “I’m so competitive, so I only like mine.”⁹⁵ Harper claimed that they are the only 100% original CAM account, so while they appreciate their followers’ support, they do not follow any CAM accounts because they do not want to see their work being claimed by others.⁹⁶ This dualism present within the creative practice of the participants highlights a disconnect that is apparent between GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, given that DCCs are claiming these CAMs as their IP when the base content are images from GLAM+ institutions.

10.B: Final Thoughts

When considering these discussions around perceived theft of CAMs in light of the FAIR Data Principles and other important ideas in this dissertation, such as the wider OA movement and licensing schemes like CC and CR, there is a tension reminiscent of cognitive dissonance. Recombinant appropriation is one the predominant adaptation styles within “meme culture.” In this instance, theft refers to when another account posts a DCC’s CAM without permission or credit. The rapidity with which trends in internet memes develop is only possible because of a culture that views all information and

sources as fair to use, and internet memes as derivative works. The prevalence of meme templates highlights how the life cycle of internet memes mirror a feedback loop, in which meme culture is recycling itself, contributing the continued development of new templates that are intended to be used by the broader community.

However, there is a creative input from DCCs into their CAMs that meets the requirements for considering these works IP. When looking at the court cases described in the Theoretical Framework, *Griner vs. King* for Congress in the US, a legal precedent was established that showed how DCCs could go about protecting their IP, although they do not have the legal ownership of the base content like Griner does.⁹⁷ *THJ vs. Sheridan* in the UK affirmed the need for a clear creative input for a work to be able to be copyrighted.⁹⁸ It is challenging to work through, particularly when considering that this theft of CAMs can have financial implications for the DCCs for whom their accounts are their livelihood.

These interviews confirm a gap in understanding of and approaches to ideas of ownership, copyright, and IP online. Previously noted arguments from researchers around joint authorship, or for an additional ownership layer on the internet are trying to fill this gap from a theoretical perspective, with valuable insights and suggestions for ways to address these gaps that are friendly to users and copyright holders alike.⁹⁹ In line with the work done by Leung, Holtzman, and McConaghy, this research would like to propose a conceptual framework for an online tool that is designed to bridge some of the gaps between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions in terms of realising the vision inherent in the FAIR Data Principles. It would accomplish this by assisting DCCs and other content creators in the FAIR-ification of reused digitised cultural heritage materials.

It is important to note that this proposal does not include technological designs, but instead is presenting a conceptual framework which highlights what the tool needs to be able to do and how it would fill gaps in current creation practices of both DCCs and GLAM+ institutions. Ideally another researcher with coding and software design experience could build upon this proposal by designing and building the tool. This tool is detailed in two parts, with the second component building on the first. The first could be adopted alone without implementing the second phase and would still be a useful tool for DCCs and GLAM+ institutions. This tool would be in the form of open-source software, building upon the work of the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authority open technical standard “Content Credentials,” (CR) as previously discussed in the Conceptual Framework. Given the level of buy-in on the CR standards by organisations like Meta, Adobe, The New York Times, Getty, and other major companies and institutions, these standards are going to continue to be developed for different purposes online, including for use on social media, as the trial run on Instagram highlighted.¹⁰⁰

The first part of this tool would involve developing open-source software that assists users in finding images from GLAM+ institution repositories that suit their interests and that are also OA in some way, be it through a CC license, the GLAM+ institution considering the images as in the Public Domain, or a Fair Use ruling of some kind. The key to GLAM+ institution content being included in the tool would be metadata, employing IIIF to ensure interoperability of the images. Perhaps this could be achieved through utilising publicly released APIs, such as the ARTIC API, as discussed in the GLAM+ Institution Website Dataset.¹⁰¹ The tool’s interface would display the digitised collection materials and their associated information. The tool would then

fully search the image metadata, allowing users to search based on terms such as “Renaissance” and “Venus,” returning results that are guaranteed to be able to be used (regarding copyright), including a section very clearly stating the conditions of reuse. These images would be able to be downloaded in a variety of resolutions and automatically have a CR tag applied to them by the software, locking the metadata, including the institution source and conditions of reuse, to the image. Instagram has already shown that they are willing to work with the CR standards, and adoption of these standards by the tool and any GLAM+ institutions that choose to work with it would accelerate the adoption and continued development of the CR standards.

If and when the CR standards are adapted to be able to be applied to social media posts by the average user, the tool could add an extension which includes an image editor. A user could search for an image, select it, add it to the associated image editor, and begin to edit the image, including cropping and zooming, adding text, and adding filters or stickers. This tool can and should be utilised for more than making CAMs, and this image editor could reflect that. The key to the second phase of the tool is this—the image, which already has a CR tag attached to it, can be edited, including the CR tag. The image editor will input changes made, who made the changes, and any other information deemed necessary by either the end-user or the developers, similar to blockchain. When the user downloads their edited image from the tool, it has a fully updated CR tag and is ready to be uploaded to their social media platform of choice. Users could make an account and save images they like as a part of the passive creation process or search for a specific image as a part of the spontaneous creation process.

Ideally, the CR tags could be searched, similar to how a DOI functions on research, allowing for a much greater ability to track use and reuse of content, as long

as users are utilising the tool. So, for example, a GLAM+ institution could do a search through the CR database for any images that have a CR tag connected to them, demonstrating reach and impact of their content, which is important for obtaining funding, but also for deciding what types of content to focus on for digitisation. For example, if the British Museum were to check their tagged images, and it showed that a particular genre of paintings was being reused in large quantities as part of a current meme template, then they may choose to digitise and make accessible more images from that genre.

The most important element of this tool is ease for the user, as difficult of a task that is to achieve. Within both phases of this tool, a DCC could, in theory, find and acquire base content, ensure it is able to be used, edit and adapt the base content into a CAM, protect their CAM through the application of a CR licence, and potentially set themselves up to be able to track their content, as CR tags are unique identifiers, making finding them later possible online. This cuts down the amount of work a DCC would need to do in order to significantly, ensuring adoption of the tool. The tool could additionally feature collections of images grouped by themes produced by GLAM+ institution or users, mimicking the art-centric Instagram accounts that DCCs like to source base content from. As a method of promoting buy-in to the tool, GLAM+ institutions could form partnerships with DCCs in which they make CAMs with images

from the GLAM+ institution, edited using the tool, with both parties sharing the content to their platforms, promoting the use of the tool to all of their collective followers.

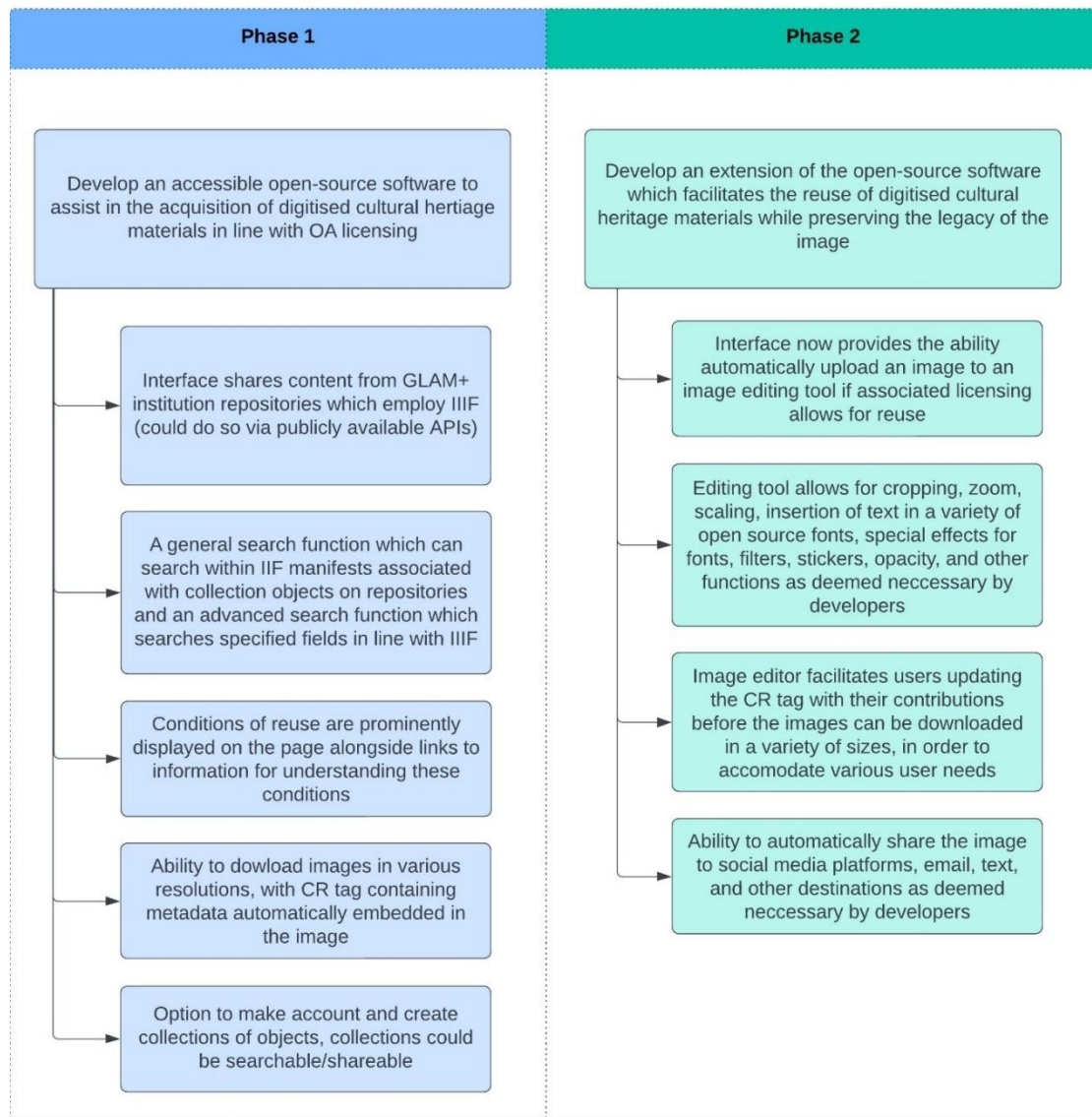


Table 15: Visualisation of proposed tool

¹ “FAIR Principles.”

² Thompson, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset.” 115.

³ Thompson, 8, 84, 87, 116-117, 120, 128-129, 175.

⁴ Thompson, 55, 58.

⁵ Thompson, 25, 28, 165, 175.

⁶ Thompson, 15, 120-121, 167, 175.

⁷ Thompson, 16.

⁸ Thompson, 167, 178.

⁹ Thompson, 26.

¹⁰ Thompson, 32.

¹¹ Thompson, 33.

¹² Thompson, 57-59.

¹³ Thompson, 16.

¹⁴ Thompson, 84.

¹⁵ Thompson, 87.

¹⁶ Thompson, 57, 102-103, 144.

¹⁷ Thompson, 116-117.

¹⁸ Thompson, 116-117.

¹⁹ Thompson, 120.

²⁰ Thompson, 184.

²¹ Thompson, 142-143.

²² Thompson, 142.

²³ Thompson, 140.

²⁴ Thompson, 7, 43, 88, 140, 143, 161, 167, 179.

²⁵ Thompson, 167.

²⁶ Thompson, 22.

²⁷ Thompson, 112-113.

²⁸ Thompson, 43-44, 89-90, 180.

²⁹ Thompson, 43.

³⁰ Thompson, 14-15.

³¹ Thompson, 14-15.

³² Thompson, 143.

³³ Hu et al., "Understanding Followers' Stickiness to Digital Influencers."

³⁴ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset." 147.

³⁵ Thompson, 157-158.

³⁶ Thompson, 148.

³⁷ Thompson, 134.

³⁸ Thompson, 29.

³⁹ Thompson, 30-31.

⁴⁰ Thompson, 7, 21, 161.

⁴¹ Thompson, 11-12, 31-32, 169.

⁴² Thompson, 37, 40-41, 91-92, 94-95, 119, 135, 146-148.

⁴³ Thompson, 18-19.

⁴⁴ Thompson, 21.

⁴⁵ Thompson, 36-37, 61-63, 78.

⁴⁶ Thompson, 65-68

⁴⁷ Thompson, 187-188.

⁴⁸ Thompson, 139.

⁴⁹ Thompson, 62-63.

⁵⁰ Thompson, 4, 36-37, 40, 50, 65-66, 79-80, 111, 136, 186.

⁵¹ Thompson, 4.

⁵² Thompson, 4.

⁵³ Thompson, 47-48.

⁵⁴ Thompson, 68.

⁵⁵ Thompson, 57.

⁵⁶ Thompson, 61-62.

⁵⁷ Council on Foreign Relations, "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Timeline," CFR Education Global Matters, October 3, 2024, <https://education.cfr.org/learn/timeline/israeli-palestinian-conflict-timeline>.

⁵⁸ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset." 63.

⁵⁹ Thompson, 68.

⁶⁰ Thompson, 23, 27, 90, 111, 121, 148.

⁶¹ Thompson, 79.

⁶² Thompson, 96.

⁶³ Thompson, 102.

⁶⁴ Thompson, 102-103.

⁶⁵ Thompson, 136.

⁶⁶ Thompson, 143-144.

⁶⁷ Casey Newton, "What Instagram Really Learned from Hiding like Counts," The Verge, May 27, 2021, <https://www.theverge.com/2021/5/27/22456206/instagram-hiding-likes-experiment-results-platformer>.

⁶⁸ Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset." 111.

⁶⁹ Thompson, 186.

⁷⁰ Register et al., "Attached to 'The Algorithm.'"

⁷¹ Raivio, "Classical Art Memes as an Affinity Space: A Faceted Classification of an Online Entertainment Page"; @classicalartmemesofficial, "Classical Art Memes 1."

⁷² Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset." 34, 111.

⁷³ Thompson, 34.

⁷⁴ Thompson, 111.

⁷⁵ Thompson, 109.

⁷⁶ Thompson, 163.

⁷⁷ Thompson, 164.

⁷⁸ Thompson, 19.

⁷⁹ Thompson, 74-75.

⁸⁰ Thompson, 155.

⁸¹ Thompson, 33-34.

⁸² Thompson, 15.

⁸³ Thompson, 33.

⁸⁴ Thompson, 140.

⁸⁵ Thompson, 155.

⁸⁶ Thompson, 186.

⁸⁷ Thompson, 45-46.

⁸⁸ Thompson, 46.

⁸⁹ Thompson, 46-47.

⁹⁰ Thompson, 123-125.

⁹¹ Thompson, 103.

⁹² Thompson, 156-157.

⁹³ Thompson, 26.

⁹⁴ Thompson, 75.

⁹⁵ Thompson, 126.

⁹⁶ Thompson, 179.

⁹⁷ Smith and Lantagne, "Copyright & Memes."

⁹⁸ Randell and Birk, "What the THJ v Sheridan Copyright Ruling Might Mean for Cultural Organisations."

⁹⁹ Leung, "Internet Memes and Copyright"; McConaghy and Holtzman, "Towards An Ownership Layer for the Internet."

¹⁰⁰ "Membership - C2PA."

¹⁰¹ Art Institute of Chicago, "Documentation."

Chapter 11: Conclusion

A scenario to consider: A work of art is digitised and shared freely online through a GLAM+ institution's repository. A researcher finds this work and writes an article that details the style of painting, the historical context within which it is painted, the symbolism in the work, and what it meant at that time and how it can be interpreted within today's society. A blogger finds the work of art through this article and writes about it for their blog, shifting the academic text into something more publicly digestible and truncated. An art-centric Instagram account finds this work of art through this blog post and shares it on their page with a summary of the blog post in the caption. A DCC encounters the work through this art-centric account and reuses it to create a CAM, sharing basic details about the work in the caption. The internet meme goes viral and suddenly other users have turned the CAM into a meme template and begin making their own versions. The meme template spreads into a viral trend and now the work of art is being reused in articles talking about the trend, merchandise is being made with the work of art, and the website "Know Your Meme" has a new entry dedicated to the work of art, the original CAM, and the subsequent trend with remixed versions of the CAM. In a short span of time, the work of art has gone from being viewed once every few years within the confines of a GLAM+ institution's storage facility to becoming a vehicle for cultural discussion on the internet. While the institution may not directly benefit from that initial instance of digitisation, suddenly the cultural and economic benefits of digitising this work of art, leading to its meme-ification and subsequent viral spread, can be seen on a global scale.

Although not an identical situation, this scenario mirrors the trajectory of the artwork "The Hesitant Fiancée," by August Toulmouche. A CAM reusing the "Hesitant

Fiancée” while Verdi’s “Requiem” played in the background went viral on TikTok in fall 2023, as previously discussed in relation to acquisition of content.¹ The painting had been digitised ahead of being auctioned at Sotheby’s in New York.² A few academic articles touch on the painting and Toulmouche, although it is more predominantly discussed in blogs before the CAM went viral.³ After the trend took off on TikTok, articles discussing the trend, its origins, the painting, and how the viral trend captured female rage were published in large news outlets like the New York Times, Culture and Society blogs like Refinery 29, and even in academic news outlets like the Conversation, written by this researcher.⁴ Its “Know Your Meme” page, which calls it “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend,” features the first known instance of the CAM and details its viral spread, additionally featuring numerous examples of remixed CAMs utilising the meme template.⁵

This dissertation has covered a broad selection of research fields; however it is important to return to the kind of phenomenon which inspired this research, in which digitised cultural heritage material is used in ways that were likely not intended by the GLAM+ institution which digitised it. The COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns saw the global population utilising digital technologies and the internet more than ever before, as it forced much of the world to shift their communicative, social, and cultural activities to online platforms. This highlighted a critical need to re-evaluate the way that organisations and individuals approached their online practices, particularly in relation to ideas of ownership and copyright.

Adopting commons-led practices in GLAM+ institutions is essential for staying relevant within the wider cultural landscape. Using the FAIR Data Principles as a tool for guiding policy creation is an accessible manner through which common-led

practices can be adopted by both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs. Commons is a powerful framework for rethinking how to approach ideas of ownership, both legally and culturally, in late-stage capitalism, where almost every facet of life is monetised, by reframing cultural heritage as a resource that everyone has equal right to. If heritage is commonly-shared resource, Benjamin's vision for aura is fully realised, as it strips the need for the "parasitic subservience to ritual" that Benjamin notes impact art.⁶ Through mechanical reproduction, works of art become accessible first financially, due to the ease with art can be reproduced, and then culturally and intellectually, as increased access to the works means increased access to knowledge about and research on these works. In this chapter, the analysis conducted in the previous six chapters will be brought together in order to examine the wider findings across the datasets, going on to highlight the contributions to research made by this dissertation and the practical implications for GLAM+ institutions and DCCs. The dissertation finishes with the limitations of this work, followed by suggestions for further research.

11.A: Summary of Findings and Contributions to Scholarship and Practice

The aims of this research were to define the relationship between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions, to understand the creation process for DCCs, and to examine the role of GLAM+ institutions as mediators of cultural heritage. These aims contributed to the central research question, which asked how an examination of the creation processes of DCCs and GLAM+ institutions through the lens of the FAIR Data Principles could shape ideas around ownership, accessibility, and engagement with digitised cultural heritage materials. This central research question was explored through a series of sub-questions, which facilitated a more granular exploration of these ideas and the aims. These questions interrogated wider ideas around the reception of art

and engagement with art through digital means, explored how remixes like CAMs can shift ideas about authenticity and ownership, asked how this examination could contribute to policy development in GLAM+ institutions, how the FAIR Data Principles could be adapted to enhance the data curation process for both parties, how these re-envisioned principles could contribute to the continued development of methodologies which promote OA and commons in the digital sphere, and how the methodologies of both parties in this research could be shifted to more fully accommodate a FAIR-ification of their data. This section will summarise the findings of this dissertation and explore how it responded to these aims and questions, making connections between these findings and how they contribute to scholarship and practice.

When looking to the GLAM+ institution website dataset, which examined publicly available information about copyright from GLAM+ institutions to understand what a DCC would encounter, it became clear that some websites have been designed with user understanding in mind, namely the category “OA innovators.” These institutions clearly designed their website, repository, and supporting information about OA and copyright with uninformed users in mind, choosing clear language and imagery to communicate conditions for reuse for digitised cultural heritage materials.⁷ They also showed consideration for the user with comprehensive supporting information, such as FAQ sections.⁸ This kind of information was not present within the “OA adopters,” and “OA potential” institutions.

Meanwhile, DCCs flagged that they have no interest in doing extra work to access digitised cultural heritage materials.⁹ Only three DCCs noted regularly using GLAM+ institution repositories, however, two also flagged that they are quickly overwhelmed by the amount of content available on GLAM+ institution repositories,

not knowing where or how to start filtering through content to find what they need. For this reason, they often turn to intermediaries who filter GLAM+ institution content for them.¹⁰ These intermediaries comprise of independent actors who share filtered GLAM+ institution content, such as blogs, art-centric Instagram accounts, and Pinterest boards. Nine of the DCCs noted using intermediaries, with four citing them as their main source of base content.¹¹

When looking back to the aims and research questions, this idea of an intermediary is central to all three aims, understanding the relationship between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions, and then understanding how these two parties function. These intermediaries need to be studied further, as noted previously, as these two parties largely function separately online, despite a previously mentioned interdependence on one another. It is these intermediaries who are doing the work of bridging the divide between these two creation practices, highlighting the way that this current generation of artists and audiences have found new ways to engage with and receive art. They find gaps, meet needs, and ultimately, make ideas that are viewed as more high-brow, like classical art, their own.

While five of the DCCs highlighted engaging in once-off partnerships with GLAM+ institutions that were overwhelmingly positive, there is still an obvious disconnect for DCCs between the concept of GLAM+ institutions as the caretakers of their base content and the idea of copyright applying to the digitised cultural heritage materials that they want to use as their base content.¹² They view their approaches to copyright as not harmful, as they consider the original artworks to be in the Public Domain, without considering if these practices may harm the GLAM+ institution, with the exception of Charlie.¹³ (Although, research conducted for the Theoretical

Framework shows that illicit reuse of digitised cultural heritage materials is generally not harmful to GLAM+ institutions.¹⁴⁾

Only two of the DCCs noted being contacted by GLAM+ institutions regarding CAMs which employed base content from their collections, with one asking for the CAM to be taken down while one simply asked for credit.¹⁵ These findings highlight the complexity of this relationship, which as previously noted, is dependent on a feedback loop in which GLAM+ institutions provide base content for DCCs and DCCs democratise GLAM+ institutions online, driving engagement with the wider sector.

A contribution to research from this dissertation is the technical analysis of the creation and dissemination of CAMs. Research into CAMs as a unique form of internet meme and adaptation is scarce, and when it occurs, it has always been from a linguistic or adaptation focused position. Past research also focuses exclusively on the form of CAMs, without consideration for their creators. This dissertation created classifications for CAMs and DCCs that are novel. First, this dissertation adapted Piata's work to create a classification system for CAMs based on the type of humour being employed. Second, this dissertation developed a classification for CAM accounts based on how the accounts are managed, considering style of revenue generation, methods of increasing online visibility, types of CAMs, and types of base content.

This dissertation then looked at how some of the technical affordances of platforms, such as content recommendation algorithms, impact the creation process of CAMs, examined the precise steps taken to create CAMs, and created a workflow of the creation process of making CAMs based off of the DCC interview dataset, noting four separate strategies that were noted as employed by DCCs. These contributions are

valuable for the fields of memetics, digital humanities, media studies, and adaptation.

They can and should be developed further and employed in future research.

Another contribution to Public History research and practice is the GLAM+ institution dataset and its analysis. A sample and analysis of GLAM+ institutions and how they function in comparison to each other is understudied. It revealed what makes these websites accessible to users and highlighted simple and accessible ways in which many of these websites could be adjusted to further enable the utilisation of their digitised cultural heritage materials. The variation in the data from the various GLAM+ institutions highlighted the variety of approaches by these institutions to mediating cultural heritage for their constituents. This dataset can and should be researched further, either through this dataset with different tools or a newly collected dataset following the Conceptual Framework.

The main contribution of this dissertation to both Public History and Digital Humanities is the application of the FAIR Data Principles from both a technical and cultural perspective, forming a conceptual framework through which to analyse the 3 datasets. This framework was intuitive to employ, as it facilitated structure within the analysis, while the sizeable body of research on the FAIR Data Principles, particularly in the Arts and Humanities context, informed the ways in which analysis could be conducted. Looking to theoretical applications, researchers should explore employing this conceptual framework further, or in different ways, or to different fields. Looking to practical applications, the Conceptual Framework highlights various ways in which both GLAM+ institutions and DCCs can approach their work with the technical and cultural dimensions of the FAIR Data Principles in mind, while the 3 datasets and their analysis show ways in which DCCs and GLAM+ institutions are already utilising some

of these methods in their practice. The workflow and proposed tool, which were outputs of the application of the FAIR Data Principles as the cognitive structure for analysis, are practical ways that these considerations could be applied further within both DCC and GLAM+ institutional practice.

Past research has examined the impact of applying the FAIR principles within a specific space or organization, or they have examined places where the FAIR principles could be edited/expanded.¹⁶ This kind of application of what specific parties could do with the principles is novel and a useful tool for organizing and analysing the data gathered. This method of application and analysis should be adapted or expanded upon, both within academic and professional contexts.

The datasets and analysis revealed valuable insights into wider views around ownership, accessibility, and engagement. The first is that the language and manipulations of base content within CAMs are considered defensible IP by both DCCs and their followers, despite regularly engaging in the practice in meme subculture of employing meme templates. In this case, the DCCs (and their followers, as demonstrated by the number of messages DCCs receive notifying them of illicit reuse of their content¹⁷) view their take on the meme template as the unique creative act that should be protected.¹⁸ While there are a number of CAM accounts that primarily post the content of other DCCs, as seen in the CAM Profile Dataset, the majority of the DCCs interviewed noted that the practice of resharing another DCC's content without crediting them appropriately was not acceptable.¹⁹

When examining ideas of accessibility, multiple DCCs noted that their purpose for starting their account was to democratise information in some way, be it unique thinkers, medieval manuscripts, or Southeast Asian works of art.²⁰ All of the DCCs

noted that they feel that information should be freely accessible online, and none of them employed a paywall to their content of any kind. Meanwhile, it is important to consider some of the instances in which access to information needs to be restricted in some way, such as the data of indigenous peoples, as discussed in relation to The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance in the Conceptual Framework.²¹

Living artists also have the right to protect their work, as noted in the GLAM+ institution website dataset when examining LACMA,²² and as noted by the participants in discussions around their approaches to copyright—multiple DCCs flagged a commitment to ensuring their base content is not from a living artist.²³ It is important to highlight the fact that current copyright laws do not meet the complex needs of meme subculture or GLAM+ institutions, as highlighted via court cases in the Theoretical Methodology, through the complex and inconsistent rules applied to digitised cultural heritage materials as seen in the GLAM+ Institution Website Dataset, and as expressed by the DCCs throughout the interviews.²⁴

Engagement within this dissertation became a complex idea, particularly in relation to DCCs trying to understand the Instagram algorithms in order to drive engagement with their content. As highlighted in the Theoretical Framework and the Platform Perceptions chapter, Instagram and their parent company Meta are secretive regarding the finer workings of their content recommendation algorithms, with both Instagram and social media management companies pushing lists of rules and vague explanations out to content creators about how to work with, please, or beat the algorithms and have their content widely shared. The level of secrecy around the algorithms and their unpredictable results have been noted in research and in the DCC Interview Dataset, as well as their impact on the wider content creator community, with

multiple participants noting that their mental health is impacted in a negative way, as the result of feelings of “algorithmic precarity.”²⁵

When examining wider ideas of the reception of art and digital engagement with art, Walter Benjamin’s ideas around aura were a driving theoretical force, and the conclusions drawn constitute another contribution of this research: a novel take on Benjamin’s concept of aura. This dissertation asserts that CAMs are an extension of the aura of the base content, a fulfilment of the tradition of creative practices that have contributed to the various elements at work in a CAM through the adaptation style of recombinant appropriation. This process of adaptation shifts the framing of the base content, allowing for users to see the art in a new way, while challenging ideas about what is an acceptable reuse of digitised cultural heritage content, in direct challenge to ideas within the AHD. While this approach takes cues from other research conducted on aura, it is a new stance which could contribute to the ongoing research into and conversations about aura, particularly in regards to digitised cultural heritage materials.

When viewing CAMs with this new conception of aura in mind, the popularity of CAMs and similar remixes of digitised cultural heritage materials make sense, as they are a more accessible way for users to engage with art. The shift in the framing of the base content allows for the users to leave behind their pre-conceived ideas about how art should be treated, as the CAM is not a remix of the original work. Interestingly, this loss of authenticity also strips fear that is born from the tension between “high” and “low” culture, as demonstrated by the large numbers of people who feel more comfortable engaging with art through a digital “framing,” as noted by participants who hosted captioning contests for CAMs in partnership with GLAM+ institutions.²⁶

These findings and their contributions to scholarship and the practice of DCCs and GLAM+ institutions are also applicable to the wider community of content creators and other cultural organisations that are interested in finding way to make their content more accessible through a commons-oriented application of the cultural and technical dimensions of the FAIR Data Principles. The workflow in the Cultural mediation and data curation chapter could easily be adapted for other contexts or be used to help someone get started in content creation. The Conceptual Framework could easily be adapted by a researcher for other contexts or be used to help assess the level of FAIRification present in an organisation. Ideally, the implications and applications of this research will stretch far beyond the context within which it was designed, being utilised along the lines of recombinant appropriation to produce a new and exciting cultural transmission which finds new meaning beyond how this dissertation was originally intended to be interpreted, contributing to the cycle of cultural production online.

11.B: Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This section will cover the limitations of this dissertation and provide suggestions for further research that were brought up as a result of the Findings. These suggestions cover three themes: memetics and linguistics, memetics outside of Western culture, and CAMs and GLAM+ institutions.

The limitations of this dissertation include the previously discussed focus on Western culture and English language sources. However, an additional and significant limitation on this dissertation was the challenge of getting interview participants. In the original conception of this research, two sets of interviews would have been conducted, one with DCCs as was presented in this dissertation, and a second with relevant

GLAM+ institution staff, allowing for a direct comparison of interview responses to highlight places of similarity and difference in creation practices between both parties. However, not a single interview was able to be organised with a GLAM+ institution staff member. This researcher contacted dozens of GLAM+ institutions, and received nine responses, six were variations on no, while three said they could, perhaps at another time, only to not be heard from again. Ultimately, this worked out, as shifting to gathering a dataset of what DCCs can conceivably glean from GLAM+ institution websites about copyright served as an excellent foundation for better understanding the DCC interviews. Similar struggles with getting participants for the DCC interviews was noted in the Methodological Framework, although thankfully enough DCCs responded and were willing to be interviewed.

When looking to suggestions for further research, the first theme is memetics, the study of memes, and linguistics, the study of languages. This dissertation previously highlighted how scholars have been calling for memes to be studied as a new mode of language, a pursuit that has started to be seen in recently published works.²⁷ However, this dissertation would like to align itself with other scholars in calling for the process of creating memes to be considered a style of adaptation.

Many scholars, including Canales, Voights, Nickas, and Hutcheon and O'Flynn are advocating for translation and adaptation studies researchers to expand what they consider to be "adaptations," positing that limiting the field to novels and films is detrimental to the field as a whole.²⁸ They go on to encourage researchers to "overcome the 'discursive self-enclosure' of the 'film culture' paradigm."²⁹ Voights actively calls for internet memes to be considered a form of adaptation, particularly when fans respond with internet memes to canonical content.³⁰ Canales notes the resistance many

adaptation and translation scholars feel towards studying fan made content, such as internet memes, noting that “acknowledging amateurs as co-authors and co-creators challenges authorship and intellectual property. It also uncontrollably extends and complexifies the existing top-down content production industry.”³¹ This resistance is also tackled by Voights, who sees this process as reflective of an audience’s desire to participate rather than appropriate, noting that participation allows for coexistence with the traditional culture production structures, as opposed to jeopardising it, as some scholars speculate.³² Canales goes on to note that for this kind of research to flourish, researchers need to get out of their “academic comfort zones,” going on to note that, “...it takes embracing bottom-to top or horizontal approaches to creation, and more chaotic research topics than the canonical book-to-film adaptations or interlinguistic translation challenges.”³³

CAMs, while not a traditional research topic, find themselves in the intersection of copyright, fair use, adaptation, humour, pop culture, and GLAM+ institutions, serving as a nexus that allows for those unfamiliar with some of these linguistically denser topics to find a connection through a familiar piece of media: a painting with a joke on it. Charlie commented on how oddly “perfect” CAMs function in this role, laughing as they shared, “I never thought I would be in the cross-section of this problem. But intellectual property rights and memes is a really open field for investigation.”³⁴ CAMs, then, need to be studied as a unique element of internet memes to see how they compare to the wider field of internet memes regarding their function linguistically, and as a multi-layered form of adaptation, as they are forms of recombinant appropriation, which draw inspiration from multiple unconnected sources.

The next avenue for further research is to look at CAMs (or other similar internet phenomena) outside of the context of Western culture. As previously discussed in the Introduction, this research acknowledges that it has a culturally Western bias, with content almost exclusively being sourced from English language-based resources. However, it is important that research like this is conducted in non-Western contexts, particularly given the ways in which Drew highlighted that non-Western art cannot be understood in the same ways Western art can. Western art operates on the culturally homogenous understanding that its audience is going to be largely white and Christian, playing into widely known understandings of religion, folklore, and history. Much of the art referenced in CAMs depicts Jesus Christ, stories from the Christian Bible, or stories from the history and mythos of Western culture, such as Greek gods or famous battles from medieval Europe. See this discussion with Drew, in which they highlight this issue in response to a question about how they make their content widely understood:

Honestly, neither of these two options work, because problem is with western art, at least, those images are out a lot more. With South Asian art, these images are not out...Most of the images that you see on my page, you're never going to see those images again in a very generic concept, as opposed to, like, you're going to see 10,000 different iterations of Madonna and child and Jesus and all the religious paintings that they usually make...So believe me when I say this, people following the context of them is impossible. So better to use them for the context that I can understand.³⁵

These comments highlight how complex adapting culture can be, requiring a great deal of knowledge to fully understand the implications of adapting works in various ways, like Drew has done with their use of kali ghat paintings as base content, playing off of the idea depicted in the paintings of men being devoted to the women in their lives, a play on traditional gender roles and power structures.³⁶ What examples like this exist in the

Southeast Asian context? In the West African context? Could adaptations like this help users in Western contexts understand non-Western contexts in a new way? This kind of research needs to be done both in these contexts and by a researcher situated within these contexts.

The final category this dissertation will suggest for further research is a continued examination of the relationships between GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, building off this research. This could take three forms: the first would be to trial a long-term partnership between a GLAM+ institution and DCC, paying specific attention to how each party could assist in the other's practice. For example, could DCCs act as assistant intermediaries for the base content to their followers, similar to a curator with visitors to a GLAM+ institution? Do DCCs already act as these kinds of intermediaries, or does that role fall more to art-centric Instagram accounts? Could a GLAM+ institution providing images directly to a DCC still allow the DCC enough room to feel they can create effectively, given how important the process of selecting content is to DCCs, as mentioned in the interviews? The second avenue is to build and test the proposed tool, encouraging a GLAM+ institution to work with a DCC but through the intermediary of the tool. Would the DCC feel it was an unnecessary step? Would the GLAM+ institution feel it is too much work? Perhaps not, if it would aid in the creative process as predicted? Finally, research could examine the role of intermediaries within this relationship. DCCs and GLAM+ institutions seem to operate relatively separately, despite their occasional partnerships. As previously noted, there seems to be a disconnect in the view of DCCs between their base content and the institutions which house and care for them. How do these intermediary accounts operate? How do they

impact the relationships between DCCs and GLAM+ institutions? Do these intermediaries have a relationship with GLAM+ institutions?

11.C: Final Thoughts

How then, would Walter Benjamin react to the concept of CAMs? Benjamin notably did not think an object losing its aura was a bad thing—in fact, as previously discussed, they believed that the more an artwork was reproduced the more questions could be asked of it, allowing for art to be created that is designed for reproducibility and for “freedom and play.”³⁷ Benjamin specifically wanted to separate art from the rituals and notions of sanctity associated with religion, allowing questions to be asked of the artworks. When Avery stands in front of a work, asking themselves what is unusual in the work, what are the honest responses from one depicted person to the next, what story can they tell, what jokes can be made, they are asking these questions of the work.³⁸

Through this recontextualisation, DCCs are removing the sanctity of the piece, interrogating the messaging and ultimately creating a new work that is infinitely reproduceable either through the meme format, the base content, or the audio/video being reused for new content. This work also makes “high” culture spaces and objects, such as works of art, accessible through their “low” culture linguistic recontextualisation, allowing for the user to be able to relate to the work of art, developing an emotional attachment that can enable the user to feel welcome into “high” culture spaces. In this way, CAMs can serve as a bridge between users who feel uncomfortable in “high” culture spaces, reminiscent of the friend mentioned in the Introduction and Drew’s comments about their family, and GLAM+ institutions, which are seeking ways to bring users back into their physical spaces.³⁹

An example of this idea can be seen every day in Florence, Italy. In front of the Uffizi Gallery is a courtyard filled with statues, clearly in the classical style. One statue on the end sticks out, a man holding up a head. The statue is of Perseus, son Poseidon, who killed the gorgon Medusa, created by master sculptor Benvenuto Cellini.⁴⁰ The statue depicts the moment just after the beheading, with Medusa's face oddly peaceful given the violence depicted. As I strolled through the courtyard while on holidays in April 2022, I heard a teenage girl shriek, "It's the meme! Oh my gosh, look!" and grab her two friends, pointing up. I whipped my head around to the noise, having an almost identical reaction, although I managed to contain my delight. I first encountered this particular internet meme in the early 2010s and wondered to myself if these girls knew the same 9-GAG format meme that I laughed at when I was in my undergrad, pictured below.⁴¹ Either way, we both had a new appreciation for the statue that, without CAMs, would not have turned my head.

In my own life, the consumption of CAMs has only enhanced my own experience when visiting CHIs, as I find myself making jokes in response to the art in front of me, doing my best to imagine CAMs I could make. This practice is not uncommon. On my frequent visits to CHIs around the world, I have noticed other people taking photos of particular artworks, pointing and laughing and saying things like "same" or other meme-related phrases, adding an air of levity to the space. This has resulted in me actively engaging with the art in the CHIs I visit far more than I would have in the past, as I am searching the artworks in front of me for points of relatability or absurdity to comment on, whether to myself or to the person I am visiting a CHI with. As Benjamin's theory of aura illustrates, when an emotional or nostalgic connection is formed with art, the aura then draws the consumer to interact with the

original work. This is true even of CAMs, which, while not the original work, bear the traces of its aura, leading the end user back to the original work.



Figure 67: The 9-GAG meme format, utilising Perseus and Medusa

Notes

¹ “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend.”

² Toulmouche, “(Lot #108) Auguste Toulmouche, The Hesitant Fiancée.”

³ Sandra Muniz, “1866 – Auguste Toulmouche, The Hesitant Fiancée,” Fashion History Timeline, 2018, <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1866-toulmouche-hesitant-fiancee/>; Janet Whitmore, “BIOGRAPHY - Auguste Toulmouche (1829 - 1890),” Rehs Galleries, Inc., accessed November 22, 2023, https://rehs.com/Auguste_Toulmouche_Bio.html; “Auguste Toulmouche; the Helmut Newton of Belle Époque Paris,” Academy Fine Paintings, accessed November 22, 2023, <https://academyfinepaintings.com/auguste-toulmouche-the-helmut-newton-of-belle-epoque-paris/>.

⁴ Callie Holtermann, “Why Does This Bride Look So Mad?,” *The New York Times*, November 13, 2023, sec. Style, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/12/style/auguste-toulmouche-hesitant-fiancee-tiktok.html>; Elizabeth Gulino, “She’s Angry & Tired: We Are All This Painting Of A Pissed Off Bride,” *Refinery 29*, November 21, 2023, 29, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2023/11/11591800/hesitant-fiancee-painting-trend-meaning>; Cydney Thompson, “The Hesitant Fiancée: This Painting Is Helping Women to Express Their Rage on TikTok – Here’s the Story behind It,” *The Conversation*, November 22, 2023, <http://theconversation.com/the-hesitant-fiancee-this-painting-is-helping-women-to-express-their-rage-on-tiktok-heres-the-story-behind-it-218276>.

⁵ “The Reluctant Bride TikTok Trend.”

⁶ Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

⁷ “Open Access Images”; “Open Access”; British Museum, “Copyright and Permissions.”

⁸ British Museum, “Copyright and Permissions.”

⁹ Thompson, 14, 26, 32-33, 84, 96, 110, 138-139, 153, 183, 185, 191-192.

¹⁰ Thompson, 43, 53-55, 84, 164, 164, 174-175.

¹¹ Thompson, 42-43, 54, 97, 109-110, 127, 134, 174, 183.

¹² Thompson, 14-15, 87-88, 98, 125, 161-162, 180.

¹³ Thompson, 46-47, 49.

¹⁴ Valeonti, Terras, and Hudson-Smith, “How Open Is OpenGLAM?”; Valeonti et al., “Exploring New Business Models for Monetising Digitisation beyond Image Licensing to Promote Adoption of OpenGLAM”; Valeonti et al., “Reaping the Benefits of Digitisation”; Terras, “Opening Access to Collections”; Rühse, “The Digital Collection of the Rijksmuseum.”

¹⁵ Thompson, 32-33, 84, 97.

¹⁶ Tóth-Czifra, “The Risk of Losing the Thick Description: Data Management Challenges Faced by the Arts and Humanities in the Evolving FAIR Data Ecosystem”; Wilkinson et al., “The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship”; Kraft, “The FAIR Data Principles for Research Data”; Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (European Commission) and PwC EU Services, *Cost-Benefit Analysis for FAIR Research Data*; Bilić and Posavec, “FAIRness of Research Data in the European Humanities Landscape”; Harrower et al., “Sustainable and FAIR Data Sharing in the Humanities”; Australian FAIR Working Group, “Policy Statement on F.A.I.R. Access to Australia’s Research Outputs,” F.A.I.R. Access to Australia’s research, accessed December 12, 2021, <https://www.fair-access.net.au/fair-statement>.

- ¹⁷ Thompson, 7, 43, 88, 140, 143, 161, 167, 179.
- ¹⁸ Thompson, 12, 15, 18-19, 26, 33-34, 45-49, 51, 56, 68, 72-75, 112, 123-124, 126, 155-158, 167, 179, 183, 193.
- ¹⁹ Thompson, 15, 33-34, 49, 58, 68-69, 88, 92-93, 98, 125, 140, 155, 167, 179, 186.
- ²⁰ Thompson, 28-29, 39-40, 78, 163, 178, 181.
- ²¹ Carroll et al., "The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance."
- ²² Kahraman, *Search*.
- ²³ Thompson, 14, 153, 178, 183.
- ²⁴ Smith and Lantagne, "Copyright & Memes"; Randell and Birk, "What the THJ v Sheridan Copyright Ruling Might Mean for Cultural Organisations"; Boyd, "Image Copyright in the Age of Social Media."
- ²⁵ Duffy, "Algorithmic Precarity in Cultural Work"; Thompson, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Data Sets--Digital Content Creator Interview Dataset: Interview Transcripts," 84, 89-90, 111, 140-41, 186.
- ²⁶ Thompson, 87-88, 98, 125, 180.
- ²⁷ Dancygier and Vandelanotte, "Internet Memes as Multimodal Constructions"; Yus, "Multimodality in Memes"; Richard Rogers and Giulia Giorgi, "What Is a Meme, Technically Speaking?," *Information, Communication & Society* 27, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 73-91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2174790>; Daniel C. Dennett, "Memes and the Exploitation of Imagination," in *Memes and the Exploitation of Imagination* (Princeton University Press, 2021), 189-98, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400831296-026>; Bastari, "Internet Meme"; Guillem Castañar, "Wiggins, Bradley. 2019. The Discursive Power of Memes in Digital Culture: Ideology, Semiotics, and Intertextuality.," *HUMOR. International Journal of Humor Research*, January 1, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/106170460/Wiggins_Bradley_2019_The_Discursive_Power_of_Memes_in_Digital_Culture_Ideology_Semiotics_and_Intertextuality; Atena Editora, "A PROPOSAL FOR A METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DIGITAL MEME GENRE," *Arts, Linguistics, Literature, and Language Research Journal* 3, no. 1 (2022), https://www.academia.edu/95680100/A_PROPOSAL_FOR_A_METHODOLOGICAL_ANALYSIS_OF_THE_DIGITAL_MEME_GENRE_Atena_Editora_.
- ²⁸ Canalès, "Transmedia, Translation and Adaptation"; Eckart Voigts and Pascal Nicklas, "Introduction: Adaptation, Transmedia Storytelling and Participatory Culture," *Adaptation* 6, no. 2 (August 1, 2013): 139-42, <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apt012>; Voigts, "Memes and Recombinant Appropriation"; Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), <https://www.routledge.com/A-Theory-of-Adaptation/Hutcheon/p/book/9780415539388>.
- ²⁹ Voigts and Nicklas, "Introduction."
- ³⁰ Voigts, "Memes and Recombinant Appropriation."
- ³¹ Canalès, "Transmedia, Translation and Adaptation," 68.
- ³² Voigts, "Bastards and Pirates, Remixes and Multitudes," 94-95.

³³ Canalsès, “Transmedia, Translation and Adaptation,” 71–72.

³⁴ Thompson, 49.

³⁵ Thompson, 91.

³⁶ Thompson, 94-95.

³⁷ Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

³⁸ Thompson, 18.

³⁹ Thompson, 77-79.

⁴⁰ Federico Giannini and Ilaria Baratta, “Benvenuto Cellini’s Perseus. The Story of a Masterpiece of Mannerism,” *Finestre sull’ Arte*, March 23, 2023, <https://www.finestresullarte.info/en/works-and-artists/benvenuto-cellini-s-perseus-the-story-of-a-masterpiece-of-mannerism>.

⁴¹ “Best Funny Benvenuto Cellini Memes,” Social Media, 9GAG, accessed August 22, 2024, <http://9gag.com/tag/benvenuto-cellini>.

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Appendices

Ethics Application

School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin Ethics Application

All researchers have a responsibility to follow Trinity's politics on research ethics as well as any academic or professional code of practice or guidelines relevant to the specific research project. Further details, including a link to Trinity's Good Research Practice Guide and to sample consent and participant information forms, can be located here: <https://ahss.tcd.ie/Faculty%20Ethics%20Committee/FacultyEthicsCommittee.php>.

This form must be completed prior to the commencement of data collection. All student applications should be reviewed and approved by supervisors prior to submission. Forms should be submitted to the School's Director of Research.

Section 1

	YES	NO
1. Has this research application or any application of a similar nature been refused ethical approval by a review committee of College or other higher education institute?		X
2. Does this research involve participants who are considered to be vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?		X
3. Does this research involve documentary material that is not already in the public domain? (Note: the answer to this question is almost always "yes").	X	

If you have answered **NO** to all the questions above, 'ethics release' is indicated and there is no need to pursue ethical scrutiny further. However, if you have answered **YES** to any of the above questions, proceed to **Section 2**.

Section 2

	YES	NO
1. Will the research require the cooperation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups/individuals to be recruited?		X
2. Will the research involve access to records of personal or confidential information concerning identifiable individuals, either living or recently deceased?		X
3. Will the deception of participants (including covert observation in non-public spaces) be necessary at any time?		X
4. Will the research involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)?		X
5. Will the research involve any drugs, placebos, or other substances (e.g. food, vitamin, and other supplements) being administered to the participants, or will the research involve invasive, intrusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?		X
6. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?		X
7. Is the research likely to involve or result in participants experiencing pain or more than mild discomfort?		X
8. Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		X
9. Will the research involve prolonged or repetitive testing of participants?		X
10. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		X

If you have answered YES to any of the questions in **Section 2**, then your application cannot be approved at School level and you must instead apply to the Faculty Ethics Committee. For that procedure please see here:

<https://ahss.tcd.ie/Faculty%20Ethics%20Committee/FacultyEthicsCommittee.php>. If you answered NO to all questions in **Section 2**, please proceed to **Section 3**.

Section 3: Applicant Details

Name	Cydney Thompson
Applicant E-mail Address	thompscy@tcd.ie
Name(s) of Additional Researcher(s) if applicable	
Name of Supervisor (for students)	Ciaran O'Neill and Jennifer Edmond
Title of Project	The Work of Art in the Age of Recombinant Appropriation
Brief description of the project (max 200 words)	This interdisciplinary research explores changes in cultural creation and consumption, particularly of heritage material, since social media has become a primary method of communicating and creating culture on a global scale. It does this by specifically examining the function and success of 'classical art memes,' (CAMs) a unique reuse and oftentimes remix of digitised cultural heritage content that is currently under studied. Questions surrounding the creation and dissemination of CAMs, ranging from application of copyright to the function of digital platforms, allow for a rich body of research that can be applied to the development of best practice in cultural heritage institutions (CHI). A series of interviews will be conducted with digital content creators and CHI staff to examine their views/practices regarding this model. The interview questions will be crafted with the FAIR data principles in mind, in order to probe the issues they address in academia from the unique perspectives of CHIs and digital content creators, in order to illuminate gaps in how culture is created and shared online.

SECTION 4 – CONSENT

4.1 Will you obtain consent for this research?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If the answer is **no**, please skip to section 5.

4.2. How will you ensure informed / explicit consent is obtained from the research participants?

Please attach a copy of consent form and participant information leaflet (for samples, see <https://ahss.tcd.ie/Faculty%20Ethics%20Committee/FacultyEthicsCommittee.php>)

By giving potential participants an informational leaflet and having them sign a consent form.

N. B. Please indicate if you have modified the consent form and/or the participant information leaflet included in the link above?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If **yes** please highlight the changes made and why these were necessary.

If template is changed substantially - this will need to be reviewed by Deputy DPO for Research: email: researchDPO@tcd.ie

I changed the formatting/order of information in order to make the information clearer to the reader and included elements from the DARIAH consent form wizard that are relevant to my research, however every element from the template is present. This has been emailed to the above address for approval.

4.4 What is the time interval between giving information and seeking consent or participation?
One week.

4.4 Will the participants be purposefully recruited from any of the following groups (tick as appropriate) (i.e. children, prisoners, adults with mental illness where having/had a mental illness is an inclusion criterion of the study population)?

	YES	NO	Not known
Children under 18 years of age		X	

Adults with learning disabilities		X	
Adults with communication difficulties		X	
Adults who are unconscious or very severely ill		X	
Adults who have a terminal illness		X	
Adults with mental illness		X	
Adults suffering from dementia		X	
Prisoners		X	
Young Offenders		X	
Those who could have been considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, e.g. those in care homes, students, line manager of participants		X	
Other groups who may be considered vulnerable (Please specify below)		X	

4.5 If participants are to be recruited purposefully from any of the potentially vulnerable groups listed above, please complete the following:

NA

SECTION 5: CONFIDENTIALITY, DATA PROTECTION, DATA PROCESSING AND DATA STORAGE

5.1 Does the study involve collecting, using, accessing or sharing personal data? Please read footnote 1 & 2 to ensure you are answering this question correctly

☐

Yes **X** No

If you are not collecting personal or sensitive data, please skip to question 5.11

If yes please give details of the personal data^{iv} to be collected and list all media/ forms utilised: online, hard copy, audio, video, photographs etc. and processing activity. Finally, please indicate how the personal data being collected relate to the aims and objectives of the study. (Justification)

Data Collected	Justification	Processing Activity
Participant names/organization/emails	Identification across the various recordings, transcripts, and data sets.	Used in a word document to identify and track interview transcripts and any needed GDPR conversations with participants, however this information will be deleted after the transcripts are anonymized. This file will be stored on my TCD OneDrive, which is password protected. Access restricted to myself and supervisors.
Written consent	Legal basis for processing.	Paper forms, digitized and then shredded, stored on my TCD OneDrive, which is password protected. Access restricted to myself and supervisors.
Interview recordings	Data gathering, will be used to transcribe interviews.	Audio files, stored on my TCD OneDrive, which is password protected. After transcripts are complete these files will be destroyed. Access restricted to myself and supervisors.
Interview transcripts	Data gathering, the transcripts will be put into a content analysis software.	Word document, this file will be stored on my TCD OneDrive, which is password protected. Access restricted to myself and supervisors.

5.2 Does the study involve collecting, using, accessing, or sharing sensitive data^v?

Yes ☐ No **X** ☐

If you answer “no,” then you may proceed to 5.11.

Data Collected	Justification	Processing Activity
See questionnaire appendix xxx question 12-17		

^{iv} Personal data is information which can identify a person – in particular: a name, address, email, telephone number, an identification number, location data, an online identifier, or and IP address.

^v Sensitive personal data means genetic, biometric and health data, as well as personal data revealing racial and ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or ideological convictions or trade union membership.

5.3 Who will determine the ‘how’ and ‘why’ the data is used? (i.e. data controller or joint controllers if more than one)

Employees and students of Trinity are not data controllers. Trinity is the data controller for the institution. However, if other institutes are involved, they should be noted as controllers here.

NA

5.4 If applicable, specify the name/s of any personnel (aside from the lead researcher) who will have access to the personal and/or sensitive data.

Name and Category of Recipient	Type of Data	Format of Data	Contract in place?
EXAMPLE: Trinity member of research team		Pseudonymised etc.	
EXAMPLE: external member of research team			

5.5 If applicable, specify the name/s of any service providers (such as transcribers, third parties carrying out analysis, data collection etc.).

Indicate the format in which they will receive the data i.e. identifiable or pseudonymised? Please confirm and attach the agreement that is in place with the service provider

Name and Category of Recipient	Type of Data:	Format of data	Contract in place?
EXAMPLE: transcribers names	EXAMPLE: Participant names	original, anonymised, non-anonymised or pseudonymised.	

<i>EXAMPLE: statisticians name</i>	<i>EXAMPLE: Written consent</i>		
<i>EXAMPLE: data collector name (hired personnel or companies that are not members of the research team</i>	<i>EXAMPLE: participant names and contract details , written consent</i>		

5.6 During and after the study, what steps will you take to protect the confidentiality of personal or sensitive personal data collected as part of the project? (e.g. Participant identities, contact details, consent forms, code keys that link personal or sensitive personal data to other data, data collected from patient/client records). Please specify details for all that apply and likewise for all media forms utilised (online, hard copy, audio etc.)

Please note: Double encryption is required on all computers, laptops and mobiles devices. Personal data should not be stored on portable devices unless absolutely necessary and it should be stated here if this is necessary and why. Cloud storage of personal data require secure clouds as recommended by Trinity and if cloud storage is used it should be indicated here including the location of the cloud etc.

Personal/sensitive data type	Media Format	Storage Details:
<i>EXAMPLE: contract details, telephone</i>	<i>Original hard copy</i>	
<i>EXAMPLE: consent</i>	<i>Original Hard copy</i>	<i>Stored in locked cabinet with access solely by x</i>
<i>EXAMPLE: sensitive data</i>	<i>Original Hard copy</i>	

5.7 Please specify that you have a log and controls in place to record who accesses, changes, discloses or erases any or all of the personal data collected. In the case of repository data, changes and erasures only need to be logged

NA

5.8 Indicate clearly when processing (i.e. pseudonymisation, anonymization, deletion) will occur. Please indicate who will be responsible for these processes and who will retain the key code if applicable.

NA

5.9 Accepted best practice recommends secure retention of data personal non-anonymised (of all the types listed previously) for 7 years. If there is any reason to apply for a variation from these guidelines, please give details and provide a justification.

Consent forms used for research must be retained for 7 years, as evidence of consent in compliance with GDPR. Students must handover to supervisor when they leave Trinity.

Personal/sensitive data type and media format	Format	Retention time, when it will be destroyed
EXAMPLE: contract details, telephone	Original, anonymised, non-anonymised or pseudonymised.	
EXAMPLE: consent		
EXAMPLE: audio recordings		

5.10 If identifiable data or material (photographs, audio, video etc.) will be retained after the study is completed, is it stated on the information leaflet and consent form, that this will be done, and that material will not be used in future unrelated studies without further specific permission being obtained?

Yes

☐

No

☐

5.11 Researchers must allow the participant access to their personal data including their transcript if they so wish (right of access and right of rectification). Please give details of these arrangements

Participants will be informed that transcripts will be available 60 days after their interview is conducted, if they would like to review them. In the event that they contact me requesting transcripts, I will send them within 48 hours of the request, sharing that any requested changes need to be sent back to me within 14 days, at which point their requested changes will be input into the transcripts and incorporated into the data set.

5.12. How will you ensure the participants can use their other rights as required under GDPR?

These include:

- right to erasure;
- right to object to processing based on public interest;
- right to data portability;

- right to object to profiling or making decisions about individuals by automated means?

Participants will be given an information leaflet informing them of their rights under GDPR and how their data will be processed—this will include information regarding how to invoke the above rights at any time and contact details for myself.

5.13 Do you have a procedure in place if a data subject wishes to withdraw from the study for example? Please expand.

I have crafted a lengthy Data Protection Plan, which includes a plan for participants withdrawing. In the event of a participant withdrawing from the study, I will delete their interview recording and transcription (if the interview has taken place), and any other information I have on the participant on my password protected TCD OneDrive. Their data will additionally be removed from the data set, and any mention of them will be removed from the dissertation text.

6 - RISK, BENEFIT AND HARM

6.1 What is the potential for an adverse outcome (for example, illness, pain, discomfort, distress, inconvenience) for research participants? NOTE: for the protection of both the investigator and the participant, this list must be suitably comprehensive and must also appear in full in the participant information leaflet.

NONE

**** Please note that any substantive adverse events *must* be reported to the XXXX Ethics Committee via VVV@tcd.ie.**

6.2 Will individual or group interviews/questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting. If yes, please provide specific detailed procedures in place to deal with these issues and who will be informed if disclosures occur. If Yes, give details of procedures in place to deal with these issues. Give specific names of counselling or other support services that might be offered to participants.

NO

6.3 Is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study

If yes, please provide specific detailed procedures in place to deal with these issues and who will be informed if disclosures occur. This information needed to be also included in the participant information leaflet.

6.4 What is the potential for benefit for research participants? please outline only the direct benefits.

Facilitating creation of digital cultural materials/professional networking.

SECTION 7 - FUNDING & PAYMENT

7.1 Outline sources of funding for the study if applicable and how you will manage possible conflict between the funders of the study and the aims and results of the study (if applicable).

Recipient of the 1251 Funding through TCD.

7.2 Will the results of the study will be used or disclosed for commercial purposes? If yes please also indicate in the participant information leaflet and indicate that the participant will not commercially benefit.

NO

7.3 Will payment be made to research participants?

YES	NONE OTHER THAN MINIMAL EXPENSES TO COVER TRAVEL COSTS ETC	NO
		X

7.4 If you answered YES to question 7.3, please specify for what purpose the payment will be made and the amount to be provided to each participant.

SECTION 8 – ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM OTHER COMMITTEES, FROM NON-TRINITY FACILITIES

Ethical approval from Trinity research committees if granted, does not supersede any requirements that outside bodies which may have the need for similar applications to be made to local ethical approval bodies in advance of the study commencing.

8.1 Has ethical approval been sought from any other organisation(s) in which the study will take place?

YES	NO	NA : IF NA, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY
	X	

If you answer N/A, please proceed directly to Section 9.

8.2 If you have answered YES to question 8.1, where has approval been sought from and has ethical approval been given? If a DPIA was required for this application please insert as an appendix to this application.

YES	Awaiting Reply	NO	<i>If No, please explain Why</i>

8.3 If you have answered NO to question 8.1, is it your intention to seek ethical approval from the organisation(s) in which the study will take place?

YES	NO	IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY
	X	

8.4 Do you require, and have you sought access to collect data from specific groups either within or outside Trinity to conduct your research please list them here and attach the letter(s) of permission to your application. This includes sports clubs, hospitals, care facilities, community services, etc.

Name of facility

Responsible person

Section 9: Declaration

Signature of applicant <i>I declare that the information given herein is accurate. I have read the TCD Ethics Policy and will follow the guidelines therein. I have read and understood the TCD Data Protection Policy.</i>	Signature: Date:
Signature of Supervisor (in case of students) <i>I declare that the information given herein is accurate. I have read the Ethics Policy and will follow the guidelines therein.</i>	Signature: Date:

Approval by the School's Ethics Committee <i>Based on the information available on this form, the REC believes the ethical risks in this project are negligible and will be appropriately mitigated during the course of the research^{vi}.</i>	Signature: Date:

^{vi} Primary responsibility for ensuring ethical conduct in research rests with the Principal Investigator(s).

Recruitment materials

FOR CONTENT CREATORS

Dear _____,

Hello! My name is Cydney Thompson, and I am a PhD Researcher at Trinity College Dublin in Dublin, Ireland. My research focuses on Classical Art Memes and how they can show us a great deal about how culture is created online. I am wondering if you would be willing to do a one-hour interview with me regarding your creative process and how you distribute your content?

The process will be anonymised as much as possible, and while I would save your email and record the interview, that information would be destroyed after 6 months once I have transcribed and anonymised the interview. Please do send me any additional questions you may have, I would love to speak with you further about my research and what an interview would entail!

If you're interested, would you be willing to share your email with me so I can send you an informational leaflet and a consent form? Many thanks in advance for taking the time to read this and help a researcher!

Cydney Thompson

Informational Leaflet

Participant Information Leaflet, January 9th, 2023 (Version 1)

Introduction to the project:

You have been asked to be involved in ‘**The Work of Art in the Age of recombinant appropriation: Memes, museums, and the Making of digital culture**’ (hereinafter: the project) because I am trying to establish and define the relationship between GLAM+ institutions and the creation of digital culture on social media through a series of interviews with GLAM+ institutions and content creators.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in the project, it is important for you to understand why the project is being done and what taking part involves. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Project description:

This interdisciplinary research explores changes in cultural creation and consumption, particularly of heritage material, since social media has become a primary method of communicating and creating culture on a global scale. It does this by specifically examining the function and success of ‘classical art memes,’ (CAMs) a unique reuse and oftentimes remix of digitised cultural heritage content that is currently under studied. Questions surrounding the creation and dissemination of CAMs, ranging from the application of copyright to the function of digital platforms, allow for a rich body of research that can be applied to the development of best practice in GLAM+ institutions.

A series of interviews will be conducted with DCCs and GLAM+ institution staff to examine their views/practices regarding this model. The interview questions will be crafted with the FAIR data principles in mind, in order to probe the issues they address in academia from the unique perspectives of GLAM+ institutions and DCCs, in order to illuminate gaps in how culture is created and shared online.

To learn more about **The Work of Art in the Age of recombinant appropriation: Memes, museums, and the Making of digital culture** project, please see <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cydney-Thompson>

Important information:

- There will be no direct benefits to participants, however, I hope the results of the project will help us to understand best practice in the creation of cultural content.
- There will be no direct disadvantages to participants, however, there is a small risk of your personal data being breached. Please see the “data processing” section for measures taken to prevent this.

- It is your choice whether you would like to take part in the study or not. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to give a reason and you can change your mind at any time. Please contact Cydney Thompson at thompscy@tcd.ie if you wish to withdraw from the study at any time.
- If you choose to participate, interviews will take approximately one hour and interview questions will be provided ahead of the scheduled interview. Audio recordings of the interview will be created for the purpose of transcription, these recordings will be kept for six months or until the transcriptions are completed, at which time they will be destroyed. See “data processing” section for security measures for recordings.
- Interviews will take place over Zoom.
- The information from the project will be published in the form of a PhD dissertation and may additionally be used for conference papers and journal articles.

Data Processing

‘The work of art in the age of recombinant appropriation: Memes, museums, and the making of digital culture’ values your privacy and processes your personal data in compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Your **Personal Data** is any information related to you. **Processing** is any operation performed on the data.

According to the **Transparency Principle**, this document will provide you with information about the processing of your personal data as required by Art. 12, 13, and 14 of the GDPR.

Who am I and how can you contact me?

Name: Cydney Thompson

Address: School of History, TCD, College Green, Dublin 2

E-mail: thompscy@tcd.ie

acting as the joint data controller within the meaning of the GDPR with Trinity College Dublin (Contact information for TCD is at the end of this leaflet).

For what purpose do I process your data?

Your data will be processed within the scope of the project. Please be informed that your data may also be used in different research projects in the domain of Digital Humanities/Public History in accordance with the GDPR.

What information about you will I collect and process?

The following types of information about you are collected and processed within the project:

- Name, surname
- E-mail address

- Affiliation / professional situation / occupation

The data are collected directly from you through:

- Oral or video interview (transcription)

Legal basis for the processing of your data

Your data is processed on the basis of your consent (Art. 6.1(a) of the GDPR) which you give by accepting this notice.

Exceptionally, where consent is not an appropriate legal basis, your personal data can also be processed on the basis of our legitimate interest in carrying out the project, or further research in the field of Digital Humanities/Public History. Then, the processing is based on Art. 6.1(f) of the GDPR.

For how long do we keep your data?

Your personal data will be stored for a period of up to 6 months after collection, after which it will be destroyed.

Will your data be shared with anyone?

Your personal data will not be shared with or disclosed to anyone outside the Trinity College Dublin, School of History and Humanities.

How will we protect your data?

Your personal data will be kept in a digital database on a password-protected TCD OneDrive. Only the primary investigator and the PhD supervisors will have access to your personal data.

Will your data be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA)?

Your data will not be transferred outside the European Economic Area.

No profiling or automated decision-making.

Your data will not be used for profiling or automated decision-making purposes.

Your rights with regards to the processing of your data:

The GDPR grants you certain rights with regards to the processing of your personal data. These rights include:

- **Access** (Art. 15 of the GDPR): you have the right to obtain confirmation as to whether We have your personal data, as well as information about how We process it. You can also request a copy of your personal data, for which We may charge you a reasonable fee based on administrative costs. In order to exercise your right of access, contact us at thompscy@tcd.ie;
- **Rectification** (Art. 16 of the GDPR): if your personal data that We process are incomplete or inaccurate, you have the right to request rectification of such data

without undue delay. In order to exercise your right to rectification, contact us at thompscy@tcd.ie;

- **Erasure** ("right to be forgotten" – Art. 17 of the GDPR): in certain circumstances (e.g. if your data are processed unlawfully or unnecessarily) you may request erasure of your personal data.
- **Restriction of processing** (Art. 18 of the GDPR): in certain circumstances (e.g. if you contest accuracy of your data that we process or lawfulness of the processing) you may request restriction of processing of your data. Such data will not be erased, but in principle can only be processed with your consent;
- **Data portability** (Art. 20 of the GDPR): in certain circumstances, you may request transmission of your data to another controller in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format;
- **Right to object** (Art. 21 of the GDPR): if you did not consent to the processing, or if it is not necessary to comply with a legal obligation, you may always object to it, in which case We shall no longer process your data.
- **Moreover, you have the right to:**
- **withdraw your consent** to the processing of your personal data at any time (Art. 7(3) of the GDPR) by contacting us at thompscy@tcd.ie. The withdrawal of consent will not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal; lodge a **complaint** with a supervisory authority.

You can exercise these rights or learn more about data protection in relation to this study by contacting us at thompscy@tcd.ie or the Trinity College Data Protection Officer (contact details below). If you are unhappy with how we have used your personal data, you can raise a concern with the Data Protection Commission via their online form - <https://forms.dataprotection.ie/contact> - or contact the Commission at:

Data Protection Commission
21 Fitzwilliam Square South
Dublin 2
D02 RD28
Ireland
<https://www.dataprotection.ie>

Trinity College Dublin Data Protection Information

Data Controller	Trinity College Dublin
Data Protection Officer	Data Protection Officer Secretary's Office

	Trinity College Dublin Dublin 2 Ireland Email: dataprotection@tcd.ie Website: www.tcd.ie/privacy

Participant Interview Guide

The Work of Art in the Age of recombinant appropriation: Memes, museums, and the making of digital culture

Researcher: Cydney Thompson, thompscy@tcd.ie

Research Institution: Trinity College Dublin

Participant Interview Guide

The interview questions were written into four categories in line with the FAIR Data Principles, around which the structure of this research is built. The acronym FAIR stands for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable, and represents a set of data standards developed in 2014 by a group of stakeholders in academia, industry, funding agencies, and scholarly publishers.^{vii} The goal of crafting the interview questions around the FAIR Data Principles is to compare how the GLAM sector approaches data sharing through a FAIR lens and compare this with if/how digital content creators go about making their data FAIR. By comparing the responses, this research should illuminate gaps within their practices and how culture is created and shared online. Each set of questions has been tailored to suit the two sets of participants within each trait of FAIR and includes a breakdown of what each trait of FAIR is and how data can be edited to meet the requirements of the trait.

It is important to note that this is a semi-structured interview, meaning that while the interview will follow along with the questions in the guide as listed, there is room to discuss anything related to these questions that the participant finds to be relevant. Additionally, if the participant has any questions/issues with the interview questions, they are free to share these with the researcher and accommodations will be made.

^{vii} D. Wilkinson et al., “The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship,” *Scientific Data* 3, no. 1 (March 15, 2016): 160018, <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>.

Introducing findability:

According to the GO FAIR website, “The first step in (re)using data is to find them. Metadata and data should be easy to find for both humans and computers. Machine-readable metadata are essential for automatic discovery of datasets and services, so this is an essential component of the FAIRification process.”^{viii} According to the 2016 paper by Wilkinson et al., which presented the FAIR Data Principles in their first fully realised research article, the central requirements of Findability are:

- F1. (meta)data are assigned a globally unique and persistent identifier
- F2. data are described with rich metadata
- F3. metadata clearly and explicitly include the identifier of the data it describes
- F4. (meta)data are registered or indexed in a searchable resource^{ix}

Anne Gilliland defines metadata pre-2000 as: A suite of industry or disciplinary standards as well as additional internal and external documentation and other data necessary for the identification, representation, interoperability, technical management, performance, and use of data contained in an information system.^x

Gilliland goes on to note that within the content of the GLAM sector, metadata looks like “the value-added information they create to arrange, describe, track, and otherwise enhance access to information objects and the physical items and collections

^{viii} “FAIR Data Principles,” GO FAIR, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

^{ix} Mark D. Wilkinson et al., “The FAIR Guiding Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship,” *Scientific Data* 3, no. 1 (March 15, 2016): 160018, <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>.

^x Anne J. Gilliland, “Setting the Stage,” in *Introduction to Metadata: Third Edition*, ed. Murtha Baca (Getty Publications, 2016), 1.

related to those objects.”^{xi} Metadata then, in more simple terms, is information embedded within a digital object that identifies that object as unique within the greater collection it is housed in. That information can be used to locate that object within the platform it is hosted on. The more detailed the metadata, the easier the digital object is to locate.

Questions regarding findability:

1. How do you find your content? Talk through the process, including specific websites, hashtags, search engines, or other specific technological assistance. Do you specifically go out looking for content or wait to come across it in some way?
2. What do you do to make your content, once created, findable online? Hashtags? Posting through a social media account? Do you embed your content with any kind of identifier or metadata?
3. Are you trying to keep track of/monitor the findability of your content in any way?
4. Is there any kind of community guidelines for creators on how to make their content more visible that you’ve been made aware of?

^{xi} Gilliland, “Setting the Stage,” 2.

Introducing accessibility:

According to the GO FAIR website, “Once the user finds the required data, she/he/they need to know how they can be accessed, possibly including authentication and authorisation.”^{xii} According to Wilkinson et al., in order for data to be accessible:

A1. (meta)data are retrievable by their identifier using a standardised communications protocol

A1.1 the protocol is open, free, and universally implementable

A1.2 the protocol allows for an authentication and authorisation procedure, where necessary

A2. metadata are accessible, even when the data are no longer available^{xiii}

A protocol is a media-related adaptive change,^{xiv} for example, the adoption of specific traits of an original video in an adaptation, or the affordances of a platform, such as Twitter’s character limit, or the pay wall on articles from the New York Times. In regards to facilitating accessibility, these protocols could be making a platform-specific account in order to access content, such as the Rijksmuseum’s online platform, the

^{xii} “FAIR Data Principles,” GO FAIR, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

^{xiii} Wilkinson et al., “The FAIR Guiding Principles.”

^{xiv} Michael Moore, “Adaptation and New Media,” *Adaptation* 3 (August 26, 2010): 179–92, <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apq010>, 180.

Rijksstudio,^{xv} which has a search function within the platform that would allow for data to be retrieved by its identifying metadata (A1), is free and allows anyone with an email address to make an account (A1.1), and requires the creation of a username and password (A1.2).

Questions regarding accessibility:

1. How do you access your content once you have found it? Do you bother with sites that need log-ins and other authentication in order to download the image? Are there any protocols associated with you accessing the source content, and if there are, do you always follow them?
2. How do users online access your content? Do you keep it free on social media accounts only, push content on Patreon, or a blend of multiple access points? Are there any protocols associated with users accessing your content? If so, please explain why that decision was made.
3. Are you trying to keep track of/monitor how often your content is accessed or interacted with online?
4. Is there any kind of community guidelines for creators on how to make their content more accessible that you've been made aware of?

^{xv} "Rijksstudio," Rijksmuseum, accessed March 14, 2022, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio>.

Introducing interoperability:

According to the GO FAIR website, “The data usually need to be integrated with other data. In addition, the data need to interoperate with applications or workflows for analysis, storage, and processing.”^{xvi} According to Wilkinson et al., in order for data to be interoperable:

- I1. (meta)data use a formal, accessible, shared, and broadly applicable language for knowledge representation.
- I2. (meta)data use vocabularies that follow FAIR Data Principles
- I3. (meta)data include qualified references to other (meta)data^{xvii}

The literal definition of interoperability is “capable of being used or operated reciprocally^{xviii},” and in a computer/technology context more specifically means, “the basic ability of different computerised products or systems to readily connect and exchange information with one another, in either implementation or access, without

^{xvi} “FAIR Data Principles,” GO FAIR, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

^{xvii} Wilkinson et al., “The FAIR Guiding Principles.”

^{xviii} “Definition of Interoperable | Dictionary.Com,” [www.dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/interoperable), accessed January 7, 2022, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/interoperable>.

restriction^{xix}.” Within the context of Digital Humanities, this definition (when taken loosely) of different systems being able to speak to each other can apply both technically and culturally. Technical interoperability is when systems can talk to each other, or when digital objects have been assigned metadata that can be used in broadly applicable contexts, such as multiple digital repositories. Cultural interoperability implies that culture is an intelligent system within which knowledge is produced and that the language surrounding knowledge creation can be crafted to apply in multiple settings.

Questions regarding interoperability:

1. Do you post content across multiple platforms? If so, what, if any, modifications do you need to make to the content based on the platforms? Do you adjust identifying factors, such as hashtags and tags, based on what platform you are posting on? Do any of those identifying factors stay the same?
2. When crafting your content, how do you, if at all, make sure that the content can be understood by a variety of people? Do you choose source content based on its historical context that would be widely known online? Or do you choose to make the content widely consumable through the crafting of the language within the content? Or do you just follow your intuition?
3. Are you trying to keep track of/monitor how often your content is used across platforms/systems online?

^{xix} “What Is Interoperability? Definition and FAQs | OmniSci,” accessed January 7, 2022, <https://www.omnisci.com/technical-glossary/interoperability>.

4. Is there any kind of community guidelines for creators on how to make their content more interoperable that you've been made aware of?

Introducing reusability:

The GOFAIR website says, "The ultimate goal of FAIR is to optimise the reuse of data. To achieve this, metadata and data should be well-described so that they can be replicated and/or combined in different settings."^{xx} In order to be reusable:

R1. meta(data) are richly described with a plurality of accurate and relevant attributes

R1.1. (meta)data are released with a clear and accessible data usage license

R1.2. (meta)data are associated with detailed provenance

R1.3. (meta)data meet domain-relevant community standards^{xxi}

^{xx} "FAIR Data Principles," GO FAIR, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

^{xxi} Wilkinson et al., "The FAIR Guiding Principles."

All four of the FAIR Data Principles are clearly linked, for instance, findability and interoperability are linked by a need for clear, standardised metadata. However, while the previous three principles could in theory be applied individually in an institution, the reusability of data is dependent on making sure that the findability, accessibility, and interoperability of the data are in place. R1 and R1.2 speak to the need for rich metadata, facilitating findability and interoperability. R1.3 speaks to the need for standards for the data and the domain to facilitate accessibility and interoperability, and R1.1 addresses one of the most crucial aspects of reusability: clear and accessible data usage licenses.

Questions regarding reusability:

1. How do you decide how to reuse institutional content? What informs your creation process? What about this source content pushes you to remix it? Is this process spontaneous (responding to current events) or more passive (seeing an image and responding to the image itself outside of current events)?
2. How do you navigate reuse licenses and other protocols for the reuse of institutional content? Do you only choose open-access materials or just use what speaks to you? Do you have any experience with an institution responding to your reuse of their content?

3. Are you trying to keep track of/monitor how often your content is reused/utilised online? Are you doing anything to make your content more reusable? If someone reuses your content without your consent, how do you respond?
4. Is there any kind of community guidelines for creators on how to make their content more reusable that you've been made aware of?
5. How would you describe your relationship, if any, with GLAM+ institutions, particularly in regards to the creation and distribution of your content?
6. Has any of the above questions sparked any thoughts about your creation process/the creation/dissemination of your content that you would like to share?

Data Management Plan

1) Data Collection

a) What data will you collect or create?

- i) I will be collecting samples of posts on social media from consenting members of the general public and from GLAM+ institutions, and interviewing staff from a select number of institutions as part of a case study. I plan to store screen shots in .TIFF formats of relevant posts from websites, .WAV formats for the recordings of interviews, .DOCX formats for transcriptions and notes from interviews, and .PDF files of related academic articles. These formats were chosen due to their standardised, interchangeable, open formats, which will ensure the long-term usability of data.

b) How will the data be collected or created?

- i) The interviews will be conducted over the online conferencing app, Zoom. They will be recorded using a built-in feature in Zoom which exports audio files as a part of the function of the application. Videos will not be recorded. Posts will be saved using my computer's built-in screen grab function, which enables screen grabs in a .TIFF format. Web pages will be saved using the application Wayback Machine, an open source web archival software.

2) Documentation and Metadata

a) What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

- i) Metadata will include relevant copyright information, and notes in the metadata will include access dates and times. I will edit metadata to Irish

archival standards using Adobe Bridge, which allows for carefully customised metadata creation within files of all types.

3) Ethics and Legal Compliance

a) How will you manage any ethical issues?

- i) I will be closely following GDPR regulations, including written consent to use any and all personal data for the dissertation, and not saving any unnecessary data for the sake of maintaining privacy. Data will be anonymised as much as possible and when needed I will refer to the departmental ethics committee.

b) How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?

- i) As much as possible my data and research database will be FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable), and have open access licensing where possible. According to the directive 96/9/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 1996 on the legal protection of databases, 'Within the EU, the act of compiling a database attracts copyright insofar as the compiler has exercised intellectual judgement in selecting or arranging the data. There is also a separate database right that applies to the contents of a database where a substantial investment was made to obtain, verify or present them. The thrust of the database right is that users may not extract or reuse more than an insubstantial part of the contents without authorisation from the compiler, unless certain exemptions apply.'

4) Storage and Backup

a) How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

- i) The data will be stored on a password protected laptop and backed up on a 2 TB external hard drive that will be password protected. Back ups will be executed every two weeks and checked at each back up for data and byte corruption.

b) How will you manage access and security?

- i) I will manage access and security by applying passwords to both the laptop and external hard drive used to store the data.

5) Selection and Preservation

a) Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?

- i) The data collected that will be of long-term value will be from the case studies, which will include pseudonymised transcripts of the contents of the interviews, and the saved social media posts, and GLAM+ institution website documentation.

b) What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

- i) The data will be uploaded to an appropriate repository as open data.

6) Data Sharing

a) How will you share the data?

- i) This data will be shared in my PhD dissertation, which will be published. It will additionally be shared in correspondence with my supervisors, in conference papers that I give leading up to the completion of my dissertation, and in an appropriate repository following the completion of my dissertation.

b) Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

- i) I will pseudonymise all data where applicable before sharing in any way. I will adhere to GDPR restrictions in every way.

7) Responsibilities and Resources

a) Who will be responsible for data management?

- i) I will be responsible for data management, and my supervisors will check in with me regularly to make sure that I am correctly employing good data management strategies.

b) What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

- i) Access to a password protected OneDrive folder, which has already been provided by Trinity College Dublin.