

SaveFile

Towards a Games Archive at New York University

Annie Schweikert (NYU Moving Image Archiving and Preservation MA)
Sigridur Regina Sigurthorsdottir (NYU Moving Image Archiving and Preservation MA)
Emperatriz Ung (NYU Game Design MFA)

Why archive video games?

Games are “complex media” and “time-based media art”

Games in the context of an academic program are a record of student work
Write history of department
Sparking inspiration

How do you archive a video game?

Data: The game itself (executable, app, source code and/or physical components such as controllers)

Metadata: Scaffolding to play the game as intended (the development platform, programming language, commercial software and hardware, artist intent, and more)

Goals

Establish a formal archive of thesis and capstone projects completed by students in the Game Center at Tisch School of the Arts.

Archivist priorities: Documentation of gameplay requirements and dependencies	Designer priorities: Documentation of creative intent and copyright concerns
Joint priorities: Approachable, sustainable accession process	

Interview findings

Privacy concerns: How much to share?
Physical media: What to collect?
Virtual reality: How to document gameplay?
Sustainability: How to keep this archive going in a two-year program?

Previous work between MIAP and Game Center:

Kristin MacDonough: “Preserve Your Cake and Eat It Too: Issues in the Conservation and Preservation of Video Games,” MIAP thesis, spring 2013
“Pressing Restart”: Joint symposium on video game archiving, fall 2013
Bex Gerber: Preservation assessment of the physical media and environment in the Game Center Open Library, spring 2014
Savannah Campbell: “A Rift in Our Practices?: Toward Preserving Virtual Reality,” MIAP thesis, spring 2017



Project Timeline

1. Staff and faculty interviews
2. Designer interviews
3. Collect games via Google form
4. Move games to longer-term storage
5. Make accessible onsite in Game Center Library

Next Steps

6. Establish server storage
7. Implement tiered privacy access levels
8. Set up CollectiveAccess database (metadata schema created spring 2018)
9. Train Game Center student and faculty volunteers on accession procedures