

Existential Scavenging: Cultural Artifacts for Future Archaeologists

Alongside the much spoken rise of social media, there is a far less debated phenomenon among everyday users of digital technologies, social media outsiders who, for merely existential purposes, engage themselves with the creation of "intimate media". With or without a conscious method they scavenge their own existence by holding on to the digital traces they encounter. They, in this way, provide a substantial meaning to their lives. The resulting artifacts are likely to be fascinating collections, which, if on one side they are disregarded by the official cultural discourse, have a lot of potential to entertain the audience of the future. The latter will look back, like a team of archaeologists, at the period of time in which these scavengers have operated. As in the case of Erkki Kurenniemi, the Finnish pioneer who will reveal his "virtual persona" only after his death or as in the case of other individuals packaging their scavenging in the form of "time-capsules", such an audience is likely to experience a sense of profound respect for the authenticity that these ancient reliquaries of a past digital age might provoke. In this sense is fundamental that, when the scavenger makes a conscious decision of encapsulating the result of his scavenging for a future audience, he uses a coherent and thus readable syntax and composes it using a wide range of media languages which such audience can interpret and compare. These media languages are only to increase the authenticity of such artifacts as are presumably created with digital technologies belonging to that time as it is for instance the case of black and white neorealist movie from 1960 (e.g. Ermanno Olmi's movie "Il Posto" shot in a corporation with actors and equipment belonging to the corporation where the very film takes place).