MAXWELL L. ANDERSON

Executive director, New Cities Foundation, and president, Souls Grown Deep Foundation

I had my first in-depth encounter with the proto-digital world in 1993, when I was director of Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum in Atlanta. In September of that year, I attended the Second International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums (ICHIM '93) in Cambridge, England. It took place the very month that the beta version of the public Internet browser NCSA Mosaic was launched. I was hooked. A few weeks after I returned stateside, the Carlos had a website.

Anyone could have foreseen some of the value of networked data from the web's primeval origins. Over the next two decades, I encouraged best practices in the adoption of digital strategies—eschewing proprietary solutions, working collaboratively across institutions, and ignoring fads in devices and platforms. I focused on building illustrated collections online, developing relational databases, and promoting ethical conduct by means of transparency in all collection-related activities, from acquisitions to provenance research to deaccessioning and restitutions of looted antiquities. It also felt essential to share performance metrics, ranging from the percentage of minorities among managers to energy consumption statistics, resulting in a public dashboard launched in 2007 at the Indianapolis Museum of Art when I was director.

What no one foresaw was how social media might trigger a contest over institutional authority, with crowdsourcing achieving a status comparable to scholarly opinion. The allure of being first, biggest, and fastest continues to distract museum leaders from the tedious but critical slog of developing web-friendly content drawn from curatorial and conservation research. Well over two decades after the first glimmer of the potential of networked digital content, museums too often remain mired in institutional habit, privileging good news over transparency, flash over substance, and an internal agenda over the field's collective potential. Simply attracting followers, gratifying as it may be, is as insubstantial a goal as increasing attendance for its own sake.

The greatest unrealized opportunity for museums in the digital realm is to channel André Malraux in a quest for a web-enabled *musée imaginaire*, allowing content to flow seamlessly across collections, yielding advances in research, global awareness of the treasures scattered among countless brick-and-mortar repositories, and a stronger case for investment in culture. The only curative proposition is for funding sources—ranging from foundations to government agencies to corporations and individuals—to incentivize collaboration over one-upmanship.

PAUL SCHMELZER

Editor, walkerart.org

They call it "flyover country," but to be less judgy, let's just say: the Walker Art Center isn't exactly at—or near—the center of the art world. New York is one thousand miles away, Beijing well over six thousand. Despite this geography, the Internet puts us in the thick of the discussion about culture today and what it means to make, present, and contextualize art. But the rationale behind our digital publishing isn't to increase the Walker's relevance to the art world: it's to increase art's relevance to people around the world.

Since its founding as an art center in 1940, the Walker has been in the publishing game. Exhibition catalogues and periodicals like *Design Quarterly* helped put us, and our ideas, on the map—or at least in libraries, bookstores, and museum shops nationwide. Today, our reach is far more extensive, thanks to online publishing efforts that bring original artist interviews, curatorial essays, short documentaries, and our previously printed texts to desktops, smartphones, and tablets anywhere in the wired world. Relaunched in 2011 as an ever-changing news-style publication, the Walker home page emphasizes our evolving thinking about our audience: that is, thinking that equally values virtual and actual visitors, those likely to visit us in Minneapolis and those who might like to but who, due to geography or economics, can't.

But simply being online doesn't bridge all geographic gulfs. To matter, our stories—usually surfaced via social media and competing with that terrain's unique kind of clutter—need to be at least one of three things: relevant, surprising, or unique. To this end, some of our content is pegged to issues in the news and topics people are talking about online. Our ongoing Artist Op-Ed series, for instance, invites artists such as Ron Athey, Dread Scott, and Natascha Sadr Haghighian to sound off on pressing matters like Michael Brown's killing, the Mediterranean refugee crisis, and the "post-AIDS" body. In a 2013 blog post, published just after Edward Snowden's NSA revelations, designer Sang Mun wrote about the protest typeface ZXX, which he developed after working as a CIA codebreaker during his conscription in the Korean army. Other stories feature the unexpected. For instance, our design director interviewed the media director of the antigay Westboro Baptist Church—a group in Topeka, Kansas, known for its hate speech—about its sign production studio. And our coverage of a Minneapolis design team's REFUGEES WELCOME storefront sticker campaign sparked interest from the White House. Some posts provide exclusive experiences: the first read of a curatorial essay from our *Ordinary Pictures* exhibition catalogue, say, or free online screenings of commissioned moving-image works by Uri Aran, Moyra Davey, Shahryar Nashat, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, among many other artists.

So far, what we do appears to be working: our local online visitorship remains steady, while nearly 70 percent of site visitors are coming from out of state—and a third from international locales.

ORIT GAT

Features editor, Rhizome

According to a 2013 Pew Research Center report on arts organizations and digital technologies, 50 percent of US arts organizations maintain a blog. This means that at every other institution there is someone sitting in the offices of the communications department wondering what to publish and who will read it.

The energy that goes into this online publishing is well spent; an institution's audience is now measured not only in visitor counts but also in likes. What to do with that attention? There are some