

Acting in the Best Interest of the Other: An Ethics of Care in Digital Curation

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Overview

- Introduction & Research Questions
- Background: Video Records of Practice, Ethics of Care, & Designated Community
- Research Methods
- Findings: Acting in the Best Interest & Data Curation as Care
- Discussion & Findings

Introduction

Research Questions

RQ1:

How do data producers and reusers perceive care in repository practices and policies?

RQ2:

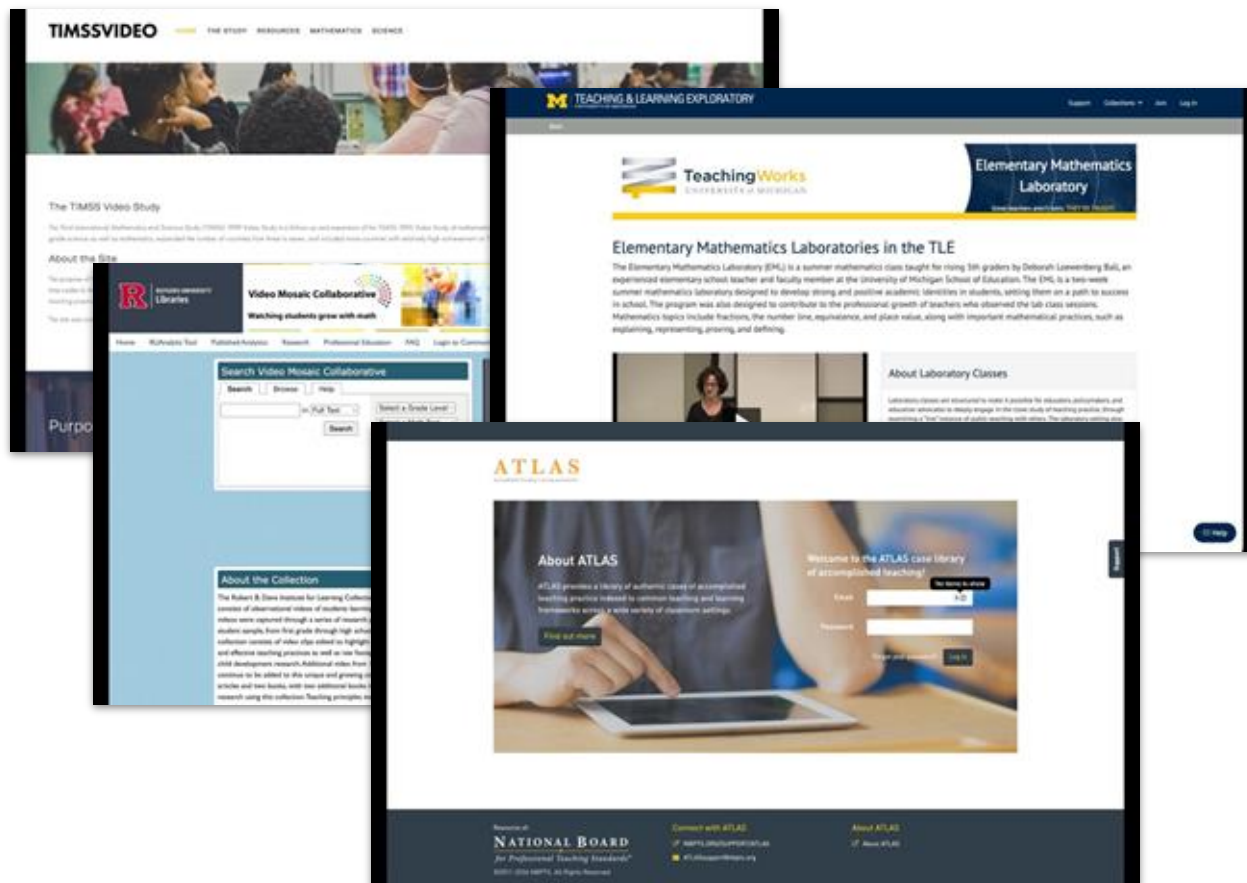
What does this mean for our understanding of relationships between repositories and Designated Communities?

Background

VRP: Video Records of Practice

**Video recordings of
teachers and students in
classrooms,** often
accompanied by associated
documentation, including
lesson plans, assignments,
and student work

VROP Repositories



Ethics of Care

- ...in Education
 - e.g., Vosman, F., Baart, A., & Hoffman, J. (Eds.). (2020). The Ethics of Care: The State of the Art. Peeters Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q26k08>
- ...in Archival Science
 - e.g., Caswell, M., & Cifor, M. (2016). From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives. *Archivaria*, 82(0), 23–43.
- ...in Digital Curation
 - e.g., Lassere, M., & Whyte, J. M. (2021). Balancing Care and Authenticity in Digital Collections: A Radical Empathy Approach To Working With Disk Images. *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v3i2.125>

Tarlow's Dimensions of Care

Tarlow, B. (1996). Caring: A Negotiated Process That Varies. In *Caregiving: Readings in Knowledge, Practice, Ethics, and Politics* (pp. 56-82). University of Pennsylvania Press.

- **Time**
- Be(ing) there
- Talking
- Sensitivity
- **Acting in the best interest of the other**
- Caring as a feeling
- Caring as doing
- Reciprocity

Designated Community

“An **identified group of potential Consumers** who **should be able to understand a particular set of information** in ways exemplified by the Preservation Objectives. The Designated Community may be composed of multiple user communities. A Designated Community is defined by the Archive and this definition may change over time”

-Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems Secretariat, 2024, pp. 1-11

Research Methods

Data Collection

- 44 in-depth semi-structured interviews with VROP producers and reusers
 - 31 university faculty, 5 graduate students, 2 postdoctoral researchers, and 6 education professionals
- Interview questions focused on:
 - Appropriate use of VROP
 - Responsible conduct of research
 - Ethics of video data reuse in education

Data Analysis

- Initial coding: deductive and thematic codes
 - Scott's pi: 0.712 and 0.732
- Secondary coding: ethics of care, harm, access
 - Continuous comparison
- Instruments available:
<https://doi.org/10.7302/Z28C9TGP>

Findings

Repositories as Sites of Care

1/2

- Value of repositories to the community
- Repositories as modelling and teaching data management
- Concerns about curation
- Tension between evolving norms for enacting care in data management and value of repositories for the field

Repositories as Sites of Care

2/2

"I would like to see a point in time where teaching is, the practice of teaching and improving craft becomes more of a public activity and so that teachers are willing to share their video so that we can talk about the teaching and improve things, and I think **these repositories are a nice way to do that**. But I also think that we've got to work on norms, and expectations, and really framing how the videos should be viewed. **It's not enough just to put all the tapes out there**." (Interviewee 21)

Data Curation as Care

Repository
Management and Care

- Care as preserving participants dignity, privacy, and respect over *time* by:
 - **Care**fully preparing data with “painstaking detail” to not “reveal who the students are” (Interviewee 040)
 - Transparency to research participants of data reuse policies. “It just needs to be done **care**fully to make sure that parents and students...knows where it will be shared and how it will be shared and for what purposes” (Interviewee 041)

Data Curation as Care

Appropriate Reuse

- Respect and privacy enacted through data reuse policies deemed appropriate
 - “for educational purposes, and for professional development. I see it as appropriate” (Interviewee 041)
- Importance of clear framing of videos
 - “...A little sequence of a teacher getting upset might be interpreted as displaying inappropriate behavior, but then if you were to look at the lesson or a classroom in a school year context, that same interaction could be interpreted completely differently.” (Interviewee 039)
- Transparency in data reuse policies

Data Curation as Care

Curation Activities:
Creating Access and
Representation
Information

- Curation activities as evidence of proper **care** that takes place continuously over time
 - “I appreciate how everything is tagged and indexed so many different ways. I feel like that has helped my use.” (Interviewee 027)
- Descriptive vocabularies structure access to VROP & are interpretive acts that shape future discovery, access, and reuse (i.e., **care** for Designated Communities)
 - “And even though they're supposed to be highly visible practices... **At times they actually weren't very visible**, and people who had worked together on research teams, we had a lot of disagreements about what we were seeing.” (Interviewee 002)

Data Curation as Care

Repository Interactions
as Caring

- Reference to assist with data discovery & access
 - “So when they told us about the dataset, this was very useful to us. And so then **we engaged with them** in the process of getting access to it, which took a while but turned out to be very fruitful for us so far in the research.” (Interviewee 013)
- Facilitating community relationships
 - Leveraging expertise
 - Community-building and coordination
 - “I think it is really important that they probably do have some conversations. I think these **repositories are a nice way to do that.**” (Interviewee 021)

Discussion & Conclusion

RQ1

RQ1:

How do data producers and reusers perceive care in repository practices and policies?

- Repositories shape the ethical conditions under which reuse occurs
- Curation and Care are relational processes that take place over **time**
- Data producers and repositories **act in the best interest of the other** (e.g., participants represented in data) outside of a direct relationship and without their knowledge of activities done to ensure respect, dignity, and privacy

RQ2

RQ2:
What does this
mean for our
understanding of
relationships
between
repositories and
Designated
Communities?

- **Care** includes development and maintenance of relationships with DCs over **time**
- Expectation that repositories will understand and reflect the ethics of **care** of their DCs
- The ethical epistemologies & practices of DCs should inform repository policies & practices

Anticipatory Care

Care that anticipates future
needs in order to **act in the
best interest** of data
stakeholders across **time**

Anticipatory Care

“If we are creating libraries, we are sharing images, what are our goals and **how do we protect those we have videotaped** that show up in the videos so that the viewers, those who will be using this video will use them. **be respectful of those initial goals?**” (Interviewee 039)

Practical Implications for Repositories

- Incorporating ethical commitments into documentation
- Articulating shared values with disciplinary communities
- Demonstrations of alignment with ethical expectations of Designated Communities

Limitations & Future Work

Limitations:

- Focus on education
- Interviewees were data producers and reusers

Future work should:

- Expand to other disciplines with different ethical traditions & norms
- Expand study participants to include repository staff members

Acknowledgments

- Thank you to all of the participants who took part in this study
- This research was funded by the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**, National Leadership Grant # LG-06-14-0122-14: “Qualitative Data Reuse: Records of Practice in Educational Research and Teacher Development”
- Additional support provided by the University of Michigan School of Information

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