What Tradition? Whose Archive?
Blogs, Googlewashing, and the Digitization of the Archive

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On March 28, 2005, the day I began to write these remarks, I Googled "archive fever." In 0.24 seconds, I was presented with a web page displaying the top ten listings for these words, made famous by Jacques Derrida's 1995 work of the same name.[1] The search returned an astonishing 4,360 entries, with headings ranging from "An e-mail to Freud" to "sadomasochismo." Why begin a philosophical inquiry into our "relationship to the tradition" by accessing a web-based search engine rather than by turning to *Mal d'Archive: une impression freudienne*, Derrida's original French text on archiving and the archive, or, better yet, by turning to consider the great works of the "canon" that make up our tradition?

One of the central points of Derrida's *Archive Fever* is that the nature of the "archive" affects not only what is archived, but also how we relate to and access it. The archive also conditions the process of archiving itself and, indeed, the very nature of what is archivable. The archive is thus a filter of sorts that is turned toward both the past (because it filters how the tradition is transmitted to us) and the future (because it filters what we archive and what is archivable, and

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[1] An earlier version of this essay was presented at the meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association, May 28–31, 2005. Regarding "archive fever," see Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Derrida's work was originally delivered as a lecture entitled "The Concept of an Archive: A Freudian Impression" in London on June 5, 1994. When I updated this essay for the *Analecta Hermeneutica* on December 28, 2008, I was given 27,800 results in 0.16 seconds. The first page listed was *not* Derrida's book—indicating some of the issues with the Google spider mentioned below—but a notice about an art exhibit at the International Center for Photography. The final entry was "Dead Formats Society," an entry on a blog that *was* addressing Derrida's work.

thus filters what we transmit to the future).[2] If this is the case, however, an alteration of the archive (qua *archon*) will cause an alteration in our understanding of the archive (qua *arche*) and, moreover, will alter what is archivable (i.e., what is "fit" to be archived). That is, any alteration of the archive will alter both our understanding of the past and our relationship to the future. Therefore, understanding the nature of the archive is decisive for understanding our relationship to the tradition, for there is no tradition without an archive, and the archive determines the tradition.

Derrida's own meditations on the archive take place in the context of a discussion of Freud and the psychoanalysts. He notes that psychoanalysis would have been different for Freud and his contemporaries–and therefore for us–if they had had access to telephones, video recording technology, and email. These comments, however, were made in 1995, when the full extent of the Internet boom was only beginning to become evident. The intervening years have reshaped the archive in ways that Derrida could scarcely have foreseen in 1995. Although many of the changes bear out Derrida's fundamental theses, the power that the Internet has come to exert over public and private discourse demands that we re-examine the archive in order to begin to assess what these changes portend.

Archive Fever: 1995

Archive Fever begins by pointing out that the term "archive" is derived from the Greek *arkhe*, and thus carries with it two senses:

> This name apparently coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to nature or history, *there* where things *commence*–physical, historical, or ontological principle–but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given–nomological principle.[3]

Thus, *arkhe* refers both to the origin and to authority. An archive is not merely a record of the past that allows us to access the tradition, which might be followed back to the origin (*arche*) of that tradition. An archive is always at the same time

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[2] Note that Derrida claims that the archive is fundamentally future oriented. See Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 36, 52.
[3] Ibid., 1.

a place of authority and an instrument through which authority speaks–strident, sibilant, or *sotto voce*–one that, through the power of inclusion and exclusion, determines truth and falsity. These two senses are clear in the Greek *arkeion*, the site or dwelling from which the *archons*, the officers of state, commanded (*arkhein*).

Access to an archive, however, is never transparent and what we find there is never unambiguous. Both archiving and accessing the archive are essentially hermeneutic tasks. Contrary to common belief, there is no clear line between preservation (memory) and destruction (forgetting). An archive is rarely, if ever, black or white, true or false. Another way of saying this is that the archive exists at the intersection of the visible and the invisible; it is, in Derrida's terms, *spectral*. "The structure of the archive is spectral. It is spectral *a priori*: neither present nor absent 'in the flesh,' neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met, no more than those of Hamlet's father, thanks to the possibility of a visor."[4] The invisibility or inaccessibility of the archive is a function of archiving, in which inclusion and preservation of some elements means the exclusion and neglect of others.

No archive would ever come to be without an archontic power of consignation. "*Consignation* aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration."[5] All archives are incomplete, however, and the unity of the archive can only be understood in juxtaposition to the otherness that is excluded from it:

> *There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without an outside …* And let us note in passing a decisive paradox to which we will not have time to return, but which undoubtedly condition the whole of these remarks: if there is no archive without consignation in an external place which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we must also remember that the repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive. And thus from destruction.[6]

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[4] Ibid., 84.
[5] Ibid., 3.
[6] Ibid., 11–12.

So, again, the archive is like the Hindu god Shiva: a site of both preservation and destruction. Even the preservation–destruction dyad is misleading, however, because, in terms of the archive, preservation is never perfect and destruction is rarely complete. The unity of the archive is, from an alternative hermeneutic perspective, always already interrupted or inconsistent.

With a parallel insight, Freud notes that the delusions of hysterics–that is, the experience of the spectral–are never completely divorced from truth. There is always a tension between truth and delusion, but there is always, at the bottom of any delusion, a grain of truth; the two are never separate. So, all archives require a hermeneutic vigilance, and the archaeologist must sift through a series of sedimentary layers or archival filters when accessing the tradition. There are at least three such filters worth mentioning: authority, temporality, and technology.

First, access to the tradition is mediated by the systems of power associated with the archive and archiving, as in the case of the authority invested in the archon or *archons*. If archeology is always in some sense topology–because the archive is always a *place* according to Derrida–then it is a "privileged" topology: "the *archons* are first of all the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited in the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives."[7] In other words, the second aspect or meaning of *arkhe* (the nomological principle) calls into question the first (the archeological principle); the only access we have to the archive (and, thus, to the tradition) is through the filter of authority (the *archons*). So, "the science of the archive must include the theory of this institutionalization, that is to say, the theory both of the law which begins by inscribing itself there and of the right which authorizes it."[8] Perhaps no one has examined the filters of authority and power as thoroughly as the late Michel Foucault, whose name is also inextricably tied to "archeology."[9]

Second, the archive, especially when speaking of our relationship to the tradition, has been transmitted through a series of *archons* so that what we have access to is a tradition characterized by a series of sedimentary layers that must

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[7] Ibid., 2.

[8] Ibid., 4.

[9] See Leonard Lawlor, *Thinking through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003).

be traversed by means of a "regressive inquiry."[10] Such a regressive analysis raises the question of what may have been forgotten in the transmission of the archive, and asks us to consider the relationship between memory and forgetting. Archived information can be–and inevitably is–lost or forgotten, for example, through the limitations of memory and mnemonic techniques.

While covert and overt structures of power, the inexorable march of time, and the consequent forgetfulness introduce important ambiguities to the archive, Derrida makes special note of the filter imposed by the technical aspects (i.e., techniques and technologies) of archivization. "The technical structure of the archiving archive … determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event."[11] The archive does not simply record meaning. At best meaning is co-determined by events and the archival structure. Derrida's statement makes it clear that this has ramifications not only for our relationship to the past but also for our future possibilities: "what is no longer *archived* in the same way is no longer *lived* in the same way."[12] Thus, the archive is not only mnemonic; it is a socio-political force.

As Derrida wrote *Archive Fever*, the archive was beginning a transformation the like of which had not been seen since the introduction of the printing press: the maturation of the Internet.

> In what way has the whole of this field [psychoanalysis] been determined by a state of the technology of communication and of archivization? One can dream or speculate about the geo-techno-logical shocks which would have made the landscape of the psychoanalytic archive unrecognizable for the past century if, to limit myself to these indications, Freud, his contemporaries, collaborators and immediate disciples, instead of writing thousands of letters by hand, had had access to MCI or AT&T telephonic credit cards, portable tape recorders, computers, printers, faxes, televisions, teleconferences, and above all E-mail … I would have liked to devote my whole lecture to this retrospective science fiction.[13]

Derrida pauses to note that email is "on its way to transforming the entire

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[10] Lawlor, *Thinking through French Philosophy*, 29.

[11] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 16. Emphasis mine.

[12] Ibid., 18.

[13] Ibid., 16.

public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limit between the private, the secret (private or public) and the public or phenomenal."[14] He goes on to predict that the instantaneous nature of production, transmission and destruction of the archive that email prefigures will lead to "judicial and thus political transformations," which affect nothing less than "property rights, publishing and reproduction rights."[15] "We should not close our eyes to the unlimited upheaval underway in archival technology."[16]

Archive Fever: 2008

Derrida's mediations on the archive took place from 1993–1994.[17] At this time, the Internet was just beginning to boom. Today, many of us are so familiar with the World Wide Web that it may be difficult to recall how recently these developments have taken place. It was only in 1991 that the World Wide Web went public, and at first it was a very limited resource. In late 1993, however, the Internet began to grow rapidly. At the end of 1992 there were only fifty World Wide Web sites in the entire world, and a year later, in the midst of Derrida's meditations on the archive, only 150. In 1994 this number increased to 3,000; in 1995, to 25,000, and by the end of that year to over 250,000. In January 2001 there were over 30 million websites.[18] Derrida wrote *Archive Fever* before Google, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, RSS feeds, and live webcasts. This is significant because, as we have seen, alterations in the archive alter the content of the archive, and, thus, our relation to the past and our prospects for the future. Given that this is the case, what are we to make of the boom in information

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[14] Ibid., 17.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 18.

[17] The lecture, *Mal d'Archive: une impression freudienne*, was given in London on June 5, 1994, but Derrida began reflection on this topic over a year before the lecture (see *Archive Fever*, 25).

[18] See Richard T. Griffiths, "Chapter Two: From ARPANET to the World Wide Web" [online]; http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/history/ivh/chap2.htm; accessed February 24, 2006 and "Computer History: History 1990–2000" [online]; http://www.computerhope.com/history/19902000.htm; accessed February 24, 2006. The rapid growth of the Internet and associated technologies may be one reason that Derrida's explicit references to email and the Internet are relatively scarce in the text of Archive Fever. Although Derrida tells us he began to think and write Archive Fever in 1993–1994, the lecture was given in 1995. Thus, while the references to technological advances such as telephones, television, faxes, recording devices and email are integral to Derrida's point, he was not in a position to fully appreciate the import of the World Wide Web and associated technologies.

technology and the consequent transformation of the archive since 1994, which may well outstrip the transformation wrought by the printing press and which Derrida could scarcely have imagined at the time?

I will comment on two phenomena brought about by the digital revolution, and then mention a third characteristic that ties the first two into Derrida's theses in *Archive Fever*.

The Revolution Will Be Blogged. While *Archive Fever* is not explicitly political, in a footnote Derrida asserts that "of course, the question of the politics of the archive is our permanent orientation here … There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory."[19] All archives are socio-political forces, and the changes that the archive has undergone in the past ten years have had an important social and political impact. There are, of course, numerous phenomena that could illustrate this fact–Internet dating, Facebook "friends," etc.–but "blogging" raises particularly interesting issues.

A blog is really nothing more than on online diary maintained by someone who wants to share his or her opinion with the rest of the world; there are few aspects of the digitization of the archive with as much potential for socio-political influence. In an article for the journal *Foreign Policy*, Daniel Drezner and Henry Farrell note that "Blogs are already influencing U.S. politics."[20]

> Blogs are becoming more influential because they affect the content of international media coverage. Journalism professor Todd Gitlin once noted that media frame reality through "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters." Increasingly, journalists and pundits take their cues about "what matters" in the world from weblogs. For salient topics in global affairs, the blogosphere functions as a rare combination of distributed expertise, real-time collective response to breaking news, and public-opinion barometer.[21]

Blogs can serve this function for several reasons, but one important reason is the degree to which blogs serve as a "real time" source of analysis and

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[19] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4 (see footnote on the same page).

[20] Daniel W. Drezner and Henry Farrell, "Web Of Influence," in *Foreign Policy*, November/December 2004 [online]; http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2707; accessed February 24, 2006.

[21] Ibid.

opinion. Bloggers can post their thoughts about important social and political events almost instantaneously. By the time a story is picked up by mainstream media, the "blogosphere" may well have been discussing events for hours, even days. Moreover, because blogs are heavily hyperlinked, referencing other blogs as well as mainstream media, it is difficult for prominent bloggers to get away with factual errors—other bloggers and readers will immediately call foul in the event of inaccurate reporting (of fact as opposed to opinion). The most respected blogs therefore serve as a sort of clearing house of both opinion and fact for major mainstream media sources. Because blogs influence mainstream media in this way, the most important bloggers "exert formidable agenda-setting power."[22]

There are numerous examples of the influence of blogs. One well-publicized example is the ousting of US Senate majority leader Trent Lott, who was forced to resign over remarks he made at Senator Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party: "Initially, Lott's remarks received little attention in the mainstream media. But the incident was the subject of intense online commentary, prodding renewed media attention that converted Lott's gaffe into a full-blown scandal."[23]

Googlewashing the Archive. What does all this have to do with philosophy's relationship to the tradition? My Google search for "archive fever" retrieved a list that, on one level, appeared to be nothing more than a curious cross section of web pages, in this case those containing the paired words "archive fever." No doubt most of these sites have nothing to do with the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, and those that do are as likely as not to contain appalling misrepresentations, misinterpretations, or abuses of his thought. Amongst these Derridian non-sequiturs and misappropriations, however, there are also thoughtful introductions to and summaries of deconstruction, as well as rigorously philosophical essays, some of which are peer-reviewed.

How will the digitization of the archive impact the way that people "do" philosophy, both as a way of life and as a discipline? In the example of psychoanalysis, Freud himself was both inventing the science of psychoanalysis and archiving it for his peers, students, and future disciples; in the case of the Internet, however, those who think and write are usually not the archivists that encode HTML and, even when they are, search engines like Google actually determine what is preserved in an area where the public can (or is likely) to access it and what is consigned to stagnant digital backwaters. Who are the

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

archons today? Several commentators have noted that "if the web is a giant public archive, then the privately owned and secretive Google is its de facto interface."[24]

For example, I wrote a critical entry on Gabriel Marcel for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, an online resource that is heavily hyperlinked and regularly updated. This essay was published on the World Wide Web and within a month I became one of the top authorities in the world on Gabriel Marcel and his philosophy–at least according to Google. If you Google "Gabriel Marcel," my article will come up as one of the top three entries, well above the most important of Marcel's own works (*Creative Fidelity* and *The Mystery of Being*), and well above references to many other long-standing secondary authorities.[25]

Though it appeared in a peer-reviewed source, my article's ranking on Google has little or nothing to do with the quality of the scholarship. Google rankings are determined by a bewildering set of criteria; there are books written specifically to teach online entrepreneurs how to rank highly on Google and other Internet search engines. The Google "spider"–the search program that crawls the web seeking out the information that the Google programmers deem important–works through the month in preparation for the "Googledance," the time of the month, usually between the 20th and the 28th, when Google rearranges its rankings. Fit the right criteria and your page magically leaps to prominence on the world stage, fail to do so and you fall into obscurity. Here's the rub: people try very hard to anticipate what the Google spider is looking for so that they can ensure that their web pages come up high on a Google search–how often have you clicked on the third or fourth, or even the second page of a Google search? This leads to a phenomenon known as "Googlewashing," a process by which a word is given, literally, a new meaning. Googlewashing replaces old pages with new pages that give "new meaning [to] a word–like expunging history."[26]

Googlewashing is accomplished by heavily hyperlinking a page with a consistent "anchor text." Some of you may remember that, for some time, a

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[24] Ars Technica [online]; http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20030627-130.html?13269; accessed February 24, 2006.

[25] In this case truth and authority have not, if I may be so bold, been betrayed. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is a peer-reviewed, academically rigorous site, and I am a legitimate scholar of Marcel's work, having presented and published alongside other recognized authorities in this area. The speed with which my article leapt into the top ten Google listings (the listings displayed on the first page of a search) surprised me.

[26] The Search Engine Dictionary.com [online]; http://www.searchenginedictionary.com/g.shtml; accessed February 24, 2006.

Google search for "weapons of mass destruction" would list–as the number one site–a joke page resembling an Internet Explorer error notice alerting you that "These weapons of mass destruction cannot be displayed" before going on to lampoon George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld and others.[27] In a world of Holocaust denials and other sorts of historical revisionism, the potential for less humorous Googlewashes is obvious. Even without Googlewashing a topic, the very power to "publish" something on the Internet lends credibility to positions and opinions that would otherwise be marginalized. It is both the strength and the danger of online publishing that it gives opinions an air of credibility. Anyone in our discipline who doubts the power of the Internet to legitimize and institutionalize a particular perspective need look no further than the prominence of questionable ranking systems for the study of philosophy–both Leiter's (in)famous Report and the various responses to it. Again, my article ranks highly on Google for "Gabriel Marcel" not because of the scholarship but because of the hyperlinks. The Google spider is good at measuring quantity, but ill equipped to evaluate quality. Nevertheless, I have become something of an authority based on this essay (as opposed to my other work on Marcel), having received multiple emails since the publication of this entry asking for my assistance on various aspects of Marcel scholarship.

The Digitization-Democratization of the Archive. Both Googlewashing and Blogging point toward one final significant characteristic of the Internet boom: the *democratization* of the archive. Derrida's third and final thesis in *Archive Fever* asserts that no one points out better than Freud

> … how this archontic, that is paternal and patriarchic, principle only posited itself to repeat itself and returned to re-posit itself only in parricide. It amounts to repressed or suppressed parricide, in the name of the father as death father. The archontic is at best the takeover of the

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[27] The point here is not whether the charges against Google on Slate.com, Salon.com and other online venues are valid or not (i.e., the extent to which googlewashing is really possible). The fact is that Google has become the *de facto* arbiter of what counts as "truth"; it has already penetrated the worlds of entertainment, popular culture, and politics, and academia will have to grapple with if it is to remain relevant in a broad manner as we move into the twenty-first century. Google does try to avoid having its search algorithm "gamed" in this way: in February 2005, changes in the Google algorithm began to affect Googlewashing and Googlebombs. Many of the earlier Googlewashes no longer appear high up on the new Google rankings pages. Nevertheless, Google will always work by using some version of a pattern-recognition program to determine page ranks, and such an approach remains vulnerable to exploitation.

archive by the brothers. The equality and the liberty of brothers. A certain still vivacious idea of democracy.[28]

If we look at the nature of the digital archive, one thing that would be difficult to ignore is the fact that it is, for the most part, remarkably open. Theoretically, anyone can access the Internet and anyone can put up a webpage or start a blog. In this *laissez faire* setting, the archive has become much more democratic.

Take Wikipedia, which is fast becoming the go-to resource for people seeking quick insight into a topic. Wikipedia is, in a sense, an open blog; however, rather than focusing on current events, the site formats itself as an encyclopaedia to which anyone can contribute. The site provides remarkably good and remarkably comprehensive accounts, but it is not perfect. There are editors of sorts that try to monitor contributions and changes, but much of the oversight is provided by "wikipedians" checking each other. When Sarah Palin's Wikipedia entry changed overnight the day before she became the Republican nominee for Vice-President, a number of Wikipedia users called foul and the entry was promptly restored to its former state. Of course, the quality of any given entry is dependent on the people who actually contribute to the wiki. While much of the information is useful and accurate, one has to wonder about the actual expertise of the authors of certain technical pages. Is the entry on Jacques Derrida written by Geoff Bennington or Jack Caputo, or was it written by a graduate student at university or an undergraduate in her first class on continental philosophy? It could be any or all of these, and the hope is that the experts will correct any errors entered by the non-experts. Oftentimes this works, but it depends on experts who take Wikipedia seriously enough to establish and maintain entries.

As Wikipedia and blogging illustrate, the Internet has an increasingly important role in determining which events are important and which events are less significant, that is, in determining how events and information are archived, what is preserved and what is destroyed. Today, the Internet helps to determine, and in some cases determines, what is true and what is false. Where previously truth and reality were determined by a small cohort of experts, who frequently called themselves "philosophers," today an increasing number of voices are able to weigh in on a topic and be taken seriously.

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[28] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 95.

The second half of Derrida's final thesis points out that Freud himself merely repeated the patriarchal logic supposedly supplanted by democratization. Similarly, the apparent democratization of the archive is, on another level, just that: appearance. First, not all people have the same access to the digital archive; there is a so-called "digital divide" between rich and poor countries, between rich and poor people within a country, between old and young, etc. Although this divide is fluid and at times appears to be shrinking due to technologies like Internet-enabled cell phones, differences in access and control persist.

Second, the democratization of the archive represented by widespread access to the Internet is tempered by an opposing tendency for the very perspectives, previously marginalized, that find their voice in the digital realm to become co-opted fairly quickly by the mainstream, forming a new status quo. For example, many mainstream media sources now maintain their own blogs, and others have hired previously independent bloggers (who were always dependent on mainstream media for much of the data that they interpret and discuss in any case). Sites like Technorati have sprung up in an attempt to index blogs and facilitate the fact-checking function mentioned above, but most of the "rising news stories by attention" on Technorati's home page are drawn from traditional sources like the New York Times, Time magazine, and the Associated Press.

Moreover, Technorati and other "Web 2.0" technologies have yet to solve many problems associated with open democratic archives. For example, spam blogs and fake blogs (or "flogs") can trick the Technorati search engine and infiltrate the index, muddying the content. In response to it popularity to criticisms, Technorati has redesigned its site several times in recent years, leading Andrew Orlowski (who coined the term "googlewashing") to charge in 2007 that there has been a "tacit admission that [Technorati] has given up on its original mission—indexing the world's weblogs. Technorati now claims to present 'zillions of photos, videos, blogs and more,' and rather apologetically adds the rejoinder: 'Some of them have to be good.'[29] None of this is to say that the digital revolution has not been more democratic than the system it has supplanted. It is simply to point out that that revolution has, like all others, established a new elite and a new status quo. The utopia of a completely open, democratic, and transparent archive continues to elude us.

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[29] Andrew Orlowski, "Technorati knocks itself out. Again."
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2007/05/25/technorati_retreats/

Conclusion

Derrida foresaw that the digitization of the archive would have important ramifications for law, politics, intellectual property rights, etc. To some extent, this insight has already been realized. Blogs provide an important outlet for dissent in countries like Iran and China–two countries with very large and active blogging communities despite oppressive governments–where more open displays of dissent are swiftly, and often brutally, put down. Even in more politically open societies, the Internet has been used with remarkable results in recent political contests. If Howard Dean saw the potential of the Internet in 2004, that promise came to fruition in 2008 with Barak Obama's remarkable political victories, first over Hilary Clinton, long the presumptive Democratic candidate, and then over John McCain. Obama's Internet-based organization mobilized thousands of people who were previously politically apathetic to donate money, volunteer at call centers, and road trip to swing states like Nevada and New Hampshire. The result was an incredibly well-funded and well-organized campaign.

Ultimately these issues of archivization will impact not only current events, politics and history, but also the nature of the discipline of philosophy itself. While a full discussion of these effects must wait for another time, it cannot be avoided, and it will arrive sooner rather than later. If so-called continental philosophy is characterized by, among other things, a fascination with the tradition, it is a tradition that we access through various archives or forms of archivization.

The Internet, accessed by Google and similar search engines, and made up of sources like Wikipedia and philosophical blogs, is becoming the de facto way that people seek information. People with an anti-technological streak–including myself at times–can decry this fact as a degradation of intellectual rigor or a laziness associated with the culture of instant gratification; the fact, however, is that, as an authority, the Internet seems to be a *fait accompli*. Despite the alarming statistics pointing out the percentage of Internet traffic associated with pornography, celebrity gossip and poor quality merchandise, the fact is that the Internet also offers us the works of Plato and Aristotle (in Greek, English, French, etc.), rare recordings of music, transcripts and audio streams of seminal political speeches, live and recorded videos of world shaking events, images of the Kyoto gardens, reproductions of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Caravaggio's *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, and real-time coverage of breaking world news.

The archive is always in flux. Usually the changes are more like the slow

and labyrinthine expansion of a coral reef, and therefore go unnoticed by most people. Today, however, we are in the midst of a radical upheaval that cannot be ignored, one that has reshaped the archive overnight as it were, and one that calls for philosophy to re-imagine what it means to relate to (retrieve or transcend) the tradition. This is true for both philosophy as a professional discipline and for philosophy as an intellectually relevant contributor to public discourse. With respect to the former, without buying in to the widespread assumption that digital media will replace print media entirely, it cannot be denied that sooner or later professional philosophy will go digital. Indeed, several prominent journals have been testing the digital waters for some time now. With respect to the latter concern, the deference to and dependence on the Internet is even more marked in the non-academic, public domain. If philosophy hopes to remain relevant, it must take control of where and how it appears on the Internet. If we do not support reputable, peer-reviewed sites like the *Analecta Hermeneutica*, the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, which present philosophy in a respectable professional light, we cannot very well complain when students, colleagues, and the general public turn to other, less reputable, un-reviewed sources. The archive is going digital, and if philosophy wants to be included in the tradition and body of knowledge that will be transmitted to future generations, it needs to develop a digital voice.