Reanimating Morgue Files. A Media Archeology of Reference Picture Collections

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline.be

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Project abstract:

This research project examines the specific case of morgue files: picture collections composed of photographs, clippings and visual printed ephemera often organized and stored in cabinets, and used
as reference aid for drawing comics and cartoons. Ubiquitous in publishers offices and artist studios during most of the twentieth century, morgues have been a central aspect of cartoonists' creative
process for decades before online image databases rendered them obsolete. Morgue files remain a forgotten cultural practice, understudied in analyses of comics and cartoon production. This project aims to study morgue files as a useful theoretical gateway, connecting comics studies with the fields of media archaeology, information science, and knowledge organization. By looking at how different cartoonists used morgue files, we will gain insight into how these collections are organized, used, transmitted, and preserved in the field of graphic narratives, allowing us to identify and better understand image-making practices in the context of early industrialization and fast commodification. Since morgues are delicate and difficult to store, and guidelines for their conservation are nonexistent, we will also make a case to develop tools for their future preservation.

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1. Research Data Summary

List and describe all datasets or research materials that you plan to generate/collect or reuse during your research project. For each dataset or data type (observational, experimental etc.), provide a short name & description (sufficient for yourself to know what data it is about), indicate whether the data are newly generated/collected or reused, digital or physical, also indicate the type of the data (the kind of content), its technical format (file extension), and an estimate of the upper limit of the volume of the data.

Dataset Name	Description	New or reused	Digital or Physical	Only for digital data Digital Data Type	Only for digital data Digital Data format	Only for digital data Digital data volume (MB/GB/TB)	Only for physical data Physical volume
Morgue Files	Photographic images and digitized files of archival records	New data	Digital	Archival data	.jpg; .json; .csv	<10GB	
Interviews	Audio files and textual transcripts of recorded interviews	New data	Digital	Compiled data	.mp3 (audio recordings); .rtf (textual transcripts)	<10GB	
References	Books, articles, and other references + reading notes	New data	Digital	Compiled data + Software data	.pdf, .csv	<1GB	

If you reuse existing data, please specify the source, preferably by using a persistent identifier (e.g. DOI, Handle, URL etc.) per dataset or data type:

Morgue files: this dataset includes photographs taken to document analogue '*morgue files'* (trade term in commercial illustration to describe picture collections composed of photographs, clippings and visual printed ephemera often organized and stored in cabinets, and used as reference aid for drawing comics, cartoons and others) kept in archival collections. The analogue archival records under inquiry are stored at the following institutions:

- Faculteitsbibliotheek Literatuur & Wijsbegeerte, UGent (Belgium)
- Biblioteca Nacional Mariano Moreno, Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- Cité international de l'image et de la bande dessinée, Angoulême (France)
- Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum, Ohio State University (USA)

 These morgue files are archival folders that have a very basic level of catalographic description that does not cover the contents of the morgue files. The photographic images made of those morgue files, annotated in Tropy, thus produce new data that will support the research.

Are there any ethical issues concerning the creation and/or use of the data (e.g. experiments on humans or animals, dual use)? Describe these issues in the comment section. Please refer to specific datasets or data types when appropriate.

- No

Will you process personal data? If so, briefly describe the kind of personal data you will use in the comment section. Please refer to specific datasets or data types when appropriate.

- Yes

The **interviews** dataset will contain personal data relative to the interviewees.

Does your work have potential for commercial valorization (e.g. tech transfer, for example spin-offs, commercial exploitation, …)? If so,

please comment per dataset or data type where appropriate.

- No

Do existing 3rd party agreements restrict exploitation or dissemination of the data you (re)use (e.g. Material/Data transfer agreements/ research collaboration agreements)? If so, please explain in the comment section to what data they relate and what restrictions are in place.

- No

Are there any other legal issues, such as intellectual property rights and ownership, to be managed related to the data you (re)use? If so, please explain in the comment section to what data they relate and which restrictions will be asserted.

- Yes

Most pictures kept in morgue files are under copyright and cannot be further reshared.

2. Documentation and Metadata

Clearly describe what approach will be followed to capture the accompanying information necessary to keep data understandable and usable, for yourself and others, now and in the future (e.g., in terms of documentation levels and types required, procedures used, Electronic Lab Notebooks, README.txt files, Codebook.tsv etc. where this information is recorded).

A ReadMe .txt file will be generated to document the different types of data and archival records compiled in the **morgue files** dataset.
The **interviews collection** will contain GDPR and ethical documents (consent forms and information sheet), a document describing the methodology and rationale, and a ReadMe file describing the collection.

Will a metadata standard be used to make it easier to find and reuse the data? If so, please specify (where appropriate per dataset or data type) which metadata standard will be used. If not, please specify (where appropriate per dataset or data type) which metadata will be created to make the data easier to find and reuse.

- Yes

The **morgue files** dataset will be maintained using the open-source software **Tropy**, which supports the metadata standard Dublin Core.
The metadata of the .txt and .mp3 files of the **interviews** will be checked and detailed as consistently as possible.

3. Data storage & back-up during the research project

Where will the data be stored?

Morgue files and **interviews** datasets will be stored on OneDrive Cloud storage.
References are stored on the Zotero Cloud storage.

How will the data be backed up?

OneDrive Cloud storage provides full backup.

**Is there currently sufficient storage & backup capacity during the project? If yes, specify concisely.
If no or insufficient storage or backup capacities are available, then explain how this will be taken care of.**

- Yes

The datasets will not exceed the 2TB allowed on OneDrive Cloud Storage.

How will you ensure that the data are securely stored and not accessed or modified by unauthorized persons?

OneDrive Cloud Storage requires two-factor authentication and offers both a secure access and the opportunity to control, modify and revise shared access within the research team involved

What are the expected costs for data storage and backup during the research project? How will these costs be covered?

Zotero Cloud storage for 6GB costs 60$/year which will be covered on the FWO project

4. Data preservation after the end of the research project

Which data will be retained for at least five years (or longer, in agreement with other retention policies that are applicable) after the end of the project? In case some data cannot be preserved, clearly state the reasons for this (e.g. legal or contractual restrictions, storage/budget issues, institutional policies...).

All data will be retained for at least five years.

Where will these data be archived (stored and curated for the long-term)?

The **morgue files** dataset will be uploaded as JSON and csv files in KU Leuven's RDR alongside the documentation. It will be made available in restricted access only because of copyright limitations (see above).
The **interviews collection** will be uploaded to RDR alongside the necessary documentation. It will be made available in open access at the end of the project.
The Zotero collection of **references** will be stored and made available in open access as a group library (without granting access to any stored PDF files that are under copyright). A csv export of the Zotero library will be uploaded to RDR for storage.

What are the expected costs for data preservation during the expected retention period? How will these costs be covered?

None

5. Data sharing and reuse

Will the data (or part of the data) be made available for reuse after/during the project? In the comment section please explain per dataset or data type which data will be made available.

- Yes, in an Open Access repository
- Yes, in a restricted access repository (after approval, institutional access only, …)

The **morgue files** dataset will be uploaded as JSON and csv files in KU Leuven's RDR alongside the documentation. It will be made available

in restricted access only because of copyright limitations (see above).

The **interviews collection** will be uploaded to RDR alongside the necessary documentation. It will be made available in open access at the end of the project.

The Zotero collection of **references** will be stored and made available in open access as a group library (without granting access to any stored PDF files that are under copyright).

If access is restricted, please specify who will be able to access the data and under what conditions.

Access to the **morgue files** dataset will be strictly restricted and granted upon request only.

Are there any factors that restrict or prevent the sharing of (some of) the data (e.g. as defined in an agreement with a 3rd party, legal restrictions)? Please explain in the comment section per dataset or data type where appropriate.

- Yes, Intellectual Property Rights

IP rights only bear on the morgue files dataset.

Where will the data be made available? If already known, please provide a repository per dataset or data type.

- Morgue files dataset > RDR
- Interviews > RDR
- References > Zotero group library

When will the data be made available?

- Morgue files dataset > restricted access
- Interviews > available at the end of the project
- References > living bibliography, finalized at the end of the project

Which data usage licenses are you going to provide? If none, please explain why.

- Morgue files dataset > no license granted given restricted access
- Interviews > CC-BY-NC-SA-4.0

Do you intend to add a PID/DOI/accession number to your dataset(s)? If already available, you have the option to provide it in the comment section.

- Yes

What are the expected costs for data sharing? How will these costs be covered?

None

6. Responsibilities

Who will manage data documentation and metadata during the research project?

Felipe Muhr

Who will manage data storage and backup during the research project?

Felipe Muhr

Who will manage data preservation and sharing?

Felipe Muhr & Benoît Crucifix

Who will update and implement this DMP?

Felipe Muhr

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