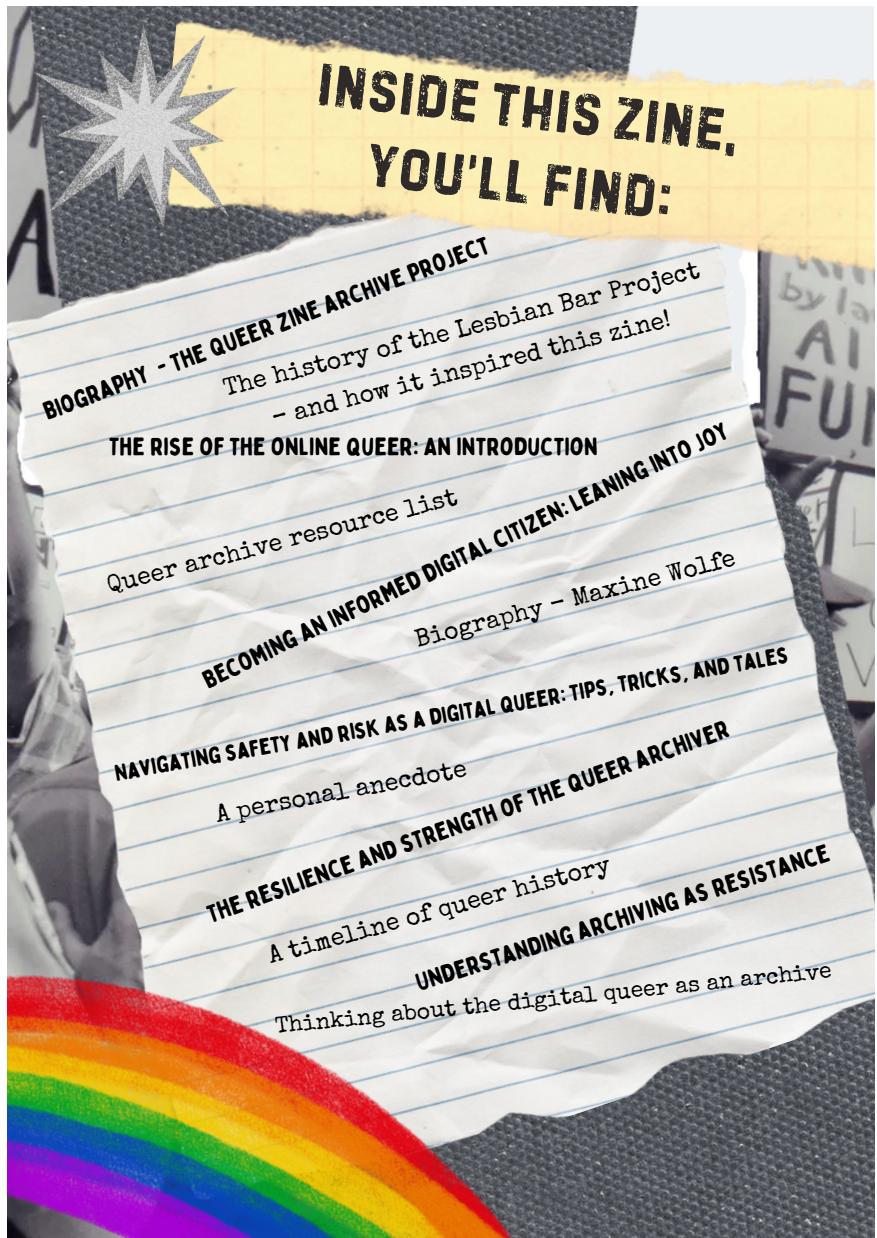


A ZINE ABOUT DIGITAL ARCHIVING,  
COMMUNITY, AND PRESERVING QUEER  
HISTORY







I don't think that's the point, though. Is it even productive to lament the loss of these spaces, at this point? I doubt it. I think our energy is better placed amplifying those that remain and preserving the histories of those that do not.

I often worry about the apathy and dejectedness that comes from watching things disappear; it really does feel like the loss of a family member or friend.

Which is why this zine is not that.

I credit TBLP with giving me the inspiration to create this zine specifically for these reasons. It sucks to say goodbye to things that feel so incredibly important, but it also feels really good to take the preservation and celebration of them into your own hands! I made a promise a while ago to refuse to let the world make me sad enough to stop caring, and I think this zine might just be proof of that.

THE LESBIAN BAR  
PROJECT CAN BE  
STREAMED FOR FREE ON  
ROKU TV!

DOCUSERIES HOST LEA DELARIA AND  
BAR OWNER LISA MENICHINO

I'm not sure I could properly create this zine without explaining what I mean when I talk about archiving as a form of resistance. It seems a little strange, right? Performative, maybe? I get that; I've had those feelings too, and I've wondered what makes the digital archive so important.

### So here's what I mean:

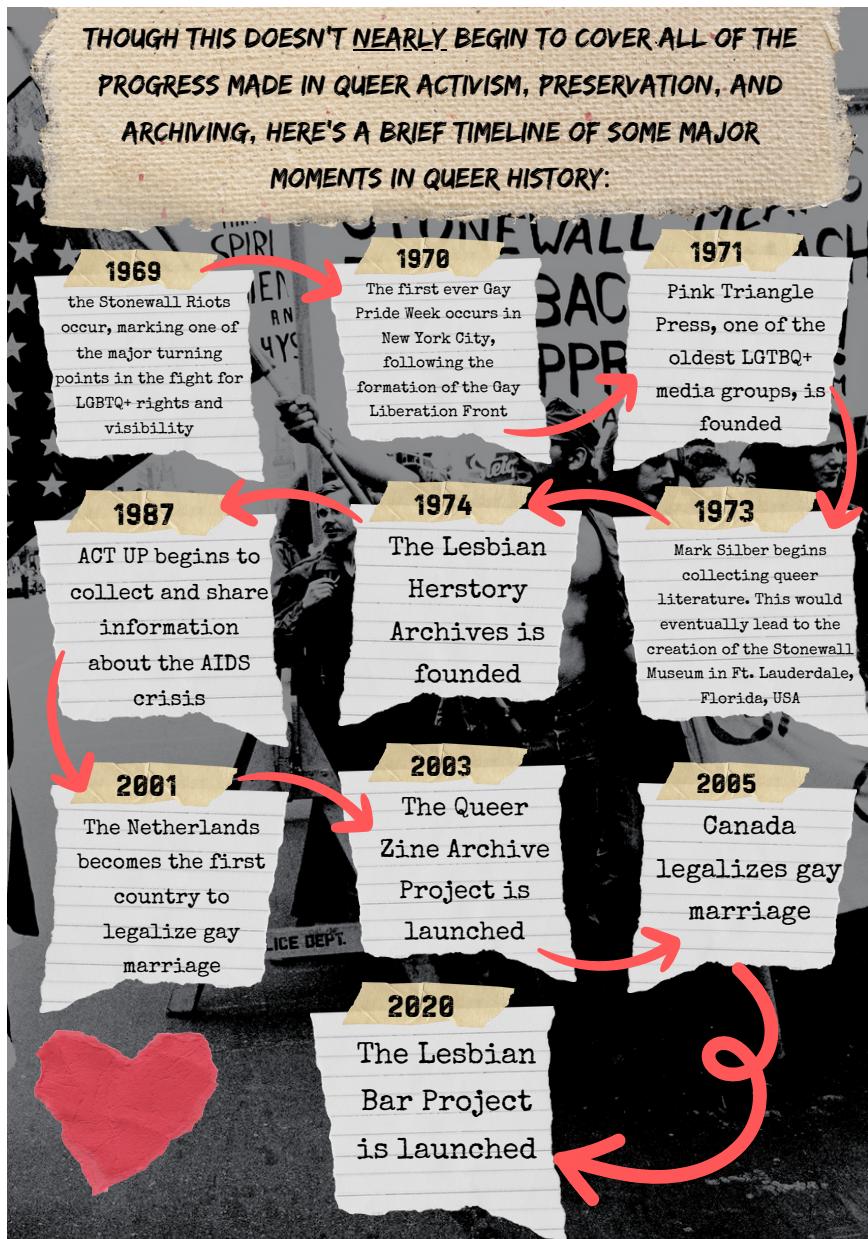
I don't like to think of the archive as a yearning point; that seems cheap to me, and totally not the point of all this. Instead, I'm more excited by the idea of archiving - queer archiving, specifically - as a desire for a better now - and, in turn, an even better tomorrow(3). When we archive these spaces, we're actively strengthening our social connections(4) and engaging in resistance.

We're often not seen as worthy of preservation by heteronormative culture(5), I think that's pretty clear. Our very existence through history threatens the narrative that we're some new-age fad; a bunch of special little snowflakes who want attention, or whatever ridiculous claim they'd like to throw our way.

So, then, the act of preserving our existence in the queer archive is resistance; we can reclaim our identities and histories(6), keep control of our own language and terminologies(7), and call out the fact that our exclusion from the hetero-dominant narrative... kinda sucks(8).

All of this is to say that no, I don't think the queer archive is a performative kind of resistance; actually, I think it might be some of the most crucial work we could possibly do right now.

HOW DO WE  
THINK ABOUT  
ARCHIVING AS  
RESISTANCE?



**ANONYMOUS** **GENDERtrash**

## SPOTLIGHT: THE QUEER ZINE ARCHIVE PROJECT

"THERE'S A WHOLE HISTORY THAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND PRINTED, AND IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF FINDING IT AND MAKING IT AVAILABLE."  
-- MILO MILLER, CO-FOUNDER OF QZAP

Launched in 2003, the Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP) is a project dedicated to making queer zines available to the public on a large scale(9).

For the past 20 years, co-founders Chris Wilde and Milo Miller have dedicated themselves to collecting queer zines from around the world, scanning them, and uploading them to QZAP.

QZAP, like many others, is a crucial piece of the queer archival project. Archives like this are not only representations of moments in queer history, but collections of feelings, experiences, and identities that we would otherwise have lost to time and circumstance.



Since 2003, QZAP has compiled an archive of over 500 zines from around the world, compiling them into a single database.

Zines have always been a major tool for queer people to express themselves<sup>10</sup>. You don't have to rely on a publisher to accept your narrative to get your zine published; you can just... do it yourself.

Which is why QZAP's work is so important and should be celebrated. This is, for many people, the only way they can access these works and engage with these histories. In this case, archives like QZAP are a necessity, not just a nice bit of history.



Throughout this zine, I want to get you thinking about how online queer communities are archives themselves, even though they don't preserve some specific moment, in the way we tend to think archives do.

You may be wondering what I mean by this. That's fine, it's not the most straightforward concept.

First and foremost, both the archive and queer identities are reflections – willingly or not – of some sort of current socio-political reality<sup>(11)</sup>; how we, as queer people identify, and what our archives tell us about a certain moment in history are both defined by their place in a wider conversation. What this means is that we can't allow our identities, nor the contents of our archives, to be lost to time; this kind of blindness or ignorance means that our spaces and narratives become ripe for exploitation<sup>(12)</sup>.

Pretty simple concept, right? You lose sight of history and you risk losing control of your community spaces.

se our paths in life bas



Consider a site like Tumblr, for example. Tumblr has an incredibly high queer presence compared to many other social media sites<sup>(13)</sup> and also makes it exceedingly easy for users to access their posting history through – coincidentally – the archive page. In this space, queer users can easily engage with the histories of their fellow bloggers, as well as their own. You're not limited by an algorithm here, which would push dominant stories to the top of the feed; instead, your post history is content that you can access at any time.

In the case of Tumblr, it's pretty clear to see that the community itself becomes the archive. Though posting on a site like Tumblr is a great way to establish a community and find likeminded individuals (trust me, it was for me. But more on that later), it also actively collects data and information on a user that they can look back on at any time.

You start to unintentionally curate your own archive because of functions like this. We'll talk more about how these digital archives can capture moments of resistance, strife, hate, and resilience later on in this issue, but the biggest takeaway here is that it's possible for an archive to be created in real time. We don't have to think of the queer archive as a complex amalgamation of years of history, hidden away in boxes packed in the back of a dusty garage; no, the online community is, in many ways, a real time archive all its own!



I hear you, reader, and I come bearing resources.

Here are some websites and movements you can check out!

-  **THE ARQUIVES: CANADA'S LGBTQ2+ ARCHIVES**
-  **QZAP: THE QUEER ZINE ARCHIVE PROJECT**
-  **EDMONTON QUEER HISTORY PROJECT**
-  **TRANSGENDER ARCHIVES @ THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**
-  **THE LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES**
-  **ONE NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN ARCHIVES**
-  **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR'S DIGITAL QUEER ARCHIVE**
-  **STONEWALL NATIONAL MUSEUM ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

## BIOGRAPHY: MAXINE WOLFE

Maxine Wolfe is a lesbian scholar, activist, and co-founder of the Lesbian Avengers. Wolfe has been working with the Lesbian History Archive since 1984, committing to various archival projects. Her ethic towards academia and scholarship is grounded in political activism, working toward progress and preservation.

Maxine Wolfe is the epitome of an ethic of care within queer archival practices. Though she is tasked with recording and preserving queer histories through LHA, she commits herself to ensuring that data collection never comes before safety.

In conclusion, Maxine Wolfe is pretty cool.

19 AVE D, 2nd FL  
AT THE DOOR  
LESBIAN AVENGERS is a  
ion group focused on issues vital  
esbian survival and visibility.  
meet every Tuesday at 8PM at  
Lesbian & Gay Community  
vices Center, 208 W 13 St, NYC.  
info: (212) 587-7711 ext. 3204

"ACADEMIC LESBIAN AND GAY  
STUDIES WOULD NOT EXIST IF  
POLITICAL MOVEMENTS DID NOT  
MAKE IT POSSIBLE."

## risking an online presence

### AS AN LGBTQ+ DIGITAL CITIZEN

Now, I'm gonna do my best to make sure this section doesn't come off as preachy. I'm sure, if you're a queer or trans person reading this zine, you're well aware of the minefield that is the internet and social media. It seems to me like we're in the "getting worse" part of "things will get worse before they get better" when it comes to safety for LGBTQ+ people online.

So, in an effort to ensure this zine covers as much ground as possible, let's talk about some of these risks

First and foremost, social media seems to LOVE edgelord humour right now; I think I've seen more homo-transphobic slurs thrown around on Instagram in the past year than in all my years as a social media user. The sad reality of social media and the internet is that these attacks can find their targets more easily than before(14-15).

41% of queer people report having experienced some degree of online discrimination based on their sexuality(16). It's not just the classic stuff - slurs and whatnot - either: groomer talk has exploded online, largely in part because of the current sociopolitical conversations occurring. Queer and trans people online regularly get accused of grooming children and "forcing" them to be queer(17); even the most unrelated content from LGBTQ+ people is at risk of these attacks.

Cyber-attacks like doxxing - the act of publishing private and personal information about someone without their consent in an effort to put them in harm's way or expose something about them(18) - carry far more risk for LGBTQ+ people. Even the most protected data can be dug up by someone savvy enough to find it, which is why it's so important for queer and trans digital citizens to become aware of ways to protect themselves wherever possible.

BKLYN

economic re

# safeguarding yourself online

## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE LGBTQ+ DIGITAL CITIZEN

Don't use your full name -  
consider nicknames or  
abbreviations

Never give out your location!

Although it might seem like a good idea to  
list your triggers or discomforts, trolls  
can use these to target and harm you

If you are a minor,  
NEVER list your age

Sometimes, it's okay to log off.  
Not every fight needs to be  
fought

Some people just don't want to learn;  
it's not your job to teach them

There's no harm in blocking trolls! A block  
doesn't mean they've won, it just means  
you're protecting yourself

Remember that even the safest  
spaces can be infiltrated;  
proceed with caution

But also, don't live your life on edge!  
It's okay to celebrate and enjoy a space  
you've found that makes you feel good

You may be wondering  
why I'm writing this zine...

I've been dreading writing this section.

Not because I thought it would be hard or embarrassing, but because I have an incredibly hard time situating myself within my own identity and queer experience. I didn't have the wonderful, welcoming family experience other people have had; I didn't have an easy time at school, either. A lot of the stuff I went through still affects me today, and I feel a sense of... mourning, perhaps, for the experience I could have had.

## THE EXPERIENCE I SHOULD HAVE HAD.

That being said, what I did have was digital spaces and online communities. I'm unashamed in admitting I might not have even been able to understand lesbianism as something other than an alien concept had it not been for Tumblr. I learned about myself through the communities I found myself in. I wasn't in a place at the time where I would have felt comfortable going out and meeting other queer people in person (in fact, the very thought of exposing myself that way was TERRIFYING to 17 year old me), but I WAS comfortable meeting people online.

I also got to learn about my history online. I found archives like the Lesbian Herstory Archive, or QZAP, or Stonewall Museum, and devoured the content. I would never have had access to any of this without the internet; digital spaces were the sole reason I found any hopefulness or support at the time...

...AND I'M NOT WILLING TO LET THAT  
EXPERIENCE DIE.

Me at 13...  
yeah, I'm not  
sure how I  
didn't know,  
either

# resilience

MY EXPERIENCE AS A QUEER PERSON ONLINE IS NOT UNIQUE: SO MANY QUEER PEOPLE TURN TO THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO MAKE SENSE OF THEIR IDENTITIES AND FIND SOME COMFORT IN COMMUNITY BUILDING. I THINK THIS TREND IS ONE OF GREAT RESILIENCE, AND I THINK THIS RESILIENCE IS A CORNERSTONE OF QUEER DIGITAL ARCHIVING AND COMMUNITY MAKING IN MANY WAYS.

## Archiving is hard.

Collecting historical information and data on the queer community often relies on some interaction with the state(19), meaning the archive might feel uncomfortably skewed toward negative experiences. Creative a queer archive – one that celebrates the struggles and the triumphs equally – means being resilient and fighting to preserve the histories that the state – the hetero-dominant machine – didn't deem important enough to preserve.

## Archiving means persisting through tough times.

Take the Stonewall Museum and Archive, for example. This archive was borne out of a pretty awful time – the Stonewall Riots were a direct response to unimaginable amounts of violence directed at the LGBTQ+ community. In this case, the archive captures a snapshot of a moment where extreme adversity occurred(20), and then celebrates all the progress and change that has since followed. Doing the work, here, is a resilient act that doesn't allow the story to end at the difficulty.

## Archiving inspires solidarity worth fighting for.

Doing the work of putting together a queer archive through building a community is impossible without a deep understanding of how community is fostered. Thinking about solidarity as a practice where struggles and triumphs are celebrated equally(21) allows us to think about the queer digital archive as a tool that flaunts its very existence as survival in a social space – cishet society, yes, but also the internet and social media – that was never made to be hospitable to it.

WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY WITH ALL OF THIS IS THAT BOTH THE ACT OF CREATING A QUEER DIGITAL ARCHIVE AND THE ARCHIVE ITSELF ARE TOOLS OF RESISTANCE. THEY SEEK TO PROTECT THE QUEER EXPERIENCE IN EVERY WAY. RATHER THAN SIMPLY REPRESENTING THE RISKS AND CONCERN AND DEFEATS WE'VE SPOKEN ABOUT AT TIMES IN THIS ZINE. THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE IS, IN SO MANY WAYS, THE MOST FAITHFUL TRUTH.

So, with all of this information in hand, why don't we revisit the concept of online queerness as an archive? Earlier in this issue, I talked about how queer spaces allow the user to become their own archive; through the preservation of their digital data, they can draw a timeline through their history and, in turn, become educated on the history of their fellow community members.

I think it's a little more complicated than that, though. I called this zine "Sustain!", because the dual meaning of the word sets up well why I treat the online queer community as a digital archive.

# SUSTAIN!

and why the queer community  
is a digital archive

One of the definitions of the word has to do with suffering something negative – some kind of harm; you sustain an injury, for example. This suffering is, I believe, reflected in the digital queer archive. While yes, the issue of online harassment and hate is a risk queer and trans people must face when navigating online spaces(22), that same harassment and hate is a fundamental part of the archive. It reminds us that these moments have happened, we've experienced them, and we still persisted through. The online community is the archival tool that preserves these moments.

The second definition of the word "sustain" deals with a strength that carries one through a difficult moment. The memory of a better time might sustain someone through the rougher moments. This is why I value the conversation about the resilience of archives AND digital queer communities so much; the archive, and what it holds, sustains us. Media and the communities that LGBTQ+ people form around them allow them to cope with difficult things, but also fight back and form narratives that are rooted in their histories(23). Again, the communities themselves capture data and digital information that become historical artifacts; the resilience and survival of these communities are an amalgamation of everything that has occurred and all the ways we preserve these moments.

**Sustain. It just feels... right.**

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HOW TO CITE THIS ZINE:  
JARVIS, AMANDA. (2024). SUSTAIN: A ZINE ABOUT DIGITAL ARCHIVING, COMMUNITY, AND PRESERVING QUEER COMMUNITY. HAMILTON.

I MADE THIS ZINE BECAUSE I WANTED TO UNPACK SOME FEELINGS I WAS HAVING ABOUT NAVIGATING THE INTERNET AS A QUEER PERSON. I'VE BEEN STRUGGLING TO RECONCILE HOW CRITICAL THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED QUEER SPACES WERE FOR ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG WITH THE UNFATHOMABLE AMOUNT OF RISK THAT COMES WITH EXISTING ON THE SAME INTERNET THE WORST BIGOTS AND HOMOPHOBES DO. IT'S AN INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT EMOTIONAL SPACE TO INHABIT.

**please** **resist**

I think the answer to this internal conflict was, for me, creating an archive of my own. While yes, I recognize this zine is not doing what traditional digital and physical archives do, I still feel that it's done a lot for ME by way of... I don't know, giving back? Returning some kind of sentiment to the archives that equipped me with the tools I needed to be okay with the space I found myself in as a teenager.

I included references to other archives, guides and resources, stories of people and groups that have meant a lot to me as a way to preserve these things in a different medium. This zine is meant to be accessible in an introductory way, and I wanted it to be celebratory of all the complexities of living in the digital age for someone looking to find that celebration.

Ultimately, approaching this project as both an assessment of what it means to inhabit LGBTQ+ spaces in the digital age, but also as a consideration of what digital archiving can offer these spaces; I think we're missing the point if we don't consider the importance of preserving the histories of these spaces and the people within them.

**SUSTAIN!**

I'LL FOREVER SUPPORT THE ARCHIVING OF QUEERNESS BEING DONE BY OTHER QUEER PEOPLE; THE INTERNET IS MEANT TO SERVE US ALL, SO LET'S MAKE SURE WE'RE USING

IT FOR OUR COMMUNITY. REGARDLESS OF THE HARSHIPS.

CREATED FOR:  
CMSTM 720: DATA CULTURES, DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA ARTS. WINTER 2024. DR. ANDREA  
ZEFFIRO