FCJ-014 Online Memorialisation: The Web As A Collective Memorial Landscape For Remembering The Dead

Kylie Veale, Curtin University of Technology.

Introduction

> "The life of the dead consists in being present in the minds of the living." Cicero

In the last ten thousand years, our deceased antecedents are thought to number over one hundred billion (see Davies, 1994). Not much has been recorded about them, unless they were famous, rich or fortunate enough to have been catapulted into the memory of others. It was therefore up to the general public to 'individualise' the deaths of the rest through mortuary ritual, an accomplishment to which archaeologists and our cemeteries can attest today. Individualisation via memorialisation has become a way for past and current societies to commemorate life on the event of a death. To that end, memorialisation provides one of a group of artefacts used by historians, genealogists and the like to document history and family links.

> [The] memorialisation of departed loved ones seems to be an integral part of human nature that can be traced back to the dawn of civilization. Throughout prehistoric times and into recorded history, there is a common thread of honouring the dead … as early as 35,000 BC, Cro-Magnon man practiced ritual funerals. (Tippy, 2002)

In the recent past, memorialisation is largely practised via granite, marble or bronze memorials in cemeteries, requiring physical visits that can be impeded by distance or physical ability. In a society that is increasingly fragmented – where families and friends, often separated by significant distances, cannot actively participate in memorialising their deceased – an alternate space to the physical needs to be provided.

Several authors claim this alternate space is cyberspace. I therefore ask: how and why do memorials exist there? Is there a link between physical and online memorialisation? What kind of memorialisation space is emerging online? To consider these questions, this paper presents findings from an investigation of online memorialisation. Firstly, a unique model was created based on an analysis of the work of several authors, using their definitions of memorialisation and their discussions of the motivations and characteristics of traditional memorial practices. The resulting Memorial Attribute Model was then used to understand how the Web is being used as a memorialisation space. Why memorialisation may have been adopted online is then considered. In addition, I outline possible links between the remembrance of the dead in the physical space and online. Finally, the Web is explored as a collective memorial landscape.

Memorilisation Practice

Memorialisation as a death ritual has been practiced as early as 35,000 BC. An evolutionary analysis of physical memorial form by Hallam and Hockey (2001) suggests that in recent times memorials are increasingly used by the living to maintain a role with the deceased. Before the eleventh century in England, memorials were only erected for those of wealth and means. However the eleventh century was also a turning point for everyday society, in that the graves of the 'ordinary' were recovered from anonymity in a desire to commemorate everyday people. Three centuries later, memorials contained items such as name, date of death, words of praise, profession (and indirectly, rank and status), and prayers to God for the soul. Later, text linking family members to the deceased was included and, by the seventeenth century, biographical accounts featured, therefore making the memorial as real as possible to the deceased and the living.

As a form of meaningful and personal communication, memorialisation helps those who experience the death of a loved one to fight through the stages of the grieving process, providing a means to express deeply felt emotion and to honour the deceased. Memorials provide a permanent place for those left behind to connect emotionally and spiritually with their loss. They also provide an opportunity to honour and pay tribute to a person and make a statement about the impact that person had on his or her family, community, or even the world. Moreover, Ruby (1995) explains that mourners are confronted by two very contradictory needs when someone dies: to keep the memory of the deceased alive, and, at the same time, accept the reality of death

and loss. Therefore as Salisbury (2002) suggests, the act of erecting some kind of memorial to the deceased is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the grieving process.

So what can cyberspace offer memorialisation? Cyberspace lacks physicality but, as Wertheim (1999) contends, cyberspace can be a spiritual space. Several authors agree this notion extends to memorialisation practice. Hallam & Hockey note the Internet offers the ability to memorialise in a public place, where anyone can visit at any time, without imposition to others, and without interruption to themselves. They continue:

> The deceased can always be provided with a here and a now [with the Internet], something which is increasingly evident in the appropriation of public space for private grief, at times of ... traumatic loss. (61)

Whilst Wertheim claims therapy is a quintessentially lonely experience, the author also suggests people crave something communal; something that will link their minds to others. As a result, while working 'on one's own personal demons, ... many people seem to want a collective mental arena, a space they might share[, and I suggest, also grieve,] with other minds' (233).

Evidence of cyberspace as Wertheim's 'collective mental arena' is certainly well documented in such areas as self-help, e-therapy or cyber-therapy, and psychoanalysis (see Bacon; Condon, and Fernsler, 2000; Derrington, 1999; Hsiung, 2002; Zaleski, 2000). Equally, academics have proven the Web can be specifically used for the practise of memorialisation. Geser's (1998) early work suggests the Web ' may enlarge the scope of cultural expression to new spheres of thoughts and emotions, hitherto hidden in the privacy of individual minds or informal interpersonal relations', thus providing a more enriched environment in which to memorialise the dead. The impulse to create some form of memorial to the dead seems to be nearly universal across all cultures to Marshall (2000), who indicates he is not surprised Web sites as online memorials 'have sprung into existence'. Finally, in his proposal for studying the Israeli culture of mourning and memorialisation on the Internet, Sade-Beck (2003: 9) says 'the Internet is a new tool for the direct expression of emotions'. He continues, 'the Internet facilitates the expression of emotions through on-site memorialization' (3).

So as cyberspace seems conducive to memorialising the deceased, how has the practice actually manifested online? This question brings me to the first task of this paper – using a model of memorial motivations and characteristics to investigate how memorials exist in cyberspace. A number of principles were utilised to create a unique method, the Memorial Attribute Model: firstly, an analysis of memorial definitions from several authors (see Davies, 1994; Friedman and James, 2002; Ruby, 1995; Salisbury, 2002); secondly, an analysis of the stages of the grieving processes in foundation works such as Van Gennep (1960) and Kübler-Ross (1969); and finally, the model incorporates a consideration of the aforementioned specific works of Geser, Marshall, and Sade-Beck. As a result, the Memorial Attribute Model consists of a list of memorial motivations and characteristics, creating two hypotheses relating to how memorials exist in cyberspace:

1. Memorials manifest online as a result of one or more of four

   motivations: grief, bereavement and loss; unfinished business; living social presence; and/or historical significance.

2. Online Memorials adhere to one or more memorial characteristics:

   invoking remembrance; a demonstrable array of kinships; and/or as a surrogate for the deceased.

Each motivation and characteristic was applied to random Web sites claiming to be memorials, found through google.com's Search Engine and using a set of identified search terms. [1] Memorial "gateways" (Web sites providing portal-like access to a number of related Web sites) were also utilised to find memorial content. In exploring each feature of the Memorial Attribute Model, references to memorials in the physical world, the Web's predecessor in this field, are incorporated for illustrative and comparison purposes.

How Memorialisation Manifests Online

Memorial Motivations

From my brief analysis of the works of Van Gennep and Kübler-Ross, I observe in the first instance that coping with grief and loss is perhaps the main impetus for memorials online. Certainly, memorialisation 'helps the bereaved to recover from their grief by providing a pleasant 'memory picture" (Metcalf and Huntington, 1991: 54) to reflect on, and can allow others to express their sympathy and consolation through active participation in the grieving process. In comparison, Hallam & Hockey present condolence cards and funerary wreaths as examples of this participation in the physical world, both of which can be kept for future reference as shared moments of intense grieving. Online, memorials created in times of grief and bereavement are found through examples of online memorial text. Just as Kübler-Ross explains the five stages of grief, Web sites found during my investigation adhere to one or more of these stages, supporting their usage as self-help throughout the grieving process.

Expressions of denial are found on many websites, symbolised by phrases such as 'I still can't believe you're gone' (A. Tracy, n.d.; Woznick, n.d.) or:

> It's so very hard to accept your death; and sometimes I think that you'll just walk through the door like nothing has happened. ('Memorial for Lucy Morrison', 2001)

> I still wait for you to call me, I think of something I want to ask you or something I can't wait to tell you about … then I remember that you're gone. (C. A. Tracy, 2002)

Anger too is found, as the living articulate resentment for their loved one being taken from them or not being there with them. The word "why" is often an indicator of this stage:

> Sometimes I would like to just scream at the top of my lungs until God gets tired of hearing me and sends you back. ('Memorial for Lucy Morrison', 2001)

> Why did you leave me all alone in this world? What am I going to do now? ('Memorial for ZAKEY KALID', 2000)

> I think of you everyday. You are such a bastard to deny us. You are such a bastard. God how I miss you. ('Memorial for Trent James Hayward', 2002)

Additionally, idioms such as "I would do anything" feature as messages on memorial texts in the bargaining stage of grief and bereavement, and the bereaved also write about how their life cannot go on after the death event. And finally, in the last stage of acceptance, acknowledgements that the deceased is not coming back are typical:

> …and now I … understand that you're not coming back… ever (Johnson, n.d.)

Secondly, Kübler-Ross notes within some communities, those who care about [the deceased] may need help in completing unfinished business. Kuenning (1987) agrees that a sudden death may leave the survivor with many regrets, a sense of unfinished business, and no time for an orderly farewell. Memorialisation can therefore be an outlet for those with unfinished business with the deceased to action toward completing it. Items such as personalised epitaphs, written letters placed grave-side or journals created to work through the unresolved issues, are active and physical displays of this memorialisation motivation. Similarly, in his content categorisation of the Virtual Memorial Garden, Marshall uncovers that most memorials were either light or dark in tone. Light toned memorials were often joyful dialogues about the deceased, whereas dark toned memorials were 'often apologies, regrets and even confessions'.

The tone of the memorial is especially important when we consider unfinished business as memorial content. Online confessions of unrequited love, last word regrets, and missed opportunities for meeting the deceased are often found, for instance, in the following examples:

> Never got to actually say I love you. Well, I love you, Or got to say good-bye, but I will say, see you later! (Esford, n.d.)

> I remember that day as if it were yesterday. We said a lot of words, you and I. I would love the opportunity to take a lot of them back. My greatest regret is that the last words I ever said to you was that I never wanted to see you again. (Memorial for DebraAnn, n.d.)

Even in the case of chosen abortions, mothers post their regrets in memoriam to their unborn babies, as an example of which allowing an anonymous cleansing:

> Oh God, please help me extinguish the pain and the sorrow of what I have done. (Campo, n.d.)

The tone of the memorial is also important when we consider that memorials have regularly been used as opportunities for conversations with the dead. In their personalised epitaphs and grave-

side letters, the living speak to the dead as if they were still alive, as the memorials become a "living" social presence for the deceased. Epitaphs are written as personal, lasting messages, and as I have already mentioned, as an outlet for those with unfinished business with the deceased. Hamilton (1999) cites Sturken's 1998 example of a conversation with the dead, in the form of a letter at the base of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington D.C.:

35 > Dear Michael: Your name is here but your (sic) are not. I made a rubbing of it, thinking that if I rubbed hard enough, I would rub your name off the wall and you would come back to me. I miss you so.

36 In this way, the living are conversing with the dead as if they were still alive, in the form of a letter as demonstrated by the "Dear Michael" start to the item. On the Web, the living demonstrate similar behaviour via interactive functionality, such as online diary entries, message boards and guest books. The online memorial created for a young lady who died in 1997 serves as an example (see 'Amanda Joy Alstatt, March 15, 1981 — June 05, 1997', n.d.), to which her father and brother often leave messages on her memorial message board. Their messages are conversational in nature, as they "talk" to her about family news and the day to day goings on in their lives:

37 > Amanda. Yea, it is me Daddy.. I know you know about the new and wonderful news. Pretty awesome Huh! That is it for now! ...

38 > Hi Amanda its me Matthew, I started highschool (sic) on August 11th. Im (sic) now in 9th grade and im 14 ...

39 > It is me!. So much to say, but not enough room or time, right here, right now.

40 Aside from mourning, grief and bereavement, memorialisation can occur on grounds of historical significance, the model's final memorialisation motivation. The maintenance of the past as a living memory is of essential importance in the life of a group and individuals. Knowing about origins, past achievements, and mistakes, allows us to understand ourselves as links in the chain of generations (Von Eckartsberg, 1988). In this way, the concept of deliberate memorialisation (see Cosslett, 2002; Searl, 2000) lends itself to historical motives, that is, dedicating a special place to the memory of someone and, in turn, strengthening the fragile bonds of memory that link the generations. This type of memorialisation can occur immediately after a death, though as Cosslett suggests, it often involves 'deliberate attempts to recapture lost memory' (252), years beyond when the actual person died.

41 When we look to the Web for evidence, the use of cyberspace as a method to preserve history and memory is not a new concept. Millard Fillmore, thirteenth president of the United States and a man born over two hundred years ago, is memorialised all over the Web from a historical perspective. Details about his personal life and political accomplishments are chronicled on The Whitehouse Web site [https://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/mf13.html], and online reference works such as Encyclopedia America [https://gi.grolier.com/presidents/ea/bios/13pfillm.html] and The Presidents of the United States [https://www.ipl.org/div/potus/mfillmore.html] include biographic information about his family and non-political life experiences. These memorials are not avenues for grief or bereavement. Rather, they are Web sites published for historical significance, as public and social reminders of the achievements and sacrifices of those in public service.

42 The Web is also used to memorialise everyday people from history. In the case of the historical section of The Officer Down Memorial Page [https://www.odmp.org], memorials serve as reminders of the everyday risks facing law-enforcement officers, by establishing a sense of past in the duties still completed today. Consider Deputy Keeper James B. Lippincott (The Officer Down Memorial Page Inc, 2003), who was killed by gunfire Friday, March 2, 1894. He has been memorialised online since 2003, despite his death occurring nearly 110 years ago.

43 In summary, and while they are not proven to be exhaustive, online memorialisations are found to be created as a consequence of one or more motivations; grief, bereavement and loss; unfinished business; living social presence; and/or historical significance. To further investigate how memorialisation exists on the Web, I represent the second hypothesis of the Memorial Attribute Model, in terms of investigating three physical memorial characteristics in cyberspace.

44 ***Memorial Characteristics***

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In the first instance, from my analysis of the work of Van Gennep and Kübler-Ross, a memorial should be a catalyst for invoking memory and remembrance, due to its past or present proximity to the deceased. Property that used to belong to the deceased may invoke memories of them. The very act of visiting a grave places the deceased immediately into the memory of the visitor, due to the proximity of the deceased to the memorial. Though what of the Internet? What of a space that lacks physicality?

46 Similar to photo albums depicting the life of the deceased at funerals, I find online memorials mitigating their lack of proximity to the deceased by providing a vast array of textual and visual remembrances. A montage of photos, sounds, and video reflects the personal values of the deceased, and hence bring into play perhaps more remembrance than a static physical memorial. Ruby suggests visual remembrances such as picture making can replace human memory, becoming the primary means by which twentieth-century Western humanity remembers.

47 Every memorial Web site I visited contained at least one picture of the deceased, though many also included photos of family, and images depicting the deceased in a positive light, allowing family and friends to relive their experiences and reflect. MIDI and WAV files play songs favoured by the deceased when memorial pages open in the browser, and visitors are given the opportunity to view home videos of the person, uploaded by family and friends from personal video cameras. Similarly, technology has also enabled an ever-lasting reminder of the exact time the person died, beyond the static death date on most physical memorials. Using time-counters to display the exact time elapsed since the event of their death, a link between the virtual and physical space occurs, complete with second-by-second adjustments as life in the physical space continues. For example:

48 > 1653 days, 14 hours, 28 minutes, and 12 seconds have passed since Robbie went to heaven. ('Robbie Smith Memorial', n.d.)

49 Perhaps the most significant memorial characteristic is that memorials are generally surrogates for the dead. Certainly in previous research (Veale, 2003), headstones are found as representations, markers or substitutes for the dead, containing one or more descriptors as information about the deceased. In this way, as Salisbury cites Matthew Berry's 1992 thesis, 'the individual grave or memorial … provides a focal point or acts as a substitute for the deceased, allowing the bereaved to maintain a role with the person' (18). These surrogate descriptors, or inscriptions in the context of general memorialisation, are often crucial in establishing relationships between the memory object and the subject to be remembered. In any case, I suggest surrogate form, content and context has a profound effect upon the ways in which a memorial works as a surrogate.

50 Equally, on the Web, memorials are being turned to as ever increasing surrogates for all manner of deceased persons; famous or not. MemorialsOnline.com, a commercial provider of online memorial packages, lists several items that should contribute to the content of a memorial, to accurately reflect the deceased. They include: names; dates and places of birth and death; final resting place and cause of death; a biography or eulogy of the deceased; physical characteristics such as height, eye and hair colour; a list of family members; favourite activities; hobbies; occupation; accreditations; education; and organisational affiliations. These items aid in creating an accurate life reflection of the deceased, creating a virtual surrogate for them.

51 Examples of memorials as surrogates for the deceased abound on the Web, and the presence of this characteristic is perhaps the largest evidence of how memorialisation exists in that space. At a minimum, memorial Web sites contain the name and/or photo of the deceased, along with their birth and death date. However, Web sites are also found to contain biographies; some even chronicling the deceased's whole life from birth (see 'Suzie Conaway-Cameron Memorial Website', 2003), while other memorials (see 'The Holly Jones Memorial Website', n.d.), describe specific events that paint the person in a happy light, complete with favourite foods and music.

52 Continuing the concept of memorial as surrogate, outward displays of kinship are a generally a part of traditional memorials. Horizontal and vertical relationships of lineage, generation and genealogy, allow the living to share some identity or familial connection with the memorial, aiding also in memory creation by describing the close personal networks and bonds of the deceased. In fact, as Davies (1994: 35) describes, 'memorials spell out the highly particular, familiar and familial relationships with their dead interlocutor, in a way which retains the centrality of the ties between the living or the dead'. Obituaries are often found to implicitly state the relationship of the

bereaved and (sometimes those already passed) to the deceased. Additionally, the living may state their relationship to the deceased when erecting memorials such as headstones. And while memorials are generally created by those who are related in some way to the deceased, those that are not related to them still expend intentional effort to display a relationship. For instance, consider memorials created by the leader or citizens of a country, for whom soldiers have fallen in war, or the fan of an entertainer who has since passed.

53 In a time where privacy laws and identity protection are paramount, I expected this particular memorial characteristic to be invisible on the Web and thus be specifically inferior to physical memorials. demonstrable kinships on online memorials however are similar, if not superior, to traditional memorials in this instance, due the increased space available for memorial text. They are also similar in that they contain a mix of detailed kinships. For example, in terms of specifically named relationships:

54 > He was the fourth child and third son of Samuel L. Diggle and Marie Louise Cobb. ('Perpetual Memorials Website for Robert Bernard Diggle (1914-1993)', n.d.)

55 > We mourn the loss of our 16 year-old son, Michael. ('Michael Swickey, Jr. Memorial Tribute', n.d.)

56 ... and generalised kinships:

57 > This page is dedicated to the memories of my beautiful granddaughter. ('Alexis Brianne Stempien', n.d.)

58 > On February 25, 2001, my beautiful little girl got hurt. ('Memorial', 2004)

59 In the same way, some online memorials (see 'Edward Herbert Dube', 2002) contain links to the memorials of other deceased family members on the Web, thereby stating familial relationships in the form of hyperlinks.

60 To summarise the above findings, websites are found to portray one or more of the Memorial Attribute Model's three characteristics; remembrance; a demonstrable array of kinships; and/or as a surrogate for the deceased. These findings however, in addition to the aforementioned five memorial motivations, raise additional questions. Why is cyberspace used for memorialisation? Are there links between the physical and virtual space? Does the existence of online memorialisation change traditional memorialisation practice? The following section of this paper attempts to explore these questions.

Why Memorialisation Manifests Online

61 In a world where physical memorials can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars (see Ryle, 2002), require physical attendance, and are subject to degradation and desecration, the Web can be considered an additional or alternate space to memorialise the dead. To explain, I propose timeliness, cost, accessibility, and creativity as advantages of memorialising online.

62 Perhaps the most prevailing advantage of cyberspace for memorialisation is that the Internet, as a space, allows quick if not instant content creation, unlimited editing and updating, and a lifespan that is not subject to the degradation of the physical world. [2] Unlike physical memorials, which are erected at one point of time and generally remain unchanged, the interactive and communicative nature of the Internet allows online content be amended and added to, in subsequent periods of memorialisation.

63 After the initial creation of an online memorial during times of grief and bereavement, additional reflection and content is often added to create an enduring and expanding space for the deceased. For example, a memorial to SIDS infant Jordan Joseph Miller (see Miller, n.d.) contains messages authored on the anniversary of his death, over some four years since he died in 1994. Equally, the online memorial of Gregory Ott (see Ott, 2002), assisted not only in the periods of initial grief and bereavement (as characterised on the main page), several other pages were added to the site in subsequent years, again on the anniversary of his death. In the same way, the mother of "Kenny" continually uses his memorial site (see 'A Memorial to Kenny', n.d.) on the anniversary of his birthday, to reflect and 'speak' to him as she works through her enduring grief.

64 Moreover, online memorial websites are also found to be dynamic and continuing works in progress, creating full-featured creative works. Olaf Karthaus (2001) spent the last three years building the memorial website, The Daniel Project for his son Daniel, who died in 2000 from a congenital heart disease. The 'Daniel's Story' section of the website is a number of chapters

commemorating his short life, with the first chapter uploaded in November 2000 (three months after his death) and the last in January 2003. All sections and indeed the site are continually being updated, making 'Daniel's life, his struggles, and most importantly, the joy he gave [his parents], public'.

65 Not only are memorials fluctuating and adaptive online, they are also a timely intermediary until a physical memorial is erected. As one bereaved person said in response to the World Trade Centre site becoming inaccessible after the September 11 terrorist attacks: 'What are we supposed to do between now and when the actual physical memorial is there?'(Frangos, 2004). I contend that cyberspace allows memorial websites to be created more quickly than physical memorials, an assertion supported by the research of the PEW Internet and American Life project. PEW Internet (2002: 21) found in the time after the 2001 terrorist attacks on the USA:

66 > … more than four in ten Web sites [archived between September 11, 2001 and December 1, 2001] allowed visitors not only to view others' expression[s about the attacks], but also to post their own reactions and perspectives about the terrorist attacks, [in addition] to communal expressions of grief and mourning.

67 Thus within three months of the terrorist attacks, a large number of Web sites were erected as online memorials. Thus in times quicker than physical memorials could be erected, the Web was utilised to quickly and easily create memorialisation spaces. Similarly, online memorials do not cost as much as the physical to erect. As Putzel (2002) says:

68 > Unlike real estate or physical memorials that tend to increase in price with inflation, the cost of erecting and preserving online memorials has declined dramatically as technology prices have plunged in recent years.

69 Furthermore, perhaps in part to the aforesaid time and cost considerations and the increasing number of people accessing to the Internet, the Web as a memorialisation space is also more open and available to a diverse group of people than physical memorials. For instance, the Internet removes the geographic difficulties evident in accessing physical memorials. As Marshall explains, online 'memorials are often created by people unable to attend funerals [and] who live far away from the burial place'.

70 As a result, funerary web-casting has become popular online, as a way to participate in memorialisation practice virtually. Made available via Internet technology, funerary web-casting enables a funeral service to be watched live through the use of Webcams, or at a later date from a recording of the service. They are often supplementary material to online memorial Web sites, as downloadable files in an online archive of the memorial service. In fact, Karen Kasel made a funeral Web-cast available for the family of her deceased mother, because:

71 > It cost[s] money to drop everything and come to a funeral. It's difficult in this day and age of everyone living so far away. I think it's just wonderful that [the family] were seeing this. You get the feel of the whole service. (Ordonez, 2002)

72 Seeing that Wertheim (1999: 228) believes the Web is 'not ontologically rooted in the physical phenomenon [and is] … not subject to the laws of physics', it is not surprising that the bereaved can view, interact and experience online memorials in their own time, without having to conform to opening dates and times. I also suggest this lack of physicality also allows memorialisation to be practiced in ways more private than at public, physical memorials. Furthermore, the ability to mask identities and remain anonymous on the Web allows those who had inappropriate or secret relationships with the deceased to work through their grief and memorialise those of their choosing.

73 The Web as a medium for memorialisation facilitates not only writing as a part of the grieving process, but also the immediate sharing of these texts internationally. Marshall certainly agrees, in that the 'relief that people have found through the simple act of writing a memorial text' may be multiplied infinitely by the knowledge of the words being disseminated around the world in a matter of seconds. In support of this claim, the following quotation from Frank Yanoti (n.d.) displays how an online memorial addresses the need to share the loss of a person for and with many diverse people:

74 > A memorial website may seem like a strange idea, but there has been nothing normal about the past few weeks. I needed a way to get out this information and I (we all) needed to do something,

> anything. I put this up quickly to aid those traveling from out of town, but I'd like to offer it to all of Alison and Adam's many, many family and friends as a small way for us to share our memories of Alison and to try to console each other. I will add a guest book shortly and I ask that anyone who has any pictures, stories, or other things to share please send them my way. It's a tragedy; there is no other word. We have only our memories and each other.

75 We must consider however the possibility that physical memorialisation is superior to the online, because of the proximity of the memorial to the deceased. That is, online memorials may not seem "real" to the bereaved, who may believe that their loved one is where the physical remains are located. Though, just as graves and static memorials can evoke memory through limited content and proximity to the deceased, I find the interactive nature of online memorials require less and less memory and imagination of the living. Consequently, photo's, text, video, and sights and sounds make for an emotion-charging experience for the bereaved and indeed any visitor to an online memorial, allowing the memories to be created for them, and perhaps mitigating the issues surrounding lack of proximity to the deceased.

76 Timeliness, cost, accessibility and creativity are not the only advantages of online memorialisation however. The Web is also a favourable medium for preserving existing physical memorials from degradation and desecration. Physical cemeteries are fast becoming areas of disrepair, and preservationists are working to transfer the information in these places to electronic repositories – such as databases and virtual cemeteries – thus preserving historical memory. The digitisation of historical books and texts are the subject of many working papers, to ensure these valuable though fragile items are not lost to the damage inflicted by time. Historical memorialisation can also be seen in terms of preservation, as much as it is about safeguarding memory. Online memorials in this regard are found to be largely genealogical in nature, though there is also a large proportion found for historical persons of socially 'higher-profiles" than everyday people, such as political, entertainment and social arenas. As a hobby, genealogy is a way for the present to search for their roots and memorialise those that walked the earth before them – the people that contributed ancestrally to the person they are today. The increase in genealogical family tree publishing on the Web immortalises the distinct relationships between different branches of one's ancestry and extended family history.

77 Finally, although I have been considering the Web as an additional or alternate space to memorialise the dead, are physical and online memorialisation distinct and disparate rituals? Or are they utilised in collaboration to enhance memorialisation practice? In fact, physical space and cyberspace work in symbiosis on many occasions.

78 At the very least, the Web provides mention or access to memorials located in the physical world. For example, the Millard Fillmore House Web site [https://home.earthlink.net/~pock/home_mf.htm] incorporates a virtual tour of the house in which he lived in Buffalo, New York, in addition to pictures of his grave and statues in New York State. Other Web sites also lessen the physical requirement of travelling to visit memorials, such as the many Web sites covering the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial. Online projects such as the Australian War Memorial [https://www.awm.gov.au/] and Thomas Jefferson Memorial [https://www.nps.gov/thje/index.htm] can both be considered online memorials in their own right, taking into consideration the Memorial Attribute Model, though they are actually representations of the physical memorial. Photos of physical memorials such as headstones are featured on Web sites such as the Carol Lambert Memorial [https://carollambert.homestead.com/] and the JC Caffro Memorial [https://jccaffro.com/]. Additionally, The Crazy Horse Memorial Website [https://www.crazyhorse.org/] offers visitors a real-time Webcam of the physical memorial.

79 Similarly, there is evidence of cyberspace providing an additional dimension to memorials in the physical space. URL's are found on headstones, linking the monument to an interactive Web site about the deceased, though in some cases they have been considered advertising rather than a way to provide a cohesive memorial for the deceased (see 'Son ordered to remove web address from mother's grave', 2001). In other cases, such as The Virtual Wall [https://www.virtualwall.org/], an online memorial enhances the physical memorial, allowing personal remembrances of letters, photographs, poetry, and citations to be recorded online, honouring those women and men named on the actual physical memorial.

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Finally, although not yet connected to the Internet, web technology is fast becoming a part of physical memorial practice. The Charon Touch Screen 'integrates with Charon Electronic Memorials to display the family's choice of reflections [in Web technology, at a kiosk at the physical cemetery:] poems, photographs, tributes, memories, and full multimedia presentations related to the deceased' are available. Similarly, 'Brent and Tyler Cassity provide visual eulogies via touch screen biographies on a kiosk in their cemeteries. They feel the deceased should be the primary focus of a cemetery visit, not some cold memorial stone' (Ramsland, 2002).

81 Concisely, cyberspace, and specifically the Web, provides numerous advantages to traditional (physical) memorialisation practice, in terms of timeliness, cost, accessibility, and a broader spectrum of creativity. There is also evidence to support the use of Web technology within physical memorial practice, and certainly of physical memorials either being represented or enhanced online. Though with the ebb and flow of millions of memorials online, what type of space is emerging there?

The Internet as a Collective Memorial Landscape

82 I find many people engaging in the participatory construction of memories on the Web, simply by creating their own heterogeneous messages of loss, bereavement and remembrance in online memorials. However, when individual memorials are considered together, possibly as Wertheim's 'collective mental arena', I propose that we can describe the Web as a "collective memorial landscape". Furthermore, specific navigation aids that spatially link individual memorials on the Web create a further dimension, in the form of online memorialisation sub-landscapes.

83 Kluitenberg (1999) states the memory of a culture or society is located principally in memory objects that hold traces of the past; a way in which material objects, events, documents and descriptions are linked together into a coherent narration of past and present. The Web, I therefore suggest, derives its significance as a broad and collective memorial landscape through demonstrated and globally accessible acts of cultural memory, in the form of online memorials. To explain, and as Kushner (1999) describes, physical memorial landscapes such as cemeteries intentionally create memory in two ways:

> 84 … one as places where individuals could remember their loved ones; the other as sacred national ground in which citizens of nation and city – in either case, members of the public – could see their public identity reflected in the memory of the public from years past.

85 Thus in considering the evidence in this paper, the Web can be considered a memorial landscape. Web sites and Web pages appear as Kushner's "places" for people to visit, capable of invoking remembrance for the deceased. And while cyberspace is considered as a distinct "place" or "space" by Wertheim and an extension of our mental space by Anders (2001), the Web reflects public identity and memory through the diverse practice of online memorialisation. Though that is not to say the Web is a singular level landscape. Delving below the memorials found on the Web uncovers sub-landscapes of implicit links between one individual-specific memorial to another, creating a global network or "collective" of memorial content for the deceased. Additionally, the use of Web rings and memorial collation or portal Web sites create memorial sub-landscapes, based on the type of death or grieving object, or even a tragic event.

86 Hypertextual linking of Web sites could at first glance be considered in Columbs' (2002: 44) terms, as merely 'documents … related to each other'. However, within the context of an online memorial for one person being linked to other online memorial content for that same person, I find online cultural memory a central theme, bridged across the perspectives of many authors. For example, the Angel Alex Web site [https://www.sleepingangel.com/sk/alex.htm], a memorial site to a stillborn baby, is in itself an act of online memorialisation, though it also contains hyperlinks to other online memorials about the child, broadening the specific narration and memory invocation about him. Another online memorial simply asks the visitor, 'for other expressions of love and memories about Kevin, you can visit the following links' ('interest.htm', n.d.). On the other hand, navigation tools such as Web rings create sub-landscapes of online memorialisation, based on commonalities of bereavement.

87 For instance, thousands of pet-related memorial Web rings exist on the Web, creating a communal grieving sub-landscape for deceased animal companions. The Hoofbeats in Heaven Web ring [https://www.hoofbeats-in-heaven.com/webring/], according to the authors, 'creates a safe haven

of support for members and visitors alike who have, or will be, experiencing the loss of their cherished horse'. Likewise, in times of tragic events and especially the current climate of worldwide terrorist activities, people can go from Web site to Web site within Web rings such as American Tragedy [https://webrings-r.us/americantragedy/index.html], to 'witness for themselves how Americans are sticking together during ... trying days' of loss. Moreover, the type of death also features as an attribute for the creation of collective memorial sub-landscapes. The Our Angels On Earth, Now Our Angels In Heaven Web ring [https://w.webring.com/hub?ring=ourangelsoneart5] allows people to traverse online memorials about the loss of a child.

88 Briefly, while Web sites belonging to Web rings are individual memorials representing past or present losses, linking them together based on contextual similarities creates sub-landscapes within a broader online memorial landscape. Equally, individual-focussed sub-landscapes are created by hyperlinks between memorials about the same person. All in all, online memorials are linked together on the Web, either directly through navigation structures, or conceptually when considering their locality in cyberspace, into a coherent narration of past and present, identified as a collective memorial landscape.

Conclusion

89 Using the Memorial Attribute Model, the paper has presented online memorialisation as practiced by and for family, friends, pets and famous people; for those dying in the present; and for others who may have died some several hundred years ago. I have confirmed online memorials are generally created through one or more of four motivations: grief, bereavement and loss; unfinished business; living social presence; and/or historical significance. I also found online memorials containing one or more of the model's memorialisation characteristics; creating remembrance; a demonstrable array of kinships; and/or as a surrogate for the deceased. While there are many links and collaborative efforts between physical and virtual memorials, creating a holistic approach to memorialisation, cyberspace has successfully improved upon memorialisation practices in areas such as timeliness, cost, accessibility, creativity, and enabled the sharing of grief and bereavement on a global scale.

90 One of the most fascinating aspects of online memorialisation is the number of people utilising it in their day to day activities, as demonstrated by volatility in the collective memorial landscape. Online memorialisation is a highly flexible, adaptive practice, enabling everyday people to keep pace with their subtle changes in thought and feeling toward the deceased, and sometimes with that of their extended friends and families. Thus memorials are being created everyday, while existing ones are removed, remodelled, or enhanced. In the long term, other means of keeping the memory of the deceased alive will become available as the living strive to keep the memories of those they've lost alive, perhaps in the form of digital immortality (see 'From Memex to Digital Immortality', 2002), or three-dimensional, life-like avatars of the deceased, complete with a downloaded consciousness.

91 The Web currently allows cultural memory to be created and maintained across the broader Web, and within sub-landscapes of links between memorials for one person, or contextual memorials based on type of death, object of death, or event-based deaths. Thus, whatever the future hold, we use the term collective memorial landscape to describe the current space emerging and evolving from online memorialisation practise.

92 While this paper commenced stating that millions of people die per year and a majority of those in the past were lost to anonymity, Internet technology is ensuring that every one of them and their descendants roaming the earth today have the opportunity to be immortalised in some form. Their life can be commemorated online, on the event of their death in the physical world, and remembered by the general public via online memorials. In a society that is increasingly fragmented and where families and friends, often separated by significant distances, cannot actively participate in physical memorialisation, cyberspace is an available and effective space for memorialising the deceased.

Author's Biography

Kylie Veale is a PhD Candidate in Media and Information (Internet Studies) at Curtin University of Technology, Australia. She holds a postgraduate degree in Information Environments and a Master of Internet Studies. She has published in international journals and edited books on subjects such

as the Internet gift economy, community-based online communication, and the intersection of genealogy and the Internet. Her current research interests extend the latter, such as environments of use within online communities, and the use of the Internet for leisure pursuits, paying specific attention to the hobbyist genre of online genealogy. Her website and writings are available online: https://www.veale.com.au.

[kylie@veale.com.au]

Notes

[1] Search terms used were: Memorial, memorialisation, memorialising, tribute, 'In Loving Memory Of', 'To The Memory Of"

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[2] This assertion assumes, of course, the management and financial responsibilities of the online resource are covered and continued for the life of the online memorial.

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