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## *Dykes on Mykes:* Podcasting and the Activist Archive

As stated by Jake Moore of the *Matricule Project*,<sup>1</sup> archive is both noun and verb. As a noun, the archive is both physical repository, where materials are stored for preservation and for perusal, and reference point, where the records are consulted. As a verb, the archive functions as a social project of history building and a facilitator for storytelling. The archive, as imagined by Moore, ceases to exist without being *in process*: acquiring documents, being accessed and utilized, articulated and critiqued. In essence, the archive ceases to exist when it is no longer engaged in creating, recreating and telling stories. The archive thus becomes a site of inquiry, shifting from source for research to subject of research, for which academics and activists alike must “pay attention to the process of archiving, not just to the archive as a repository of facts and objects” (Arondekar 2005: 15). The online archive simultaneously builds from and undoes the archival project through its expansive and largely unregulated context and participatory process; it is a challenge to archival fixity and to conceptions of time and place as markers of identity.

The growing popularity of online archives, including social networking sites, unaffiliated online repositories, podcasts and blogs, reinstates the importance of knowledge-sharing and points to the limitations of the traditional archive, in its

gatekeeping function (Arondekar 2005). Moreover, archiving in an increasingly digital environment has become both more efficient and more ephemeral, and rests in the grey zones of largely unregulated Internet policy, and the male-dominated world of information technology and software development (Benkler 2006; Bradley 2005; Stalder 2004).

*Dykes on Mykes*, as a community radio show, a podcast and an archiving project, is used here as a case study to explore the connections and challenges afforded by new media in relation and as a challenge to traditional notions of archiving.<sup>2</sup> I borrow moore's (2006) conceptual framework and propose that the podcast is, like the archive, both a verb and a noun—a process and an object. It is at once an audio file, an XML document and a way to communicate and share information. As such, I propose that the podcast can be analyzed as a technological means of distribution, but also and more importantly, as an invaluable example of the web's potential and its evolution as an online repository and collaborative history project. Podcasting contributes significantly to the discussion of preservation and online documentation, all the while putting into question notions of archival fixity and authority, which is equally valuable to the theorizing of cultural preservation in an increasingly digital and digitized world.

While (out) lesbians' and queer women's voices and experiences are rarely heard on mainstream radio, podcasting makes queer programming widely available. This case study demonstrates how podcasting offers an alternative to traditional media, and thus, to traditional modes of queer feminist representation, and to recording and preserving queer women's culture in a Canadian context. I maintain that it is podcasting's intrinsic archival potential, as I define herein, which characterizes it as a tool for activism. I propose that podcasting is a powerful participatory alternative to both traditional radio programming and traditional means of recording, organizing and preserving collections.

This project is a response to the findings of my previous research on Canadian lesbian and gay archives,<sup>3</sup> in which I had the privilege of interviewing many long-term archivists and gay activists. The results of this research were disappointing: any idealistic notions I had upon entering the archives of locating and perusing lesbian ephemera were terminated by the serious, and all too obvious, lack of archival projects initiated by women that either survived and/or were properly documented. While there have been concerted attempts at preserving lesbian culture, material repositories are costly and require specialized knowledge and significant labour to maintain. The traditional archive, then, is not the central locus of Canadian lesbian culture, should there be one.

As I was conducting this research, many online history projects surfaced, such as the forum-based *SuperDyke*<sup>4</sup> and the *Queer History Project* in Vancouver, Daniel McKay's *Gay Halifax Project*,<sup>5</sup> and our own *Dykes on Mykes* podcast.<sup>6</sup> This renewed

my hope that similar initiatives might surface online in other marginalized communities and led me to this research project on lesbian- and queer women-run online archives, using the *Dykes on Mykes* podcast as a pilot project and case study.

## Canadian Lesbian Archive Context

Before discussing *Dykes on Mykes* radio and their use of podcasts as a tool for archiving, a point needs to be made about the dearth of contexts from which to discuss lesbian history. As queer theorist Ann Cvetkovich (2002) argues, the fact that “gay and lesbian history even exists has been a contested fact, and the struggle to record and preserve it is exacerbated by the invisibility that often surrounds intimate life, especially sexuality” (110). This observation is confirmed by the trajectory of lesbian archives in Canada reveals. According to Scott Goodine of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, gay and lesbian archives in Canada “have no legal compulsion to exist; they are free to create and control their policies and procedures as they see fit. This is the case whether they are charitable organizations or private entities” (Goodine, pers. comm.).<sup>7</sup> As a result, gay and lesbian archival repositories in Canada—the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives in Toronto, les Archives gaies du Québec in Montréal, and the Canadian Women’s Movement Archives in Ottawa—each present drastically different access policies despite being modelled in large part on traditional national archival standards. While the Canadian Women’s Movement Archive is not a lesbian archive *per se* (at least not according to its title), it contains an incredible amount of lesbian ephemera and its existence speaks to the divide between the gay liberation movement and the women’s movement of the 1970s (1996, 2003; Thompson 1986). The two main gay and lesbian archives in Canada are predominantly about and run by gay men’s culture. As part of the gay liberation movement, running parallel to the women’s movement, the original and exclusively gay (male) archives took time to consider lesbian history as part of their collecting mandate (Averill, pers. comm.).<sup>8</sup>

According to Harold Averill, long-time archivist at the Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives (CLGA), the reason that the word “lesbian” did not figure in the title was out of respect for the concurrent development of the Canadian Women’s Movement Archives, also originally in Toronto:

We didn’t feel that we should try and compete with what they were doing. But, that archive closed 15 years ago and their material is now at the Morisset library at the University of Ottawa. [...] After that we felt we were free to put “lesbian” in our name. (Averill pers. comm.)<sup>9</sup>

Iain Blair, president of les Archives Gaies du Québec (AGQ) echoes Averill’s (CLGA) notion of competition with lesbian archives, but offers a different perspective on the issue of inclusion. He contextualizes its inception:

the Archives [AGQ] was named in a rather different era when things were much more separated, and it was started by gay men speaking for gay men [...] I should say too that a lot of gay men like to work with gay men (for social or political reasons, or sometimes for basic narrow-mindedness) and don't want to change the name" (Blair pers. comm.).<sup>10</sup>

Initially, both the AGQ and the CLGA considered existent lesbian archives when choosing their name; however, both failed to foresee their eventual demise. Instead, the CLGA opted to expand its mandate and make lesbian more obvious within its title, while the AGQ was still (at the time of the interview) and assessing whether the inclusion of lesbians in their predominantly gay male archives would function merely as a token gesture.<sup>11</sup> Given the unsteady nature of the relationship between gay and lesbian cultures, certain proponents of lesbian history believe the materials would be best housed within the Canadian Women's Movement Archives (CWMA) in Ottawa, should it become an either/or decision.

The CWMA holds a large collection of lesbian and lesbian-feminist themed documents, as well as posters, artwork and ephemera; it was founded by outspoken lesbian-feminist, Pat Leslie. Leslie was very active with the Toronto women's newspaper *The Other Woman* in the mid 1970s. When it ceased publication in 1977, Leslie relocated all of their material to her home and started the Canadian Women's Movement Archives (Thompson 1986; Trudel 1998). In the late 1970s, Leslie wrote about the importance of the archives and of the anticipation and consequence of its disappearance, for lesbians in particular:

Specifically lesbian Herstory will be forever buried. What little exists now consists of hopeful conjuncture. It is the fear of oppression and the shyness of self-expression which makes that invisible veil so heavy. If need be, the Women's Movement Archives would go underground, file by file, to protect records of the growing movement. Access to everything donated by lesbians is strictly limited. (Leslie 1979-1980: 11)

The CWMA did not go underground, but rather was transferred to the Morisset Library at the University of Ottawa, deemed by the group to be the most secure, stable and politically aligned repository, where it has resided since 1992.<sup>12</sup> However, this shift to a university setting, a process which appears to be significantly under-documented, leaves much to ponder considering the founder's plea to keep the archives within the community of women activists. In 1979, Leslie wrote:

To ask the patriarchy to preserve our lives for us is a suicidal act. We do not need to be researched by patriarchal/academic institutions; we do not need to be financially supported by governments, capitalist or otherwise. [What] we do need is a link to future generations of feminists and lesbians who will have access to our lives. (Leslie 1979: 11)

Researching lesbian history, therefore, means tracking the history of the archive itself. Lesbian-feminist critiques of the archive ask us to consider not only the relationship of women to the archive, as repository and process, but also the problematic nature of defining and delimiting the lesbian community. Who counts as a historian, archivist and subject of history, and how is history created? How do citizenship, nationality, race and ethnicity further complicate the lesbian/queer archive (Pérez 2003)? In outlining a Canadian context, I attempt to delimit the current boundaries of the lesbian archive and propose that a perspective positioned within queer and feminist theory is of great value when situating the practices of podcasting within a larger archival discourse. The question of where lesbian history belongs, as I explore in this paper, is revisited in and through queer community new media appropriation.

### Case Study: The *Dykes on Mykes* Podcasting Archive Project

The *Dykes on Mykes* podcasting archive project functions as a case study and site of inquiry into debates broadening current conceptions of lesbian archives in Canada (cf. MacPhee and Hogan 2006). The *Dykes on Mykes* radio show was created in 1987 shortly after the founding of CKUT, Montreal's Community Radio Station. At that time, CKUT was accepting proposals for new programs, to which local gay and lesbian community activists responded by pitching the idea of a weekly lesbian radio show as well as a men's equivalent, then named the Homoshow.

Twenty years later, *Dykes on Mykes* prides itself on being the longest running Anglophone lesbian and queer women's radio show in Montreal, if not in Canada. *Dykes on Mykes* is entirely volunteer operated and while it has never had a formal mandate, its unwritten goal has always been to serve the lesbian, trans and queer (LTQ) communities and give voice to local Anglophone lesbian culture. *Dykes on Mykes* airs LTQ perspectives on politics, music, arts and culture and provides Montreal's LTQ communities with a forum to discuss all of these topics. This forum is achieved through the format of one or two individual or group interviews per show, frequent panel discussions, listener call-ins, email commentary through [www.nomorepotlucks.org](http://www.nomorepotlucks.org), opinion pieces by contributors and informed debates between the show's co-hosts.

Four years ago, the show's long term-volunteers, Deborah VanSlet and Elana Wright, turned the microphones over to a new team: Dayna McLeod, Marie-Claire MacPhee and myself, Mél Hogan). Wright and VanSlet, who had been hosting the show for over ten years, wanted more time with their families and also felt it was important for new voices from more active members of the queer community to emerge through *Dykes on Mykes*. With this transition came a milk crate of cassette tapes and reels dating from the earliest shows in the late 1980s, and the inspiration to make these shows available to the general public.

At this point, I want to address the potential of podcasts to make older, analogue radio shows available and, more importantly, to merge the recording with the historical documentation regarding hosts, guests, themes and dates. Attending to the interaction of these elements is necessary to consider the archives as more than an amassment of tapes, CDs and reels, or even a method of recording, or mere process of classification or storage. Given the largely invisible and under-preserved Canadian lesbian history, podcasting essentially combines the recording with the preservation process and encourages copying, re-distribution and feedback from users. As a more participatory process, podcasting shifts the traditional archive's emphasis on authenticity and authorization, to the personal, experiential and collective. As such, the *Dykes on Mykes* podcast invites and ignites lesbian culture through shared reference points and folksonomic categorization of content. In addition, wider distribution has meant more common ground on which to build the foundations of a distinct yet increasingly more diverse culture.

Unlike many podcasts that gain an audience by first airing on commercial radio, the *Dykes on Mykes* podcasts offer the marginal community of listeners a means of access to a collection of shows from which to choose topics of interest as well as recent broadcasts. Because commercial or national radio does not cater to a specifically lesbian audience,<sup>13</sup> podcasting has become the *de facto* means of mass distribution of lesbian radio culture, in conjunction with its local, live association to community radio, which provides *Dykes on Mykes* with a studio, equipment and a larger community of producers and programmers.

McLeod, co-host and initiator of the *Dykes with Mykes* podcast, conceives of the podcast as an archiving tool which allows her to document, organize and keep a succinct record of all broadcasts. This record inspires the production of higher quality shows by encouraging the show's producers to refine programming, as well as interview and production skills which directly impact the value of each show. The result is an increasing the number of live listeners and, most noticeably, podcast subscribers (McLeod, pers. comm.).<sup>14</sup>

## The podcast

The term "podcasting," was coined by Ben Hammersley, writing for *The Guardian* on February 12, 2004. By October of the same year, many how-to guides to podcasting appeared on the web, an indication of its ever-growing popularity. Podcasting takes its name from the popular media player by Apple, the iPod, although one does not need an iPod to podcast or listen to podcasts, making the term a bit of a misnomer. *The New Oxford American Dictionary* declared "podcast" the Word of the Year in 2005, legitimizing its popular use following the large success and anticipated staying power of the technology, and defining the term as "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player" (Kothe 2006).

While podcasting is an increasingly popular tool and medium, knowledge of its origins, configuration and infrastructural relationships remains largely under-documented. The podcast is a concept that merges action and object: it is an audio file, compressed and transmitted over the web. Despite its particular nature, podcasting shares a close history with traditional radio and web radio, which I mention here very briefly as preliminary context for discussing the uses of emergent technologies. Like many important contributions to communication technologies, traditional radio was born of collective efforts and innovation across the globe. Suffice to note is that from (radio) listener to (podcast) user, to potential podcaster, radio's time- and location-based natures are transformed in the digital networked era. Web radio, also called Internet radio, came into being with the advent of web streaming in the mid 1990s (Kurose and Ross 2007),<sup>15</sup> arguably serving as a bridge between traditional radio and podcasting.

Credit for the first actual "podcast," as distinct from web radio for its automation capacity, often goes to Adam Curry, a former MTV Video Jockey and pirate radio amateur,<sup>16</sup> with the help of Tristan Louis, and the cooperation of RSS ("really simple syndication" or "rich site summary") feed developer Dave Winer (based in part on the work of Stephen Downes, creator of the RSS Ed Radio application).<sup>17</sup> Curry is said to have named the code "the iPodder," an Applescript application that automated downloading and syncing processes of audio files to iPods, which he released on August 15, 2004 (Giles 2006; Kothe 2006). However, conceptual variations on the current podcast were being developed in various forms, dating as far back as 1999, according to [www.voices.com](http://www.voices.com).<sup>18</sup> The release of Curry's code also coincided with the launch of Napster, a system that put peer-to-peer (p2p) file sharing on the map, transforming the music industry.<sup>19</sup> Together, these various innovations demonstrate a collective push for mass communication through file sharing, collective projects and open networks. To this effect, participatory media researcher, Yochai Benkler (2006) explains that more people have access to the physical means necessary to participate in network culture than ever before.

Podcast content is recorded, compressed, and/or distributed on an mp3 file, which is the current standard for audio files. An mp3 file is, simply put, a standard compression format that is less than a tenth of the original size. The mp3 thus offers an alternative to pre-digital notions of the original, by proposing an archival means of distribution that is different from but points back to, a high quality file. Just as the digital necessarily shifts the archival discourse from questions of authenticity to those regarding access and transmission, the mp3 file, as far as its role in podcasts is concerned, invites users to engage in its reproduction and make it a part of their own archives. Popular podcasts often allow free streaming of their most current show while charging a small fee to access the rest of the collection items, selling the mp3 file as a collection piece.<sup>20</sup> This speaks to the non-rivalry in consumption of digital media, or more specifically, the absence of the type of

forced scarcity necessary to create the value attributed to rare or difficult-to-find collection pieces (Murray 2004; Stalder 2004).

In order to amass files, podcasting uses syndication feeds (Atom or RSS) for playback on portable media players and personal computers. This allows for automatic downloading via subscription, which is why podcasting requires an accompanying XML file and why podcasting refers to all media, not just audio. However technically complicated, XML makes it possible to use, create and benefit from metadata and documentation without having to know the intricacies of its inner workings, much like the web itself.

A deeper understanding and theorizing of XML allows for its consideration as a tool for archiving. It is a powerful classification system: not only does it allow any user to create custom tags, these tags also become searchable categories, allowing users to search for files by their creator, title, date, etc. Furthermore, outputting XML data is flexible as it can be made manifest in various forms and places from the computer monitor to a database, personal digital assistant (PDA), or printer. Its versatility (or, extensibility), openness (or, non-proprietary nature) and independence from any platform and programming language means that documentation is easily migrated, adapted, customized and transferred, all of which are crucial concerns in digital preservation.<sup>21</sup>

Automation for podcasts functions in a highly technical manner yet is simple to use for podcast creators and users. In this regard, automation is a two-fold process: for podcasters, the structure is already in place allowing for mass distribution of audio files through fan or user subscriptions, and for the subscriber, podcasts are automatically delivered to personal accounts. However, with the advent of podcasting, content emerged from those who put the technology in place. IT conversations, technology-themed interviews dominated by the largely white, male perspective working within the IT industry. One of the most popular podcasts by and for women in the early days of the medium, for better or worse, was *MommyCast* hosted by Gretchen Vogelzang and Paige Heninger.<sup>22</sup> In a 2005 *Wired* interview, Vogelzang attempted to justify the gender lag through her personal experience with podcasting: “There’s a learning curve there, and once women come to it, [*podcasting is*] going to be huge for women.” She added that podcasting allows women to “listen on their own terms,” because they “do not have the luxury of being in a specific place and time to listen to a broadcasted show” (Friess 2005).<sup>23</sup>

### *Dykes on Mykes* Podcast Radio

Adapted from the American Legal Guide to Podcasting,<sup>24</sup> Kathleen Simmons and Andy Kaplan-Myrth and the faculty of the Law and Technology group at the University of Ottawa produced a Canadian version of the guide: “Podcasting

Legal Guide For Canada: Northern Rules For The Revolution” (Simmons and Kaplan-Myrth 2007). While the guide provides advice and insight into the largely unregulated world of copyright as it pertains to podcasting, its definition of podcasting as an individual and/or independent venture overlooks the relationship between community radio and podcasting. Given the importance of this guide for the podcasting community and to policy makers, community radio podcasting has been largely overlooked in the conversation. Much of what *Dykes on Mykes* does pushes the boundaries of legal content distribution. I propose that this is a form of “queer dealing,” a play on the Canadian legal exceptions to media (re)use known as “fair dealing.” While traditional radio’s publicness was balanced by its immediacy, podcasting now replicates, transmits and in many ways, concretizes each show. However, given the history of gay and lesbian censorship, collaborative and agit prop activism and general invisibility of LGBT peoples in the Canadian media, queer dealing implies an inherent rejection of copyright and Internet regulation in favour of the conception of radio podcasting as an open and provocative media outlet.<sup>25</sup>

The CKUT radio show archives are stored in two different qualities to suit different needs and bandwidth constraints: 64 kbps (a medium quality bandwidth at 28 megabytes per hour of sound) and 128 kbps (the best quality bandwidth at 57.6 megabytes per hour of sound). The CKUT archive permits a maximum of 3 hours of download or streaming at one time. And, the 64 kbps archives are stored for 2 months and 128 kbps only for one week.<sup>26</sup> Each of these technical requirements reveals political decisions made by the radio station staff in managing bandwidth use and server (storage) space.

*Dykes on Mykes* hosts, programmers and technicians have taken it upon themselves to podcast the show independently. This means that many users can download the show at any time, simultaneously. In this sense, the podcast, by eliminating the notion of the *original* central to conventional archives, privileges widespread access over the live radio experience. The XML file can always be edited or altered by the podcast creator, thereby seriously challenging notions of archival fixity and the role of archivists as gatekeepers (Burton 2005; Jourden 2007). Furthermore, podcasting allows *Dykes on Mykes* to keep track of the number of listeners and downloads per show, something that was impossible with live radio. *Dykes on Mykes* has approximately 500 regular podcast listeners, many of whom download the show from outside of Canada.

Along with the technical advances afforded by podcasts, the diversity and availability of otherwise rare and specialized topics is the key to the podcast’s popularity and power as a tool for dissemination and preservation. As stated by Kothe, “podcasting has flourished because it gives people more control over what they listen to, and the freedom to take their programs with them” (2006). Listeners can now tune in when they wish, listen to a few shows consecutively, skip content,

or repeat a show many times. Moreover, podcasting may have special import for those who do not have access to much queer culture. As McLeod (2007) observes, “queer radio disseminates information to people who are closeted, in the process of coming out, or merely interested in queer women’s culture” but wishing to do so in a private and personal manner.

Given the reach of podcasting, *Dykes on Mykes* is inspired by and invites responses from its new-found national and international audiences, while remaining cognizant of CKUT’s mandate to promote local events, artists and news. Now hosting more than sixty podcasts, *Dykes on Mykes* has aired topics ranging from interviews with queer artists (Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Milan, Alyson Mitchell, Rae Spoon, Ivan Coyote, Paige Gratland, Moynan King, Jackie Gallant, etc.) and academics (Nancy Nichol, Judith Jack Halberstam, Jennifer Miller, etc.) to discussing two-spirited gatherings, queer youth, abortion, film festivals, bisexuality and queer zine archives. All of the shows’ podcasts topics are listed and further documented on [www.nomorepotlucks.org](http://www.nomorepotlucks.org), its affiliated website.<sup>27</sup> [Nomorepotlucks.org](http://www.nomorepotlucks.org), also founded and run by the current *Dykes on Mykes* hosts, functions as a site of convergence for lesbian and queer media in Montreal. The website strives for a bilingual balance, while *Dykes on Mykes* is the Anglophone sister radio show to the francophone program, *LesBo-Sons*.<sup>28</sup>

Podcasting is a powerful tool for dissemination because the podcast creator retains much of the control over the way the sound file is handled, described and with which program it is registered. With a simple interface and free registration, the now-ubiquitous iTunes (<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>) capitalized early on the trend to become one of the most widely used methods for podcasting. Given that there is no user-generated equivalent to the centralized video repository [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) for audio podcasts,<sup>29</sup> the reliance on Apple’s iTunes comes at a price. McLeod explains:

When we first started podcasting, I noticed a really big delay—a week or two weeks—before iTunes would register changes in our XML file, which is what is read by the iTunes interface. I compared this timing with shows like CBC’s *Definitely Not the Opera*, a show whose information would appear the day after radio broadcast which seemed unusual to me. I am always suspicious of the mega corporations, especially when they do not respond to emails detailing and complaining about why a show called *Dykes on Mykes* is having such problems connecting with our audience through their interface. I become even more suspect, and dare I say, paranoid, when I upload an episode about the *L Word*, where the discussion focused on gays and lesbians in the American military, and the war in Iraq, and iTunes doesn’t register it for one week, until I remove the meta-tag equivalent buzz words of, “Iraq war,” “terrorist” and “Afghanistan,” and as soon as I remove these keywords, it appears in iTunes. So I ask you, am I paranoid? (McLeod 2007).

As demonstrated by McLeod's example, within the so-called democratic potential of the web, podcasting's reach is thwarted by its reliance on corporate mediation determining in large part the acceptability and accessibility of online content. Thus, while *Dykes on Mykes* need not use iTunes for dissemination, it is the most popular application for podcast aggregation and distribution, creating dependence based on popularity and reach.

The notion of access is further complicated by the ways in which issues of sexuality are understood and framed in a digital environment. As a queer show, *Dykes on Mykes* often broaches sexual content, some of which is "sexually explicit" in iTunes parlance. *Dykes on Mykes* co-hosts do consider that some content may be less suitable for a younger or more conservative audience; in those instances, they select the optional iTunes-specific "explicit content" box in the XML generator. This way the listener is forewarned; the onus remains on the podcaster to determine which content is explicit and which is not. One example of a show deemed explicit by *Dykes on Mykes* featured well-known Japanese bondage expert, Midori (July 31, 2006).<sup>30</sup> For the co-hosts, however, merely mentioning sexuality does not merit the disclaimer, as in the interview with Lindsay Willow, a teacher from Halifax who was wrongfully accused of sexually interfering with one of her students by a homophobic teacher and her principal (September 11, 2006),<sup>31</sup> the Little Sisters' pornography case discussing the bookstore's landmark litigation against Canada Customs (January 29, 2007),<sup>32</sup> and recent interview with Paige Gratland's *celebrity Lesbian Fist Project*, an art project on display at Art Metropole in Toronto (June 9, 2008).<sup>33</sup> This is not content deemed explicit by the co-hosts, as the urgent need for dissemination overrides any need for such a disclaimer. However, McLeod explains,

because as queers, we are incredibly aware that mainstream culture equates simply talking about gay and lesbian issues as sexualized content, we are always wary of how to contextualize content for our XML files and descriptions of our shows because we are using mainstream distribution systems like iTunes. (McLeod 2007)<sup>34</sup>

Reminiscent of early queer activism, sexuality tends to both enhance the appeal and downgrade the value of the podcast within conservative corporate enterprises. The *Dykes on Mykes* podcast is in a bind: it simultaneously normalizes queer and sexual content by making it more visible and accessible, while remaining true to and speaking for a distinct queer women's audience. In Canada, with its open access to the media and enlightened human rights policies, *Dykes on Mykes* is in a privileged position: it can convey an important message to others who, in complex situations or more restrictive countries, have little or no exposure to queer voices.<sup>35</sup> The *Dykes on Mykes* podcast thus functions as an archive of collective and individual struggles and stories, and as a means of further exploring the impact and effect of media on the ever-growing and diversifying lesbian and queer community.

*Dykes on Mykes* is not the only queer podcast. In fact, queer voices are emerging all over the web, so much so that their activities are now referred to as “queercasting.” Queercasting imitates and remixes traditional radio, with live guests, phone interviews, conversations between friends at home and features topics ranging in political import. This has greatly expanded the potential of queer or other marginal voices for mass dissemination. Popular queercast types include radio show “recycling” (reusing old episodes), including *PrideNation Gay Radio*, *QRadio: The Las Vegas Gay and Lesbian Talk Show*, and original podcasts such as *TrannyWreck*, *The Lesbian Mafia*, *The Planet: The Podcast For L Words Fans*.

These shows vary in their originating contexts, though most are produced in the United States. McLeod offers the following observation:

There is an entire Queercasting explosion happening; why wouldn't *Dykes on Mykes* take part in this media revolution? We hope that our podcasts will reach audiences who need to hear queer voices, women's voices—and reflect a unique history. What we're learning through this podcasting project, is that if we don't archive our own queer culture, no one else will. (McLeod 2007)

McLeod's statement harkens back to feminist lesbian pleas of the late 1970s, when freestanding archives of the women's movement and lesbian community were first imagined, and to the possibility of instantiations in the public realm in which the control and content of lesbian lives could be maintained by its representative communities. So while this lesson has informed much of the lesbian media activism in which *Dykes on Mykes* situates itself, podcasting and emergent technologies of display and dissemination, in conjunction with the mainstreaming and increased tolerance, in certain contexts of queer representations, have also challenged the possessive nature of lesbian history.

We lesbians could no longer take our archival collections underground, file by file, as Leslie's 1979 plea proposed. Lesbian culture belongs to and is now housed in our personal collections, or more specifically, on our media players, CDs, hard drives and servers. Because podcasting allows for easy access to information, both in its creation and consumption, lesbian culture has been able to expand and redefine itself in the digital age; lesbians and their archives can be seen and heard, not just represented and talked about. Lesbian culture online maintains the urgency and necessity of a distinctive lesbian culture, often in conjunction with, but sometimes in opposition to, queer, LGBT, as well as various feminist political stances. New means of communication have thus afforded otherwise invisible and marginalized lesbian communities the means with which to re-represent community, challenge dominant representations, highlight the importance of minority representation itself, and archive the results of their activity and activism.

## Notes

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1. Matricules project link: <http://www.studioxx.org/fr/matricules> and moore's statement in *DPI*: <http://dpi.studioxx.org/demo/?q=fr/no/07/brief-matricules-database-and-archive-project-studio-xx-first-10-years>. Accessed August 3 2008.
2. *Dykes on Mykes*. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/>. Accessed 5 September 2008.
3. Mél Hogan. 2007. *Archiving Absence: A Queer Feminist Framework*. MA thesis. Concordia University.
4. <http://www.superdyke.com/>. Accessed 5 September 2008.
5. Personal interview. Daniel McKay, Gay Halifax Project. Halifax, NS, February 2007. <http://gay.hfxns.org/HistoryProject>. Accessed 5 September 2008.
6. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/>. Accessed 5 September 2008.
7. Personal correspondence. Scott Goodine, Provincial Archives of Alberta, March 2007.
8. Personal interview. Harold Averill, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives archivist. Toronto, ON, March 2007.
9. Canadian Women's Movement Archives (CWMA). University of Ottawa Archives and Special Collections, Morisset Library, University of Ottawa. <http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca/>. Accessed 6 June 2007.
10. Personal interview. Iain Blair, President, les Archives Gaies du Québec, January 2007. Les archives gaies du Québec (AGQ), 4067 boulevard St. Laurent, bureau 202. Montréal, Quebec, Canada.
11. Personal interview. Alan Miller, CLGA Archivist. Toronto, March 2007.
12. The CWMA archives donated their collection to the University of Ottawa, in 1992, because they "could provide (a) bilingual service and communication among the feminist community from coast to coast," (b) the content was already organized into groups. See "Deed of Gift: Letter of Agreement Between The Women's Information Centre of Toronto and The University of Ottawa Library Network," authorized by Anne Molgat and Nancy Adamson. 1 October 1992.
13. See The Pride of Toronto 103.9 PROUD-FM as one example of all gay content radio: <http://www.proudfm.com/>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
14. Personal interview. Dayna McLeod, *Dykes on Mykes* Community Radio. Montreal, 2007.
15. Streaming relies on bit transportation over the network in Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) or User Datagram Protocol (UDP) packets.
16. <http://www.cliquecomm.com/blog/2006/09/24/introduction-to-podcasts-part-2/>. Accessed 3 September 2008.
17. For more information on Downes and Winer, see: <http://www.voices.com/podcasting/history-of-podcasting.html>. Accessed 3 September 2008.
18. <http://www.voices.com/podcasting/history-of-podcasting.html>. Accessed 4 September 2008.

19. <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring01/Burkhalter/Napster%20history.html>. Accessed 4 September 2008.
20. A good example of this is “This American Life” which sells its previous podcasts for \$ 0.95. See: [http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio\\_Podcast.aspx](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Podcast.aspx). Accessed 9 September 2008.
21. <http://www.allbusiness.com/technology/internet-technology-web-development/10201-5.html>. Accessed 4 September 2008.
22. <http://www.mommycast.com/>. Accessed 3 September 2008.
23. <http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/2005/11/69583>. Accessed 3 September 2008.
24. Creative Commons. Podcasting Legal Guide. [http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Podcasting\\_Legal\\_Guide](http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Podcasting_Legal_Guide). Accessed 29 August 2008.
25. My doctoral work will address more specifically the linkages between lesbian and queer politics and copyright in Canada—queer dealing—inspired by agit prop video AIDS activism in the 1980s, thwarting notions of authorship and ownership underlying the current intellectual property regime.
26. CKUT Radio Archive. <http://secure.ckut.ca/cgi-bin/ckut-grid.pl>. Accessed 10 September 2008.
27. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
28. *LesBo Sons*. <http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendID=65252415>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
29. Sourceforge’s Juice is a free end-to-end application: <http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/index.php> Accessed 12 September 2008.
30. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/doms-shop-til-you-drop-to-your-knees>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
31. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/doms-go-back-to-school-part-deux>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
32. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/hey-little-sister>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
33. <http://www.nomorepotlucks.org/chronique-dykes/paige-gratlands-celebrity-lesbian-fists>. Accessed 8 September 2008.
34. In iTunes, if one show is labelled explicit, the show itself carries that label within the interface.
35. *Dykes on Mykes* received on average ten emails per year, through [www.nomorepotlucks.org](http://www.nomorepotlucks.org), comparing or commenting on the role of the podcast in people’s current situation.

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