April 11, 2025

RESEARCH DATA SHARE

Reflections from/on an Experimental Book Project

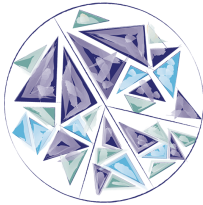Angela Okune, PhD
ESTS I Research Data Share

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Engaging Science, Technology, and Society

Database Books

"Books where a database of resources forms the central element (i.e., not as an enhancement to a text-based book) around which the book is formed. These can be non-linear, with multiple access points, or can incorporate updates or versioning, akin to a 'living archive'. Considers the question when is something a digital archive, and when is it a publication, or a book?"

Adema, J., Steiner, T., & Bowie, S. (2022). Part 2: A Typology of Experimental Books. In Books Contain Multitudes: Exploring Experimental Publishing (2022 update) (2nd ed.). Copim. https://doi.org/10.21428/785a6451.cd58a48e

Why Database as Book?

How to write in a legible, cohesive way without flattening our different voices?

How to leverage our diversity of disciplinary training, lived experiences, linguistic backgrounds, as an asset rather than a challenge in collaborative writing?

How can we encourage interactivity with publics?

Backstories of Research Data Share collective

RESEARCH DATA SHARE

PROCEEDINGS OF ARCHIVING KENYA'S PAST AND FUTURES

RETURN TO PECE ESSAY LANDING PAGE

Cite as:

Okune, Angela. 2019. *Proceedings of Archiving Kenya's Past and Futures*, November 12, 2019: Nairobi, Kenya. https://www.researchdatashare.org/content/event-archiving-kenya%E2%80%99s-past-and-futures-nov-12-2019/essay.

ABOUT QUOTIDIAN DATA

Quotidian Data (QD) is a research institute focused on advancing understanding of the socio-technical layers of knowledge production and stewardship, especially related to data. QD conducts research and training around critical studies of science, technology and society in Africa,...

Read more

ABOUT THE EVENT

This workshop held on November 12, 2019 brought together fifty researchers, archival specialists, open data technologists, and government representatives to think about the intersection between open data technologies, digital humanities and research data practices in Kenya.

The event ran from 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM and was organized around an opening presentation by Angela Okune and Leonida Mutuku followed by three panel sessions which explored how diverse institutions have attempted to support student interests in research and archiving; raised questions about existing forms of scholarly knowledge outputs; and dove into the politics and geographies of data localisation and governance.

MATERIALS

EVENTBRITE INVITATION TO "ARCHIVING KENYA'S PAST AND FUTURES"

EVENT PROCEEDINGS

PHOTOS FROM "ARCHIVING KENYA'S PAST AND FUTURES"

VIEW ESSAY

OKUNE & MUTUKU. 2019. OPENING REMARKS AT "ARCHIVING KENYA'S PAST AND FUTURES." NOVEMBER 12, 2019. MCMILLAN LIBRARY: NAIROBI, KENYA.

VIDEO PROCEEDINGS - OPENING REMARKS

https://youtu.be/MahWbS8JhPw

VIDEO PROCEEDINGS - PANEL 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLP452Y5HoE&feature=youtu.be

2019

2020 - 2021

Chapter 6

The Research Data KE Working Group: Scaffolding for Thirdspace

By Research Data Kenya Working Group[144]

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7x695678

RESEARCH DATA SHARE

RESEARCH DATA KE WORKING GROUP

COVID19 news & discourse

VISUALISING COVID-19 IN KENYA

VIEW ESSAY

PUBLIC NARRATIVES

These artifacts have circulated either on Kenyan mainstream or social media and we believe are relevant to understanding how the public is interpreting & experiencing COVID19 and its effects in Kenya.

This essay collates news and public discourse identified by members of the Research Data KE Working Group that are of interest to thinking about the COVID19 epidemic in/from/about Kenya. We are particularly interested in archiving and tracking how media and other public channels are discussing the epidemic in order to identify relevant research resources and translate our individual experiences and data into collective knowledge that can support communities. We plan to use this information to better identify and collate existing qualitative/ethnographic research resources across diverse thematic areas relevant to thinking about and working on the COVID

NATION ARTICLE: "DO HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES ON COVID-19 REALLY ADD UP?"

RICHIE, HANNAH. 2021. 'WESTERN COUNTRIES PREVENTED AFRICAN NATIONS FROM HAVING THEIR OWN VACCINE'. VICE NEWS, 13 MAY 2021.

ATTIAH, K. (2020, SEPTEMBER 22). OPINION | AFRICA HAS DEFIED THE COVID-19 NIGHTMARE SCENARIOS.

EMERGING OBSERVATIONS

GENDER AND COVID-19 IN KENYA

Gender and COVID-19 in Kenya

VIEW ESSAY

ANALYTIC QUESTIONS

How have different actors responded to COVID-19 and what kinds of counter responses have emerged to that?

How is COVID-19 knowledge and expertise moving across national borders? How are researchers outside dominant institutions of knowledge production organising? What new collaborations and synergies are being formed? How are they working?

How is COVID-19 "in Africa" (or "in Kenya") being mentioned in comparison to other

DESCRIPTION   TABLE   PARENT GROUPS   ARTIFACTS   TABS   FIELD DIARY   LEGACY

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GOOGLE ARTS AND CULTURE SITE

DEUTERO READINGS

VISUALISING COVID-19 IN KENYA   VIEW ESSAY

GENDER AND COVID-19 IN KENYA

RESEARCH DATA KE DESIGN GROUP ORGANIZATIONAL ARCHIVE

TECHNICAL ONBOARDING TO RDS PLATFORM

NEWS AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON COVID-19 IN/FROM/ABOUT KENYA

PHOTOS FROM "ARCHIVING KENYA'S PAST AND FUTURES"   VIEW ESSAY

YOU ARE THE GROUP MANAGER

RESEARCH DATA KE WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

GROUP OWNERS

SYOKAU MUTONGA

ESTHER OBACHI

AURELIA MUNENE

JOYCE WANGARI NGUGI

HAWI RAPUDO

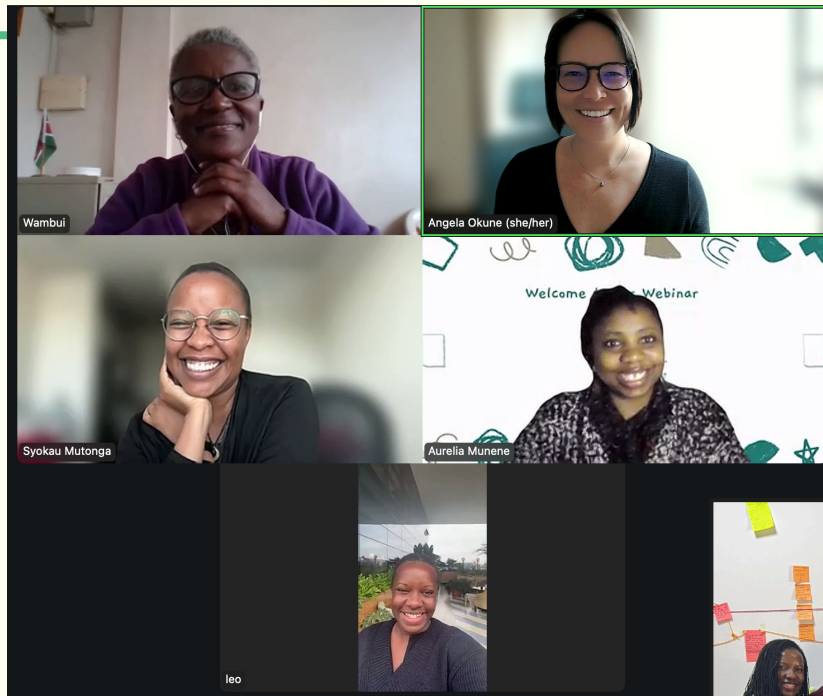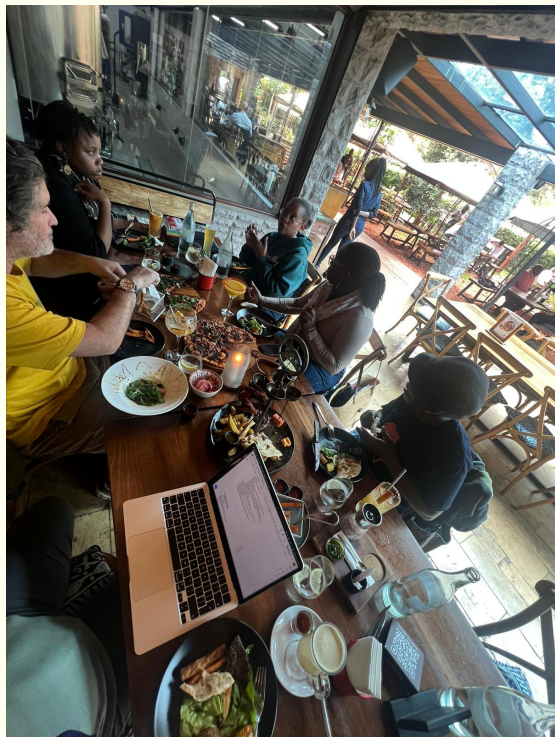PARIJAT CHAKRABARTI

2024

November 2024

www.researchdatashare.org/content/reflective-poem

Experimenting from/in the in-betweens

Freed from the constraints of
chasing a tenure track job
that would have required me
To be a solo author
stand out, stand on top, be #1
white supremacy culture.

Instead, I forge collaboratively
Walking together instead of alone or apart
Writing with rather than

Writing about
Studying together instead of
Studying "them".

I am freed of the alienation of
Performing Objectivity.

Instead I can be
matchmaker
note-taker
noise-maker.

I sit on the floor,
kick off my shoes,
chime in.
Inhibited not because I am waiting for
the Others to speak.
But because I want to make space, make room.
Be hospitable.

The writing is also freed.
I don't have to write it up in a
"scholarly publication".
Peer reviewed by other academics and not the "Others."

No.
I am so over that.

My labor should support something trying to do otherwise.
Pushing the grain.
What is the social contract of researchers?

We must be in the world. Of the world.
Stay authentic. To what is needed in the world. And what I
can humanly muster.

Now I carve time. From a full-time job that pays the bills.
To enter collaborations I truly love that nourish and fill me
up.
Not "collaborations" for EU and US funding.

We meet in our in-between times. It's never enough.
But it's always enough
To energize us. Exhaust us with all the possibilities
If only we had more
time,
capital,
clarity.

But maybe, it's because we are in the in-betweens that
It is so rewarding.

Life is
always moving
alive
a gushing waterfall
unexpected thunderstorms
a bottomless pothole.

So there will never be a perfect time
For a perfect collaboration
For a perfect knowledge output

Give up on perfect.
Just embrace the possibilities.
For now...
an experiment
is all we can strive for.

outputs that count

time

How do you navigate your positionality in relation to academia – when working from within, at the margins of, or entirely outside traditional academic structures?

different
stakes

clarity ——————— comfort with
lack of clarity

What communities and social/political movements are you working with?

What have you found helpful – or challenging – when collaborating across different situated struggles, cultural and epistemic backgrounds, or political horizons?

Leaning into *how* rather than the ***what***

production of the book **establishes, builds, and sustains relationships of individuals and the collective**

our biggest limiting structure is our imagination

How do you engage in critical and/or radical politics through editorial and publishing processes, practices, and infrastructures – and what tensions or contradictions emerge in doing so?

sidestepping the requirement for a linear narrative & instead investing time in the data relations

"Database as Book" as Methodology?

- Assemble team of researchers who desire to collaborate (ideally who already have their own research portfolios and training, deep trust and relationships with each other, shared areas of overlapping interests)
- Develop documented shared expectations
- Development of overarching topical focus
- Co-design brainstorming session to tease out how each of our personal areas of interest tie into the broader topic
- Host gathering where members of publics are invited into the topic and give early-stage feedback (this is part of "peer review" of the book)
- Upload artifacts, annotate them to draw out shared analytic threads of interest
- Discuss regularly as author team; draw in external parties to also share and keep each other accountable

- **…MORE TO COME**

Asante! Thank you!

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