Personal Digital Archiving 2011

Learnings from a life’s work: The Doug Engelbart Archives

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“Boosting our Collective IQ”

Story in a nutshell

1951

1962

1964

1967

1969

1988

1978

1998
The human element

- experimental methods, conventions, practices
- new roles
- strategic approach

Alumni 100+

research team 1-47 people over 20+ years
The stuff

- photos
- texts
- artifacts
- software
- repository
- press
- audio / oral histories
- Personal records
- Backup Media
- film / video
- events

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Archiving real-time

online

physical
(Re)Archiving on the web

1995

our first website

preserved by
Internet Archive

1990s

Stanford MouseSite
Archiving on the web

Computer History Museum

2010 Internet Archive

The First 2000 Years of Computing
Context

What’s their story?
What were they thinking?

“firsts”
"Father of the Mouse"

Doug Engelbart invented the mouse in 1963 in his research lab at SRI International (then Stanford Research Institute), and a patent was issued in 1970.

One idea he had was to use a tabletop, one turning horizontally, each transmitting their rotation (on analysis. He sketched it out roughly. The first mouse had only one button simply because that was all there was room for in the wooden casing.

The team had a small NASA contract to test the efficiency of different pointing devices, and pitted the mouse against a half dozen other devices (see Mouse Alternatives below for some photos of contenders). The mouse won hands down, and was then included as standard equipment in their ongoing research (see 1965 Report detailing these experiments).
Video Archives

The MIT/Brown Vannevar Bush Symposium

The MIT/Brown Vannevar Bush Symposium was hosted at MIT on October 12-13, 1995, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Vannevar Bush’s seminal article "As We May Think," published in the Atlantic Monthly, July 1945. As a speaker at the event, Doug Engelbart received VHS copies of all the sessions, which later surfaced as part of the Doug Engelbart Archives Initiative. In researching the origin of the videos, we were pleased to discover the original conference resources dating back to 1995 still available on the MIT and Brown University websites. The video archives from the event are now available online at the Internet Archive, as shown below. Refer to Symposium program for title and abstract for each talk, as well as speaker bios, and panel notes; speakers’ slides were captured and posted for the event, but are unsurprisingly no longer viewable. See section Additional Resources below for links to more, including a Memex Animation.

1. Vannevar Bush

MC: Andy van Dam
- Intro and Historical Timeline [Bio]

#1 Paul Kahn
- Visual tour of Bush’s work [Bio | Memex Animation | Photos]

#2 Doug Engelbart
- The Strategic Pursuit of Collective IQ [Abstract | Bio]

#3 Ted Nelson
- Where the Trail Leads [Abstract | Bio]

#4 Bob Kahn

1. Vannevar Bush
The Doug Engelbart Archives

Overview

The Engelbart Archives Collection documents the life’s work of Doug Engelbart. This is an ongoing initiative of the Doug Engelbart Institute, in collaboration with SRI International, Sun Labs, Internet Archive, New Media Consortium, and distinguished volunteers from Doug’s alumni group, to preserve for historic interest, and to inform a next generation pursuit of his compelling strategic vision and significant prior work. The initial thrust of this Initiative is to gather, sift through, catalog, digitize, and upload archival documents, video footage, photos, and digital files for preservation and broad-based accessibility. We are currently working with 2,000+ digitized historic photos, 150+ digitized video tapes, plus dozens of digitized papers. This work complements the existing comprehensive collections at Stanford University Libraries Special Collections, and the Computer History Museum.

The Archives

Texts

- Published Papers and Books - bibliography maintained at Doug Engelbart Institute with links to all of Engelbart’s published papers and books, selected white papers, as well as links to books that feature his work.

- More papers, correspondence, reports, memos - available at the MouseSite Archive page, Stanford Libraries Special Collections, with links to their Annotated Table of Contents page, and Finding Aid - a Partial Guide to the Douglas C. Engelbart Papers, 1953-1998. Selected papers and reports are available online, the rest are hardcopy only. Stanford’s extensive physical collection includes Doug’s original notebooks, calendars, files, videotapes, audiotapes, etc.
Harold "Doc" Edgerton

The Edgerton Digital Collections (EDC) project celebrates the spirit of a great pioneer, Harold "Doc" Edgerton, inventor, entrepreneur, explorer and beloved MIT professor. This site is for all who share Doc Edgerton's philosophy of "Work hard. Tell everyone everything you know. Close a deal with a handshake. Have fun!"

Milk Drop Coronet, 1957

Aerial Reconnaissance

Fathoming the Oceans

Doc's Notebooks

Edgerton was intrigued by the unique engineering challenges of underwater research...Read more>

Doc's daily note-taking:
8,000 pages of...

Learn more >
Where to go from here

- Learn from the Edgerton Digital Collection and archivists of notable persons
- Digital storytelling
- Digital museums – NMC MIDEA
- Engage faculty and interns
- Partnering and Funding
Objectives beyond webifying

- Humanizing history
- Connecting the technology to the vision
- Communicating the primary significance of the vision
Doug's Strategic Vision
A Call to Action

What drove his innovations that sparked a revolution and catapulted us into the Information Age? Doug's strategic vision for boosting our Collective IQ is not only still viable, it is even more critical to business and society than ever.
Knowledge Ecosystem
Knowledge Ecosystem
All plugged into a collective intelligence
“Boosting our Collective IQ”
Dynamic Knowledge Ecosystem

“Boosting our Collective IQ”

dialog ~ intel ~ knowledge products

Concurrently
• developing
• integrating
• applying

KNOWLEDGE
Dynamic Knowledge Ecosystem

"Boosting our Collective IQ"

dialog ~ intel ~ knowledge products

Tool / Knowledge Requirements:

- Open
- Evolvable, migratable
- Interoperable
- Malleable, custom views
- Permeable, every object addressable, linkable in any file
- Identifyable, every object stamped with author and time of creation/edits
- Annotate
- Extensible
- Customizable
- Seamless experience
- Shared desktop ubiquitous
- Online publishing with ID and version management

Concurrently
- developing
- integrating
- applying

KNOWLEDGE
Grand Challenge

Complexity and urgency are scaling up *exponentially*

- with exponential Collective IQ strategy
- with incremental Collective IQ strategy
- Organizations and societies with no Collective IQ strategy
Appreciation

• Alumni from Doug’s lab and Institute
  – Jeff Rulifson, Harvey Lehtman, Jake Feinler, Bill Daul
  – Doug’s long-time secretary Mary Coppernoll

• SRI International and Logitech at all levels

• Stanford Library Special Collections
  – Henry Lowood, Tim Lenoir and team

• Computer History Museum
  – Paula Jablonsker, Marc Weber, Jake Feinler

• Internet Archive
  – Brewster Kahle, Laura Milvy, Jeff Ubois, and team

• New Media Consortium (nmc.org)
  – Larry Johnson and Alan Levine

www.dougengelbart.org