

Appendix 3 | Interview Arthur

Paul : I'm doing an interview with Arthur at the Create Cafe on the 19th of June 2008. We're discussing his use of the DMAP portfolio system.

Arthur : Aversion to it.

Paul : Or aversion to it. I suppose we'll just start of by saying; Can you tell me a little bit about Arthur and his relationship to technology? When did you first start using computers?

Arthur : I first started using computers when I was 18 around about 1979. My relationship with that was just pure fascination. The ability to play games [inaudible 00:45], do an outline, stuff like that.

Paul : What was it with that relationship with that technology that was rewarding to you?

Arthur : Well, there's an interesting story there in the contrast between me and my brother because my brother who is two years older saw this as something that he could use. He liked to program and play with it and build his own computers and do all that kind of stuff. Whereas I was much more into using what was available. There is an interesting contrast right there that continued. He went on to do a degree in programming and stuff, whereas I've always been far more interested in applications and using stuff.

Paul : Why are you interested in that? Is it what you get out of it or what you can put into it or...

Arthur : I think of it as a useful tool, simple as that. It's like the latest hammer.

Paul : It's like the latest piano or the latest...

Arthur : To me it's a function of- I tend to think in terms of what relationship I want to create. What music I want to create. What to do to achieve other goals. A lot of those are technologically based. Technology to me is simply a way to solve the

problem. I'm quite happy to innovate. I taught myself HTML. I understand a little bit of basic programming stuff. I'm quite happy to do those sorts of things if it gets me what I want. My thing is simply being a user. If I can hire someone who'll do the programming for me, great.

Paul : You'll do that.

Arthur : I have done that.

Paul : You have done programming before. And you actually teach programming, I noticed.

Arthur : No, I don't teach programming. I teach HTML design. I understand enough HTML design to do that. But I have no desire to be a programmer at all.

Paul : OK. Also, just very briefly if you can, I want to get an understanding of your music and your relationship to your music. How that started. When did you first start playing music?

Arthur : Well, I used to sing to myself in my crib. My first public performance was "Oh Christmas Tree" in kindergarten, which was when the teacher realized that I could actually sing in tune at the age of about three or four or something like that. They made me just sing "Oh Christmas Tree" at the Christmas party regularly. I started on the piano when I was six until I got sick of my teacher. Then I started learning guitar when I was 10, till I got sick of my teacher. Then I started learning trumpet when I was 11, till I got sick of my teacher. Then I started to teach myself to play drums. I became a drummer. I really enjoyed that. It's still my first love and my best instrument. Since then, I've taught myself to play guitar, tin whistle, mandolin, piano, bass, and all sorts of other stuff. And I've had some lessons, so I'm sort of classically trained. I don't sing classically.

Paul : All right. That is sort of a very broad repertoire of musical schools.

Arthur : Yeah. I've been writing since I was four or five. My daughter now makes up little songs as we're riding around the place. That's what I used to do.

Paul : What does music bring to your life?

Arthur : It's like scratching an itch.

Paul : It needs to be scratched?

Arthur : I've tried giving up music, and I can't. It gets so bad, like I'll just be walking down the street to go to a meeting, when I was a professional editor after five years, I'd be walking down the street to a meeting, and just the rhythm I'd be walking would start a beat going in my head which would start and songs pop in. I just can't stop it. When I try and perform new stuff I just done, add basically a little, yet I can't stop it.

Paul : OK.

Arthur : It's very annoying on occasion.

Paul : Yes I know. I've got certain addictions like that myself. But, I suppose the thing then is, there's an intersection obviously then between technology for you and your music, and how did that intersection evolve?

Arthur : OK, I've always been an early adopter of technology because I like it, it's a nice toy, to play with it. My view of any application is, and again this is effective to the relationship with my brother, because his approach always was he would create a new program and he would deliberately say to me, "well try and break it." That was always his approach; he wanted me to test things and see what it could do and see what it couldn't do, all that kind of stuff. And that was useful so him in his development program. So, my approach to technology always is to get a hold of it and don't do what you're supposed to do with it. Smash it over the head and see if you break it. And I like to play with it. I have never done a formal course in anything much, I just get things I need to do when I need to do it.

And it's the same with my guitar playing. When I taught myself to play guitar, I didn't go and get any formal lessons and practice any scales and all that sort of stuff. I just got a song and headed to go play that song. And I still do that now even with my own creation; learn as much as I need to.

When it comes to technology, my music career was truncated by the fact that my dad wanted me to be an engineer. And I got basically ignored and shopped the industry over. I went and looked at what other people were doing. So I eventually saw I'd had enough fun being clever. Yeah I wanted to play music so this opportunity came up.

And it occurred to me that the thing that I could still do musically would be to create a community of ideas in the same situation, the same place. And it just sort of grew from there. Because I know a lot of people in that situation; who are in their 30's, 40's, 50's, who are great for us, great song artists. It'd be a nifty habit to make it and make a living out of their current activity.

So, I really wanted to bring them together. And I went back. When I left public service after five years and now companies scared, I went back to media. My intention there was to use my engineering degree and study linguistics and work in radio, all sort of things and do singing and that kind of stuff. Well I fell in love with journalism. And at the end of that I get a nice project across the media groups that was heavily...And this was like Marty said, it wasn't a big thing then, but it became very apparent that the Internet as a connectivity thing and as a source of news and information, all that kind of stuff was just to keep paying.

And I did even work for an online journal. Yeah, several of them. One of them went belly up in the Dot Com Crash. I got run up on a set of nail, I had the dubious honour of continuing work with no pay. Just after I got a mortgage, a month after I got a mortgage for a house thank you and my wife was pregnant. So, then it just sort of fell into place that I decided that I could use the Internet as a connectivity and new media technologies, to harness this latent talent that more than likely that a whole lot of people had.

To me that's what it's all about; it's about using what's there to try and solve the problem of how these people can get, not just me personally, because we don't want a really left wing socialist, not just me personally, but how can I bring other people in the situation, harness their talents and whatever their aspirations are. And who I am, do I see media technology in music.

Paul : Excellent. It's good to hear that. And I'm getting a sense from what you just said, then, that community is really important for you. And what does community mean for you, in that sense?

Arthur : Good question. It means a couple of things. To me, it means the warm fuzzies that other people have got benefit from what I'm doing, whether it's as a performer or as someone who sort of makes other people happy, or if they've brought together other people that have formed creative relationships or done whatever they have. There's a warm-fuzzies thing happening there.

Paul : So the warm-fuzzy thing, what do you mean by that, again? Do you mean it makes you feel good?

Arthur : It makes me feel good to know that other people are getting benefit from what I do. That may make me sound like a bleeding-heart socialist. I am not interested in- there's probably a fair bit of that if I'm writing what I'm doing, but that's not the point. To me, the point is that I can point to something and say, "I created that relationship, and that makes me feel good."

Paul : OK.

Arthur : I like that community thing. Also, I think, as a songwriter and a performer, I've never pretended to have all the answers. And I think that it's important that when I work in partnership with other people the result is always better than when I'm trying to do it all myself. And I think the community, at that point, has a very immediate practical benefit, because if I need a guitarist, like, hey... [whistles]

Paul : "Could you help me with this..?"

Arthur : It got me a guitarist...

Paul : And there's a degree of reciprocity in that...

Arthur : It's a genuine community, and you hope that that's the way it would work. Of course, it's not always working like that...

Paul : That's right.

Arthur : But affiliated, hopefully you reap the rewards.

Paul : So, really, then, you and your practice is about using technology as a tool to create community online.

Arthur : Not only online. Online and offline.

Paul : And also, enhancing people's music-creation ability through the use of technology?

Arthur : Well, not just music. That entire database I showed you, I would hope to tap artists. I mean...

Paul : Is it more human-capacity building?

Arthur : Yeah. In a creative sense, yeah. I mean, in my project, there's programmers involved. There's artists involved. There's musicians, obviously. There's a whole range of creativity going on that isn't necessarily music. We hold this artist up, Britney Spears, who's "the star..."

Paul : The star.

Arthur : But this person is living off the works of 1,000 other creative people, in one capacity or another. And I'd like to sort of create a more...

Paul : Equitable?

Arthur : Yeah, I guess a more equitable, create a new structure for intellectual property and ownership of that CD that repays the people who were involved with the creation of it. It's not a case of you turn up and get 500 bucks, we sell 500 million copies and we keep the rest. To me, that's always been a very wrong approach in the creation of music.

Paul : OK.

Arthur : I want other people to be rewarded for what they've done.

Paul : All right. Excellent. Well, that's a great deal, because now we have a better sense of who you are as a creative practitioner and some of your core beliefs. So, with that in mind, part of creative practice in an academic circle is reflecting on your creative practice and your journey in your research.

Arthur : I've done a lot of that lately.

Paul : Which is good. So, with the e-portfolio, what did you see it as being? What was the message that came across to you as for it to be?

Arthur : I think I viewed it as being a place that you could point to and say, "This is what I'm doing. This is where I'm at." And that has several functions. First of all, it's basically a storage facility where you can say, "This is everything I've done. This is how I've done it." You could record not just the artefacts but the process, which I think is very important. And my own research is largely concerned with the process. It's one thing for a band to turn up and say, "Here's our CD."

Paul : Yeah.

Arthur : And one band sells 15,000 copies, and one band sells five copies. The CDs sound pretty much the same. What's different is the process. So to me it's an opportunity to document not just the outcome but the process as well. Now in so doing it provides me with credibility where I can-you know people who I've contacted and said, do you want to be involved in this and they can tell me what they've done. I can go put that back, I've done that, you understand that's where I'm coming from. It's all recorded and documented like there wasn't room. So it gives me credibility, it also gives, I was hoping, but it hasn't worked out that way but also to provide a focal point for other people to build on what I'm doing. A lot of people could do it my rough way. So I was hoping it would provide a focal point but I've since used Wiki because I realize that people are probably always going to cut the mustard. That's what you get when you start from the beginning.

I think that a Wiki is a much better way to go I've found.

Paul : Is it, if only to stick on that key word you use "focal point". When you say that is it, obviously, if you're trying to build a community of people, you're looking at people who are outside of QUT as well.

Arthur : Absolutely.

Paul : Is that the main issue for you?

Arthur : Yeah, a lot of it is yeah. That I can't just go to, I mean I'm just the guy that put me in a plane a Health Inspector called Ramos who has an independent music conference that he does every year. He'll help me in New York and I wanted to point to this and say this is the man. This is what I'm doing, this is what the research is all about but I couldn't point to the e-portfolio. I rang him up because I had to make- because he's rich and I didn't get in his face. I rang him up and I said well you should check out Wiki on line. But I couldn't do that quickly-in that thing. That was a real bummer and I would think he would try and solicit songs from you know where I could say look for the credits on the last album I did. You see it's not all about me I want other people involved and I couldn't do that.

Paul : You designated your e-portfolio and done all that sort of stuff. How did you find the process of actually using it and navigating around the e-portfolio?

Arthur : Oh, that was good, that was all very respectful.

Paul : Five.

Arthur : Well I already blogged enough and built Wiki at home. Probably a bit more savvy at that point than a lot of people and more willing to play with it to figure it out. That's sort of my pride so I didn't have a problem with it.

Paul : OK, so the actual software It was technologically sound.

Arthur : Yeah.

Paul : That's what you're saying?

Arthur : Look, the only reason that I didn't use it every day, though I did my blog everyday, is because it would have been-the blogs made public and with all the accounts, so it meant technically twice the work. I did that a couple of times, a couple places you can find a copy of it I think posted here as well. That was just double the work because it wasn't public-I could have made it the puzzle point where you could receive your own blog with all the rest of it, bang it would...

Paul : So the benefit for any e-portfolio and a key to the system would be for you is if you didn't have to pay for hosting a site outside and people could then come in and see what you were doing?

Arthur : Yeah, see I'm plugged into my PHD as I go and at the moment that we key it in I'm just hanging off of that blog. If I had a University RSS PHD service, where I can say right here's the PHD blog and I had space on there that I could load the Wiki software, you know where I could get it working and then go on. If I could produce. That would be brilliant. Similarly, again I was tempted on the e-portfolio to upload all the papers that I published and stuff but the Imprints already done that so again it's twice the work. You know, I've already uploaded all this stuff on Imprints. I just don't need to upload it again.

Paul : OK, excellent. So if it comes down to the question of- I suppose its sustainability, I guess in a way. Is that the way you think of it as in how much time you actually have to give to something so that it doesn't become a burden, so that it's not achievable to sustainable?

Arthur : Yeah, Probably even more than that it's just utility. If I'm going to have to do twice the work, I'm going to have to get at least twice the reward. The other thing is, I wanted to help you out and I played with it and stuff. In terms of my personal involvement in it, it's just not worth the time. At the moment, I have uploaded that CD to at least a half dozen different websites that I have to maintain. I've got three MySpace, I've got a Facebook site and part of my research I'm doing is to see is what's the optimum way for a bunch of young users to do that. You can't possibly have and maintain all of the Web 2.0 websites.

Paul : That's right.

Arthur : They're springing up all over the place. So what we've got to do is pick the winners and say, keep focusing. You can afford, probably, if you're a soloist to maintain five as a sitting port style recording. If we can get a widget, then I post one blog post to MySpace and it gets copied to every other blog that I'm involved in...

Interview: That would be golden.

Arthur : That would be golden. And even probably when you go there, that's the centre of that.

Paul : That's the thing, that's the next question I was going towards actually. What's the structure of the e-portfolio and the ability to link web 2.0 artefacts? Was that appealing? Or was that sad? What did you think of that?

Arthur : It's a good idea, again as a focal point. Flickr already exists and Flickr is a public thing and it's great. YouTube already exists and I've got a YouTube account and a Webber account and a Flickr account. I don't want to have to post the same thing twice. And the way that work that would be good. Because I can say to people, "well here's a summation of all of those" and then I give people one URL instead of four. Here's my MySpace site, here's my Flickr one, here's my Webber one, here's my YouTube one; that's four URLs to send anyone who wants to look at your stuff.

If I can go here's my e-portfolio and it brings it all in for you. It saves them. It's a real benefit to doing it that way.

Paul : Right. The other thing then is do you know the address of your e-portfolios?

Arthur : Off the top of my head, no.

Paul : That's fine. And in fact that's because you haven't been using it obviously.

Arthur : Right. It's all written down and I can go and find it. I can find it on my database very easily.

Paul : Now, I suppose the next thing is, and I'm being mindful of time here, is what do you intend on doing for e-portfolios in the future? And are your supervisors happy with your Wiki proposal?

Arthur : The Wiki's not about me, the Wiki's about community. I have my blog websites, two Dandridge sites, particular and advance, three MySpace sites, that database one that I just showed you which is going to be - I guess is the wisest thing that you need to do, whether I maintain them or not - is sort of to start playing with it. Whether I maintain that a lot will depend on what it can do for me over the next six months. At the moment I just don't know. But it's useful contact to have made because the company have been very personal about it. They personally contacted me: "What do you think of this? and can we help you with that?" I sent them some feedback to say, "I really appreciated it so much."

But if I don't get some serious frames that might seal its connectivity, then that's just another Web 2.0 things that, we're aware, I better make the decision then on whether we're going to maintain it.

Paul : And that's really, I'm getting from your reflections there, getting a sense that it's more about is it worthwhile for me to pursue this and what's the benefits of adopting this technology?

Arthur : Look, the whole point of the Wiki, was because I know as a user, if you want a service you've got to do the work. Google doesn't always get you the service you want. It's pretty hit or miss, particularly if you really don't know what you want. I mean you know what to do and have no idea what it's called. So Google's pretty good. Then there's the reliability issue where, you're just as likely or more likely to get a shyster as you are to the genuine article. And then, even if you find it, there's no guarantee it applies to you. So the point of Wiki is to streamline that and provide specifically a service that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world; searches pretty extensively.

All those little directories for North American, English or French and they were all focused on something that drove business to the furnace.

So what I set out to do was to streamline things that provides a single, one stop service. If you can get it-the equal working on some basis then it would get the work, that's why I like that-the idea of that talent data base because it's a way of saying, he's

really put in a lot of attention he's really done his stuff. You can get in touch with other people and downloads being the same stuff. Several garage bases.

What's needed in the talent world is probably something that does all that. I wonder what database has got it.

Paul : With the talent data base idea, I mean relating it to your creative practice does it provide you with block and flake buyer and give you a price for...

Arthur : No, they haven't played with that. There is-see last attempt has a Wiki in service a hot liner in the market. It seems to me to be a more effective way of doing this than what Talent Data Base is doing because it's pinched in different directions. But there's no reason why it couldn't do the same thing, as Talent Data Base still be effective. Again, I haven't been on in the last couple of weeks since I'm slow that way so I haven't really played with it. It provides a lot more space, I've got three CDs that I want to upload I can only upload I guess 30 gigs worth of stuff to the Town data base whereas, PlasicM just goes a little bit more and that's a big plus.

Paul : OK excellent.

Arthur : Yeah, I'd look at-it really comes to utility and I haven't found a killer app yet in terms of-in terms of line music and rare music stuff iTunes has all that. In terms of meeting the teenagers and providing the music MySpace, God help us, is killer app. It's got sufficient...

Paul : Particularly for musicians it seems to be very, very popular.

Arthur : Well FaceBook people graduate from MySpace to FaceBook when they get more sophisticated in their needs and they're working and stuff. But FaceBook is just going music oriented now approved and being out of the import blast I think and app services. So it really seems to have MySpace as dead water, but at the moment it has killer apps. So I think that there's a potential there for a music portfolio where you're at, I just haven't seen the app.

Paul : But if the site was made public, you'd be more inclined to use it?

Arthur : Hmm.

Paul : And if you could link to other artefacts and...

Arthur : One of the big debates in the music community in the last few years has been, "Is my MySpace band site enough?" and the answer is no because at any stage MySpace could be pulled down. Everything you've done and had is lost like that, there nothing you can do about it. All it would take is yet another paedophile, and look this is a liability and all that's gone. Where if you maintain your own work on your own web site as band it's more expensive, and it means you've got to maintain it because it's all your stuff. So, there's room there for compromise it's a killer app.

Paul : OK, so really it's so hot in there-it all works technologically correctly-there was no major bugs or anything like that?

Arthur : It's nice.

Paul : So it all came down to it didn't meet your needs.

Arthur : Simply utility. I can see two things I wanted to use the e-prints thing to store things that I don't necessarily want public but I can point to it and say, and then the public thing that remains very important for-it might be for everybody. And I guess that's a bit of a camel question. I can see that the e-prints follows advice-it has some areas where you flag a document when it's downloaded and it's either public or not. This journal posted is it for publication or is it just for your own...It had some kind of up...

Paul: That is there but it's more complex a work than I would have liked.

Arthur: I didn't get to play with it so.

Paul: No that's fine. OK great. Arthur thanks very much for your time that's great.

Arthur: Thank you.