

The Role of Cultural Institutions under the New Consumption Circulation of Digitized Cultural Contents: Focusing on Google's Digitization Project

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1. Aim

It has become common that people access cultural contents on-line without visiting the physical libraries or museums even though the contents were offered by the institutions in the first place. This paper examines whether the role of cultural institutions will be maintained or not in the digital environment, considering cultural capital in connection with public interest.

2. Data & Methods

The production and reproduction of cultural capital by cultural institutions is based not only on the “displaying” and “preserving” of the collections, but also on the geographical location, characteristics of users, custodian authority and etc. The paper compared the social features of cultural institutions including Seoul National University(SNU) to those of Google's digitization project.

3. Results

First, people expect that Google's intention will determine the role of cultural institution. It deserves attention, however, that public cultural institutions have played a social role in their production of cultural capital, and now Google is also playing the role, with certain features of cultural capital. It is thus fair to say that Google is a cultural institution. Secondly, the particular feature of Google is different from that of existing public cultural institutions in terms of profit-maximizing policy, the U. S. based entity, its arbitrary operation of search algorithm, risking privacy of users and the lack of transparency.

4. Conclusion

Google's digitization project is a new type of cultural institution, but is not obliged to serve the public interest in the same way existing cultural institutions have done. Hence, we need to ask “Will Google take the role of cultural institution?”, with discussion on the way Google would carry out the required duty.

5. Reference

None