

# **BUNDENGAN: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SPACE FOR COLLABORATION IN THE CONSERVATION AND REVIVAL OF AN ENDANGERED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT**

**Rosie H Cook<sup>1</sup>, Luqmanul Chakim<sup>2</sup>, Sa'id Abdulloh<sup>2</sup>, Dr Nicole Tse<sup>1</sup> and Prof Margaret Kartomi<sup>3</sup>**

Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation<sup>1</sup>, Faculty of the Arts, The University of Melbourne/Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Surakarta<sup>2</sup>/

Music Archive of Monash University<sup>3</sup>

[rosiecook@gmail.com](mailto:rosiecook@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

The widespread use of social media in cultural heritage and conservation projects principally makes use of its capacity for public-facing engagement and the promotion of cultural institutions and events. Its potential as an inclusive, accessible and dynamic research output is less well-established. This paper focuses upon the potential of social media as a complementary form of conservation documentation, in response to the use of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaboration between source communities and collecting institutions as a means to preserve both material and intangible cultural heritage. Using the conservation of a rare and endangered musical instrument called bundengan as a case study, this paper will assess the uses of social media platforms in both documenting and enabling collaboration between the source community in Wonosobo, Java, Indonesia, and academic researchers based in Indonesia and Australia.

## **Introduction**

In 1972, Margaret Kartomi deposited an unusual bamboo instrument at the Music Archive of Monash University (MAMU). Identified as a “kowangan” in Kunst’s *Music in Java*<sup>6</sup>, it remained a curious but somewhat mysterious feature of the collection for the next 44 years. Limited knowledge of how it should be played, or even displayed, affected its interpretation, and its large size, unwieldy shape, and fragile materials also prevented the Kowangan from being accessed as a research object. Through a collaboration between Professor Kartomi, now Director of MAMU, and the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, the Kowangan arrived on Masters student Rosie Cook’s workbench in early 2016, with a request for its visual and physical integrity to be restored (Figure 1). Conservation treatment options were identified to stabilise the Kowangan’s plant materials, but as an object collected from another culture, understanding of its true meaning and function was essential for its conservation.

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<sup>6</sup>Jaap Kunst, *Music in Java: its history, its theory and its technique* (Springer, 2013).



Figure 1 – *The Kowangan* in February 2016 before treatment(Photo: Rosie Cook 2016)

Cultural materials conservation has evolved from the material preservation of self-contained artefacts, to a people-centred approach to decision- and meaning-making<sup>7</sup>. Recognising that the significance of world culture objects dwells in their meaning and their original context<sup>8</sup>, a more flexible conservation strategy was developed based on the individual needs of the *Kowangan* and its significant intangible features. English-language publications about the instrument were extremely limited, however investigations on the Internet led to a music revival community in Wonosobo, Central Java, where the instrument, known locally as *bundengan*, is still played, providing a unique opportunity for engagement (Figure 2). At the same time as Cook was embarking on this conservation research project in Australia, Indonesian ethnomusicology student Sa'id Abdulloh was facing the same lack of information and literature on the topic of *bundengan* as a form of cultural heritage unique to the Wonosobo region. The *bundengan*'s unusual organology defies systematic categorisation according to its morphological or acoustic elements and requires a deeper understanding of its cultural context<sup>9</sup>. Fieldwork therefore became the primary research method for Abdulloh's final assignment of his undergraduate degree at the Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Surakarta, engaging with musician-makers to learn about the structure and performance of *bundengan*, in order to better analyse its organology.

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<sup>7</sup>Hannah Hölling, "The aesthetics of change: On the relative durations of the impermanent". In *Authenticity in transition*, ed. Erma Hermens and Frances Robertson (London: Archetype Publications, 2016): 3-24; Pip Laurenson, "Authenticity, change and loss in the conservation of time-based media installations." *Tate Papers Autumn 2006* (2006).

<sup>8</sup>Miriam. Clavir, *Preserving what is valued: Museums, conservation, and First Nations* (UBC Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup>Margaret Kartomi, *On concepts and classifications of musical instruments* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).



Figure 2 – Bp Munir playing a *bundengan* (Photo © P.Keen 2016)

In a movement that contests the hegemony of Western museological culture, conservators of “ethnographic” collections increasingly seek to involve the source community as experts in their own heritage<sup>10</sup>. In the field of ethnomusicology, a similar shift has occurred, moving away from morphological and acoustic concepts and towards a more dynamic and expansive understanding of “instruments as elements of the musical and sociohistorical behaviour of human beings”<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, interviews and fieldwork directly within musician communities also become an essential source of knowledge and expertise<sup>12</sup>. The encounter between researchers and the *bundengan* community exemplifies the welcoming and open nature of music revival movements<sup>13</sup>. During a homestay with *bundengan* musicians in Wonosobo, exploration of the Instagram hashtag #bundengan led Cook to photos showing not just performances, but instances of young people in the region interacting with the instrument, including Abdulloh. An online conversation was initiated through comments, leading to a meeting between the two researchers, a local music teacher, and two young musicians, all of whom were actively involved in reviving *bundengan* practices. From this initial interaction, interdisciplinary collaborative exchanges have unfolded, involving *bundengan* performances, instrument-building, teaching and workshops – and all strongly reliant on social media for their propagation and documentation.

Kartomi warns against “artificial, or observer-imposed, schemes [...] frequently based on the goals of an individual investigator”<sup>14</sup>, while Ingold encourages researchers to follow a line of enquiry, in order to connect with the community more deeply, in a process he describes as “correspondence”: “far from answering to their plans and predictions, it joins with them in their hopes and dreams”<sup>15</sup>. In recognition of both views, the *bundengan* and its performance are viewed as living heritage and embodied culture, rather than objects of analysis, and

<sup>10</sup>Michael Ames, *Cannibal tours and glass boxes: The anthropology of museums* (UBC Press, 1992); Tharron Bloomfield, "Pupuru te mahara—preserving the memory: working with Ma-ori communities on preservation projects in Aotearoa, New Zealand." In *ICOM Committee for Conservation, ICOM-CC, 15th Triennial Conference New Delhi, 22-26 September 2008: preprints*, vol. 1 (Allied Publishers Pvt., 2008): 144-149.

<sup>11</sup>Kartomi, *On concepts*, 283.

<sup>12</sup>Jeff T Titon, *Sustainability, resilience, and adaptive management for applied ethnomusicology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>13</sup>E Livingston, "An Expanded Theory for Revivals as Cosmopolitan Participatory Music Making." In *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* (Oxford University Press, 2014): 60.

<sup>14</sup>Kartomi, *On concepts*.

<sup>15</sup>Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013): 7.

through correspondence they each situate themselves as another social actor within *bundengan* revival, and position their personal and theoretical investment in its arguments<sup>16</sup>. This reconceptualisation of the role of the researcher emphasises a shift from academic reward towards community benefit<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, consultation within the source culture can require a shift towards new ways of classifying and interpreting information, potentially with multiple co-existing frameworks for organising information which may be related to their socio-political, religious or artistic practices<sup>18</sup>. The recognition within conservation of a multiplicity of narratives and different knowledge formats<sup>19</sup> requires new shared spaces for action and a commitment to social change<sup>20</sup>. Whilst social media has been promoted as a means of public engagement and transparency for cultural heritage institutions<sup>21</sup>, this paper is a case study in the usefulness and effectiveness of social media as a space for collaborative research, promoting the voices of local knowledge in the documentation of *bundengan*. Recognising the richness, but also the limitations of blogging and social media platforms, this paper acknowledges that the use of social media in collaborative, community-based projects complements existing conservation and ethnomusicology research, providing two-way access between a broader field of contributors and contribution formats.

### Approach and methodology

Reconceptualising the ethnographic object as a document of social practices<sup>22</sup>, it becomes appropriate to employ a strategy elaborated for the conservation of performance art, using documentation as the primary means to conserve the meaning and intent of its original use. Recognising that a flow of development is crucial to performance-related artforms, there is a responsibility for conservators to avoid “freezing” a work; in the same vein MAMU, as a music archive, aims to counteract the museological convention of prioritising stagnant material objects that lack links to living culture. Research aims for MAMU’s Kowangan approached conservation as a “bottom-up interactive process, where community voice, pride, self-esteem and a sense of ownership play vital roles”<sup>23</sup>. The dynamic and adaptive approach that integrated the relationships with the Wonosobo-based *bundengan* community was informed by contemporary anthropology, performance theory, and applied ethnomusicology to engage with the community’s interests, needs and existing frameworks, as well as a multiplicity of narratives.

Although fieldwork in August 2016 and through 2017 aimed to develop documents that contribute to a more complete understanding of the Kowangan, it also relied on second-hand information and documents made by outsiders as opposed to the owners of a cultural practice<sup>24</sup>. The identification of continuing opportunities for two-way knowledge exchange

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<sup>16</sup>Diana Taylor, *The archive and the repertoire: Performing cultural memory in the Americas* (Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>17</sup>Yasminah Beebeejaun et al., “Beyond text’: exploring ethos and method in co-producing research with communities.” *Community Development Journal* 49, no. 1 (2013): 37-53.

<sup>18</sup>Kartomi, *On concepts*, 271.

<sup>19</sup>Ramesh Srinivasan et al., “Diverse knowledges and contact zones within the digital museum.” *Science, technology, & human values* 35, no. 5 (2010): 735-768.

<sup>20</sup>Beebeejaun et al., “Beyond Text”.

<sup>21</sup>E Pearlstein and D Lohnas, “Conservation outreach materials for a tribal museum without conservators”. In E Williams, ed., *The Public Face of Conservation* (Archetype Publications, 2013): 222-231.

<sup>22</sup>Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination culture: Tourism, museums, and heritage* (University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>23</sup>Krebs, “Indigenous curation”.

<sup>24</sup>Ames, *Cannibal tours*; Clavir, *Preserving what is valued*; Kartomi, *On concepts*.

and the transmission of musical knowledge orally<sup>25</sup> for the local *bundengan* revival movement, was therefore prioritised. It further recognised that a conservator is not an “objective observer of culture but an active participant”<sup>26</sup>, and “correspondence” itself becomes a form of conservation documentation, while realising the limitations of textual or audiovisual records in documenting performance and the value of human-to-human embodied experiences of learning and social memory. The correspondent nature of this documentation process was particularly revealed through the use of social media, which is proposed as a valuable tool for gathering and archiving human experiences<sup>27</sup>. The Kowangan/*bundengan* provides a case study to likewise reflect on the integration of social media in interdisciplinary collaborative research methods, and discuss the impact on the different participants’ practice around the *bundengan* music revival movement.

### Why social media for research?

Knowledge acquisition is recognised in a variety of formats, many of them “beyond text”, including visual documents as well as embodied knowledge and social memory. “Beyond text”, an ethos proposed by Beebeejaun et al and relevant to this study, highlights the crucial need for substantive content to be “accountable to the true complexity of participants’ views”, and asserts that the use of formalised, specialised text-based outputs lack dialogue and disempower research subjects<sup>28</sup>. Social media, it is argued, provides such dialogue and promotes first person voices to “[challenge] the way heritage conservation is conceptualised, understood and practiced”<sup>29</sup> through shared transformational goals and different claims to knowledge<sup>30</sup>.

In the case of researching *bundengan*, beyond-text documents of embodied experiences can take expected formats including playing *bundengan*, dancing to *bundengan* music, and learning to make the instrument, partly captured through social media, which developed as an output over the course of a 2016 fieldtrip and again in 2017 as part of an emerging *bundengan* revival project, *Making Connections*. Social media – a term referring to mobile and web-based applications which promote interaction and dialogue – uses “media for interaction as a superset beyond social communication”<sup>31</sup>. The ubiquity of social media explains its early presence in this research as a source of information in the absence of formal publications (e.g. YouTube videos and Facebook posts through which *bundengan* playing was first experienced, and providing opportunities to identify and contact community members). However its potential as a form of correspondence through visual, beyond-text exchanges, became apparent during fieldwork in Wonosobo, where Instagram is a popular social network amongst the younger generation. Photos were shared between the respondents and researchers, and the #bundengan hashtag became a way of accessing and circulating bite-sized items. This format is not only accessible, it allows the respondents to

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<sup>25</sup> Kartomi, *On concepts*.

<sup>26</sup> Hanna Sandgren, “White people in Indigenous affairs: A conservator’s perspective”, *Demos Journal*, June 2016, <http://www.demosproject.net/white-people-in-indigenous-affairs-a-conservators-perspective/> (accessed June 12, 2017)

<sup>27</sup> Gabriella Giannachi, “Documenting the user experience”, *Performing Documentation: Revista de história da arte Serie W 4* (2015): 32-46.

<sup>28</sup> Beebeejaun et al., “Beyond Text”, 38.

<sup>29</sup> Galla, “First voice”, 22.

<sup>30</sup> Beebeejaun et al., “Beyond Text”.

<sup>31</sup> Trisha Baruah, “Effectiveness of Social Media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study.” *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* 2, no. 5 (2012): 1.

be immediately identified, acknowledged and engaged, and provides a “right of response” — misspelled names can be corrected, comments can be made, and links can be shared. Through the #bundengan Instagram channel — an automated online archive of images and videos tagged with this marker — new respondents and information can become accessible.

Social media builds a presence and social memory and can be construed as a documentation format that uniquely promotes first person voices, producing outputs that are accountable to the complexity of individual narratives and opinions, and challenge more authoritative academic formats<sup>32</sup>. Whilst researchers rely upon participant observation to understand and engage with the community<sup>33</sup>, Ingold recommends stepping away from “a retrospective commitment to descriptive fidelity” and instead contributing “ways of knowing and feeling shaped through transformational engagements” so as to identify common objectives<sup>34</sup>. This correspondence invites the researcher to become part of the social media history of *bundengan*, and invites participants to grow social memory of *bundengan*, thereby contributing to its conservation<sup>35</sup>. By sharing to social media observations and moments captured during fieldwork, performances or experiments, individual researchers document their own embodied experiences, but also recognise the subjective nature of such contributions – a subjectivity which is not always overt in standard academic outputs but exists nonetheless.

## Results

At the time of Cook’s first visit to Wonosobo in August 2016, only 10 Instagram posts were visibly tagged with #bundengan, several of which were duplicates and from the same small pool of users. Currently there are 246 posts tagged #bundengan on Instagram from a wide variety of users (Figure 3). In addition to social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, online blog posts and news articles have generated interest and further opportunities for collaboration with academics in Indonesia and Australia, as well as musicians and university organisations in Australia. Figure 4 illustrates data trends based on Google searches for the term “bundengan”, and shows that over the past 7 years there have been peaks of interest generated by specific events such as TV reports, however the challenge is in sustaining and building interest and engagement over time. Whilst the past year demonstrates a more sustained effort, the fact that recorded searches dropped to 0 in June 2017 demonstrate the need for persistent ongoing content creation and public engagement.

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<sup>32</sup> Beebeejaun et al., “Beyond Text”; Galla, “First voice”; Ingold, *Making*.

<sup>33</sup> Helen Newing, *Conducting research in conservation: Social science methods and practice*. Routledge, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Ingold, *Making*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Giannachi, “Documenting the user experience”.

# #bundengan

246 posts

## Top Posts



Figure 3 – Current top 9 posts on #bundengan Instagram channel as of August 31, 2017. Source: Instagram.



Figure 4 – Number of monthly google searches for the term “bundengan” between January 2010 and August 2017. Source: Google Trends, table captured August 25, 2017.

The *bundengan* musicians, teachers and craftsmen associated with the *Making Connections* project are currently supported by universities, government institutions and artists in Indonesia and Australia. As a result of this engagement, a two-day *bundengan*-playing workshop was held in March 2017 at the Pendopo Wonosobo for school children; a second *bundengan* instrument-building workshop is being held at the 2017 International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Arts Creation and Studies at ISI Surakarta, and a third workshop is being planned for February 2018 at The University of Melbourne, in tandem with a concert and exhibition at Monash University and a performance at the Indonesian Consulate. Additionally members of *Making Connections* carried out a *bundengan* workshop at the Sonobudoyo Museum in Yogyakarta. Universitas Gadjah Mada researchers Dr Gea Parikesit and Dr Indraswari Kusumaningtyas expressed their interest in *bundengan* after visiting the museum’s traditional musical instrument exhibition, connecting with *bundengan* researchers through their respective online presence, and as a result becoming valuable partners in the *Making Connections* projects.

Interest from musicians and ethnomusicologists has also been stimulated through social media. A recent post on Indonesian ethnomusicology blog *Aural Archipelago* based on the August 2016 *bundengan* fieldtrip<sup>36</sup> generated over 100,000 views and 1,420 shares on Facebook, including a musician in Australia who contacted *Making Connections* to organise a visit to Wonosobo to learn *bundengan*. Abdulloh has fielded additional enquiries, including his collaboration with Arbi, a Universitas Negeri Semarang student who is finishing his musicology thesis. Arbi has been able to pursue contacts linked by #bundengan, generating interesting conversations and ideas, and is currently researching musical aspects on *bundengan* and exploring the adaptation of *bundengan* into an electric instrument.

## Discussion

There are convincing arguments supporting the use of social media in collaborative ethnomusicology and cultural heritage conservation projects, and the *bundengan* case study illustrates the successes of such an approach. As will be discussed, social media as a digital archive, as a space for collaboration and conservation, and as a shared space for music

<sup>36</sup> Palmer Keen, “Bundengan stories: Folk zithers and duck herders in Wonosobo, Central Java”, *Aural Archipelago*, March 2017, <http://www.auralarchipelago.com/auralarchipelago/bundengan> (accessed August 1, 2017).



research and revival, were key themes that emerged and were of benefit. However it is important to recognise the challenges and ramifications of using social media platforms as archives and platforms for the propagation and exchange of knowledge.

The primary cause for concern revolves around copyright and intellectual property. The movement of text-based or audiovisual outputs and discussions from the controlled world of academia to publicly accessible servers, owned by for-profit and public companies<sup>37</sup> has ramifications, including the lack of control over audience and feedback, intrusions into privacy, and disputes over intellectual property. Collecting institutions may recognise that the source community “owns” the cultural tradition from which their collections originate – but the ownership of documents becomes even more complex when the photos, videos and discussions become elements of a public social network. Once uploaded to Instagram, it is theoretically possible for anyone to access, use, and even generate income from content which was created for educational purposes rather than profit. Content generated by a group but uploaded by a single user could present complications should income become attached to it, although the current group of performers and researchers are motivated by social change and the revival of *bundengan* rather than financial remuneration.

Another aspect to consider is the context and why this strategy enjoys success in Indonesia, but may not be suitable in other cultural contexts. The use of beyond-text methods relies heavily on adaptation to local practices, and social media requires fairly consistent access to the Internet over a reasonably wide demographic. The use of social media in this research context can be considered as emerging directly from the community, rather than imposed by outsiders, which despite its informal nature, does more closely reflect the broader ideas of its own culture<sup>38</sup>. Adoption of and adaptation to social media as a shared space for collaboration has been successful in the case of *bundengan*, with participants representing multiple generations and income levels. The ability to replicate this type of exercise would depend on the source community’s access to, and interest in, social media.

### **Social Media as A Digital Archive**

Social media as a digital archive parallels the ancillary relationship between the material object and its significance, as data becomes more valuable than its carrier. Batchen describes the archive as “a continuous stream of data, without geography or container, continuously transmitted and therefore without temporal restriction (always available in the here and now). Exchange rather than storage has become the archivist’s principle function, a shift in orientation that is evidenced in the flurry of networked projects that are under way all around the world.”<sup>39</sup> Using #bundengan created a shared, accessible, visual and aural archive of *bundengan*, generated primarily through the source community of performers and audiences. Association between the grassroots movement and institutions such as Australian and Indonesian universities is publicised, which establishes their respective relevance and social impact on *bundengan* revival. The publicization of knowledge gaps became a call to action,

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<sup>37</sup>Julia Rodriguez, "Social media use in higher education: Key areas to consider for educators." *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* 7, no. 4 (2011): 539-550.

<sup>38</sup>Kartomi, *On concepts*.

<sup>39</sup>Geoffrey Batchen, “The art of archiving”, in Schaffner, Ingrid, and Matthias Winzen. "Deep storage." *Arsenale der Erinnerung/Deep Storage. Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art*, Prestel, München-New York (1998), 47.

encouraging a wider, non-academic audience to contribute knowledge to the digital archive<sup>40</sup>.

As the collaboration grew between participants – conservators, ethnomusicologists, musicians and performers in Australia and Indonesia – the need for effective long-distance communication became clear, and instant messaging platform WhatsApp further provided an efficient resource which considered the needs and the capacity of all members of the core group. In addition to quickly and easily sharing information, photos, videos and links, it was highly adaptable for users in rural Indonesia who might not have access to unlimited data or to a laptop, particularly when on the road or in a different time-zone, and who can catch up on the archived conversation or jump straight to messages where they are tagged. Most importantly, it was a communication tool that was already in use within the community, including generations less familiar with technology who were not comfortable with email, for example. The use of informal texts (translated automatically), photos and videos from events, and even emoticons contributed to building strong working relationships in ways that are sometimes not possible through phone calls or even face-to-face meetings due to language barriers. These beyond-text experiences reflect the ethical principles that underpin this research, namely to work with community members as co-researchers, forming “deeper, co-productive trust relationships, that allow for more open responses to questions”<sup>41</sup>.

Recognising practical limitations enforced by distance and language, as well as the repercussions of an overly Western or academic approach to both authorship and audience<sup>42</sup>, social media proved to be a “beyond-text” method of communication. It provides the numerous advantages including the sharing of ideas, bridging of communication and knowledge gaps, and promotion of events and partners, whilst requiring limited financial and time investment<sup>43</sup>.

### **Social Media Spaces for Collaboration as Conservation**

As part of a pluralistic approach in conservation, social media is often used as a means of raising awareness about conservation work<sup>44</sup>, but a more interesting use of social networking and media platforms is one that encourages participation as a form of knowledge exchange and generating conservation knowledge<sup>45</sup>. Participants from the source community possess a platform to actively engage and contribute knowledge which longitudinally enhances the conservation practices, as opposed to passively observing and learning about conservation. They become first person voices and co-researchers, rather than being themselves subjects of research. An early reference for the initial Conservation Documentation on the Kowangan was a blog post in Javanese entitled “Javanese culture: Bundengan”<sup>46</sup>, one of very few available resources in February 2016, but one which would not generally be approved in

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<sup>40</sup> Srinivasan et al., “Diverse knowledges”.

<sup>41</sup> Beebejaun et al., “Beyond text”, 46.

<sup>42</sup> Kartomi, *On concepts*.

<sup>43</sup> Baruah, “Effectiveness of social media”.

<sup>44</sup> Pearlstein and Lohnas, “Conservation outreach materials”.

<sup>45</sup> Caroline Kyi, Nicole Tse, Sandra Khazam, 2016 “The potential role of citizen science in reshaping approaches to mural conservation in an urban context”, *Studies in Conservation*, 61, supplement 2, (2016): 98-103.

<sup>46</sup> Rizky Khorina 2015, “Kebudayaan Jawi Bundengan”, blog post, <<http://rizkykhorina23.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/kebudayaan-jawi-bundengan.html>>, accessed 16 February 2016.

standard academic formats. However, this blog post was written by the daughter of a *bundengan* performer, whom Cook later visited and connected with on Instagram, illustrating the reach of social media and its access to previously undocumented knowledge from source communities.

One of the challenges to consulting with source communities is that conservators working on world culture collections may be located in a different country, and from a completely different culture. Social media is engineered for global networking and communication<sup>47</sup>, and has proved invaluable in identifying and engaging with experts in the field, despite language and geographical barriers, as was the case for the Kowangan's conservators, located in Melbourne. Relying heavily on Google translate, in February 2016 references were identified on Facebook and Twitter to a local documentary about *bundengan*, that had serendipitously been launched only days earlier. It was possible through social media to track down documentary producer Bp Bambang Hengky. Pak Bambang was the first direct contact between Melbourne and the *bundengan* community, and again using Google Translate, an email correspondence was established with each side writing in their native language.

This correspondence developed into the basis for a field trip, with planned interviews, performances and the purchase of a new instrument for MAMU's collection. The internet is of course invaluable in the preparation of such trips in terms of logistics, however it was again social media that provided the most useful of resources – a network of individuals with a shared passion for music and Indonesian culture, one of whom was Palmer Keen. Keen's website *Aural Archipelago* showcased how an online presence might be established for *bundengan*, sharing stories, videos, photos and audio recordings. Reaching out to Keen, Cook found a willing and eager collaborator, whose participation in the *bundengan* fieldtrip made it a richer experience, and whose existing social media presence increased exposure for *bundengan* and for her conservation goals.

Instagram proved to be a strong catalyst for expanding the MAMU Kowangan's "social network" to reach new generations of musicians and performers. Keen uses Instagram and Facebook to reach a broad audience of Indonesian and international enthusiasts, and encouraged Cook to explore the #bundengan hashtag, through which she met other members of the community. Using Instagram and WhatsApp to work directly with the burgeoning *bundengan* community, beginning in Indonesia and continuing after her return to Australia, allowed Cook to understand complex relationships, as well as to access first person accounts of experiences and embodied practices, that would sustain the broader ontological significance of the Kowangan. This exploration of how the MAMU instrument connected to other objects as well as to humans<sup>48</sup>, and the archiving of multiple types of documentation – video, photo and text, all interactive and encouraging discussion – is grounded in performance, and in respect for applied, practical knowledge. Consequently, our understanding and interpretation of this instrument has improved, and importantly, trivialising or incorrect assumptions about *bundengan* are reduced, through a broad and often community-assessed range of perspectives and narratives<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Baruah, "Effectiveness of social media".

<sup>48</sup> Ian Hodder, *Entangled: an archaeology of the relationships between humans and things*. John Wiley & Sons, 2012

<sup>49</sup> Benjamin Alberti, "Designing Body-Pots in the Formative La Candelaria Culture, Northwest Argentina." *Making and Growing: Anthropological studies of organisms and artefacts* (2014): 107-25; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination culture*.

The value of publically accessible and participative forms of documentation such as social media was a significant and unexpected outcome of this conservation project, as networks of knowledge were created directly by participants. The expansion of social memory and public knowledge of the instrument contributes to its long-term conservation and to its historical documentation. These documented lived experiences, whether by the researcher or within the community, contribute to and engage with the archive, creating a space for exchange and connection, “for a two-way experience that enriches and stimulates memory production, augmenting individual and communities’ sense of presence and identity”<sup>50</sup>. The linking of memories to lived experiences avoids the reduction of such documents to abstracted or intellectualised historical reconstructions, and preserves their authenticity<sup>51</sup>. Recognition of these lived experiences disseminated through social media, however, does not address the ephemeral nature of such formats and further challenges remain as to whether, and how, they need to be encapsulated within the archival and documentation process, for example through web archiving services.

### **Social Media as A Shared Space for Music Research and Revival**

Globalization is often understood to be synonymous with the modernization achieved through the western culture, while the eastern culture (and traditional cultures themselves) remain traditional and conventional, as indicated by their antiquated and ancient features. This phenomenon aligns with a popular Malinowski theory<sup>52</sup> that a higher and active culture will influence the lower and passive cultures through cultural contact. In the field of music, the continuity in the development of music is more inclined to the populist. It is inversely proportional to the beat of the traditional music, which struggles to compensate<sup>53</sup>. This is the situation currently experienced by *bundengan*.

Times have changed very quickly. The world can be explored in one hand, with the immediacy of social media providing a platform for “the public to be present, to communicate, to influence”<sup>54</sup>, and an ideal nexus for the development of relationships and exchanges. An example is the work of artist and ethnomusicologist Asep Nata<sup>55</sup>, who specialises in a musical instrument called *karinding*. All the activities and research that he shares on his Facebook homepage have initiated contact with people who want to know more about *karinding*. He frequently participates in the comment section, providing scientific input alongside discussions. These online conversations frequently result in face-to-face meetings, which are then shared along with photos and tags link to social media accounts of his commentators and new collaborators. The scope of topics shared can range from serious to humourous, which allows the musician to build both a personality and relationships around this traditional musical instrument.

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<sup>50</sup>Giannachi, “Documenting the user experience”.

<sup>51</sup> Baykan Günay, “Conservation of urban space as an ontological problem”, *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 26, no. 1 (2009): 123-156.

<sup>52</sup>Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Dynamics of Culture Change” (Dinamik Bagi Perubahan Budaya: Satu Penyiasatan Mengenai Perhubungan Ras Di Afrika). Trans from Zahara Ahmad, Kuala Lumpur. 1983.

<sup>53</sup> W Rahmanto, *Teori-Teori Budaya (Perspektif Dampak Perubahan Budaya di Indonesia)*. Blog post.<<http://walidrahmanto.blogspot.co.id/2011/06/teori-teori-budaya-perspektif-dampak.html>> accessed 27 August 2017

<sup>54</sup> Baruah, “Effectiveness of social media”

<sup>55</sup> Asep Nata, <https://www.facebook.com/nataasep> (accessed August 12, 2017).

Familiarity with social media trends and personal interest in traditional music resonated with Abdulloh, but it was the immediate feedback and engagement from “outsider” researchers Keen and Cook that encouraged Abdulloh to shift his self-perception from passive social media observer, to activist, and from student researcher, to performer and creator of content, educating others on the topic of *bundengan* and its conservation. The use of #bundengan provided validation as well as excitement, and spurred the growth of a network of researchers and audiences. The sense of an international audience and the flurry of “likes” and “shares” became evidence of the importance of Abdulloh’s research and active participation.

The impact of audience engagement incentivises not only participants, but also outside contributors. Funding bodies and sponsors are crucial collaborators for cultural heritage projects. A well-recognised function of social media in heritage projects is their public-facing capacity to create awareness of the value and shared responsibilities in caring for cultural heritage<sup>56</sup>. The creation and curation of social media platforms allows organisations to demonstrate their engagement with the public, and increases access and relevance to audiences not immediately involved with the project. An example of this is the use of Instagram during the April 2017 Asia-Pacific Tropical Climate Conservation Art Research Network (APTCCARN) forum, carried out on the island of Bohol in the Philippines. Photographs, profiles, and brief summaries of the events and activities were posted, and participants to the Forum were encouraged to join the social media conversation using the hashtag #aptccarn5 across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram<sup>57</sup>. Posts on the APTCCARN social media platforms were also tagged with the #First70Years hashtag celebrating the diplomatic relationship between Australia and the Philippines, and linked to sponsors including the Australian-ASEAN council, not only as an acknowledgement but to encourage cross-pollination between social media users.

This type of “soft diplomacy” through social media is also used for the *bundengan* as collaboration continues through the *Making Connections* program, and is an effective illustration of the ways in which social media and technology have changed Indonesian society and the relationships between cultural events, sponsors, and audiences. Despite Indonesia’s status as a developing nation and the limited availability of wired internet, connectivity has increased significantly through mobile web devices, and social media has become the preferred activity of connected Indonesians<sup>58</sup>. Understanding the importance of gaining community participation into traditional arts, both through performances that reach audiences, and through art institutions that will strengthen their position as cultural heritage<sup>59</sup>, the *Making Connectionsbundengan* project appeals to a sense of national pride and shared social responsibility in preserving a unique cultural product in Wonosobo, by building a strong media presence, capitalising on the instrument’s unusual appearance to make it go “viral”. In addition to utilising contacts in the traditional news media outlets such as radio and newspapers, the participants used social media, and through multiple types of

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<sup>56</sup>Pearlstein and Lohas, “Conservation outreach materials”.

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.instagram.com/aptccarn\\_/](https://www.instagram.com/aptccarn_/)

<sup>58</sup>Lia Puspitasari and Kenichi Ishii, “Digital divides and mobile Internet in Indonesia: Impact of smartphones.” *Telematics and Informatics* 33, no. 2 (2016): 472-483.

<sup>59</sup> Agus Irianto, “The existence of traditional arts and tourism insight of the local community: a case study in Wonosobo Regency Province of Central Java”, Conference paper, Diponegoro University Institutional Repository, <http://eprints.undip.ac.id/42930/>, (2014).

posts – photos, videos, interviews and events – Instagram was a catalyst for capturing the attention of local cultural and social promoters such as @wonosobozone. Similar to crowdfunding, visible interest in a project, quantified through “likes” or shares, is a tangible way of demonstrating to a funder that there is cultural and potentially financial value in their investment.

As *bundengan* is a form of traditional music unique to Wonosobo, there is potential to gain support from local government by appealing to their responsibility for cultural heritage management. Due to the focus of tourism boards in Central Java on cultural commercialisation, their support often relies more on an identified financial benefit rather than the maintenance of traditional culture<sup>60</sup>. *Making Connections* positions itself also as a social project, inviting many parties to collaborate in promoting *bundengan*, using social media and the promotion of events directly or indirectly linked to *bundengan* to solidify its legitimacy in the eyes of the local tourism department. It is hoped that this collaborative social media strategy, linking a broad network of participants including the photography community, radio, social media promoters, newspapers, schools, dancers, and musicians will encourage the tourism department in Wonosobo or widely in Indonesia to pursue this model of cultural promotion. Moreover, art institutions such as ISI Surakarta have also been encouraged to review this kind of social project for an effective way for promoting ethnic music instruments or other traditional cultural practices.

## Conclusion

Over the course of researching the MAMU Kowangan and the contemporary practice of *bundengan*, collaboration with the source community through the establishment of living links between the two emerged as a socially conscious approach. Through this process, the use of social media was revealed as a communication device, enabling correspondence between a multitude of first person voices, and revealing the subjective – yet accountable – experiences of researchers. Social media platforms such as Instagram provided accessible and inclusive spaces for collaboration with a broad range of participants, building an archive that allowed for dialogue, multiplicity of narratives, and transparency, using visual and informal media to exchange knowledge and build a sense of pride and participation in the conservation of *bundengan*, re-imagining and re-situating its social context. These types of documentation and knowledge take unconventional formats; transmission of the more unconventional forms of documentation to MAMU for archival purposes is problematic. However the choice to open lines of enquiry, rather than seek definitive answers to questions, remains in line with the overall ethos of this research in understanding the social and intangible values of the Kowangan in order to better care for it.

The involvement of a broader spectrum of interested parties reaches beyond the frameworks of academia and professional practice codes for conservators and researchers. The active participation of community members is valued, as their vested interest in the performance culture – both as audience and as active practitioners of the culture itself – is key to building living heritage, and to the resilience and continued preservation of heritage in this part of the world. If conservation practice can contribute to this continuity of cultural heritage, it can be argued to be at its most effective. Social media raises individual profiles as well as building capacity and knowledge. The documentation of these achievements in academic papers remains important, but the real results will be seen in the expanded awareness and practice

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<sup>60</sup>Irianto, “The existence of traditional arts”

of *bundengan* in the international, local and hyperlocal scenes through accessible online platforms.

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