

## George Oates



Job title: Interaction designer

Organisation: Good, Form & Spectacle

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Abstract:

### **Title: Every Collection is a Snowflake**

The promise of pristine linked data is powerful and compelling, but in practice, we're working with data created by humans, which is full of inconsistencies and gotchas. Instead of trying to force computers to understand these foibles, we've been working directly with data creators and using data visualisation to see the grain of individual catalogues including [Open Library](#) and the fabulous [Wellcome Library collection](#). This work has gently challenged myths of data completeness and accuracy, and even helped data creators see their own collection data in a new light.

Bio:

George has been working online since 1996. She's a designer, producer, maker; part of the founding team at Flickr, doing interface/copy/system design; invented Flickr Commons, director/designer of Open Library at Internet Archive; art director at Stamen. Today, she runs two companies: Good, Form & Spectacle, a nimble software agency focussed on cultural heritage projects, and Museum in a Box, a new play on the old idea of museum handling collections. Cultural clients include British Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Wellcome Trust, Het Nieuwe Instituut, and MoMA.

George's particular skills lie in designing interfaces people don't have to think about, quickly

understanding complex systems, remembering the humans, challenging status quo by asking why a lot, and making people feel comfortable with and excited about change.

George has spoken internationally about her work since 2005. She is a non-executive director at The Postal Museum, serves on the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities and British Library Labs advisory boards, visiting lecturer at the Department of Design, Goldsmiths, University of London, and is a former research associate of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries.