Editorial

Earlier this year the recordkeeping profession lost two of its pioneers, Mollie Lukis and Doreen Wheeler. This issue of the journal opens with obituaries that celebrate their respective achievements and contributions to the profession and society at large.

The first article in the current issue of the journal is Mitchell Whitelaw's 'Visible archival collections', takes us through his Visual Archive project at the National Archives of Australia, a project undertaken under the auspices of the 2008 Ian Maclean Award. Whitelaw's work raises the possibility that the ways in which we currently facilitate online access to archival collections does not communicate the full reality behind the results sets returned from standard searching mechanisms such as the NAA's RecordSearch. Would it be better to have the option of a completely different approach to interrogate collections that makes use of the new graphical possibilities of present and emerging web technologies, and that cater to the minds of researchers who are geared toward seeing rather than reading? Whitelaw's article takes us on an exploration of some prototype visualisations that can help researchers literally see patterns and relationships in the abstract and labyrinthine structures of an archival control system.

Another set of assumptions about humans and their behaviour toward records are questioned in Anne Marie Condé's article 'Lives lived in silence'. Are humans story-telling creatures, ever eager to spin a yarn about themselves, leaving behind well-ordered evidence and traces of their lives as a means of not only forging their own identities, but also communicating them to others and posterity? Or is this an idealisation serving a particular view of what human beings can or should be; an idealisation shaped by practitioners that are used to dealing with an abudance of records and wanting to ensure their good order? Primarily through a reading of the unfinished last novel of French writer Albert Camus, Condé has these kinds of questions in mind as she revisits Sue McKemmish's classic article about personal recordkeeping 'Evidence of Me ...'. Camus's *The First Man* is a highly autobiographical account and presents the reader with a portrait of his impoverished family

in French colonial Algeria. Condé makes us ponder the implications of human existence for the vast majority of people on this Earth who lead lives that yield little or scarce evidence, and may never have the realisation that their life could actually be otherwise.

And while some communities produce scarce written evidence of themselves, there are many that produce an abudance of stories and records through an oral tradition which are retained as living memory. Are these kinds of sources still considered mere supplements to the written record? Is there such a thing as an oral record and an oral archive if it exists only in an individual's or a coummuity's memory? What would it mean to reassess the traditional preference of written over oral sources that does not by default assume the superiority of the written form as more stable, trustworthy and authentic. These are some of the concerns raised in Shannon Faulkhead's 'Connecting through records'. Can a person or a community be, or embody, archives? Faulkhead poses a realignment of our understanding of the differences between oral and written cultures and the kinds of records they produce. Rather than simply seeking to reverse the bias against the validity of oral records, tradition and history, Faulkhead proposes that we open our minds up to the ways in which these two approaches can augment each other, and give us different types of resources for different types of remembrance.

In 'Testing the continuum', Leisa Gibbons sets out to ascertain how user-generated cultural heritage on YouTube is being treated by collecting institutions. Proposing YouTube as a 'continuum machine', Gibbons asks whether we are ready to collect the kind of cultural artefacts that are being created by the Web 2.0 technologies, and wonders whether the current collecting policies of relevant archival institutions actually comprehend what it is they are dealing with. That is, the video culture of YouTube is not just another visual medium but is also, simultaneously, a series of social transactions between people and groups of people, through which activities new communities of shared identity and ownership are being created. In another article that seeks to test the difference between concepts and outcomes, Danielle Wickman in 'Measuring performance or performing measurements?' looks at ways in which the drive to measure performance can be made to yield

meaningful results rather than becoming an end in itself, a performance of measurement for its own sake. Wickman considers a number of measures that can be used to properly guage the implementation of the PARBICA toolkit, challenging metrics that focus on performance rather than outcomes while taking into account the difficulties inherent in ascribing particular outcomes to particular actors and actions.

Also in this issue, Aditya Nugraha presents a case study focussing on Surabaya Memory, a cultural heritage initiative documenting life in Surabaya, one of the major cities on the island of Java in Indonesia. Nugraha describes the success of this online initiative in giving voice to the minority voices of the Chinese in Surabaya and argues that approaches based on representation and significance contain inherent biases which make them unsuitable for overcoming this kind of selective amnesia.

Many people working in non-collecting archives would probably have their own concerns about the relevance of significance to the task of appraising records. However, the recent release of *Significance 2.0,* the revised publication from the Collections Council of Australia describing the current methodology of significance assessment, gives us an opportunity to consider whether there is a place for significance assessment in archives and the ways it could be implemented. Sigrid McCausland's review of the publication in this issue urges archivists to consider this possibility. Even if they are unlikely to ever have the need to implement it in their own work domains, archivists should be aware of what significance entails and how it is being implemented in the broader collections sector.

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