# Editorial

Discussion of the intersection of recordkeeping and Web 2.0 has been focussed on the challenges that will face professionals wishing to manage the evidence being created on these new online forums. Are there records that need to be captured and preserved? Are the new Web 2.0 channels merely new conduits of communication that can be ignored because the vital information and evidence of business activity is to be found in a more authentic and complete form elsewhere? Do recordkeeping professionals have to revise their concepts and strategies in the face of this new ever-growing mass of online content? Another strand of professional discourse has emerged about the opportunities for outreach that Web 2.0 has made possible for those working in archives, seeking to engage with various types of audiences through interactive and collaborative offerings. This is a hot topic not just in archives but across the whole cultural heritage sector as institutions large and small chase new types of audiences and engage with them in a more conversational and open-ended manner.

There is one other dimension in which a far-reaching transformation of recordkeeping is being made possible by Web 2.0 technologies, and it was explored in great depth in 2009 by the Government 2.0 Taskforce. The Taskforce has cast Web 2.0 functionality in the role of a new approach to governance and accountability, and most notably, seeking to plumb the potential of these technologies to make government more open and democratic through the interactions of citizens, public servants and elected representatives. In 2009, Adrian Cunningham participated in the Government 2.0 Taskforce. His contribution in this issue of the journal tackles the implications of the Taskforce's recommendations for recordkeeping in Australia, in particular the role that archivists can play in regard to improving governance. The question is, now that the Hon. Senator John Faulkner is no longer driving the transparency and accountability measures recommended by the Taskforce, whether the current government will have the stomach to implement them effectively?

In his article on preserving digital records, Kye O'Donnell takes us on a step-by-step implementation of an electronic recordkeeping system by the City of Perth in Western Australia. The City of Perth had a recordkeeping environment that will be familiar to many: a TRIM document and records management system was being used to manage paper-based records but electronic records were only being stored on shared network drives. For those who are facing the challenges of managing the growing mass of data sitting on corporate shared drives, O'Donnell provides a thorough account of the thinking and processes undertaken by the City of Perth in implementing a digital records preservation strategy through a systems integration approach using Xena.

Paul Macpherson's article opens up a very compelling discussion about the future of reading rooms in archival institutions. In his view, the insistence on the centrality of reading rooms to archival access is a relic of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when 'the only reasonable way of providing free, equitable access to records' was through the provision of reading room facilities. With the advent of digital technologies, Macpherson contends, an alternative is now readily at hand and the time has come to ask whether the level of service provided in reading rooms is sustainable or warranted. This is a highly contentious and politically sensitive topic, as witnessed by the announcement by the National Archives of Australia in November 2009 that state offices and their reading rooms in Adelaide, Hobart and Darwin would be closed. While outright closure of reading rooms may not be the answer, Macpherson's article is certainly a wake-up call to those who think that the status quo can be sustained indefinitely.

Although it is unfair to compare state, territory and federal archives to their much richer cousins in the library world, the recent reinvention of major libraries offers one possibility for how to transform major research institutions. The State Library of Victoria is a case in point: it is now *the* vital hub at the north end of Melbourne's Swanston Street, a constant buzz of activity and social interaction. It hosts popular exhibitions, and accommodates an attractive café, a Readings bookshop, and the Wheeler Centre for literature. It also provides free broadband wi-fi to a multitude of students and other

library patrons, and a growing range of electronic or digital resources both onsite and online, as well as remaining a place for serious and considered research.

I hope that Paul Macpherson's article will open a lively discussion. I encourage readers to contribute letters or full-length articles that further explore the issues or counter-arguments. This is an important debate for the profession to have, and this journal is the perfect forum in which the practical and philosophical issues surrounding the future of reading rooms should be discussed in a considered and informed way.

Three reflections feature in this issue of the journal. The first is based on a speech the Hon. Michael Kirby, former Justice of the High Court, delivered at the 2009 ASA conference in Brisbane during a lunchtime seminar. Kirby reflects on his recent retirement and search for a place to deposit his personal records, and their eventual transfer to the National Archives of Australia. Fr Paul Gardiner provides a fascinating insight into the crucial role that archives have played in the canonisation of Mary McKillop, showing that recordkeeping is an important part of the formation of saints. And for those who missed the launch of Peter Scott's book *The arrangement and description of archives amid administrative and technological change: essays and reflections by and about Peter J. Scott*, Eric Ketelaar has been kind enough to supply the text of his reflection on the import of Scott's work to the global archives profession, and explores the influence of Dutch archivists on Scott's thinking.

In the reviews section of this issue there are three book reviews from Shauna Hicks, and another from me that reviews two of her recent publications. A few months ago Shauna announced her resignation as the Australian Society of Archivists' Managing Editor and from her role on ASA Council. Shauna has been a mentor to me since we both began working at Public Record Office Victoria in 2003. In recent years, she extended this support to my role as editor of this journal.

Over the span of three decades, Shauna has made a major contribution to the ASA, and in 2007 this contribution was duly recognised by the Society through a Distinguished Achievement Award. Shauna became a professional member of the Australian Society of Archivists in 1987 and served as Queensland Branch Convenor from 1987 to 1990 and then again from 1992 to 1993. In 1993 she became the National Secretary,

ASA Council, and Convenor of the ASA Membership Committee and held these positions for four years. Shauna was then Managing Editor for the Society from 1997 to 2001, and again from 2007 to 2010, and has been a member of the *Archives and Manuscripts* Editorial Board from 2002 to 2010. Shauna has served on the ASA Council for five terms, for a total of twelve years.

As Managing Editor, Shauna has been responsible for all publications produced by the Society, supporting the editors of *Archives and Manuscripts* and the *Bulletin* and ensuring the publication of *Selected Essays in Electronic Recordkeeping in Australia*, edited by Judith Ellis, and more recently the third edition of *Keeping Archives*. In her earlier time as Managing Editor, Shauna also wrote the first chapter of *Selected Essays*, edited the hard-copy proceedings of the 1999 Brisbane conference (and was the conference's Convenor) and published them online. She has been a Convenor of the Mander Jones Awards Committee, and together with journal editor Maggie Shapley established the editorial board for *Archives and Manuscripts* in time to assess contributions for the November 2002 issue. The creation of the editorial board set in place the requirements for the Society's journal to be recognised by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training as a refereed journal.

From October 1998 to 2009, Shauna compiled *In the Mailbox*, first as a column for the *Bulletin* (until 2007) and posted to the *aus-archivists* listserv so that online resources could be immediately accessed via web addresses. *In the Mailbox* gives a brief summary of the contents of each publication that is received by the Australian Society of Archivists. Another initiative of Shauna's was establishing the Reference, Access and Public Programs Special Interest Group (RAPPSIG) at an inaugural meeting at the 2002 Sydney Conference. Shauna was elected the founding Convenor, a role in which she continued until 2007.

In many ways the role of Managing Editor can be a thankless task: members tend to concentrate on what does not happen or does not happen on time, forgetting that many others must deliver before the job can be accomplished. Shauna achieved a great deal for the Society in the position and always bore the concerns and tribulations of the position with grace. On behalf of the Society and colleagues on the

editorial board of *Archives and Manuscripts*, I would like to thank Shauna for her many contributions over the years and wish her well for the future. I'm sure that she will not be slowing down too much just yet and has plenty more planned, as is demonstrated by her many public presentations, websites and print publications, and her untiring contributions to Twitter and a range of other social media. In so doing, she is leading and encouraging members of the archives community to explore social media for their own use.

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