



New horizons: writing on records and archives from emerging scholars

In February 2018, *Archives & Manuscripts* invited submissions for a special theme issue dedicated to research and writing from emerging scholars and new professionals. The call was broad, and the response was inspiring. We, the guest editors, Lise Summers, Laura Millar and Donald Force, are pleased and proud to see the fascinating and diverse articles published in this issue, which offer a small window into the high-quality scholarship underway right now by the next generation of recordkeeping and archives professionals around the world.

The guest editors, all records and archives educators at one time or another in Australia, Canada and the United States, wanted to provide a forum for ‘emerging scholars’: new professionals who may have written essays or dissertations but perhaps never before published in a professional journal. To support the newest of the new, we set clear boundaries around the concept of ‘emerging scholar’. We welcomed submissions from undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate students, or recent graduates from archives, records, or information studies programs within Australia or around the world. Our definition of ‘recent’ was tight: the graduate should have completed study within the previous two years, with a similar constraint on time in the profession, either as a practitioner or educator. The topics available to consider were virtually limitless, though: authors were encouraged to write on any and all aspects of records, archives, and information concepts, theories and principles; from historical studies to digital preservation analyses; to discussions of theory and case studies from research initiatives.

Even though we focused our target population precisely – current students, recent graduates and ‘new’ scholars, not long-time practitioners – we were thrilled to receive 73 submissions from every corner of the world: from Australia to Canada, the United States, Africa, Europe, Indonesia and beyond. The proposals were fascinating. The challenge of developing a shortlist was daunting. So many of the papers had resonances with the challenges facing archives and recordkeepers in today’s political climate, not just in Australia but internationally.

As we worked through the adjudication process, we kept our focus clearly on emerging scholars. Some authors were more seasoned professionals who did not quite fit the ‘emerging scholars’ definition; we have encouraged them to consider submitting their proposals for another issue of *Archives & Manuscripts*. Some authors were undertaking very complex research, often dependent on case study research, computer analysis and other tasks that no one could guarantee would be finished in quick order. When we felt the author might not be able to complete their analysis within the time frame for the special issue, we urged them to submit to the journal again when their projects were finished. We hope they do! Other proposals, while fascinating, focused on a limited regional area or institutional matter. We felt that the scope of study would need to be

broadened significantly to make the paper more widely relevant to readers outside of the jurisdiction in question. We have urged those authors to finish their projects and then, if they do not publish in a platform directly relevant to their research, they may wish to consider how to broaden their analysis to reach a wider audience.

When we settled on our final shortlist of 15 proposals, we were delighted to see that we had an exciting diversity of topics from writers who had demonstrated, through their proposals, a strong ability to communicate their ideas clearly and engagingly. The short-listed articles offered a range of issues, ideas and research that, rather than focused on one part of the world, might resonate with the readers of *Archives & Manuscripts*. We are so pleased that the final papers in this special issue meet our aspirations admirably.

In 'Archives du Maroc? The Official and Alternative National Archives in Morocco', **Sumayya Ahmed**, a recent graduate of the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA, outlines the complex and contentious history of The National Archives of Morocco. Ahmed looks at two versions of archival heritage in Morocco: the relatively recent National Archives of Morocco, incorporating French colonial material, and the Hassan II Prize for Archives and Documentation, which looks for and promotes privately held materials which, it could be argued, are a more legitimate Moroccan voice. The National Archives of Morocco was established in 2013, following the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of 2004–2005. The TRC cited the 'deplorable state of national archives' as a major obstacle to its work, a finding that may be comparable to archival conditions both in Australia and in other jurisdictions. The lack of accessible and centralised state archives led the TRC to prescribe the creation of a national archives. In order to understand the archival duality of modern-day Morocco, this paper looks at the state of the Hassan II Prize today in comparison with the National Archives, which has seemingly ingested, without interrogation, the Moroccan colonial archive. This paper posits that Moroccan nationalists rejected the narratives of the Moroccan colonial archive and instead busied themselves with locating and collecting indigenous records in order to produce new post-colonial narratives.

Hannah Ishmael, a PhD student in the Department of Information Studies at University College, London, England, has written 'Reclaiming History: Arthur Schomburg'. In her work, Ishmael compares the vision of archival practice articulated by Hilary Jenkinson with that of a contemporary colleague, Arthur Schomburg, whose publication 'The Negro Digs up his Past' offers 'a radically different conception of the purpose and use of archives, one that focuses on the concepts of recovery and transformation'. By placing Schomburg within the wider emergence of the Pan-African movement, Ishmael gives us a dramatically new interpretation of the evolution of our professional history, helping to broaden the canon to include works from other important professionals, particularly by looking at the development of Black-led archives activities in London, England. Her study encourages us to revisit our assumptions about the traditional leading thinkers in the archival profession and recognise the other voices that have contributed to the preservation of our documentary heritage.

In 'Breaking Rules for Good? How Archivists Manage Privacy in Large-Scale Digitisation Projects', **Ellen LeClere**, a doctoral student at the iSchool at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the United States, looks at challenges associated with large-scale digitisation, particularly related to the management of privacy. In her

article, LeClere argues that digital archives are a popular way for archivists to provide access to collections, but the process of digitisation also creates more opportunities for private information to be disseminated widely, perhaps without consent. She draws on interview data from archivists at four institutions to consider the impact of digitisation on questions of privacy and access, finding that archivists often rely on open-access policies to justify their digitisation projects. She suggests that while digital archives may be perceived as ‘public goods’, there are moral limitations that archivists need to consider when developing goals and strategies for documenting and storing ‘all the world’s knowledge’. With digitisation such a ubiquitous part of archival service, LeClere’s findings add an important caution to our efforts to use digitisation to support public access.

Jonathan Mukwevho, who received his Master of Information Science degree from the University of South Africa in 2018, has examined ‘Educational Programs as an Interactive Tool for Public Engagement by Public Archive Repositories in South Africa’. In his study, Mukwevho sought to establish the nature of public education and engagement by public archival repositories in South Africa. Did those repositories, he wondered, recognise the importance of public education and training in promoting their archival holdings? As Mukwevho discovered, most public educational programs offered by archival institutions are narrowly geared toward teachers and students; adult users and the general public receive less attention. Providing broader and more inclusive educational programs, Mukwevho believes, would help to develop a more knowledgeable and sympathetic public, expanding the user community and perhaps increasing the profile of and support for archival institutions. Mukwevho’s lessons from South Africa are widely applicable to archival services around the world.

Bonface Odhiambo, who is currently completing his Master of Science Degree in Records and Archives Management from Moi University in Kenya, writes on ‘Institutional Readiness for Digital Archives Management at United States International University-Africa’. In his article, Odhiambo notes that digital technologies present extraordinary opportunities for archiving and preservation; they are becoming widely used in institutions in Africa and around the world. But, he argues, two key issues have to be considered to implement digital archives management effectively: first, the fact that there is no single model of best practice for digital archives management that can be adopted across all organisations; second, that the challenges of managing digital assets are constantly changing. To consider these issues and identify possible strategies, Odhiambo conducted a case study of the readiness of one institution – the United States International University-Africa (USIU-A) – to implement effective digital archives management processes. Using a mixed-method case study approach, Odhiambo issued questionnaires, conducted interviews, carried out observations and collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Odhiambo found that, while the institution had taken steps toward digital archives management, more work needed to be done: policies had been developed but were not well known, the infrastructure required for digital archives management was not up to standard, and other challenges inhibited the adequate management of digital archives. In his article, Odhiambo presents concrete strategies for action, such as procuring stronger technological systems, adopting best digital archival practices, increasing staff awareness of policy matters and improving infrastructural requirements for digital archives

management. This article has relevance for small and large institutions struggling with similar challenges, worldwide.

To bring this special issue to fruition, the editors relied on the generous support and thoughtful advice of a wide range of peer reviewers, including members of the *Archives & Manuscripts* editorial board and other recordkeeping professionals around the world. We are so grateful to everyone who offered to review manuscripts, often more than once. The reviewers not only provided insightful and practical feedback to the authors but also helped to nurture their writing by offering supportive and detailed comments, helping them strengthen their research and writing. The mutual respect between authors, peer reviewers and editors, and the opportunity to use the editorial process as a teaching experience, was a highlight. All the reviewers supported the same goal: to help the next generation of professionals and scholars be the best they can be.

We are thrilled to see this special issue published. But we are perhaps more excited that, given the phenomenal interest from all the new professionals out there in Australia and around the world, the pages of *Archives & Manuscripts* may be filled for some time with more articles from emerging scholars. Our 'special issue' is not a solo exercise: the ball is now rolling and we look forward to seeing many of the proposals we received for this project published in the months and years to come.

Congratulations to Sumayya Ahmed, Hannah Ishmael, Ellen LeClere, Jonathan Mukweho and Bonface Odhiambo for their hard work and diligent efforts to meet our deadlines and standards. Well done! Congratulations also to the dozens of other emerging scholars who had the courage to bring their proposals forward for consideration. Keep writing – the recordkeeping community needs and welcomes your new ideas and innovative perspectives!

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