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Editorial

Note: ASA submissions to Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2012–2016

In last year's volume of *Archives and Manuscripts* (Vol. 43, 2015), two articles were published on the topic of child sexual abuse and recordkeeping. Kim Eberhard's article, 'Unresolved Issues: Recordkeeping Recommendations Arising from Australian Commissions of Inquiry into the Welfare of Children in Out-of-Home Care, 1997–2012', appeared in issue 1 of 2015. Viviane Hessami's article, 'Recordkeeping Issues Arising from the Public Hearings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse', was published in issue 3 of 2015. Both articles made observations, in slightly different ways, about the visibility and participation of the archival profession, and of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) in particular, within the current and past inquiries relating to these issues.

The ASA has, in fact, made three contributions in recent years to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In addition to formal submissions made on 26 November 2012 and 31 May 2015, the ASA recently provided a response (on 11 April 2016) to a consultation paper issued by the Royal Commission in relation to the issue of out-of-home care on 8 March 2016.

These submissions can all be found at <http://www.archivists.org.au/about-us/submissions>.

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With the advent of Big Data, archival institutions need to grapple with a range of new challenges and opportunities that come with managing and preserving datasets. In 'Organisation and Description of Datasets', Jinfang Niu analyses the similarities and differences between national archives and dataset repositories when it comes to the use and implementation of metadata and standards. The article will be of interest to those in archival institutions seeking to learn more about the specialised metadata standards used by data repositories, how they are able to support more flexible organisation of knowledge, and the potential for both deeper discovery alongside easier access and re-use of data.

In 'Factors Influencing the Integration of Digital Archival Resources: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach', Zhiying Lian presents a fascinating insight into the organisational culture of contemporary Chinese archives. The article focuses on efforts to integrate digital archival resources in Shanghai. The constructivist grounded theory approach, a qualitative research method, begins with a series of interviews the author conducted with archivists at a number of archives in Shanghai. From there, the author builds theoretical constructs through several stages of coding and categorisation. Interestingly, the author also reports that 'more and more holdings in Chinese public archives have been digitised, for example the average percentage of the digitised archives in the public archives of Shanghai is over 70%, and some archives have had all their holdings digitised' (p. 86). This is quite impressive considering that many archives elsewhere around the world have only managed to digitise a much smaller fraction of their collections. With this abundance of digitised archives, and the advent of born-digital accessions, the impetus for integration is strong. However, as the author observes, there are numerous barriers to achieving integration that are largely a matter of organisational cultures and practices.

The concept of 'high power distance' emerges as one of the crucial findings of the research. The concept relates to the way that 'subordinates expect to be told what to do' and the way that, in turn, superiors 'are entitled to privileges, and contacts between superiors and subordinates are only supposed to be initiated by superiors' (p. 93). The author signals in her concluding remarks that she intends to expand the research to broader jurisdictional comparisons, including on an international scale. Such comparisons would be very interesting, considering that many archival organisations outside China also exhibit elements of power distance relationships which undoubtedly have an impact upon how the organisations are able to adapt to risk and change.

In their article in this issue, 'Records Management Practices in Ecumenical Tertiary Institutions: The Trinity Theological Seminary in Focus', Maxwell Narh Akuffo and Musah Adams present the findings of their case study of the records management practices of the Trinity Theological Seminary (TTS) in Ghana, West Africa. With reference to *ISO 15489-1: Information and Documentation – Records Management – Part 1: General* and the life-cycle model, the authors identify a number of issues and challenges including 'inadequate space, the lack of qualified and skilled staff, and the lack of a procedure manual to ensure effective management of records' (p. 63). A familiar story unfolds, known to many institutions not only in Africa but elsewhere around the world, where funding and administrative priorities often relegate records management to secondary or tertiary considerations. The authors set out a number of recommendations for the management of TTS to implement, beginning with the formulation of a written records management policy statement and the proper training of staff in records management, and the appointment of specialist staff with formal tertiary training to lead the program.

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