

Degrees of perspective aside, how else might we consider this encyclopedia? One obvious comparison is the journal *Archival Science*. In their opening editorial for the first issue of 2001, Horsman, Ketelaar and Thomassen outlined its scope to include appropriate attention to the non-Anglophone world. They acknowledged the impact of different cultures on theory, methodology and practices and said they planned to take into account different traditions from various parts of the world. By producing four issues a year for the past 15 years, including a double theme issue on archives and human rights, in effect they have been continuously building an archival science encyclopedia, and one with a quite different result to that under review.

A final comparison is suggested by the release of the encyclopedia as a print publication. In the short term, entries can stand. But all entries' bibliographies and some content will need to change, given the volume addresses principles *and* practices. Discussion of archival practice, archives and the Web, cloud archives, community archives, EDRMS, records management standards, web archiving and the half-dozen entries related to the digital will quickly need refreshing. Today online reference publications can provide features such as citation tracking and alerts, active reference linking, and saved searches and marked lists, but the possibilities are endless (see for example the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at <http://plato.stanford.edu/>). An ebook version of the encyclopedia was released with the hardcopy under review, and perhaps it will become the avenue through which the promised 'regular updates and additions' (p. x) arrive. The Society of American Archivists has kept its 2005 glossary up to date through a Dictionary Working Group, which communicates via a weekly email to members and subscribers. However this encyclopedia's redundancy is managed, one trusts the selection of entries will also be regularly reviewed.

Michael Piggott

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Archives Alive: Expanding Engagement with Public Library Archives and Special Collections, by Diantha Dow Schull, Chicago, American Library Association, 2015, xxvii + 324 pp., USD\$79.00 (paperback), ISBN 978 0 838913 35 2

Whatever debates we might encounter regarding institutional and disciplinary divisions between libraries, archives, museums and galleries, the fact remains that many large institutions have always had diverse holdings. Public libraries in the United States are no exception, with many responsible for significant archival and special collections. In *Archives Alive*, Diantha Dow Schull profiles programs, projects and archival departments in public libraries across the USA, seeking to 'shine a light' on this sector 'at a time when libraries and archives everywhere are undergoing profound change' (p. xx).

Schull sees this transformation as consisting of three trends: the move away from static repositories toward institutions becoming networked user destinations; the continued evolution of digital technologies; and the emergence of new perspectives on access, education and community-building. To address them, she started with a list of 175 programs, interviewing 77 library directors, archivists, special collections librarians and communications specialists before whittling down her selection for *Archives Alive* to 117 profiles from 62 institutions.

This is not the sort of work one would usually read cover to cover, and the design and format are well suited to exploring digestible chunks of content based on interest. The profiles are grouped into nine topics – including art and archives; educational initiatives; exhibitions and related programs; and oral history and community documentation projects – sorted

alphabetically, with a tenth chapter looking at the full set of programs delivered by 13 special collections departments. Each chapter starts with a narrative summary of the topic. The subsequent profiles, most of which are only two or three pages long, are uniformly formatted, each with a clear title and institution, an overview and a key quote from an interviewee, followed by a more lengthy description of the program or project and two concluding bullet points: challenges and future plans. A comprehensive index helps locate concepts (like 'social media') that cut across topics.

Overall, *Archives Alive* is mostly aimed at practitioners working in or with libraries, archives and special collections, though the range of examples means there is also much here to interest those in academic institutions, local and community history centres, and other organisations with mixed collections. While Schull's survey is particular in its focus, the activities covered are impressive in their variety, scope and consistency of detail, and illustrate the emergence of the trends outlined in her introduction.

At the same time, aiming for breadth means there are limits to the utility of the work. For those seeking to initiate, expand or refresh programs in their own institution there is potential inspiration here to feed into brainstorming sessions, or to identify areas of focus for more intensive research, but Schull does not provide enough to be a useful source of practical advice.

Similarly, the lack of analysis is at times frustrating. The introduction is clear on why this decision was made: '*Archives Alive* does not emphasize rigorous analysis ... At this stage in the development of public library archival programming, criticism is less important than professional and public recognition' (p. xxvi). But the result is a wealth of passing detail with little available evidence to support decision making. For example, in the chapter on exhibitions and related programs, we read about exhibitions like the *Wonderful Wizardry of Baum*, based around the library's collection of first editions of L Frank Baum's Oz books. Schull tells us that it demonstrates 'how a public library can use thematic exhibitions and related programs to build new public audiences' (p. 172), but no information is given on visitor numbers and no indication provided as to how many visitors were 'new'. The remainder of the chapter – as with the remainder of the text – is similarly lacking, providing numerous collection facts and statistics but very few examples of visitor numbers, user feedback, metrics or engagement levels.

Finally, if we are truly moving away from the static and analogue to the networked and digital, there is a bigger question to be asked: should such surveys be published in print at all? If published digitally, allowing users to search and sort by place, institution type, collection size and similar, it would be a more flexible, usable and discoverable resource. What is more, online it could link directly to digital exhibitions and collections (for a text with digital technology as a key theme, the lack of URLs is surprising). And, in an area so dependent on project funding and cyclical programming, rolling updates and additions to an online resource could start to map changes within the sector, ensuring the resource as a whole remains relevant. In print, *Archives Alive* provides an effective (if uncritical) point-in-time snapshot, but one with clear limitations on its utility and longevity.

ORCID

Michael Jones  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5448-8799>

Michael Jones 
University of Melbourne

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