is particularly relevant in the area of records available for Right to Information/Freedom of Information, which in turn supports the tenets of open and transparent government.

Section four, Digital Records Management and Preservation, covers a pressing challenge for many of us including my own organisation, which is grappling with the challenges of establishing a digital archive. Reassuringly, the authors cover topics we have been discussing internally such as the meaning of trusted records in the digital world. It is comforting to know that these challenges are universal yet slightly unnerving that they are still yet to be solved.

Section five, Reflections, is a fitting conclusion to this series of essays as it outlines Thurston's contribution to the education of archivists at University College London and the continuing need to promote and foster archives in developing countries.

I admit that before reading this book I had not encountered Anne Thurston's work. Nevertheless, it is obvious that she is an archival force to be reckoned with and has been instrumental in making changes that continue to have an impact both in the UK and in many African countries. It is refreshing to see as an archivist and a woman that Thurston's work is universally celebrated and acknowledged in this well-written and thought-provoking collection of essays.

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Description: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections, edited by Kate Theimer, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, 198 pp., USD$61.00 (paperback), ISBN 978 0 810890 93 0

How many ways can there be to describe archives? It can be tempting to assume that the standards, codifications, textbooks and tools that archivists have available cover the field thoroughly. But practising archivists also know that we face significant challenges – limited resources and competing priorities, the nature of born-digital records, complex or otherwise difficult collections, to name just a few – that struggling on with standard practices will not meet. As in other areas of our professional practice, we need to innovate.

This is the first title in a series on *Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections*, edited by Kate Theimer, an American archivist, author and blogger. The other titles cover outreach, reference and access, management, appraisal and acquisition, and educational programs. This title comprises 11 case studies which, in Theimer's words, 'show a range of concerns and strategies, but [which] were all selected because they demonstrate ideas that could be transferred into many other settings' (p. vii). Each case study is structured in a standard way, with sections covering planning, implementation, results and lessons learnt, as well as an introduction and conclusion.

In a publication produced in the United States, naturally, North American case studies predominate: seven are from the USA and one is from Canada. The others are from Australia, Iceland and Scotland. They come from a range of institutional settings, but most are from university or college settings. The case studies reveal a range of institutional arrangements and traditions within this sector that affected the approaches taken. Otherwise, there are two case studies from national archives and one from a major historical society.

The 'special collections' (that is, within a research library) part of the series' title is reflected in the settings of several of the case studies. This does not limit the value of these case studies for archivists working in other settings. Time and again, I recognised issues – including items acquired individually and lacking context, jumbles of ephemera, records requiring specialised knowledge to understand or describe – that I deal with regularly as a school archivist. At the same time, some of these case studies highlight a tension in this environment, between the application (and adaptation) of library practices to what we would recognise as archives and the application of archival practices (and systems and metadata) in an integrated library setting.

The two national archives case studies, from Australia and Iceland, while dealing with very different issues, also struck a chord with me, as familiar issues from my experience in national and state government archives. Every reader will respond differently, but will find something, perhaps many things, that resonate with their experience.

The innovative practices described in the case studies take many forms, including crowd-sourcing, unlocking value in legacy finding aids and descriptive information, using survey techniques to establish basic intellectual control, collaboration to draw on a wider range of skill sets, getting agencies to arrange and describe records before transfer, using interns and other student and volunteer labour, and producing 'catablogs'.

The case studies mostly feature hardcopy records, but also born-digital records, while one is specifically concerned with digitised records. Digitisation is part of the mix in many of the case studies. In a significant number, also, the innovative practices or projects were undertaken in conjunction with the implementation of new archives/collection/content management systems. Clearly, innovation in description seldom takes place in isolation.

Naturally, the International Council on Archives (ICA) descriptive standards figure promi-nently in the case studies, including all the issues stemming from the traditions in which they have been developed. Other standards with which I was less familiar also feature, including Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Modern Manuscripts (AMREMM) standard, which, alas, I will likely not have the opportunity to use. Similarly I learned about software tools that I had not met before, such as Archon and the Archivist's Toolkit. Naturally, also, the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and Encoded Archival Context (EAC-CPF) XML schemas feature significantly, which, for me at least, required a change in mindset from the relational database approach to modelling descriptive entities and relationships that I am used to.

The editor's excellent introduction identifies a number of themes that link various of the case studies together. One of particular interest was 'the recent trend in archival description to describe the creators and contributors to collections, as well as the materials themselves' (p. ix), which is the major theme of two case studies. In Australia, of course, this is hardly recent, with the thinking behind the 'series system' (of which separate description of context entities is as much a hallmark as series-level description) approaching its 50th birthday. In Australia, we like to think that we invented the whole idea of describing context entities separately from records entities (and linking them through relationships). The University of Glasgow's case study seems to suggest that, if we did, it is not widely recognised. The 'Australian model' (that is, describing archives in context, plus recordkeeping metadata standards) is recognised only by a reference to describing records at the series level, but not in relation to the basic concept. My bruised Antipodean feelings were, however, soothed when the author noted that the map of entities for State Records NSW's Archives Investigator 'was particularly helpful' for identifying relationships between descriptive components, having developed that map myself back in 2000.

The foregoing is meant as no criticism of the Glasgow project or case study. The author pro-vides a clear rationale for taking this major step away from traditional fonds-based description,

as well as describing how it was done in the EAD/EAC world. It was especially interesting to see how the Glaswegians shoehorned their complex relationships into descriptive standards and document type definitions (DTDs) that just weren't designed for them.

I enjoyed reading this book immensely, and not only because description is the archival function that has always interested me most. All of the case studies are strongly practical, and even pragmatic, describing options and decisions in areas ranging from the technical nitty-gritty, such as the use of particular fields or data elements, to human resources and project management, such as the use of interns and volunteers. A number of the authors write with a dry humour. Many are frank in their assessment of the success of their projects against their initial aims and in how methods and plans needed to be changed in the light of experience. There is no defensiveness here or institutional 'spin'. Just archivists reporting innovative and practical ways of doing description better.

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Crisis, Credibility and Corporate History: Proceedings of the Symposium of the International Council on Archives, Section on Business and Labour Archives, 14–16 April 2013, Basel, International Council on Archives Studies 1, edited by Alexander Bieri, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2014. x + 146 pp., £50.00 (hardback), ISBN 978 1 781381 37 3. Available from Turpin Distribution (email: liverpool@turpin-distribution.com).

The objective of this symposium as described in its announcement was to 'tackl[e] the archive's conflict between scientific history and marketing'[1] and further, as stated in the conference programme, 'Our conference will focus on corporate history, more specifically the conflict in between writing scientific history and the demands of modern history marketing.'[2]

Twelve papers contributed at the symposium are included in this volume and cover a range of topics that reveal a majority of fundamentals in common within the diversity of circumstances to be found in six countries spread across the globe.

The papers include an overview of:

1. business entities' attitudes to history and their individual part in preserving, using and publishing the results of research into the records they have created and kept;
2. 'the conflicting demands of academic standards and entrepreneurial marketing' (p. 13) when a business decides to write its history;
3. a distinction to be drawn between an objective assessment of the evidence and being 'contextually accurate' (p. 25);
4. the company archivist's right to write the company's history in the face of questions about the archivist's objectivity;
5. 'The Application of Social Science Theories in Corporate History' (p. 39);
6. the 'archetypes' (p. 55) of biographical writing;
7. a case study of circumstances leading a prominent 'family to confront their history' (p. 63), resulting in a thorough investigation of the relevant archives;