

changed role for the records manager in public policy development and delivery, he considers that accountability would need to be viewed more pervasively. The iKRS implies that the records manager is working with, and for, stakeholders, beyond the organisation in which he or she is situated.

The author has excellent credentials in public policy and first-hand knowledge to enrich his observations. Now a consultant in knowledge and information management, he led The National Archives' program developing electronic records management within the UK Government during the late 1990s and early 2000s. He draws on examples and understanding from this experience in challenging records managers to reset their focus and contribute more directly to problem-solving and enabling outcomes for the organisation.

This publication is of interest for its analysis of public sector transformation, particularly in the UK, but also evident elsewhere. The articulation of a view of information management, knowledge management and records management as mobilised and active is also thought-provoking. While likely to be of immediate applicability to those in government, this book contains insights on taking a strategic approach and clearly thinking and communicating the value of recordkeeping skills in a changed world.

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**L Morra and J Schagerl (eds.),** *Basements and attics, closets and cyberspace: explorations in Canadian women's archives*, Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier Press, 2012. ix + 335 pp. ISBN 978 1 55458 632 5. CA\$85.00

*Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace* is a fine example of the systematic ways in which Canadian scholars (to a greater degree, perhaps, than their Australian counterparts) have successfully opened out and responded to some of the larger and more compelling questions concerning what it means to work in, and with, archived personal papers, whether as archivists or researchers. As Morra and Schagerl observe, their collection 'addresses the real and sometimes peculiar challenges that affect archival work today', and they freely admit that some of that work now involves 'deciding what constitutes an archive' (p. 1). The subtitle, *Explorations in Canadian Women's Archives*, indicates that the volume is especially directed towards those engaged in ongoing debates concerning the archiving of material produced by women, but those professing little or no knowledge of these debates or Canadian literature more generally still have much to gain from these detailed and sometimes provocative essays.

If, as Catherine Hobbs suggests in her contribution to *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace*, 'archival theory has done a terrible job of accommodating the particular needs of individual people's archives' (p. 181), this volume arguably goes some way towards addressing this lacuna. Comprising 20 essays, as well as a lengthy introduction and afterword, it is a substantial work. The essays are organised into three thematic sections: 'Reorientations', concerned with new ways of understanding what

might constitute an archive; 'Restrictions', concerned with the processes that condition the shape of, and access to, specific archived collections; and 'Responsibilities', containing a nuanced set of reflections on the crucial, but often unacknowledged or unreported, decisions that researchers must make. While the last section contains perhaps the most explicit reflection on questions of ethics, contributors across the volume consistently return to this aspect of archival work, thus making it a valuable resource for anyone seeking to extend their understanding of the many ethical dimensions involved in managing personal papers, whether in their acquisition, processing, accessing or scholarly use. Further, contributions from a number of Canadian writers (Daphne Marlatt, Penn Kemp, Sally Clark and Susan McMaster) provide insights into the experience of being 'collected' and 'archived' from the less frequently documented perspective of donors, including some fine accounts of the awkward experience of being turned away by venerable collecting institutions, who failed to be impressed with their 'bits of litter' (p. 209).

While it is perhaps invidious to highlight only a selection of essays from what is a consistently strong volume, several stood out for me, and they are, in many ways, emblematic of this volume's major contribution to ongoing debates in the area of personal papers. Karina Vernon, for example, provides an important intervention, with respect to the now-familiar political imperative for archives to address the substantial gaps that characterise their collections. Through her analysis of Libraries and Archives Canada's (LAC) efforts to fulfil its 'multicultural mandate' (p. 193), which dictated that the 'racialized silences of the archive "must" be filled' (p. 197), Vernon produces a persuasive reframing of those gaps and silences in the LAC collection, ultimately reading them 'not as signs of disenfranchisement, exclusion or victimage [sic], but as potential signs of empowered self-exemption from archives, a form of active resistance against the fantasy of the total Multicultural Archive' (p. 203). Julia Creet similarly takes up the question of whether and where documents ought to be preserved in a confronting essay reflecting on what to do with letters that record a personal experience of the Holocaust – one that her mother withheld from their family, even as she preserved the papers that documented it. While Creet notes that the 'organization of her letters suggests an archival "instinct" embodied in the preservation and orderliness of her ephemera' (p. 304), she is at a loss to interpret her mother's impulse and understand what her obligations might now be. She asks: 'does the evidential value of the letters outweigh her obvious wish to leave her past behind?' (p. 310). Memory and forgetting are also central in painfully ironic ways to Kathleen Venema's account of working in the 'Alzheimer's archives' (p. 285). Venema reads letters out loud to her mother – letters they exchanged decades before, while she was working overseas; letters that her mother no longer remembers either writing or receiving. 'Whatever the archive will do', Venema avers, 'it will not heal my mother's memory, and will not bring her back to me' (p. 289). Memory – in this instance, cultural memory – and where it resides is central to Cecily Devereux's account of researching the popular image of the 'Indian maiden' using the internet auction site eBay as an alternative to conventional institutional archives. She raises novel and productive questions concerning our assumptions about what repositories for cultural memory look like: 'eBay is grandmother's closet or grandfather's trunk opened up and distributed – for sale, it is true, but with the effect of making broadly available the contents of those family archives in ways that have important implications for cultural memory' (p. 35). *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyber-*

*space* is a valuable addition to current scholarship and debate and, as such, deserves to be read and appreciated well beyond the Canadian border.

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**A different kind of web: new connections between archives and our users**, edited by Kate Theimer, Chicago, Society of American Archivists, 2011, xvii + 369 pp., US \$69.95, ISBN 1-931666-39-3

Let us begin by musing on the nature of the task involved in pulling together a paper book about the Internet. David Ferreiro, in his introduction to this compilation of essays, generously calls the book both timely and timeless. While it is certainly timely, I think there is some irony in casting an ageless patina on the active discussion of the evolution of archives that unfolds between these covers.

Although the book is about how archives might take advantage of Web 2.0 tools to get stuff done, attract and engage new audiences through social media and generally move with the times, a broad discussion of the changes brought on by the rapid shift of knowledge from paper to electronic storage is inevitably also present. The book is concerned with attitudes to these changes: the ways in which they can be both embraced and resisted.

The strength of this book lies in the range of institutions, projects and tools that are covered. There are 21 essays from 26 contributors across the English-speaking archival world, which have been brought together by editor Kate Theimer. The book has four major sections, based around the themes of Web 2.0 and outreach, Web 2.0 and archival authority, Web 2.0 and archival management and Web 2.0 and new archival users. A review essay introduces each theme, and the discussion is fleshed out by a number of case studies, where particular projects are discussed and assessed. These are followed up with two essays balancing excitement with caution. The first, by Terry D Baxter, tries to find the point at which we risk throwing out the archival baby with the institutional bathwater. The second, by Randall C Jimerson, asks us to remember the ‘digital divide’: the barriers to entry generated by poverty and lack of access to IT resources. Lastly, a conclusion by the editor summarises the themes raised.

The case studies are a broad cross-section of experiments with Web 2.0. There are discussions on the use of various blogging platforms, YouTube, Second Life, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and wikis (both in-house and Wikipedia). There is some discussion on creating custom sites, such as the National Archives of Australia’s *Mapping our Anzacs*, and hooking social media into online databases and data standards, such as Encoded Archival Description (EAD). There is an interview section, which canvasses the views of genealogists and representatives from major commercial genealogy sites using online archives and data.

As well as fuelling the conclusions of the larger essays, these cases studies are useful for anyone looking for practical advice. By and large, the studies do a good job of unpacking the nuanced cultures that grow up around any popular online platform. They are also the part of the book that will date most quickly. None of the platforms above are much of a mystery anymore and some of them are, now, rather old hat.

The other half of the book – the section with review essays – draws together themes and conclusions from the individual studies. The first section, on the straightforward use