

ARCHIVES
and
MANUSCRIPTS

The Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists

The Archivist's Mission

Archivists ensure that records which have value as authentic evidence of administrative, corporate, cultural and intellectual activity are made, kept and used. The work of archivists is vital for ensuring organisational efficiency and accountability and for supporting understandings of Australian life through the management and retention of its personal, corporate and social memory.

Archives and Manuscripts is a publication of the Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated, PO Box 638, Virginia, Qld 4014, Australia.

© Copyright in *Archives and Manuscripts* and the articles contained therein is vested in the Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated.

Contributors' opinions and advertisers' claims do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated or the Editor.

Printed on permanent paper by Fineline Printing, Melbourne.

Cover design by GRiD.

ISSN 0157-6895

Contents

Volume 36, Number 2

November 2008

Karen Anderson

Editorial.....9

Articles

Eric Ketelaar Exploration of the archived world:
from De Vlamingh's Plate to
digital realities13

Between 1616 and 1697 Dutch skippers surveyed the coast of Western Australia. The country's oldest-known written record of European exploration is a pewter plate left behind in 1697 and inscribed by Willem de Vlamingh (the plate is now in the Museum of Western Australia). Dutch maps, charts and journals transformed the unknown land into 'a flat surface of paper that can be archived', generating what Bruno Latour calls 'immutable and combinable mobiles'. In Latour's centres of calculation, events, places and people can be administered on a large scale and at a distance. Many things can be done with the archived world that cannot be done with the true world. This is as true today as it was in the seventeenth century. Reality is digitally virtualised and archived. Information about reality becomes information as reality (in Albert Borgmann's terms). What are the implications for record professionals?

Tom Nesmith Re-exploring the continuum,
rediscovering archives34

Knowledge is increasingly touted as the key to achievement of the primary socio-economic goals of societies around the world, and archives hold the most extensive body of largely untapped knowledge resources. Australian archivists have offered the continuum concept to try to close this gap between societal needs and archival potential to help meet them. Yet archives remain unable to play a central role in Australian society or elsewhere. What can be done?

A still largely unexplored dimension of continuum concern is the question of how records may be made useful. Much greater effort to discover new uses of archives may close the gap in a world that does not fully appreciate their utility. This article explores means of doing so. Given the recent extraordinary diversification of uses of archives, such a re-exploration of the continuum can lead to a rediscovery of archives that may carry them the rest of the way toward a central place in their sponsoring institutions and societies, and contribute to the ongoing discussion of the nature of the continuum itself.

Andrew Flinn

Migrations, disputed heritages and
multicultural identities: archives
in a post-colonial society54

The legacies of empire and colonialism exert a powerful influence on contemporary societies yet they are frequently ignored or unacknowledged in much Eurocentric history and heritage. The movement of populations, both from and into the imperial centre, and the growth of multicultural societies with shared and disputed heritages, have significant implications for archival practice and the attempts to support a 'democratised' archival heritage. Taking the British Empire and Britain, and London in particular as its focus, this article will interweave individual 'hidden' stories of international resistance to colonialism and imperialism in order to contextualise some of these impacts including the disputed heritage of the Imperial archive; the need to document anti-colonial resistance as well as rule; archival acknowledgement of the place of enslavement and colonial exploitation at the heart of modern British society; the challenges of recording the experiences of migration (in and out, legal and illegal); the necessity to document the lives and histories of post-colonial peoples now living in the heart of the former imperial metropole. The article will also argue that in seeking to address these challenges, the archival profession must embrace diversity in all its aspects in support of the production of a more representative national heritage which in turn might engender a greater sense of shared, multicultural identities.

<i>Lekoko Kenosi</i>	Records, national identity and post-apartheid South Africa: the role of Truth Commission records in nation building	76
----------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established by an act of parliament in 1995. It was the twenty-first in a series of truth commissions that had characterised nations transitioning from repression to democratic rule. The main aim of the South African TRC was to promote national unity and reconciliation. The other objective of the commission was to usher in a new value system or culture of national identity, national pride, institutional accountability, transparency and respect for human rights. However, what is also of great interest is the fact that for the first time in the life of truth commissions the South African commissioners placed its records right at the centre of these new core values. This paper, extracted from the author’s doctoral dissertation, aims to highlight the often overlooked role of records in nurturing a culture of national identity, national reconciliation, institutional accountability and transparency.

<i>Toby Burrows</i>	Identity parade: managing contextual personal information for archival data	88
---------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

For researchers in the humanities, biographical data are central to most of their investigations and the sheer size and scope of biographical research has produced an enormous range of printed and digital information. One area of major research interest covers the connections between people, and their place in social, intellectual and cultural networks, particularly in the past. This approach is increasing in importance, spurred on by a much wider and more general interest in the phenomenon of networks and in their potential as an explanatory framework for human behaviour. This kind of research into social, intellectual and cultural networks appears to pose a major challenge to existing digital resources and to the metadata structures which underpin them. This paper investigates the extent to which existing metadata frameworks – particularly in the archival and library sectors – are able to present this type of

contextual information and looks at the potential value of new and emerging approaches. It also suggests some ways in which the latest semantic web and Web 2.0 developments can be applied to build the next generation of biographical services for humanities researchers.

*Roger Löfgren and
Lars-Erik Hansen* Plugging the digital gaps:
the use of metadata in the Swedish
Social Insurance Administration 105

The theoretical discussion on digital archives has been extensive for more than a decade, but there are few examples of practical and real implementations. During the last five years, the Swedish Insurance Agency (SIA) has implemented a digital archiving system to manage the tens of thousands of documents produced daily in the case management systems used at local social insurance offices. The system was tested in a pilot version and fully launched in 2006. The digital archive at SIA works, however continuous evaluation, feedback and development will improve and expand the product. The digital archive project has found the OAIS, ISAD (G) and EAD standards to be usable and good, but also found that they cannot be implemented too rigidly. Instead, a more flexible approach is needed, using the standards as a resource whereby relevant metadata is added along the whole document life cycle.

The aim of this article is to describe one of the biggest digital archiving projects in the Nordic countries undertaken in the period 2001–2006. It was run in one of Sweden’s biggest public agencies: the Social Insurance Agency, in collaboration with the National Archives of Sweden. The major part of this report covers the period 2001–2006, although a few changes have been made during 2007–2008.

*Margaret Birtley and
Veronica Bullock* Will collections vanish in the urge
to converge? Observations on convergent
evolution in the collections sector128

This paper considers the potential merits and pitfalls of convergence in the collections sector. Australia’s archive, gallery, library and museum domains are being encouraged to work more closely together and to be recognised as a ‘collections sector’. The domains

are borrowing techniques from each other in order to meet the expectations of their audiences. In some settings, new hybrid organisations are being created on the assumption that greater sustainability can be achieved through the shared delivery of similar services. We offer some observations on trends toward convergence of the domains, and a set of possible indicators for the analysis of future convergent evolution of the Australian collections sector.

Candace Loewen Transformation, exploration, innovation:
Library and Archives Canada's Access
Policy Framework148

In 2004, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was created from the former National Library and National Archives. The new mandate was derived from the opportunities presented by the power of the Internet and the rallying cry of the official transformation document, *Directions for Change*, was 'access is the primary driver'. This paper provides an account of the voyage from the transformation challenge in 2004 to the development of a keystone framework document in 2007 which provides future direction for access, called the *LAC Access Policy Framework*. The framework provides a definition of access, four principles of access, and several guiding objectives which underpin the principles. While the final product is not very long, it represents wide-ranging, intense discussions from all parts of the new institution which helped to nuance the balance which all cultural institutions face between preservation and access. The original points of departure on this exploratory voyage were quite disparate but the final result represents a true convergence in its innovation. Other cultural institutions that are also facing the challenges of access and the Internet, yet recognise the need to fulfil their mission of long-term preservation, will find this example from LAC helpful in its futuristic orientation.

Marian Hoy

Early professional learning in collecting institutions: navigating the opportunities and obstacles 169

What inspires individuals to embark on a first or second career in fields or professions where positions are not always permanent and where there is a perception that colleagues have to retire before there is an opportunity to achieve a promotion? A research project in progress explores the experiences and expectations of a group of 16 archivists, curators and information professionals or librarians who are starting new careers or positions in collecting institutions. The paper focuses on their professional learning and how they connected their previous study, including internships and work experience, to their new environment.

Michael Piggott

The Australian archival system, 1971–2008: a valedictory appraisal 189

In 1971 the author was a 'LIT', or librarian-in-training with the National Library of Australia, studying an elective in archives and manuscripts under Bob Sharman and shortly thereafter joining the manuscripts section. That same year the Records Management Association of Australia (now Australasia) was two years old; the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and university professional education programs did not exist; and national archives legislation was still thirteen years away. Challenges such as electronic records and public programs were still to be identified. Using the idea of a national archival system as the backdrop and some of the author's interests and involvements as pretext, the article shares reflections on some of the major archival ideas and developments of the past generation while attempting to steer between gratuitous advice and un-grumpy optimism