To ask archivists if society is better off forgetting is a bold and heretical question. The title of this volume of essays is somewhat enigmatic, and raises questions such as: Who is forgetting? What is being forgotten? What is the meaning of forgetting? These questions are never directly answered, and the essays themselves do not explicitly address the title’s question. A close reading of the introduction is required to discern the editors’ goal in assembling this particular set of essays: to explore the neglect of the archival enterprise from the perspective of Canadian public policy.

One word that characterizes the contents of this collection of essays is “wide-ranging.” Co-editors Cheryl Avery and Mona Holmlund (archivist and art history professor, respectively, at the University of Saskatchewan) have assembled diverse authors from different fields to address the many issues that affect the well-being of the archival enterprise. The wide scope is reflected in the titles of the five parts: “The History of Funding,” “Access and Privacy,” “The Digital Age,” “Accountability and the Public Sphere,” and “Resource for the Present.” Fortunately, the volume includes an index to improve access to the host of ideas discussed.

In part one, archivists Marion Beyea and Shelley Sweeney address the inadequate level of funding for archives in Canada. Beyea recounts the development of the Canadian archival system in the 1970s and 1980s (including public funding for archival processing and professional development) and its subsequent erosion. Sweeney compares funding for archives with that for libraries and museums, and concludes that financial support, regardless of the source, will come only if archivists change their priorities to broaden their user base, demonstrate impact, raise their profile, and become active fundraisers (pp. 31–33).

Part two explores the tensions between the concepts of access and privacy. Archivist Jo-Ann Munn Gafuik discusses the federal access to information legislation as a tool to support both transparency in government and the role of archivists in assisting the public in making sense of the records that are preserved. David Surtees, a law professor, talks about privacy and the so-called disenfranchised who have no control over information that is collected about them. The challenges in finding the appropriate balance between access and privacy are demonstrated in Terry Cook and Bill Waiser’s account of the Census Wars—a battle over the release of the post-1901 Canadian census data that pitted privacy advocates against archivists, historians, and genealogists.

The Digital Age is the focus of Part three of the volume. Historians Chris Hackett and Robert Cole discuss the implications, particularly for historians and the process of historical research, of having source material digitized and on-line. Archivist Yvette Hackett (no relation to Chris) provides a succinct and insightful overview of the emergence of born-digital records, as well as the ways in which digital records necessitate archival practices different from those used to deal with analog records. Her argument that “digital records cost more” (pp. 129–135) clearly articulates the imminent risk to our collective memory if we do not address the challenges of digital preservation.
Part four, “Accountability and the Public Sphere,” features two essays by archival educators Terry Eastwood and Tom Nesmith. Eastwood examines the role of archives and archivists in accountability in a democratic society. Beginning with an exploration of the complexities of the concept of accountability, Eastwood then draws examples from many jurisdictions to set out the immense challenges faced by archivists if they are to be effective in supporting the “deep-seated public interest in preservation of government records as a vehicle of democratic accountability” (p. 164). Nesmith urges archivists to rethink their traditional public programming and find creative and innovative ways to link archival records to matters of current public concern. He provides a number of examples of archives that have done this, and offers concrete suggestions for moving in that direction (pp. 182–184). While the authors propose new approaches and identify challenges, both emphasize the chronic lack of resources in the field and the hard choices to be made about priorities if resources are diverted to something new.

The last part of this anthology is entitled “Resource for the Present” and consists of two essays. The first, by Tom Adami and Martha Hunt (archivists with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda), emphasizes the importance of the records of international peacekeeping missions and international criminal tribunals. The final essay by journalist Robert Steiner attempts to link archivists with great journalists and politicians, all of whom, he claims “instinctively invite individuals into a frank encounter with the roots of their current experience” (p. 214).

Some archivists may find these essays disappointing in that many of them tell us little that is new. For example, Surtees contributes nothing new to the discussion of the principles to follow in protecting the privacy of individuals whose information we collect. Hackett and Cole’s discussion of the implications of digitization for research would have been more interesting if they had applied their ideas explicitly to archival practice. Steiner’s understanding of archives as “any materials—artefact or natural—that invite a person into a frank encounter with the source of their current experience” (p. 216) is likely to exasperate archivists.

But the editors are not speaking only to archivists. Instead, they wish to start “a broader debate that will stimulate interest among decision makers and inspire professionals in the field to consider how best to bring their concerns to a broader audience…whom we wish to inspire to take up the debates presented here” (p. xvii). If that is their goal, they have done well to pitch the content at a more general level and to include voices from other disciplines.

No one is suggesting that we are better off forgetting. However, the archival enterprise is not as robust as it should be if it is to fully accomplish its role in a democratic society. Archivists will find this volume useful in engaging their sponsors, users, and elected representatives in better understanding what we do. Although the discussion is grounded in Canadian public policy, the issues will resonate with those in other jurisdictions. For those who wish to “make the case for more status, funding, staffing, and influence for archives in society” (p. xvii), this volume is a good start.

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Books on organizational culture within information organizations (e.g., libraries, archives, and museums) have been popular in recent years, given the downturn in world economies, the loss of experienced staffers to retirements and layoffs, and the retooling and retraining that needs to occur as staff move from the print environment towards a digital environment. This book examines the concept of organizational culture from a number of different angles: national, structural, occupational, and corporate. It also explains the author’s predilection for a particular organizational culture theory, one expounded by the Dutch anthropologist Geert Hofstede.

The book consists of seven chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to the overall concept of organizational theory and contains an extensive literature review on current theory and application. Most of the research cited is international in scope, focusing on theoretical applications. Definitions of organizational culture are also provided, using the national culture theory of Hofstede (pp. 23–27). The author acknowledges that Hofstede’s theory is controversial and at times hard to defend, but insists that it is the theory of most interest for the purposes of this book. Hofstede’s three divisions of cultural characteristics within organizations are the main chapter divisions of this book: national, occupational, and corporate.

Chapter two discusses the national culture characteristics of organizations, examining the challenges and current debates surrounding this topic, and includes some information on the Edmund Hall conceptual model. Two major multidimensional models of culture are then compared: the five-dimensional model of Hofstede and the seven-dimensional model of Frans Trompenaars (p. 37). The rest of the chapter examines Hofstede’s five dimensions: power distance, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs. short-term (for some reason, not included in Table 2.1), and individualism vs. collectivism.

Chapter three attempts to provide balance and wholeness to organizational culture theory by including political, legislative, and social environments in the mix. Tangents such as language, technological infrastructure, privacy, copyright, and freedom of information are discussed at length, although the author clearly states that the information provided on these topics is informational and not definitive. Chapter four looks at the second layer of Hofstede’s organizational model, that of occupational culture. This chapter more specifically addresses information organizations and examines the literature for recent discussions and case studies regarding librarians, record keepers, archivists, and museum professionals. Chapter five considers the corporate culture of organizational culture, what the author calls the “most superficial layer.” Corporate culture is the layer most susceptible to change and is unique to each organization. Things like dress code, external branding, interior design, management style, and in-house language and stories are detailed here.

To assist readers with understanding their own organizational cultures, Chapter six combines the information of the previous five chapters. A three-level framework for assessment is provided (pp. 126–127), followed by directions for documenting and
diagnosing one’s organizational culture using this framework from level one to level three. Chapter seven provides four different scenarios that show how to implement a new information management initiative: establishing a special library service; developing a business case for a digital library; implementing an electronic document and records management system; and establishing an in-house archival repository. Four broad types of organizational models (village market, family model, full bureaucracy, and well-oiled machine) from chapter two are used to provide consistency and relevance to the scenarios. Each of these organizational types is presented fully before the author moves to the scenarios. For instance, in establishing a special library service, consideration is given to the following models: marketplace bureaucracy or village market model; full bureaucracy or pyramid model; personnel bureaucracy or family model; and workflow bureaucracy or well-oiled machine. In the conclusion, the author intends this book to be a practical tool for the assessment of one’s information culture, and thus to provide a framework for change and direction.

While I appreciate the detail and extent of documentation on organizational culture that the author has compiled, I find Hofstede’s theory regarding organizational culture hard to follow and sometimes difficult to justify. For example, the power distance index (PDI) calculations that Hofstede compiles might be construed as racist, if not overtly discriminatory. Table 2.2 indicates work organization differences between those countries with low PDI societies (such as Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavian countries, and Austria) and those with high PDI societies (such as Malaysia, Latin American countries, Arab countries, India, France, and Hong Kong). Certainly these differences exist in all countries, but the table’s conclusions are not supported by any evidence.

The masculinity/femininity values (MAS) (pp. 58–59) detailed by the author are just as ridiculous, as if some countries are more “masculine” or “feminine” than others. Who determines what are masculine or feminine characteristics? Is it not a major goal of the feminist movement to get away from labels and stereotypes of gender?

Basing an entire book on Hofstede’s organizational culture theory, in my mind, seems rather dangerous, and I wonder if the publisher proofed some of this content before it was published. Understanding organizational culture is essential in today’s economic climate; however, I do not believe this book adds anything but controversy to the topic of shaping and changing one’s organization towards new directions and shared goals.

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Making digitized resources available on-line is less difficult than it has been in the past. It is no longer necessary for small to medium-sized libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions to have experience with programming or markup languages to make digitized portions of their collections accessible on-line. Web publishing platforms like Omeka allow for the creation of on-line exhibitions, and the increased availability of digital collection building and management software like CONTENTdm or Greenstone make it possible to highlight collections of digitized images, recordings, and publications. Enabling researchers to find, discover, or retrieve an item on-line through the use of consistent and structured metadata is as important as digitization. There are many recent publications on digitization projects and the need for consistent, structured metadata. Metadata for Digital Collections: A How-To-Do-It Manual by Steven J. Miller is a strong addition to the body of guides and textbooks that concentrate on digital resource description in small to medium-sized archives, libraries, and cultural institutions.

The author assumes the reader has only a basic understanding of metadata and he builds to more complex concepts and metadata schemes as the manual progresses. Miller creates a comfortable environment for readers new to metadata or resource description by using many tables, illustrations, and practical examples. Metadata for Digital Collections is a substantive introduction to the concept of metadata, metadata standards (including metadata schemes and element sets), subject analysis of digitized objects, and controlled vocabularies. Miller discusses the creation and documentation of a metadata scheme, how different metadata schemes interrelate, and the quality of an institution’s metadata in an environment where it can be harvested, processed, and aggregated into a more general digital repository. Miller concludes the textbook with a chapter dedicated to the future of resource description as linked data and the potential of the semantic Web. The textbook has a companion Web site with review questions and hyperlinks to further examples and additional resources that make this volume an excellent candidate for classroom use.

The scope of Miller’s textbook is intentionally restricted to three common metadata schemes: Dublin Core (DC), Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS), and Visual Resources Association (VRA) Core Categories. Rather than provide a comprehensive, but perhaps superficial, survey of the many available metadata schemes, Miller presents detailed analyses of these three metadata schemes that include discussion of most metadata elements within a particular scheme, and how to prevent common errors when using a particular scheme. Using Dublin Core and its element set as a basis, Miller effectively compares and contrasts the metadata scheme with the more complex MODS and VRA Core Categories.

Miller’s approach is efficient and admirably practical. He often introduces a new subject and its application concurrently. For instance, Miller addresses the concept of resource identification and description alongside explanations of individual metadata elements. He introduces the title elements of Dublin Core, MODS, and the VRA Core Categories and puts that lesson immediately into practice by discussing the need for
a descriptive title and the difficulties associated with generating a title for a digitized image. Miller does not talk only about the need for digital resources to have consistent, structured description; he also discusses where relevant and available information should go within a particular metadata scheme, and, ideally, how the metadata should be encoded. Once readers are able to see the similarities and limitations of the various metadata schemes, the book helps them to understand the process of sharing metadata with other departments or institutions, preparing for a future product or software migration, and understanding how a data or service provider will harvest an institution’s metadata. When MODS and the VRA Core Categories appear in later chapters, readers are already familiar with their respective element sets and can then come to appreciate how to translate or map these elements into another metadata scheme. Even better, by the completion of the textbook, readers should have a fair understanding of how to develop and document a metadata scheme for local institutional use. Miller’s textbook provides instruction sufficient to grasp how MODS, the VRA Core Categories, and an institutionally specific metadata scheme are mapped to the Dublin Core elements. This is an important lesson, because an institution must be able map its metadata scheme, local or otherwise, to Dublin Core for metadata to be harvested and aggregated by a data or service provider.

A consistent theme throughout the textbook is balancing the local needs of an institution in describing digital resources for local use, versus a more global need for sufficient description of digital resources to facilitate better harvesting, processing, and aggregating of metadata into a larger digital repository. Given that an institution’s metadata may be harvested, Miller believes institutions should direct an eye towards the interoperability and quality of their metadata. Insofar as an institution can apply an established controlled vocabulary and standardized data entry to describe its digital resources, that institution is bolstering the chances that its resource description will be able to be processed by a machine, and thus be shared or harvested more easily in the future. To assist readers with preparing for a future exchange or sharing of metadata, Miller provides examples of how repositories have harvested a particular set of metadata to demonstrate results, and ways to improve the quality and interoperability of an institution’s metadata. Miller’s list transcends metadata creation for digital resources and applies to any type of archival description—how to use standard elements correctly; include sufficient contextual information and access points; enter data values that are standardized; distinguish between administrative and descriptive information; and document local practices.

Although Miller has written an introductory-level textbook, he does not shy away from difficult or highly detailed issues related to creating metadata for digital resources. For example, Miller dedicates a significant amount of the textbook to the difficulties associated with content analysis, its format and relation to subject, the specificity of description, and the need for metadata creators to apply accurate and verifiable subject terms and avoid projecting interpretation onto a digital resource. The research and analysis necessary to create metadata for an unlabeled photograph is not easy. Even though subject analysis is only a small part of the digitization and metadata creation process, it is refreshing to see Miller honestly and systematically discuss the issues that arise in describing an unlabeled or unpublished item. Such a discussion seems
especially important, since the person who originally selects and describes the artifact or archival material for digitization may not be the same person who will digitize or make the resource accessible on-line. Additionally, as part of making a resource available on-line, metadata creators may need to supplement the existing metadata with subject headings, genre terms, or other information to maintain the context of a digital resource. Miller’s review and explanation of linked data and the semantic Web is a challenging and interesting look at the possible future of metadata. In the context of the Resource Description Framework (RDF), Miller sketches a glimpse of the terminology and concepts that are required to create linking data. Admittedly, his explanation is complex, but the potential to link a variety of on-line resources—everything from an on-line encyclopedia article to a digitized audio recording about a particular subject, person, or event through the associated metadata—is astounding.

In my own experience as an archivist and metadata librarian, I regularly use Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC), Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS), and Encoded Archival Description (EAD). Although Miller’s particular coverage of MODS and the VRA Core Categories was new to me, his textbook was sufficiently rigorous that I am confident I can use the metadata schemes in the future. As I read the textbook, I attempted to ignore my background in metadata and read it as a beginner might. Miller’s practical approach to metadata is as thrilling as metadata can get. His attention to creating and mapping metadata schemes, providing a comprehensive bibliography, and focusing on metadata quality is a guide for future projects and an asset in the classroom.

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Jonathan Boulter uses the works of four contemporary writers to interrogate theories of archives, mourning, and melancholy. This is not a text aimed at practicing archivists: he grounds his work in Derrida, Freud, and Blanchot, with no mention of practical examples of archives. Indeed, many archivists will be irritated by the disregard for archival principles and the lax and expansive examples of “archives.” Even Boulter’s use of words like “archivic,” “archivable,” and “archivization” demonstrate his distance from the work of real-life archivists.

Boulter’s specific aim in this book is to understand the mechanisms of what he calls the “economies of mourning and melancholy” and how they connect with archives. These goals depend on two foundational texts. The first is a 1917 essay by Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in which Freud identifies two possible responses to deal with loss. Mourning, the normal response, means working through the loss to recognize that the lost party is truly gone. The abnormal response, melancholia, means identifying with the lost one so greatly that the loss continues as an everlasting part of the present. Boulter is fascinated by Freud’s vagueness about the activities through which these two responses occur, and seeks to understand the processes by which mourning or melancholia happen.

The second key text is Jacques Derrida’s Archive Fever, which Boulter uses as his foundation for understanding—if not quite defining—archives. Archives are physical places, but they also have a spectral quality. That is, their meaning only develops in the future, once they have been interpreted. Boulter states that beyond physical archives, characters in the books he discusses can themselves become archives: “As crypt, as archive ventrilocated by history, the subject begins to offer itself as a site to be heard, to be read, to be interpreted” (p. 7). Boulter seems willing to see almost anything as an archives, so long as it can be interpreted and has something roughly to do with history or memory. He goes on to suggest that the writers he will discuss support Derrida’s idea that the archives is truly built on the loss of the past rather than its protection.

Boulter ties these two key texts to a third: Maurice Blanchot’s The Writing of the Disaster. Blanchot proposes that a disaster inevitably changes the subjectivity, or the self, of the person facing the loss. Seeing the subject—in this case, the character of a novel—as an archives suggests that the archives itself is not fixed. Boulter claims contemporary fiction is “obsessed with the need to figure the subject precisely as the site for history” (p. 12), so he examines his ideas by a close reading of literary works.

The complexity of the introduction dilutes Boulter’s points. Of course, the issues of loss, disaster, and mourning are all relevant to archives. Archivists have long struggled to address missing records, to document hidden pockets of society, and to facilitate public understanding of the past in all its complexity. Even taking a broader conception of “archives” to include all forms of memory and history, individuals and societies deal with loss, and attempt to heal, remember, and let go. However, combining three specific and disparate theories, and then applying them to the diverse works of four authors, makes for rather unwieldy reading.
The writers examined in this book are Paul Auster, Haruki Murakami, David Mitchell, and José Saramago. Hailing from the United States, Japan, Great Britain, and Portugal, respectively, these writers are each popular and well-known, both at home and abroad. The works examined include novels, short stories, and a lone non-fiction work, Murakami’s collection of interviews of victims and perpetrators of the 1995 sarin gas attacks in the Tokyo subway system. Boulter sees “archives” depicted by the four novelists in quite inclusive ways. These include an accumulation of historical phonebooks, a private collection of films, and even an individual’s consciousness, as well as a more traditional registry. In some cases, the form of the work represents the archives, such as Murakami’s non-fiction collection of interviews *Underground*, and Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas*, which incorporates diaries, letters, and an “orison”—a sort of holographic oral history. (No questions are raised about the long-term preservation of this presumably fragile medium, by the way.)

Rather than walk through each individual work analyzed, this review focuses on the most traditional archives represented, the registry in Saramago’s *All the Names*. This is the final text Boulter discusses, and it seems to collect his most well-developed thoughts. *All the Names* follows Senhor José, a lowly clerk in the Central Registry, who becomes obsessed with an unknown woman whose record card he chances across in the archives. He attempts to track her down, stealing into the records of her elementary school, her home, and finally, to the cemetery where she is buried. In some ways, Senhor José is the perfect case for exploring Boulter’s interests. The clerk displays a bizarre melancholia for this unnamed woman: he has lost her by simply never knowing her at all. Rather than accept this loss, he becomes obsessed with it, and this obsession alters him permanently. Boulter describes Senhor José’s physical deterioration, as well as his transforming identity. One of the most interesting turns in the book comes at the end with the Registrar, probably the most realistic portrayal of an archivist discussed by Boulter. The Registrar, finally alerted to Senhor José’s actions, permits Senhor José to alter the woman’s record card to maintain that she is still alive. He allows the records of the dead and the living to mingle, presumably changing the classification of the entire system. Unfortunately, instead of discussing records management or original order at this crucial point, Boulter reverts back to the philosophers for his understanding of how the archives ought to have been ordered.

And this represents the overriding flaw of this book: rather than contextualizing these rich narratives with the real work of archivists, Boulter depends on theories far removed from archives. It seems clear that the meaning and weight of the archives warrant artistic and intellectual examination, so surely there must be value in connecting the work that archivists do with the intellectual work that writers and scholars do. The texts discussed in this book are well-known and well-received, and several do represent some kind of recognizable archives. Reading these works of art could conceivably help archivists connect with patrons who recognize popular representations of our work. However, we may wish to skip the layer of analysis presented by literary critics.

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Have you ever been moved to send an author a hearty thank-you for his or her contribution to the field of archival literature? I conveyed such a message recently to U.S. Senate Archivist Karen Paul, one of the editors and contributors to An American Political Archives Reader. Informed that Department of Defense personnel would descend upon my repository the next day to review a congressional collection for classified material, Paul’s chapter “Classified: What to Do If National Security Officials Visit” provided me with the information, authority, and options to handle the situation successfully. Although this particular episode may seem exceptional, it is indicative of the volume’s value as a source for consultation and inspiration. Any repository with congressional papers in its holdings should possess a copy.

This book, along with Cynthia Pease Miller’s recent publication Managing Congressional Collections, represents the increasing maturity of the political archives field, which has seen steady growth in both publications and professional accomplishments over the last thirty years.1 The two volumes, in fact, complement one another rather than compete. Miller’s smaller publication offers a manual with recommended minimum standards and best practices, while An American Political Archives Reader explores real life experiences, problems encountered, and lessons learned. The former work provides ready reference on the ideal, and the latter offers expanded discussions and explorations of practical issues.

After an introduction by former Senate Historian Richard A. Baker that examines the history of institutional support for the organized study of congressional history, An American Political Archives Reader is divided into six sections of several chapters, and each discusses issues related to acquisition; the documentation of Congress (including collection development policies, oral histories, and electronic records); appraisal, arrangement, and description; the building of research centers; and researcher use of political collections. A little over half of the chapters are previously published or presented works (the earliest dating from 1984), while the remaining pieces are newly commissioned. The contributing archivists include professionals with extensive experience managing congressional collections and several former leaders of the Congressional Papers Roundtable at the Society of American Archivists and the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress. The last section also contains five articles by historians and political scientists describing trends in congressional research, personal encounters with political collections, and the use of these collections in their scholarship. This section offers constructive clues to archivists about what records are valued and why, although several of the essays are written to convince archivists to utilize these papers.

Congressional collections are inherently complex in nature, and the Reader reflects the array of challenges associated with their maintenance. Topics include sensitive, high-profile donors; the broad spectrum of formats involved (paper, photographs, recordings, memorabilia, and electronic records); the possible inclusion of classified documents and official committee records owned by Congress; and raising funds to support the collections. Essays on appraisal, processing, and description tackle problems
posed by the sheer scale of congressional collections (1,000 to 3,000 linear feet are not uncommon). Reading these discussions, it is easy to understand that the origins of More Product, Less Process (MPLP) lie in part with Mark A. Greene’s and Dennis Meissner’s own confrontations with the mammoth bulk of congressional recordkeeping. Consequently, it is not surprising that several of the Reader’s authors discuss MPLP adaptations and ramifications.

The Reader includes two chapters on the papers of state legislators and an entire section on institution-building at three political research facilities: the South Carolina Political Collections at the University of South Carolina; the Howard Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville; and the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia. Despite this effort to broaden the subject matter, the book’s overwhelming emphasis is on congressional research and collections. More pointed examinations of other political collection genres would be welcome. As one of three branches of our government, the judiciary generates its own set of records, and a number of archives hold the private chamber papers of judges. Such collections evolve from a separate recordkeeping tradition, possess different document types, and offer their own unique set of challenges. Surely these distinctions are fodder enough for publication.2

Another surprising gap is the lack of a section on outreach, reference, and instruction. Several authors (particularly L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin and Karyl Winn in their article on access tools) touch upon these concerns, but the subjects merit greater elaboration. When an archives completes and opens a major political collection to researchers, significant programming in the form of events, exhibits, or publications (or some combination thereof) often follows. In addition, election cycles and current events offer repositories continuous opportunities to connect contemporary topics to historical holdings. The scale and scope of most political papers demand more extensive consultation with patrons to insure that they make the most effective use of limited time. Finally, expanding researcher use beyond political historians and biographers requires constant education of faculty, library staff, archives personnel, and the general public about the vast array of subject matter available on national, state, and local levels that are applicable to numerous disciplines and purposes. As a political papers archivist who frequently ponders these issues, I crave insight and ideas derived from the experiences and recommendations of others.

This volume, however, claims neither to be “comprehensive nor definitive” (p. viii). The gaps perceived by this reviewer in no way detract from the tremendous value of this anthology’s milestone achievement. Rather, one should consider my critiques as hopeful suggestions for a future, revised edition that will mark even further advancements in the field of political archives. In the meantime, the current version offers a bounty of collective wisdom to explore, digest, and adapt to political collections at your institution.

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NOTES


Saving Cinema: The Politics of Preservation is bookended by accounts of two Universal Studios fires in 1990 and 2008. This densely packed work uses these stories and their portrayals and meaning to illustrate a shift in the perception of film and its importance in society. In 1990, news accounts invoked the idea of films as America’s cultural heritage to convey the devastation felt by many at the loss of history on the Universal lot (p. 3). However, author Caroline Frick explains that the loss of reels of film in the 2008 Universal fire was downplayed by most because of the existence of multiple copies. Studio executives and the public simply did not perceive a loss of heritage in the latter case (p. 151).

Saving Cinema has three stated goals: 1) to provide an overview of the film preservation movement going back to the 1930s; 2) to attempt a “reevaluation of the field’s traditional tenet: preservation as the profession’s core value and task” (p. 6); and 3) to broaden the discourse within media studies programs by looking at the history and function of film archives.

The author’s impressive educational and professional background provides her with a unique perspective on the film archives community and its history. Having studied and worked both internationally and domestically for academic, government, and private institutions, Frick is able to bring together the histories of a diverse group of organizations to tell the story of film, its meaning, and its legacy.

Saving Cinema details a global history of the film preservation movement. Frick begins in the interwar period in the United States, when film critics and enthusiasts were engaged in establishing the legitimacy of commercial films. Hollywood features made up the bulk of what was considered “film” in those early years, and film studios were generally receptive to efforts to collect films deemed important to preserve (p. 28). By tracing the cooperation and conflict between the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Library of Congress, two fledgling film libraries at the time, Frick illustrates two early views of the value of film: film as art and film as history.

Though Frick shies away from focusing on personalities involved in the film preservation movement, the movement’s early history comes alive when she details the exchanges between MoMA librarian Iris Barry and Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish over the selection of films for preservation. Barry desired films that above all were works of art, employing discriminating criteria focused on quality. In contrast, MacLeish’s mandate was to assemble a representative sample of films that accurately depicted the era during which they were created. Despite their differing views on which films should be preserved, these early film archivists shared a similar end purpose: an emphasis on the exhibition of films (p. 44).

Saving Cinema then moves on to international discourse and the post-World War II shift toward perceiving film as national heritage, rather than as art or history. Frick states, “Heritage scholars posit that national heritage is most acutely articulated and considered most relevant when perceived as under threat” (p. 84). Following the devastation of World War II, nations began to focus on protecting their cultural heritage, and film became one medium involved in that movement. In the United States, this focus on “heritage” would
not begin until the last years of the Cold War, when “the nation’s own motion picture industry was threatened with foreign invasion (that is, investment)…” (p. 52).

The history of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) is the basis for Saving Cinema’s international perspective. The organization underwent a profound ideological shift from a cinémathèque model that promoted exchange and access, to a more scientific approach focusing on the preservation of film (p. 108). Frick believes this shift is related to global decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s and the resultant increase in the number of film archives from newly emerging nations. FIAF’s founding members attempted to limit membership to the organization by narrowing their focus. Members from newly emerging nations such as those in Latin America objected to the focus on preservation because to them, films were “living vehicles of propaganda and decolonization, a medium for culture in the widest sense of the word and must therefore be shown as much as possible” (p. 114).

Finally, Saving Cinema delves into regional film archives, a more recent movement in the United States that traces its rise to the orphan film movement. This focus is a shift away from the commercial film industry, primarily Hollywood. Orphan films, defined as “a motion picture forsaken or discarded by its owner, caretaker, or copyright owner” (p. 120), came into vogue in the 1980s and led to the decentralization of the film preservation movement. The expansion of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant funding in 1978 legitimized “new archival players within domestic preservation discourse” (p. 138).

For Frick’s archival audience, the most important aspect of Saving Cinema is the debate over preservation versus access. The book essentially contends that film archivists have moved from an imperative to collect films in order to show them, to one where preservation of the medium takes precedence over access to content. It is Frick’s belief that this shift originates in the reframing of film’s value. Where once collectors, societies, and archives valued film as art or history (p. 5), today’s film archivists see film as an expression of national heritage, and therefore a treasure that must be kept but not used (p. 10).

In its final chapter, Saving Cinema argues that film preservationists must reexamine their focus on preservation of the medium of film (p. 153). It is in this conclusion that the author makes her most controversial statements.

Frick offers the idea that in the digital world, access itself can perhaps be considered preservation (p. 153). She then provocatively questions whether we even need film as a physical medium (p. 155). This is predicated upon the reality that most celluloid copies of classic films are themselves copies, rather than pristine masters (p. 175). These bold statements are likely an attempt to get the attention of those colleagues whom Frick believes have become overly concerned with the preservation of celluloid. In her compelling conclusion, she states, “Preservation itself reveals that permanence is an illusion. The more we save, the more aware we become that such remains are continually altered and reinterpreted…. Advocates of preservation who adjure us to save things unchanged fight a losing battle, since even to appreciate the past is to transform it” (p. 171).

Saving Cinema’s broad focus puts to the test the view that film as art has been replaced by film as heritage. Moving between national, international, and regional archival history does not illustrate a global consensus or definitive timeline for when
preservation took over as the primary focus of film archivists. Perhaps the book needs to more explicitly trace the potential causality of this shift in different areas of the world.

Although archivists are but one intended audience of this work, I had hoped Frick would place the issues of film archives into context within the wider archival field. What are the similarities and differences between preserving film versus other item formats? Frick asks “the most leeway, license and perhaps forgiveness” from her archival audience at the very outset of *Saving Cinema* (p. xi), but I could not deny my curiosity as to whether she believes film archives are inherently different, or whether they represent a microcosm of the archival sphere.

Aimed at a wide audience, including film historians and media study students, *Saving Cinema* presents a cogent challenge to the archival community regarding the philosophy of regional film archives. Overall, Frick argues convincingly that the primacy of attention on cultural heritage in the discourse surrounding film archives has pushed the field further toward a preservation-centric model. The technical needs of preservation are clear, but Frick believes that this focus on preserving the medium of film has sacrificed the true archival mission of providing access to the items in our care. The technological possibilities of the twenty-first century present an important opportunity for reevaluation of the direction of the field’s mission. Although there are real concerns inherent in providing access, especially through digitization and on-line dissemination of media, which this book, in my opinion, does not adequately address, *Saving Cinema* can be viewed as an essential first chapter of a discussion about the future of film archives in the twenty-first century.

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Enhanced communication and cooperation between librarian subject specialists and archivists in academic libraries is increasingly important as libraries extend more services in the digital realm. Within academic libraries, subject specialists and archivists have traditionally existed within separate spaces, with little or no interaction between the two distinct professions. In their work *Engaging Students with Archival and Digital Resources*, Justine Cotton and David Sharron attempt to bridge this information divide and encourage the use of both archival and digital resources in library instruction sessions. The authors note that librarian subject specialists often overlook the existence of materials held in the archives or special collections department when responding to reference requests or when teaching library instruction sessions. Archivists, in turn, may not communicate to their librarian colleagues information about the rich resources within special collections departments.

Although it is a good general introduction to academic library instruction that connects special collections and digital resources, this volume is a basic overview and does not delve deeply into issues inherent in teaching with special collections resources. *Engaging Students* largely succeeds as a brief, technical guide, but falls short of the mark for more experienced library professionals.

As is evident from the introduction, the intended audience of *Engaging Students* is both librarian subject specialists and archivists. The volume opens with an introduction to archival theories and practices and a brief explanation of the differences between the two professions. The introduction and chapter one demonstrate how the authors seek to “bridge the gap between archivists and academic librarians” (p. 9). One concern with terminology addressed here by the authors is that typically archivists at academic institutions are considered “academic librarians”—they are just a different type of academic librarian. What the authors really intend to discuss are the differences between academic librarians who are subject specialists or reference librarians, and those who work as archivists or special collections librarians. The authors note that there has been a history of non-cooperation between these two types of information professionals, and they articulate several good reasons why this divide continues to exist. Often physical separation is the primary culprit because archives are typically housed in separate buildings or floors. Moreover, archivists are engaged in their own distinctive work, making it a challenge to form relationships across the spectrum of staff within an academic library.

In chapter two, “Faculty Outreach,” the authors discuss ways to engage with academic faculty and promote archival and digital collections. Again, the terminology regarding “librarians,” “archivists,” and “faculty” employed in this chapter is somewhat imprecise and appears to ignore the possibility that librarians at some academic institutions have faculty status and are engaged in research or other scholarly projects. While acknowledging the need for better communication within academic libraries, the authors still make the assumption that the librarian faculty liaison model functions well within the library. All too often, special collections librarians and archivists do not reap the
benefits from this model. The sample outreach letters from information professionals to academic faculty members that are included in Appendix B are somewhat informative and provide an archivist or librarian a reliable outline for similar letters to use at his or her own institution.

Chapter three, “Introducing Students to Library and Archival Resources,” is particularly engaging and provides an excellent overview of how to explain archival and digital collections to students. The authors stress the need to challenge student assumptions about digital resources and demonstrate the impossibility of digitizing all archival sources and making them available on-line. While most instructors may already know about these issues, this book presents such concepts in a logical manner and gives helpful pointers as to how to approach this topic with undergraduate students. The chapter reads as if it were written as a script for archivists to use to engage students or others who are not fully aware of such concepts.

One important detail absent in this guide is a thorough description of the ideal classroom setting for student instruction sessions. As physical spaces within libraries are rapidly evolving into large information commons and less shelf space for books, mapping areas for instruction becomes more and more important. Digital resources and special collections presentations can require different classroom settings. The digital resources portion of the class may involve an overhead projector, large screen, specialized software, computer workstations for both the instructor and students, and audiovisual capabilities. The special collections component of the session would ideally require large tables, a secure environment, and a location near to where collections are shelved. These are important issues for large universities with multiple libraries where instruction classrooms may be appropriate for both types of instruction. A broader discussion of some of these issues would make Engaging Students more informative.

Although Cotton and Sharron reference “archival and digital resources” in their title, the definition of “digital resources” remains unclear. At first, the reader may suppose that the authors are only referring to databases that include special collections materials. However, as one delves further into the work, any digital resource, including secondary source publications (e.g., Google Books and Project Muse), information clearinghouses (e.g., Center for History of Physics), and discovery tools for archival information (e.g., OAIster and Archives Canada) are included in the definition. Chapter four, “Resources,” presents an unsystematic selection of such resources and tools. Interestingly, OCLC’s ArchiveGrid, an important tool for searching for archival collections internationally, is not part of the list. Also, Project Muse is mentioned, but not JSTOR, perhaps the best-known humanities journal database. Although most of the digital resources discussed are useful, archivists and librarians aware of current digital resources will already know about most of these digital collections, databases, and tools. This chapter will be most helpful to new information professionals who may have not had a chance to explore some of these digital resources.

In chapters five and six, the authors arrive at the true substance of this volume: how to plan and deliver well-conceived instruction sessions about archival and digital resources. Although the team-teaching approach introduced for the library instruction sessions is not a new one, this model does work well with undergraduate students. The division of instruction into two 30-minute segments, one for the librarian subject
specialist to teach about digital sources (or secondary sources) and one for the archivist to discuss primary sources as suggested by the authors, is effective in practice. Most instructional examples used are related to English and other literature-related classes because the authors are specialists in this topic, which they freely admit. A more inclusive study would have incorporated additional perspectives in the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences, but the examples offered are genuinely good starting points. The one description provided of a history-related instruction session is a solid model for finding and using a variety of sources, both primary and secondary, related to investigating an historical event.

*Engaging Students* focuses primarily on lower-level undergraduate students. Upper-level undergraduate students and graduate students are only briefly addressed. The suggestion to allow upper-level undergraduate and graduate students to process an archival collection is not realistic at some universities. Processing projects are time-consuming and require considerable supervision from the archivist, especially if an entire class is participating in such a project. In addition, not every upper-level undergraduate or graduate student, even in the humanities, is interested in archival processing or in becoming an information professional. Other projects and instruction methods could have been proposed for these advanced students.

As a general step-by-step guide to delivering instruction sessions with digital and archival resources, *Engaging Students* successfully stresses the benefits of collaboration between librarian subject specialists and archivists. The conclusion of the book also provides some additional food for thought about the future of academic libraries, including the idea that special collections and digital resources may be the primary components of the academic library of the future. The message is clear that librarian subject specialists and archivists will need to start collaborating more with each other and their campus constituencies to engage students and other researchers and increase awareness about all available library resources. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the authors effectively emphasize that instruction sessions should demonstrate that both digital and archival resources have their respective strengths in providing information, and are relevant to the future of academic libraries.

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Clearly the archival world is at a crossroads with the digital transformation of historical content. In From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition, Giovanna Fossati outlines an approach for grappling with this challenge in film archives. A detailed look at managing the preservation, restoration, and storage of film in the midst of its transition from analog to digital, Fossati’s account offers a roadmap with which to build upon the past while envisioning the future of film archives. What is unique about her method is her insistence on focusing on the transition itself, not an easy task considering the rapidity and radicalism of change. Fossati resists addressing that proposed future moment in time where all things are digital, and in doing so, provides a practical approach to film archives that is immediately accessible. Hypothesizing that a hybrid of analog and digital means of film technology and practice is likely to exist for some time, if not in perpetuity, Fossati’s premise is “based upon the idea of film as inherently transitional, rather than on the idea of film destined to transition to digital” (p. 258).

The first edition in the Amsterdam University Press Framing Film series dedicated to theoretical and analytical studies in restoration, collection, archival, and exhibition practices, From Grain to Pixel fulfills its intent to appeal to both film studies scholars as well as archival practitioners, but leaves no doubt that the preservation of film is critical. Recognizing the complex nature of film as both document and art form, Fossati addresses theories on the nature of film itself, or its ontology, as central to understanding how these theories influence both film creation and care. In doing so, she examines how the replacement of analog film by digitization or digital capture is affecting film scholarship, and the implications this has for film archives. By bringing together film theory with film archival practice, Fossati suggests that collaboration of film laboratories, academic researchers, and archivists must occur to adequately address the challenges archival film poses in its present transformation.

To support her supposition, Fossati divides her book into two parts: “Practice and Theory of (Archival) Film” and “Theorizing (Archival) Practice,” each of which is divided into two chapters. In both parts, she spends considerable time surveying the current landscape of film practice and film archives, turning a critical eye towards the methods being employed to deal with an industry in flux. How are films being made and distributed today? What exactly defines a film? How are laboratories and archives using new technologies to approach preservation and access? How are they taking into consideration film ontology in their approach? These are just some of the questions Fossati attempts to answer while remaining self-aware of examining them from a transitional viewpoint. By no means providing an exhaustive look at film production and film archival practice, Fossati reminds the reader throughout the book that she is offering “snapshots” of this inimitable transition period from analog to digital. In essence, she is seeking to reframe the discourse on film archives, encouraging archivists to embrace this transition not as a means to an inevitable end, but as a process worthy of study in its own right.
Part one looks at film practice in transition, both in terms of film production and film archives, highlighting the most relevant ways in which digital technology has affected how films are made, how they are distributed, how they are viewed, and inevitably how they are stored and managed. Through this examination, the duality of the digital dilemma is made evident: not only are archivists beginning to employ digital tools in their work, but they also are increasingly working with digital content. Those unfamiliar with the various tools and techniques currently employed in film production and restoration, as well as current popular approaches in film theory, will find this section a handy reference, both for understanding later chapters and for informing decisions in everyday practice. As Fossati states at the outset of chapter one: “Archival practice is in many ways connected to film production practice … they make use of the same providers and of the same equipment for exhibition … archivists need to know the technology used to make films today in order to be able to best preserve and restore these films tomorrow” (p. 33). Techniques and tools covered in this chapter include digital audio, digital editing, computer-generated imagery and digital compositing, digital intermediate processes, digital cinematography, and digital projection. Fossati details these changes and demonstrates how the pressure to provide digital access to analog films and preserve an ever-growing collection of digital-born films is influencing archival practice. While she touches on long-term preservation and access, Fossati’s main focus is on the ethics and methods of film restoration. The common thread throughout the chapter is that as much as the film industry has already grown more comfortable using a mix of analog and digital techniques, so, too, must film archives use a hybrid approach to the resulting materials.

While the debate over the nature of film is not new (e.g., is it artifact or a concept?), the digital transition has only served to add another layer. Fossati embraces this debate in her second chapter, using it to formulate frameworks and concepts that archivists can use to address issues in practice. She points to the disconnect between film scholars and film archivists and makes the plea that “the archival life of film needs to be opened to the academic discussion, especially now …” (p. 105). Addressing film as both material and conceptual artifact, Fossati proposes four theoretical frameworks she finds the most relevant to the discussion: “film as art,” “film as original,” “film as dispositif (i.e., exhibition or viewing circumstances),” and “film as state of the art.” She also divides the debate over the essence of film into three key concepts that impact archival practice today: convergence or the inevitability of digital; remediation or the choice of restoration; and simulation or the recreation of the analog experience. Through this discussion of film theory, Fossati posits that the current transitional phase gives us a new way of looking at the nature of film, which can lead to an essential middle ground between the oft-opposing viewpoints of film studies and film archives by advocating the use of film theory to analyze archival practices.

This argument is the basis for part two, in which Fossati applies the theories discussed in part one to existing archival policies and practices, using a ten-year span (1997–2007) in her analysis. Here she steers away from referencing new film production and focuses solely on archival film, recognizing that the archives profession is still a ways from reaching consensus on viable solutions to digital film technology. The third chapter is devoted to illustrating how four major film archives can be considered as operating
primarily within one of the four frameworks established in part one. Her scope is international, using the Danish Film Institute, the Anthology Film Archives of New York, the Nederlands Filmmuseum, and Sony Pictures Entertainment as examples. Fossati also turns to another major player in film archival practices, the film laboratory, pointing out the often close relationship shared with archives. Here, labs from Amsterdam (Haghefilm), Copenhagen (Digital Film Lab), and New York (Cineric, Inc.), all of which have relationships with one or more of the aforementioned archives, are used to illustrate the concepts of convergence, remediation, and simulation, respectively. Also included are brief descriptions of four European Union-funded projects as examples of cross-discipline cooperation that can serve to reshape the film archival profession and refocus the roles of archivists and scholars.

Lastly, in chapter four, five film restorations (mainly American commercial releases) conducted by the archives and laboratories discussed earlier, are used as case studies to illustrate the direct application of film theory. Fossati clearly states which frameworks and concepts presented in part one apply to each restoration. Workflows and the ethical issues that arose from each project are described in each distinct approach to film restoration. Here, perhaps, is the clearest demonstration of how theory is put into practice. By applying her frameworks and concepts to these cases, Fossati reveals how film theory can be used to make informed decisions, freeing the archival practitioner from speeding headlong into digitization, or from paralysis due to indecision.

A timely, must-read for those working in film studios or major government film archives, Fossati’s book can be useful to all those responsible for the preservation and administration of motion picture film. However, in an increasingly visual society where film has become more prevalent in all types of archives, I question Fossati’s insistence on focusing solely on major film archives. It may take some effort for a small outfit with limited film holdings to see a useful correlation between Fossati’s examples and the likely amateur film they manage. Nonetheless, From Grain to Pixel is a welcome tool by which to measure film archives’ progress, and should assist in informing most film archivists and the decisions they face today. More than that, it may spur archivists to take a more active role, with the aim of affecting change in film production, and fully utilizing available technological tools and the changing demands of digital-savvy users.

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Digital technologies have become part of the operations of cultural institutions, augmenting and aiding in the presentation, description, and management of traditional material. This anthology, noted in the introduction as “the first comprehensive theoretical discourse on cultural heritage and digital media since 1997” (p. 1), compiles current theories and analysis of themes about the coming together of cultural heritage and technology. Written by an international cast of 30 authors, the anthology includes 22 essays and divides into three sections.

Part I, “Replicants/Object Morphologies,” focuses on “the confluence of technology and culture in the representation of art and heritage collections for both Western and indigenous communities” (p. 4). The first essay, “Rise and Fall of the Post-Photographic Museum,” by Peter Walsh, notes similarities between the introduction of photography and the advent of the Internet, and observes that the Internet has changed the public’s relationship with art. The public no longer must visit museums to view art and can build their own online collections. In the next essay, “The Materiality of Virtual Technologies: A New Approach to Thinking About the Impact of Multimedia in Museums,” Andrea Witcomb makes the case that multimedia installations can go beyond providing support for traditional exhibits and be material expressions in their own right. As one example, she describes an exhibit at a Melbourne aboriginal museum in which photograph displays turn into videos when patrons walk by them, creating a dialogue with the material.

“Beyond the Cult of the Replicant: Museums and Historical Digital Objects—Traditional Concerns, New Discourses,” by Fiona Cameron, addresses the debate around the “original-material/copy-immaterial divide” in the relationship between historical objects and virtual representations. She concludes that while the original object will always maintain authority over the digital, more visible references to the production and materiality of digital historical objects will help them to be accepted as independent creative works.

“Te Ahua Hiko: Digital Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Objects, People and Environments,” by Deidre Brown, examines the application of three-dimensional augmented and virtual reality to Maori cultural objects and landscapes. Brown questions whether inherent qualities that give something meaning are transferred to the digital object.

The essay “Redefining Digital Art: Disrupting Borders,” by Beryl Graham, notes that digital media are being used to make, interpret, reproduce, and store art. This “disruption of borders,” in which digital art is produced and distributed using the same technology, differs substantially from photography and other art forms. In the next essay, “Online Activity and Offline Community: Cultural Institutions and New Media Art,” Sarah Cook continues the theme of digital art as a medium and transmission system, noting how community engagement and collaboration via the Internet may take a role in shaping the work.

Part II of the book, “Knowledge Systems and Management: Shifting Paradigms and Models,” explores the convergence of knowledge, learning, information management, digital technologies, and user research in cultural heritage. In her essay “A Crisis of Authority: New Lamps for Old,” Susan Hazan explores whether new media modifies the relationship between museums and visitors in meaningful ways. She concludes that it
offers new opportunities for remote visitors to experience the museum. In “Digital Cultural Communication: Audience and Remediation,” Angelina Russo and Jerry Watkins describe the potential for new media technologies to connect cultural institutions to new audiences through community programs.

Fiona Cameron and Helena Robinson, in “Digital Knowledgescapes: Cultural, Theoretical, Practical, and Usage Issues Facing Museum Collection Databases in a Digital Epoch,” suggest changes in how museums think about, construct, and administer collection databases, including: links between 3D information spaces and traditional chronological narratives; the use of non-text-based information, including virtual reality systems; and other strategies. In “Art is Redeemed, Mystery is Gone: The Documentation of Contemporary Art,” Harald Kraemer examines how traditional methods of documentation do not sufficiently record transient modern artworks, including interactive art. He offers solutions to this problem, such as considering documentation as part of the art itself.

In “Cultural Information Standards—Political Territory and Rich Rewards,” Ingrid Mason explains how cultural information standards provide infrastructure for collecting, preserving, and accessing digital cultural heritage. She then describes how sociopolitical forces influence cultural information standards and knowledge spaces. “Finding a Future for Digital Cultural Resources Using Contextual Information Frameworks,” by Gavan McCarthy, discusses how cultural institutions must develop systems for digital cultural information that remain manageable and accessible. The contextual information framework that he posits could network information nodes at the organizational, national, and international levels, and with stand-alone sources.

In “Engaged Dialogism in Virtual Space: An Exploration of Research Strategies for Virtual Museums,” Suhas Deshpande, Kati Geber, and Corey Timpson draw on classical rhetoric and appraisal theory to create an audience-centered strategy for optimal performance of virtual museums. Classical rhetoric identifies several key characteristics of audience behavior, and appraisal theory recognizes the importance of the social context. “Localized, Personalized, and Constructivist: A Space for Online Museum Learning,” by Ross Parry and Nadia Abach, explores the confluence of user-driven software, learner-centered education, and visitor-led museums. The paradigm of increased personalization, localization, and constructivism (on-line learner as producer) is characterized by greater awareness of and responsiveness to the distant museum learner.

Part III of the book, “Cultural Heritage and Virtual Systems,” reviews projects and applications of virtual reality in the area of cultural heritage, beginning with Sarah Kenderdine’s essay “Speaking in Rama: Panoramic Vision in Cultural Heritage Visualization.” Kenderdine investigates the history of panoramic immersion, from cave paintings and magic lanterns to contemporary virtual reality. Panoramic vision systems create virtual spaces in past environments or remote real-world locations that can be inhabited by the viewer. Increasing sophistication requires less imagination from the spectator, however. In “Dialing Up the Past,” Erik Champion and Bharat Dave provide an overview of digital imagery from early days to current interactive multimedia representations. They also discuss how sense of place has come to occupy a central position in interactive digital environments.

“The Morphology of Space in Virtual Heritage” by Bernadette Flynn explores how access to heritage is becoming mediated through digital simulations and photographic
representations. Although the “aura” of the object may be lost, the user gains the “experience of navigation, immersion, vertigo, and losing oneself.” Two characteristics of virtual environments are explored in Slavko Milekic’s “Toward Tangible Virtualities Tangentialities”: the lack of support for experiential interactions with virtual information, and the emphasis placed on quantity rather than quality of information. Milekic challenges virtual environment designers to support user interactions that contribute to information transfer and retention and make the quality of virtually presented information meet or exceed real-life experience. Current browser-supported interactions are not conducive to active exploration and learning; instead, tactile, kinesthetic, verbal/auditory experiences must be incorporated into designs.

In “Ecological Cybernetics, Virtual Reality, and Virtual Heritage,” Maurizio Forte addresses the concept of virtual worlds as ecosystems. The user is positioned between the production of cultural information (the mind) and the communication/transmission of information (the virtual reality system and the body) in this complex of relations. “Geo-Storytelling: A Living Archive of Spatial Culture,” by Scot T. Refsland, Marc Tuters, and Jim Cooley, discusses “locative” media in the context of virtual heritage, including the concept of “Geograffiti,” an open-access spatial authoring system for mobile, network-enabled, location-aware devices. This virtual graffiti application allows both interaction with space without visibly altering it and more flexible storytelling. In “Urban Heritage Representations in Hyperdocuments,” Rodrigo Paraizo and José Ripper Kós discuss how hyperdocuments—links embedded in and connecting information—can be powerful tools for displaying physical urban structures and the connections that create urban spaces.

The anthology’s final essay “Automatic Archaeology: Bridging the Gap Between Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, and Archaeology,” by Juan Antonio Barceló, defines “archaeology” as the analysis of social actions performed in the past. Archaeologists should look for actions that have produced objects, and computer technology may be used to perform this inverse engineering.

At the beginning of the anthology, the editors state their intent “to serve a broad international audience” of “professionals, academics, and students working in all fields of cultural heritage (including museums, libraries, galleries, archives, and archeology), as well as education and information technology” (p. 2). To a large degree, this compilation should serve their purpose. In particular, it is a good reference for students of cultural heritage, as it provides overviews of earlier technologies, examines the current state of the art, and identifies problems to be addressed in the future. Likewise, academics wishing to conduct further research will find it of interest, particularly the first two sections (which may be of limited value to practicing professionals). Professionals may find the last section more useful, as it describes practical applications of technology in cultural institutions. Digital technologies are here to stay, though, and everyone working in cultural heritage fields would be wise to consider the issues and applications presented in this anthology.

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Archival Anxiety and the Vocational Calling is an intriguing compilation of essays regarding the archival profession from the viewpoint of Richard J. Cox, professor of library and information science at the University of Pittsburgh. The author has written over a dozen books in a career spanning more than four decades. In four parts, this latest work covers the topics of the archival profession, government secrecy, ethics, and teaching the next generation of professionals.

The book begins with a lengthy yet admirable essay by Cox examining the issues surrounding what he calls the archival/records management “calling.” This is not surprising given the length and depth of Cox’s career. His description of the angst felt by those in the profession who have no formalized graduate education, versus that felt by those with a graduate education but little or no experience is particularly apt. Cox includes resources about furthering education, networking, and mentoring that are particularly helpful to those new to the field as well as those considering formalized continuing education.

Next is an essay regarding the Public Records Office of Colonial Williamsburg. Cox’s discussion of the original and subsequent archival purposes for the building is particularly interesting. He concludes with an expressed wish that the building could be in part repurposed to include an exhibit detailing the “making and keeping of documents...[and] visitors could ask about the nature of older records systems that...support both the interpretation of the eighteenth century town and the modern genealogist’s quest for their ancestors...” (p. 53). This is a viewpoint that would be popular with genealogists hoping to find key documents for their research.

The next section focuses on government archives and the secrecy of documents. In light of the events of 9/11 and the focus on anti-terrorism, the idea of an informed public as a forearmed public is not a new one. Unfortunately, government transparency may be a long time coming. Cox discusses at length presidential libraries, redacted documents, and documents saved from gulags and imprisoned leaders like Nelson Mandela. His national and international views are eye-opening and give both the seasoned and newly-minted archivist much food for thought.

Chapter six discusses the scandal of the reclassification of government documents formerly declassified by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). On April 11, 2006, the public discovered that NARA had signed two agreements in secret with several federal intelligence agencies to “…remove previously declassified records from the shelves of the National Archives” (p. 103). For those not aware of the issues and players, this chapter goes into detail about the communiqués between NARA staff, the author of this book, and the news outlets that covered the story. Their intersection with the Society of American Archivists presents an interesting look at the politics of a government organization pushing its agenda and a professional organization trying to maintain standards. Cox’s conclusion is not a happy one, forecasting the eventual erosion of the archival profession and its mission to provide open access to historical documents.
Chapter seven presents a multifaceted discussion of professional ethics for archivists in records management positions in corporations and academia. Using the examples of Enron and Arthur Anderson, Cox highlights the risks inherent in the profession, such as shredding of documents (Enron) and questionable auditing practices (Arthur Anderson). Whistle blowing and destruction of key documents are only two of the risks explored. On the subject of appraisal decisions, the next essay in the chapter discusses the decision by SAA to end the Archives & Archivists Listserv, and Cox classifies the resulting fallout as “a sad and disturbing episode in the history of the Society of American Archivists” (p. 182). A final essay on Anthony Clark, a researcher on presidential libraries who gave a talk attended by the author, discusses Clark’s problems obtaining from NARA staff information that should have been openly accessible.

The final section of essays in the book discusses the next generation of archivists—how do we teach them amidst all the ethical dilemmas, controversy, debates, and rapid change? Cox’s first essay on “Revisiting the Archival Finding Aid” takes a sharp look at the development of this crucial research tool and how it is shaped by the individual archivist’s perception of the collection. He discusses such topics as advocacy for archives, the challenge of archival work, and issues facing new archivists in the digital age.

Cox’s last essay on appraisal and his concluding thoughts provide readers with ample information to contemplate, whether they are currently practicing in the profession, considering it, or embarking on it fresh from graduate studies. Overall, the book is exceptionally well-written. Helpful footnotes point to further reading in topical areas of interest. For those just entering the profession, Cox’s book is akin to Jenkinson, Schellenburg, or Thornton in its profile of a profession exploring the dichotomy of theory and practice in a state of perpetual change.

This volume is a must-read for those wanting a broad overview of issues and events surrounding the field of archives past, present, and future. Read this book to find out how one of the profession’s leading educators views the field—a view as enlightening as it is anxiety-provoking.

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Writing a book about the quickly changing world of Web 2.0 and archivists’ use of its applications is daring, to say the least. The ultimate challenge of hitting such a constantly moving target is ensuring its continued relevance. How do you create something that enlightens past developments, informs today’s practice, and will guide future archivists? Editor Kate Theimer and the other authors of the essays and case studies that comprise *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users* have plotted an intelligent roadmap for addressing this difficult set of professional challenges.

Many of the authors in *A Different Kind of Web* are acutely aware of the rapidly shifting nature of this topic. For example, in his essay “Going to See the Elephant: Archives Diversity, and the Social Web,” Terry Baxter remarks that “by the time this book is published, Web 2.0 may have already moved into the historical footnote category” (p. 275). While this book is still relevant to today’s profession, Theimer anticipates the fate that Baxter has in mind. In her introduction, she explains that in addition to informing modern archival practice, one purpose of the book is “to document our current thinking and use of the web for the benefit of future scholars” (p. vii).

The case studies in *A Different Kind of Web* explore archivists’ use of the most common social media applications, such as Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, blogs, Wikipedia, and YouTube. Each case study conforms to a uniform structure: overview of the repository, business drivers, setting the stage, results, challenges, lessons learned, and next steps. This formula allows readers to come to their own conclusions about the effectiveness of each social media application as well as each institution’s implementation of the application.

While the case studies address diverse uses of social media, what binds them together is archivists’ and repositories’ willingness to invite users into archival processes. A good example of this prevailing attitude is the processing blog *A View to Hugh* discussed in Stephen J. Fletcher’s essay. Through photographs and detailed stories of processing the Hugh Morton Collection of Photographs and Films, this blog has opened up the archival experience to those outside the profession. It has given the public an idea of what an archivist does as well as the many challenges and decisions that archivists face in processing a large collection.

The number of case study authors who employed Web 2.0 applications without clear plans or success criteria surprised me. Many of the case study authors acknowledged the problem of quantifying success, though all considered their efforts a success. Perhaps the lack of precise metrics and extensive planning speak more to the ease of use and implementation of social media applications than to carelessness on the part of archivists and institutions. These two factors have also created a low-risk environment for archivists who want to experiment with social media. In her case study, Mattie Taormina characterizes Stanford University Library’s use of Second Life as an experiment (p. 47). In talking about lessons learned from the Library of Congress’s Flickr Commons Project, Helena Zinkham and Michelle Springer similarly admit that
a “leap of faith in trying something new may also be needed” (p. 112). Taking leaps of faith and experimenting with these tools is needed, but as Randall Jimerson cautions in his essay, social media is not a professional panacea (p. 328).

“Liberating Archival Images: The PhotosNormandie Project on Flickr” by Patrick Peccatte is one of the more interesting case studies because of the project’s creator and his use of archival material. Unlike many of the authors in this volume, Peccatte is not associated with an archival institution or repository. By collecting public domain photographs freely available on-line and posting them on Flickr, he is trying to create better descriptions of photographs of the Battle of Normandy during World War II. This case study is important for archivists because it provides a glimpse into how archives will be used in the future. It underscores the need for archivists to cede more control over their collections for the purposes of creative uses and reuses of their materials.

As new applications and technologies take the place of current ones, and as archivists become more familiar and comfortable connecting with users though social media, these case studies will inevitably become less and less relevant to daily practice. A Different Kind of Web will avoid a fate of obsolescence and obscurity by its inclusion of essays that frame the case studies and investigate larger currents of archival thought. These essays discuss issues such as authenticity and authority, mediation, professional diversity, intellectual control, and equality of access, all of which transcend any particular social media application.

In her essay “Balancing Archival Authority with Encouraging Authentic Voices to Engage with Records,” Elizabeth Yakel conceptualizes the Web 2.0 phenomena as a “Great Opening” of archives. In fact, she claims that it is the second such opening. The first great opening, according to Yakel, occurred in the 1960s when archivists and repositories opened their doors to researchers of all kinds and expanded their collecting scopes to include records from previously undocumented members of society. Web 2.0, in her words, “…furthers the focus on access begun in the ‘First Great Opening,’ [and] it more directly encroaches on the authority of the archives/archivist to represent the collections” (p. 77). Because of the direct challenge to the authority of archivists as intermediaries between users and materials, many have been hesitant to completely embrace both great openings. It remains to be seen what effect the second opening will have on the profession. If the results of the first openings serve as any sort of guide, then it will surely enrich our collections as well as increase both the number of our users, and, ultimately, archivists’ societal value.

Some of the authors in this volume cast doubt on the notion that Web 2.0 is an entirely new phenomenon. In his comparison of 1990s AOL and Facebook, Terry Baxter points out that many of today’s social media applications and services are conceptually analogous to previous technologies (p. 275). These similarities are easy to lose track of when faced with the numerous social media applications being developed every year. Just as Baxter finds parallels in the technologies of the past, historian Robert Townsend in his contribution draws comparisons between the role of users in the early twentieth century and that of today. He reminds us how important early researchers were in preserving, describing, publishing, acquiring, and advocating for archival material during the first half of the twentieth century. The relationship between users and archives that Townsend so deftly outlines presents an opportunity to see our current users in a
new light, not just as passive receivers of archival information, but as active creators, collaborators, advocates, and shapers of archives. More importantly, this relationship places users squarely in the center of the archival universe. In his essay, Randall Jimerson echoes the historical approach to understanding the impact of social media on the archival profession. According to Jimerson, Web 2.0 tools are simply tools. While not discouraging their use, he urges archivists not to lose sight of the core principles on which the profession is based. He also warns archivists that a digital divide still exists between those with access to technology and those without it. As a result, Jimerson envisions social media not as a replacement, but as a complementary tool for access.

Kate Theimer’s second contribution to the volume both serves as the book’s conclusion and as an expansion of her definition of Archives 2.0. She makes it clear that Archives 2.0 is not a buzzword that simply denotes Web 2.0 as used by archives. It is akin to a new professional outlook or philosophy. Archives 2.0 is, as Theimer further explains, “an approach to archival practice that promotes openness and flexibility. It is an approach in which archivists are user-centered and embrace opportunities to use technology to share collections, interact with users, and improve internal efficiency” (p. 335).

_A Different Kind of Web_ has much to offer archivists interested in archival history, Web 2.0, archival theory, and outreach. It presents different professional voices, challenging ideas, and innovative uses of social media. It also addresses today’s pertinent archival issues and practices, and not only contextualizes them within developments of the past, but also anticipates future debates and uses of archival material. This type of thoughtful and comprehensive approach to the analysis of social media (or any archival issue, for that matter) is and will continue to be valuable to the profession.

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