

## BOOK REVIEWS

Amy Cooper Cary, Reviews Editor

### Preserving Digital Materials

By Ross Harvey. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2012. 264 pp. Hard cover. \$105.00. ISBN 978-3-11-025368-9.

Just over six years separate the publication of the first and second editions of Ross Harvey's *Preserving Digital Materials*. In that time, the world has changed—again. When Saur published the first edition in 2005, the cultural heritage community widely accepted that the technical and organizational aspects of digital preservation had become something of a subfield of professional practice—perhaps a subtle form of wishful thinking that someone else would master the clues to a solution. Between 2005 and 2012, however, social media, commerce, communication, entertainment, and learning have largely migrated to server farms and digital clouds where personal privacy and long-term preservation resemble quaint artifacts of a bygone era. With ubiquity comes dependence and with dependence comes risk. Digital preservation is now everyone's problem.

It is against the reality of a nearly all-digital information environment that Ross Harvey updates his important survey of the digital preservation landscape. In a deft bit of editorial creativity, Harvey manages to preserve the useful structure and most important intellectual content of the first edition while expanding the international scope of the coverage and integrating new research, new projects, and a new optimism in progress toward a collaborative approach to preserving resources in digital form.

*Preserving Digital Materials* is, at its heart, a tour de force review of the literature documenting the many projects and programs that have advanced digital preservation practice over the past fifteen years. The extensive bibliography contains more than 450 sources, all of which Harvey works into his ten-chapter narrative. For the second edition, fully one-third of his sources have been published since the first edition appeared, demonstrating clearly the consistent growth of research and practice in the digital preservation field. Clusters of new publications that Harvey works into the second edition demonstrate advances in doctoral-level research on digital preservation (e.g., Cal Lee), the emergence of certification initiatives for preservation repositories (e.g., TRAC and DRAMBORA), the development of new technology

infrastructures for preserved content (e.g., LOCKSS, Portico, HathiTrust), and the increasing maturity of national and international initiatives (e.g., NDIIPP, JISC, Digital Preservation Coalition, Planets).

Ross Harvey is particularly well qualified to present an accessible review of the international scope of digital preservation initiatives. He was born and educated in New Zealand and moved to Australia in 1987, where he practiced librarianship and made his initial contributions to preservation and digital preservation. He has extensive experience in research projects in Australia and the United Kingdom, having consulted and written widely over the past twenty-five years. He has taught in universities in Australia, Singapore, Scotland, and Canada. Currently, Harvey is visiting professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College, Boston, a position he has held since 2008. The first edition of *Preserving Digital Materials* properly reflects his roots by drawing deeply on the admirable Australian experience with digital preservation. The second edition benefits greatly from Harvey's worldview. The most innovative digital preservation projects in the Western world deeply inform the book, which on the surface might be seen as narrow cultural relativism. In reality, digital preservation theory and practice are truly global challenges whose solutions lie in advances in research and development that can only emerge from the coordinated efforts of national governments, research universities, and the information industries most responsible for today's ubiquitous digital environment.

The structure of *Preserving Digital Materials* lends itself to reflection on and engagement with most of the key issues of digital preservation. The first three chapters are definitional in character. Harvey does a very good job synthesizing how digital preservation has established a distinctive paradigm apart from traditional preservation perspectives. This distinctiveness stems in part from the immediacy of the digital preservation risk and in part from the changing relationships among content creators, content users, and content preservers. Harvey highlights the differences between preserving the artifacts of digital information (media) and preserving digital content as information objects. Indeed, the title of the volume is an explicit recognition that digital information is neither stateless nor devoid of substance. One of the most important themes of Harvey's book is that successful digital preservation turns on a deep understanding of the materials and the tangible nature of digital information systems. The heart of Harvey's analysis adopts a model of digital preservation developed by Ken Thibodeau (from his work on the InterPARES project) and two independent but complementary digital preservation guidelines developed by UNESCO (with the National Library Australia) and the United Kingdom's Digital Preservation Coalition. Chapter 7 focuses on approaches to preserving the technological components that store and deliver digital information, while

chapter 8 emphasizes efforts to preserve information objects in formats that do not depend on underlying technology systems. Chapters 5, 6, and 9 frame these two approaches to digital preservation with a solid description of viable digital preservation strategies and collaborative frameworks.

Because of its very strong grounding on the evolution of digital preservation thinking and practice, *Preserving Digital Materials* could possibly serve as one of several textbooks for a course on digital preservation. Harvey drives his argument straight up the middle of the sociotechnical perspective on digital preservation without ever dwelling too deeply on either aspect. *Preserving Digital Materials* is not a technical primer, although the book is fully informed by technical developments in the creation of preservation repositories, XML-based metadata schemes, the state of tools for diagnosing preservation problems, and trends in automating the production of metadata and migration paths. Harvey limits the technical content of digital preservation by focusing on a variety of national and international projects that are doing the best technical work in the field. Teachers and students would likely have to pursue the plethora of white papers and websites that provide links to code and downloadable applications. It remains an open question whether digital preservation practice can be taught effectively in a lecture/discussion format, without recourse to technology laboratories and practical engagement experiences.

On the social side of the socio-technical perspective, *Preserving Digital Materials* does not deeply engage the societal, personal, or organizational contexts of digital preservation particularly deeply. Chapter 4 covers selection for preservation, which is one of many aspects of digital preservation that are essentially nontechnical in nature. Although the chapter summarizes some of the major issues that organizations have wrestled with over the years in library selection and archival appraisal (e.g., intellectual property, assessing value, information life cycles), the review is a bit of a gloss. Harvey draws on a variety of projects whose goals are explicitly about developing frameworks for selection policy development, particularly those fostered by UNESCO, the United Kingdom's Digital Curation Centre, and innovative work a decade ago by a NSF-DELOS working group. Harvey expresses optimism about the state of thinking on selection issues, but leaves readers with doubt about the gap between an abstract theory of selection and the practical challenges of determining the significance of what can and should be saved for the long term.

The final chapter in *Preserving Digital Materials* provides a fascinating benchmark on false starts and progress made over the past decade in coming to terms with the digital world. Harvey ended the first edition of his book with an enthusiastic endorsement of Microsoft's MyLifeBits project, a now dead-in-the-water effort to create a "lifetime store of everything" in a personal digital cache. It is almost endearing now to think that Microsoft wanted to help solve the

problem of personal digital archiving with tools that manifestly increase the quantity and diversity of information about our everyday lives. As we cede archiving of our personal identities and organizational records to Facebook and the cloud, respectively, it pays to be cautious in predicting the future of digital preservation practice. With the second edition of *Preserving Digital Materials*, Harvey wisely points to ten recent developments in digital preservation that have emerged from the cultural heritage community. He finds a renewed optimism in the level of societal awareness, the richness of the knowledge base, and the vibrant community of researchers that is tackling the most important issues in digital preservation.

The second edition of *Preserving Digital Materials* is a worthy read right now—a near-comprehensive portrait of the emergence of digital preservation as a critical component of modern information management practice. Placed alongside the first edition from 2005, Ross Harvey’s book is a well-written benchmark of progress that will also serve a decade or so from now as a reminder of the shape of the road ahead.

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*School of Information*  
*University of Michigan*

### **I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era**

Edited by Christopher A. Lee. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. 380 pp. Soft cover. Available from the Society of American Archivists, \$49.95 members, \$69.95 nonmembers. ISBN 1-931666-38-5.

This provocative book offers a collection of ten essays representing new ideas on how cultural institutions and individuals can best manage personal digital information. Combining disciplines, most notably ARM (Archives and Records Management) and PIM (Personal Information Management), these essays include international perspectives from Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Edited by Christopher A. (Cal) Lee, associate professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina, *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era*, argues that “five trends have dramatically changed the nature and status of personal collections: professionalization; professional convergence around digital preservation; increased storage capacity available to individuals; distribution of collections; and research focusing on individual stories” (p. 4). Lee’s introduction promises to guide archivists’ thinking about personal digital materials by exploring challenges and opportunities, and by focusing on “five associated areas of literature: the administration of personal papers and manuscript collections;

electronic recordkeeping; digital data recovery and forensics; personal information management; and the design of tools for user-generated collections” (p. 7). Although Lee believes that *I, Digital* can serve as a catalyst for the PIM research community to collaborate with professional archivists, the evidence and opinions presented in this book suggest that, in reality, PIM practitioners have more to learn from traditional archival practices and records management policies than vice versa.

The three main sections of this book are “Conceptual Foundations and Motivations,” “Specific Genres and Document Types,” and “Implications for Memory Institutions.” It includes many illustrations, charts, tables, sidebars, and screenshots, and each chapter has scores of endnotes, plus a fifty-five-page bibliography referencing many foundational essays for context. Unfortunately, the book is flawed and uneven because much of the thinking about personal collections relies on data collected online from anonymous users, without critical evaluation or appraisal; it mainly focuses on single-use, short-term strategies for immediate access, while largely ignoring a discussion of sharing and distributing assets across wide networks and between digital platforms. But short-term, Band-Aid solutions such as “benign neglect” promoted by Cathy Marshall and other PIM practitioners contradict better proactive strategies to provide secure and managed long-term access to assets of enduring value. By blurring the boundaries between PIM and ARM, *I, Digital* undermines the critical, but largely unexamined, distinction between personal information management as a practicality and personally identifiable information governance as a policy on an institutional and societal level. Consequently, some of the recommended best practices are drawn from nonauthoritative sources (amateur photographers, anonymous online commenters, and Microsoft researchers) and, as presented in this book, directly contradict archival common sense and best practices.

The first part, “Conceptual Foundations and Motivations,” is far and away the strongest section of the book. It comprises four paradigm-shifting perspectives addressing conceptual foundations and domains of personal information management (PIM), archives and records management (ARM), and electronic recordkeeping (ERK), as well as the Australian records continuum. The outstanding first chapter, “And Now the Twain Shall Meet: Exploring the Connections with PIM and Archives,” co-authored by Cal Lee and Robert Capra, draws on the Dutch manual<sup>1</sup> for core archival and recordkeeping concepts including original order and chain of custody, and focuses on even older concepts such as provenance and *respect des fonds*. The authors argue that electronic recordkeeping methods are also based on ideas and practices later

<sup>1</sup> S. Muller, J. A. Feith, R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, trans. A. Leavitt, (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1940).

established and developed by Sir Hilary Jenkinson and T. R. Schellenberg in regard to appraisal for institutional collections, and that foundational principles such as primary and secondary value have an impact on today's PIM strategies and expectations. This chapter points out that one significant source of confusion in PIM literature and research is that PIM focuses on both *personal information* management (management of information from or about private individuals) and personal *information management* (management of information by individuals, whether or not it is personal). Using a three-dimensional, two-by-two-by-two-inch cube, the authors clearly illustrate the three broad categories of integrated PIM activities: finding and re-finding, keeping, and organizing and managing. These activities are affected across time and networks, and between individuals and across institutions depending on context. This is an excellent essay describing some fundamental problems and strategies that cut across both areas of ARM and PIM literature. The authors raise many probing questions related to these differing perspectives and provide smart contextual information on the role of today's personal information artifacts.

In the second chapter, "Ghosts in the Machine: Towards a Principles-Based Approach to Making and Keeping Digital Personal Records," Adrian Cunningham, director of Strategic Relations at the National Archives of Australia, writes that whether we know it or not, individuals and institutions suffer from "digital amnesia" and "the challenge may not be what to collect . . . but rather what to identify and document and how to ensure its future survival, meaning and utility in a distributed custody context" (p. 82). He points out that the "ongoing technological transformation of personal information creation and management creates opportunities for ongoing reconceptualisations of notions of 'the archive' and archival endeavour" (pp. 82–83). Cunningham takes a step back to reveal the big picture, our enduring values, and he articulates twelve guiding principles—four records-related and eight systems-related principles—for continuous transformation. This chapter, deeply rooted in traditional archival concepts of evidential value, chain of custody, and continuum thinking, cogently describes foundational principles meant to guide actions for the development of programs and strategies.

The third chapter, "Challenges and Opportunities for Personal Digital Archiving," is firmly in the PIM school and revisits Jeffrey Rothenberg's dire predictions from 1995. The author, Catherine C. Marshall, senior researcher at Microsoft, adopts the digital library framework model: a two-dimensional pyramid or equilateral triangle with equal sides for content, technology, and stewardship practices, or, as the author states, "personal digital archiving will boil down to nothing more profound than deciding what we should keep, how and where we should store it, and what sorts of work people will have to do to

keep their digital collections alive” (p. 97). The chapter includes case studies and user interviews from hobbyists managing personal collections. Marshall notes that cheap storage encourages hoarding, and individuals “rely on periodic loss to keep uncontrolled growth in check” (p. 107), but she never addresses the fact that as storage gets cheaper, the guaranteed lifespan of storage media gets shorter. This chapter draws heavily on Marshall’s previous studies with participants offering “a range of different personal digital archiving studies” (p. 90). But in a subsection called “Archival Best Practices and Personal Stewardship,” the author states that at Emory University, “professional archivists are developing best practices for the stewardship of these personal collections” (p. 107). Noting the human tendency to keep rather than to cull, Marshall focuses on technology tips, arguing that benign neglect serves as a PIM correction to the problems of over-accumulation and inaccurate appraisals. Without citing any archival literature and referring to research studies carried out by the author herself, this chapter is geared to PIM practitioners, IT professionals, and computer scientists who believe IT and throw their hands up and repeat the mantra, “Don’t appraise; keep everything; storage is cheap.”

On the other hand, the outstanding fourth chapter, “Evidence of Me. . . In a Digital World,” by Sue McKemish, provides insightful analysis of how personal recordkeeping integrates with the continuum model by illustrating how record functions change as personal memories and evidence are shared and transferred beyond boundaries of individual spacetimes and contexts. Filled with excellent graphics and informative sidebars, this chapter describes how the continuum model identifies, captures, organizes, and distributes born-digital and electronic records with multiple provenances across networks as traces and functions change over space and time. McKemish provides crucial information for digital archivists and information professionals trying to navigate the boundaries between personal records and public recordkeeping. In the continuum model, records are depicted as dynamic objects, fixed in original content and structure, but constantly changing and mutating. Individuals who manage shared records with ephemeral and enduring values must understand that records are “always in a process of becoming” (p. 119). This chapter shows how continuum thinking organizes collections with extensible flexibility, and with an awareness of how personal, departmental, and institutional stakeholders’ records may impact evidential and transactional information and cultural memory.

The second part, “Specific Genres and Document Types,” focuses on two specific areas of practice: digital photography and the social Web or Web 2.0. This section is the least persuasive part of the book. “Three Backups Is a Minimum: A First Look at Norms and Practices in the Digital Photo Collections of Serious Photographers” concentrates mainly on information shared by

amateur photographers who posted comments to Photo.net. By focusing attention on “the collection management practices of amateur photographers” (p. 157), this chapter gathers recommendations and draws conclusions based mainly on the methods and practices of the “social world of photography” (p. 159) and gives only a passing mention to recommended and best practices of professional archivists and cultural heritage institutions. Without exploring in detail the different roles and responsibilities of professional archivists and amateur photographers, this chapter seeks to simplify, but ignores many fundamental archival concerns. By focusing on near-term collection management and workflows, the author (and online commenters) avoids discussion of long-term preservation of photos with enduring value. This “conceptual ambiguity” is best illustrated by the synonymous usage of “backup” to describe backup, storage, and archiving in this chapter’s title.

“Collecting the Externalized Me: Appraisal of Materials in the Social Web,” another chapter written by Cal Lee, investigates social media and Web 2.0 with an eye toward traditional distinctions between primary and secondary values, and material evidence and intellectual information (content). But, as the author notes, when appraising content from the Web in a Web 2.0 context, the distinction boils down to “publications to consult” and “records to collect” or personal *information management* and *personal information* management in public but private spaces. The author collects data and provides tables and summaries of the twenty most popular blogs (as ranked by Technorati, 2008) and identifies users of various social media services. Lee sees the blogosphere as a two-way medium where *provenance* is provenance, and effective Web collecting strategies allow personal information and user-generated content to be aggregated, appraised, and shared. He points to different appraisal strategies as a combination of a depth-first (hierarchical) appraisal of personal archives and a breadth-first appraisal of collections crawled through Web harvesting strategies.

In addressing Web archiving, Lee cites Hans Booms who argues that appraisal should be based on the value ascribed by those contemporary to the material and that appraisal should also be based on notions of representativeness. Citing Schellenberg’s insistence “about the differences between statistical sampling and the ‘special selection’ carried out by archivists” (p. 230), Lee cites three factors that make Web content appraisal different from appraisal of personal papers and calls for a very different model based on identifying selection criteria likely to capture a massive volume of user-generated content, a wide net to harvest and collect materials from a large and diverse population, and an ability to identify and collect materials distributed across networks in context. This chapter is primarily concerned with external Web archiving, not merely of collections, but of whole environments with related links and contextual information.

The third and final section is titled “Implications for Memory Institutions” and addresses strategies, plans, and practicalities related to public institutions and personal collections. “Take It Personally: The Implications of Personal Records in Electronic Form” by Rachel Onuf, archives analyst for the Archivists’ Toolkit, and Thomas Hyry, director of Special Collections at UCLA, notes that changes in technology have created profound challenges because “The American archival tradition has been an amalgamation of the public archives tradition, which mandates archives to collect and preserve records created by their parent institutions; and the historical manuscripts tradition, which directs archives to collect materials for their broader cultural, societal, and historical value” (p. 242). Downplaying, by briefly mentioning, the significant work of the Pittsburgh Project and the diplomatics framework from the University of British Columbia, the authors erroneously claim that up to the 1990s, “The only articles that had been published on the topic of personal electronic records were written by Australian archivists” (p. 242). The chapter ends with a call to action for archivists to embrace new digital tools that may lead to new fields of study and research methodologies building on the digital content we collect, access and organizational systems we use, and new skills we learn.

In “Making It Usable: Developing Personal Collection Tools for Digital Collections,” Leslie Johnston, Digital Media Projects coordinator at the Library of Congress, reports on the University of Virginia Library’s Digital Collections Repository. This chapter includes an excellent soup-to-nuts discussion of how key assumptions about information architecture and user services were articulated early and priorities were identified, so that within two years, a fully functional repository was launched for testing. The repository was released with a suite of tools to the entire university, and the project scaled up as the library started integrating objects from multiple sources, spreading across the university and providing an environment for faculty and users to collect digital objects and create a scholar’s workbench, an integrated framework where faculty can easily store, manage, curate, and share digital objects and collections in their full range of scholarly and teaching activities.

Johnston’s essay includes information gleaned from different stages of the repository’s development with crucial feedback from stakeholder audiences of different backgrounds. It is fascinating to read how faculty testers, student users, and focus groups provided significant insight that was converted into better functionality. With the inclusion of many screenshots, the reader sees how easily end users can interact with the new tools. The significance of this project is not simply the Digital Collections Repository itself, but that the project built and provides open-source archival tools needed for widespread use. But, by primarily focusing on making collections easier to use and more readily accessible, the author points out that the library does not address the challenges of keeping

found things found, information management, or the long-term preservation of digital media collections with enduring value.

Susan Thomas, digital archivist at the University of Oxford, concludes the book with a chapter on “Curating the I, Digital: Experiences at the Bodleian Library” and addresses the library’s problems with proactive collection management, ingesting legacy born-digital assets, and managing new materials in growing a hybrid archive. Because digital materials require more proactive preservation than paper records, Bodleian employs digital forensics tools to monitor bit-level integrity, while refining workflows needed for ingest and capture. They have learned at Bodleian that “Digital curation is not a problem with a final solution; archivists must learn to live with ongoing change in the documentary form and in archiving methodologies” (p. 301). Born-digital materials represent new challenges for digital archaeology, and digital forensics may represent new tools to better describe born-digital assets and archival collections.

Cal Lee has assembled a significant text with enlightening essays and an extensive bibliography that captures a moment in spacetime in which best practices, collection development plans, and collecting strategies converge and diverge. Every archivist or archival educational institution hoping to better understand and articulate best principles, practices, and strategies for digital archiving would be advised to study parts of this book closely. Though uneven, this book offers excellent insight and context because archivists stand at an information crosswalk separating our strategies and schemas from format and function.

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*Nickelodeon Creative Resources*

### **A Different Kind of Web: New Connections between Archives and Our Users**

Edited by Kate Theimer. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. 369 pp. Soft cover. \$69.95. ISBN 1-931666-39-3.

In her most recent book, *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections between Archives and Our Users*, Kate Thiemer successfully demonstrates her understanding of the archives profession and the challenges archival practitioners are currently facing and will continue to confront in the future. Drawing on her own knowledge and expertise in the field, Theimer is the author of the popular blog *ArchivesNext*, and the books *Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections* and has contributed chapters for two edited volumes that address archival practice. In *A Different Kind of Web*, Theimer brings together innovative archivists who share their experiences with implementing Web 2.0

technologies. Each of the four main sections of the book begins with an introductory essay that provides important context for the case studies that follow. All of the case studies included in the book adhere to the same format, which makes it easy for the reader to draw his or her own comparisons and conclusions. The final two chapters in the book address themes of diversity and systems of access to archival material. Theimer concludes her book with a few thoughts on where she believes the archival profession could be heading with the aid of Web 2.0 technologies.

In her preface, Theimer asserts that her book seeks to explore “how archives are using the tools of Web 2.0 to reach and interact with users, old and new” (p. xi). Building on that framework, Theimer suggests that the case studies included in her book offer practitioners not necessarily a step-by-step “how-to guide” for implementing Web 2.0 tools, but rather suggestions for innovative practices independent of any particular tool. Theimer articulates: “I also wanted to ensure that the content would continue to be valuable even after the specifics of the tools under discussion had changed” (p. xii). Interestingly, Theimer states that a third goal of her book seeks to document current thinking in the archival field about the use of the Web for the benefit of future scholars. These goals ensure that Theimer’s book remains relevant and an important resource as tools and the archival profession continue to evolve.

By editing her book with several different audiences in mind—students, practitioners, archival educators, historians, and history faculty—Theimer successfully illustrates that Web 2.0 tools are not used only by the under-thirty age group. Each section speaks to one or more of these audiences. Readers, especially those involved in archival or historical studies, can benefit from the information presented. The organization of the book mirrors the way I consider using Web 2.0 technologies: outreach first, and then engagement. The final two sections compelled me to consider new ways of implementing these tools through archival management practices and partnerships with practitioners outside of the archives field.

In the introductory essay for the outreach section, Joy Palmer and Jane Stevenson successfully articulate a question I have asked myself and others: are Web 2.0 tools “Something Worth Sitting For?” or worth the time it takes staff members to implement them as outreach tools. Their essay weighs possible implications for outreach methods that take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies. Palmer and Stevenson logically focus their discussion around the user. The most telling aspect of the five case studies is the different objectives each institution’s staff members had when beginning a social media initiative. When the Jewish Women’s Archive staff began a Twitter feed and the W. S. Hoole Special Collections at the University of Alabama created a Facebook page, neither had a real objective in mind. As Palmer and Stevenson characterize, they “embarked

on [their projects] in the spirit of experimentation” (p. 7). In contrast, Stephen Fletcher, who created “A View to Hugh,” a processing blog at the Hugh Morton Collection of Photography and Films, explicitly states that he and fellow staff members were “not motivated to use a Web 2.0 tool for the sake of using a Web 2.0 tool” (p. 21). Similarly, by creating YouTube videos at the University of Iowa, the staff offers users access to films that they might otherwise never see. The Second Life project at Stanford University offers readers a third approach to outreach methods through Web 2.0 technologies—that of a broader university research project. In their conclusion, Palmer and Stevenson aptly articulate, “We are still very much in a period of experimentation” (p. 19). The five case studies included in the outreach section embody the authors’ observations.

In the second section of Theimer’s book, Elizabeth Yakel’s introductory essay frames the case studies that focus on authority through the lens of engagement. Yakel accurately identifies that archival practitioners are often fearful of Web 2.0 technologies. The case studies in this section begin to answer the central question that Yakel poses in her essay: “How should the conflicting archival impulses of opening up archives and remaining the one authoritative archival voice be balanced in the emerging peer production environment?” (p. 84). In the first case study, Michele Combs of Syracuse University shares how, before contributing content to *Wikipedia*, she first studied the social norms that govern the site. Similarly, albeit with slightly different results, Helena Zinkham and Michelle Springer of the Library of Congress relate how their experiences with Flickr tested their conception of user engagement, as Flickr would not change its rules about deleting user comments.

Yakel accurately characterizes the other three chapters in this section written by staff members at the National Archives in the United Kingdom, the National Archives of Australia, and the Library of Congress as efforts to maintain control and authority, not attempts to create a community. After reading this section, I wanted more answers to Yakel’s initial question about openness and authority. Yakel concludes her essay asking the profession for more research on this topic and challenging practitioners to consider the motives behind the decisions they make regarding communities in Web 2.0 arenas.

James Gerencser’s introductory essay, “New Tools Equal New Opportunities: Using Social Media to Achieve Archival Management Goals,” builds upon the themes to which Yakel draws attention through his analysis of archival management. Through the use of Web 2.0 tools, Gerencser successfully argues that archival managers now have the opportunity to open up their practices to the public. Those practices include processing and describing collections, as illustrated through the UMass “catablog” project. Danielle Kovas and Rob Cox describe their experience creating the *UMarmot* catablog using WordPress software, which allows them to offer users collection-level descriptions for all of

their holdings, as well as detailed finding aids for those collections that staff process. Amy Schindler at the College of William and Mary created a wiki to share and solicit contributions about campus history. In the third case study, Malinda Triller uses Drupal to create a blog that stores reference questions and answers that fellow staff members can add to and that the public can access. The three case studies included in this section offer readers potentially time-saving workflows and tools that encourage sharing information among colleagues, as well as the public. Most important, archivists do not need to create the perfect finding aid, reference answer, or campus history to share that information with the public. Striving for perfection, as Gerencser seems to argue, limits the impact archivists and archives can have on the public.

The final three essays successfully compel the reader to consider the archival profession from an “outsider’s” point of view. Robert Townsend analyzes past, present, and potential relationships between archivists and historians. His central claim, “to fully embrace Web 2.0, archivists need to look to this diverse community of users as potential collaborators, whose interests and engagement with your materials can be harnessed to serve archives and their staff,” appears to be an obvious solution (p. 213). However, as the preceding sections highlight, ceding control, authority, and management of archival tools to the public tends to incite fear among archivists, rather than the excitement I felt when reading Townsend’s essay.

Both Terry Baxter’s and Randall Jimerson’s essays provide crucial starting points from which archivists must analyze their motives behind using Web 2.0 tools and which audiences they might be leaving out when implementing these tools. I hope to see the themes of diversity and the importance of parallel systems of access in future SAA conferences and journal articles.

As Kate Theimer concludes in her essay, “Archivists and Audiences: New Connections and Changing Roles in Archives 2.0,” the notion of a “different kind of web” offers both practitioners and users the opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another in brand new environments. As Theimer’s preface and subsequent case studies and concluding essays support, while it remains impossible to know what the Web will look like even five years from now, archivists must be committed to innovation and experimentation to remain relevant.

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*University of Rochester*

### **Academic Archives: Managing the Next Generation of College and University Archives, Records and Special Collections**

By Aaron D. Purcell. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2012. 336 pp. Soft cover. \$95.00. ISBN 978-1555707699.

After spending seven years as an archivist for religious communities, I made a sudden switch to academic archives—to a one-stop-shopping position as head of archives, records manager, and special collections curator. I wish I'd had Aaron Purcell's *Academic Archives: Managing the Next Generation of College and University Archives, Records and Special Collections*. Part field guide, part primer, part crosswalk from archives in general to archives in the university specific, this book would have prepared me for the less obvious challenges I would encounter: the peculiar culture of the academic library, the evolving needs of patrons, and the myriad roles of a university archivist. The book would have also helped me see how high the performance bar is set. Throughout, Purcell markedly places great demands and expectations on the archivist in response to the academic environment and the needs of the time.

The strength and defining characteristic of *Academic Archives* is its comprehensiveness. Very ambitious in scope, the book details preparation for an academic archives career, from management and administrative functions to the future of the field. Any one of these topics—in fact, any of the ten twenty-to-thirty-five-page chapters—could become a book on its own.

Purcell herds these various themes into three parts: “Archives and the Academic Environment,” “Building and Updating an Academic Archives Program,” and “The Future of Academic Archives.” The chapters of the first section offer practical advice, but their value lies more in the sparks of insight gleaned from the author's experience. They define the placement of academic archives, and the work of the archivist in the profession in general, in the environment of the academic library and in the particular setting of special collections.

Purcell describes the current archives setting by presenting a timely interpretation of the 2004 survey A\*CENSUS, aided by effective bulleted lists and graphics to summarize and accent. The author notes the predominance of female archivists—a flip from the 1950s—and touches on the need for greater diversity, more technical expertise, and increased training opportunities (pp. 9–11). His call for excellence on the part of the individual archivist grows in the rest of the chapter, where he introduces the newcomer to the need for continuous education and training, the role of performance evaluation along one's career path, the need for scholarship according to a personal research agenda, and the demands of service within and outside the college or university—all components of the “Überarchivist” in the proverbial basements of academia.

A call for prioritization of many demands admonishes new archivists to “pick commitments carefully, especially after reaching a critical mass of responsibilities” (p. 22).

That discussion gives way to one of the strongest chapters in the book: “The Mission of College and University Libraries and Academic Archives.” *Academic Archives* both distills a mission for archives in the academic setting and at our current locus in technological and educational history, and then provides a broad yet thorough description of every aspect of that mission, resulting in a concise, reliable summary of academic library activity, goals, and trends. Purcell describes, for example, the modern library and the generations of its most prominent users, as well as the functionally different types of users (pp. 26–28). He presents the mosaic of research interests, needs, and skills, something he understands as a history scholar himself. He leads from the users’ interests to the fund-raising required to meet them (pp. 36–39). Despite the broad scope, specifics are not lacking. He reviews the Google Book controversies and libraries’ opportunities to compete or collaborate with that and similar efforts (pp. 41–43), to cite one of many examples.

Finishing the section on the academic environment is a chapter setting archives in their special collections home. A history of special collections, including the degree to which World War II constitutes a turning point for these repositories (pp. 54–56) prefaces a discussion of services and spaces—down to décor and furniture—and new directions, such as the Hidden Collections Initiative (pp. 78–81). As after each chapter, Purcell cites his many references. The works represent classic texts and new literature and show an impressive amount of research. The book would be valuable as a collection of chapter bibliographies alone.

Having established the environment of academic archives, Purcell moves on to “Building and Updating an Academic Archives Program,” a section consisting of six chapters that roughly represent the accepted functions of any archive: mission and vision, collection development, accessions, processing, management, and outreach, plus records management and digital content. These chapters vary in depth of coverage. Most serve as a review of tenets for the function, such as the ten pages covering the timeless principles and practice of archival processing. The “updating” in the title is valid, however. Each chapter emphasizes modern currents within the field, such as the author’s distillation of the three types of researchers who most use an academic archives website or virtual reading room (pp. 232–33).

The section opens with a guide to establishing a mission for the archives. As in all chapters, the author initially poses several larger questions. For instance, the basic question here is “How does one craft and develop a mission for their archival program?” Answering, he names relevance the key to survival in

productivity-driven times (p. 89). The consummate archivist is again pivotal in Purcell's view, as the chapter ends with a passionate discourse on the need for a visionary leader, the archival leader versus the mere manager, and thirteen leadership traits, from hard and soft skills to political savvy (p. 106).

Representative of the remaining chapters devoted to the traditional functions of archives is "Records Management and the Academic Archives." This textbooklike chapter introduces basic principles, such as the life cycle of records and the role of a records manager, and points to the challenges of electronic records, comparable to every records management text available. The section "Starting or Re-Starting a Campus Records Management Program" constitutes a unique resource, however. Themes such as how the records program fits into the campus structure and a concise consideration of legal factors show thorough research. Life experience must stand behind the discussion of how archival and records management interests can be at odds, especially when the archivist is the records manager (p. 129). Not surprisingly, the visionary records manager appears as well: "Effective leaders cultivate interest in their programs, develop and carry out schedules, work with archivists, manage a records center, and inspire their staff" (p. 135).

Further chapters in the "Building and Updating" section follow a similar pattern: basic information applied to the academic environment followed by insight into current practice, evenly researched and well written.

"The Future of Academic Archives"—Purcell's final section—contains only one chapter: "Emerging Trends and the Horizon for Academic Archives." In it, the author climbs his podium and becomes an advocate, evangelist, and recruiter of the superhero-archivist, full of skill, vision, and endless energy. He begins with a dose of harsh reality:

Making predictions can be dangerous, especially when changing technology and availability of resources affect those forecasts. . . . [T]he archival profession is faced with how to build programs and meet the demands of researchers during periods of unpredictable support, a host of unanswered questions about electronic records, and the transition of professional leadership from one generation to the next. (p. 279)

The author answers a list of almost overwhelming future problems with pages of equally overwhelming solutions, returning to excellent specific archival education, perhaps via a separate degree program, along with evermore training and professional involvement. He sees the future archivist as "an effective manager of people, spaces and collections, a developer of instructional and reference services, a builder of collections, successful with donors, a records manager in an electronic environment, a leader of digitization projects" (p. 292), as well as a fund-raiser, activist, master of outreach, and "active scholar

with [an] academic reputation” (pp. 293–96) The author balances the current situation and the trends of the profession, in a neat equation, illustrated by a discussion of the Archives 2.0 movement (pp. 282–83).

While Purcell’s book at times has the feel of a travel guide that aims to give the reader a preview of what to expect upon arrival in the land of academic archives, it also has an autobiographical tone. Beyond research, it represents the author’s experiences navigating the academic archives waters. Purcell has been director of Special Collections at Virginia Tech since 2000. Like a biography, it not only informs; it also encourages the reader to reflect on his or her own experiences and how they mesh or collide with those of the author, soliciting agreement or dissent.

The weaknesses of this book are minor. For instance, while the book is accessible because the author presumes little previous subject knowledge on the part of the reader, statements of the obvious dilute some of the best observations. I often skimmed through, nodding to myself until I got to something more intriguing. Somewhat seasoned archivists may read it like I did. In addition, references are overcited in the text—a small detail that, however, interrupts the reader.

Second, although the title includes the words “Next Generation,” the book’s treatment of electronic records includes no new information beyond what is and has been available in any electronic records publications for the last five years. The chapter “Digital Frontiers and Electronic Challenges” provides a thorough overview for the novice or for a professor looking for a concise catch-all, but nothing new for the archivist who has done any reading or thinking about digital records. In fairness, the author repeatedly calls for serious thought about the future throughout the book.

Purcell claims a wide intended audience in his preface: “. . . archivists of all ranks and experience, archivists working outside of academic libraries, archivists in training, other information professionals, library directors, historians and members of the academic community” (p. xiv). While this claim is justified, I recommend this book especially to three categories of readers. Purcell’s work will bring those new to the academic archives world up to speed and make them aware of the quirks and unique requirements of their new home faster and less painfully than daily experience will. Students can find in *Academic Archives* a thorough case study, very effectively illuminating every aspect of archival work with the light of a particular subculture—academia. Finally, the historian or philosopher of archives will find ample fodder for musing about the old and new roles of archives in academia, the changing expectations of those they serve, and the purity of various strains of theory. Anyone in Purcell’s intended audience or mine, however, will not fail to find the book valuable as a planning

tool, a refresher course, a bit of strategic prophesy, or a checklist for covering bases, in addition to an accessible and comprehensive read.

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*University of Wisconsin—Parkside*

### **Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives**

Edited by Larry J. Hackman. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. xi, 411 pp. Soft cover. Available from the Society of American Archivists, \$39.95 members, \$56.00 nonmembers. ISBN 1-931666-37-7.

Taken as a profession, we archivists have never been the most adept or active at tooting our own horns. Whether this reticence is born out of our traditional role as quiet custodians of historical records, or our reluctance to act independently of our institutions, or even simple social awkwardness, it's hard to say. (I mean, if we really wanted to frequently interact with people and talk up ourselves and our achievements, we probably should all have become politicians.) However, it's becoming increasingly obvious in these strained economic times that we need to accept and embrace the role of firm, consistent, and active advocates for our collections and institutions. Money and other resources are tight, and we need to raise stronger voices in lobbying for our interests.

Ours is a practical field, and we require practical guidance to be successful at our jobs. Therefore, archivists who need to be concerned with advocacy as a key professional responsibility (that is, all archivists everywhere) should welcome Larry Hackman's eminently useful, eminently readable volume *Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives*. Hackman is ably poised to speak on the subject of advocacy: he was the first director of the historical records program at the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (1975–1981). Furthermore, as New York State Archivist from 1981 to 1995, he led the New York State Archives and Records Administration in a large-scale advocacy campaign that transformed the institution and gave it a powerful local records program. Hackman, and the book's other contributors, speak from deep and practical experience about the need for concerted archival advocacy.

Hackman's introduction and opening essay set the tone. He defines *advocacy* as "activities consciously aimed to persuade individuals or organizations to act on behalf of a program or institution" (p. vii). This is a good general definition that encompasses a wide variety of potential institutional actions that can be brought to bear; other professionals may differ, and the authors of the various case studies that follow Hackman's essay sometimes use *advocacy* in slightly different ways. As an umbrella definition, however, Hackman's should apply to any institution. He notes that the professional competence of many

archivists in other areas does not always translate to effectiveness in advocacy and that this condition needs to change. To assist archivists in making this change, Hackman formulates a series of key principles that thread throughout the case studies and the rest of the work. These principles include, among others: the creation of a strong overall institutional infrastructure as the chief goal in advocacy; the commitment to advocacy as a long-term, ongoing activity; the evidence of an effective archives well run by professional staff as the best advocacy tool possible; the need for influential friends and the ability to invest those influences wisely; the importance of making advocacy a team activity for an institution's entire leadership and staff; the value of effective communication; the ubiquity of possible advocacy opportunities; the need to take some risks; and the understanding that advocacy needs to be a core function in any archives.

I believe that little is new in what Hackman is trying to tell us. It's all useful, common-sense advice, but for the most part nothing particularly groundbreaking—instead, it is the distillation of Hackman's decades of professional experience, which I'm sure reflects in the careers of many other archivists as well. What *is* really valuable about this particular volume is how it usefully packages a treasure trove of practical knowledge into a single, readable work while also highlighting useful extensions of that knowledge into real, working environments.

But it's not all recycled information. I was struck, and impressed, by two particular points. I've seen advocacy used to promote or encourage the development of particular collections or specific one-time projects, but these activities have generally been limited in nature. In this book, I note Hackman's consistent theme that good advocacy requires continual looking to the future. Although a number of the case studies that follow the opening essay concern one-time or otherwise limited projects, the book as a whole notes that advocacy is an archival function that, to be truly successful, must work toward the *ongoing, long-term* operation of the institution. Good advocacy has no true endpoint.

I also really appreciate Hackman's comment that "Advocacy is part of the core work of an archives; it is not an add-on or, in reality, an option" (p. 11). Again, in my experience, the range of advocacy activities often strikes me as peripheral, best left to senior administrators or professionals specifically tasked with outreach or lobbying responsibilities. But Hackman and his contributors have convinced me, as I hope they do other readers, that all advocacy must step into line with appraisal, arrangement and description, reference, and our other key job functions, if it is to be effective. In her summary of the book's case studies, Edie Hedlin aptly states that "the question is not whether archivists engage in advocacy but how well they exercise this core responsibility" (p. 318). She notes that we all engage in advocacy in some way, and the evidence of

success in many of the case studies promotes the idea that we need to more thoughtfully and comprehensively adopt it into our normal workflow.

The title of the book refers to the potential “happy returns” on the advocacy investments that an institution or archivist may make, and numerous examples of these returns are found in the thirteen case studies that make up the heart of the book. The workplace scenarios described vary widely; it would be a very unusual institution indeed that couldn’t find at least one case study with which to identify. Elizabeth Adkins and Karen Benedict bring together several examples of successful program promotion in corporate archives. Roland M. Baumann details how concerted advocacy assisted his campaign to create new endowments for the Oberlin College Archives. Francis X. Blouin, Jr.’s study speaks to the value of a long-term, advocacy-driven consciousness as he examines reinvention-as-advocacy over the course of forty years at the University of Michigan’s storied Bentley Historical Library.

Advocacy is an important tool in institutional creation as well as ongoing development. Cases from Ellen Crain and Donna E. McCrea (Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives), Norton Owen (Jacob’s Pillow Archives), Giordana Mecagni (Archives for Women in Medicine), and Christine W. Ward and Judy P. Hohmann (New York State Archives Partnership Trust) describe how able, driven, and creative professionals used their imaginations and determination to create entirely new archival programs out of nothing.

When a program is already in place, advocacy can be a powerful weapon in evolving it toward additional or expanded functions. J. M. Deken tells the tale of how she steered the Archives and History Office for the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory from a minor, poorly funded program into a more visible and respected institution, using both internal and external advocacy techniques. The New York Philharmonic Archives faced institutional skepticism and neglect until Barbara Haws assumed the role of archivist, parlaying a concerted effort to establish and nurture personal relationships with donors and her core user communities into a well-publicized and successful institutional archives.

Several case studies involve state archival institutions. Bruce W. Dearstyne relates the story of how the New York State Archives and Records Administration advocated its way into a strong and effective local government records program. Gregory Sanford discusses an advocacy effort at the Vermont State Archives that helped boost its political and institutional standing by promoting its value as an informational resource for ongoing political and social debates. And down in St. Louis, Kenneth H. Winn chronicles the transformation of an archival processing project (St. Louis Circuit Court records) into a separate branch of the Missouri State Archives through a series of targeted advocacy endeavors.

In addition to the valuable case studies, several supplemental essays help round out the book. Lewis Bellardo shares the fruit of his long professional

career with a series of observations on advocacy drawn from his leadership tenure at three separate archival institutions, while Edie Hedlin ably summarizes and analyzes the case studies presented.

In more general terms, Richard J. Cox details the practical importance of teaching advocacy to archives students as part of their standard educational program, while Lee White and Heather Huyck offer valuable counsel on advocacy efforts and impacts at the federal (U.S.) level. Kate Theimer brings readers a solid overview of ways in which social media (Web 2.0) can be wielded as effective institutional tools for advocacy. The volume concludes with a brief summarizing essay by Hackman and a selected list of additional readings.

*Many Happy Returns* specifically targets the individual archivist at all levels and will be of immense value to a wide audience of archival professionals, not simply institutional leaders or managers. All of us who strive for the continuing and increasing success of our institutions over time should find something valuable in this well-written, easily understandable work.

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