

Early Birds in the Coal Mine: Business Archivists as Partners in AI Development and Implementation

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Abstract:

In the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), business archivists often find themselves grappling with how to embrace this new technology, if at all. Some voice concerns that the proliferation of AI has led to discussions among business and IT leaders about the potential for this technology to replace an archivist's vital contributions in the pursuit of efficiency and lowered costs. However, rather than being victims of advancing technology, archivists are uniquely positioned to serve as invaluable partners and litmus tests for IT teams navigating the complexities of AI implementation. By being proactive in seeking and developing these partnerships, archivists can also provide warnings about the limitations of AI. In some cases, an archivist's expertise might even help shape policies and developmental roadmaps for AI that can aid corporate archives in the long run. The partnership between Procter & Gamble's Heritage Center and Turing Team, which successfully collaborated to create a domain-specific knowledge base for the Heritage Center using RAG-based model askPG and provided critical testing conditions and training materials for internal AI tools, presents an opportunity for discussing these possibilities. This exploration will illustrate how such collaborations not only elevate the role of archivists in their organizations but also provide access to cutting-edge platforms, technical resources for archives, and opportunities to learn about AI as a potential tool for improved research capabilities, data integration, and responsiveness in the face of growing demands for new insights.

About the author:

Claire Danna (*she/they*) is a corporate archivist and historian at Procter & Gamble's Heritage Center & Archives, where they help preserve the company's rich physical and digital collections. Claire attained a BA in English Literature and a minor in Media Studies from the University of California – Berkeley. Her career got off to a surprising start at an artificial intelligence start-up in San Francisco before being accepted to the University of Michigan's Science of Information Master's program as the Joyce Bonk Fellow at the William L. Clements Library.

Claire combines her academic and professional background with a lifelong passion for storytelling and education. As an early career archivist, she has had the honor of presenting on various educational panels, including the Business Archives Section's colloquium at the Society of American Archivists' annual conference. They have received the Charlene Conrad Liebau Library Prize for their archival research on female printers in the late 17th century and two UMSI Exposition Awards for their work with the Henry Ford Museum and the Buddhist Digital Resource Center.

Beyond their professional endeavors, Claire is a Lindy Hop and blues dance instructor and also enjoys running, knitting, and pottery.