

# Archives in the News! An Examination of Mainstream Media Coverage of Archives

LORI LINDBERG and ERIN FLEAK

**Abstract:** This research examines public perceptions of archives, what is deemed “newsworthy” about them and what archives can learn from this examination by identifying, evaluating and analyzing contemporary news sources. Over 400 graduate students at two universities collected links from online news sources, predominantly consisting of mainstream media, for over five years. The results culminated in over 20,000 individual news stories tagged and recorded in Delicious.com, a social bookmarking website. Our research attempts to answer the following questions: How are archives represented in mainstream media? What resources do media outlets produce (video, slideshows, articles, etc.)? What is considered newsworthy about archives? What source types cover archives most frequently, and how? How can this data be used and what potential products or initiatives could result? A better understanding of the subject matter contained in news features, as well as how archives and archives materials are depicted and described in these articles, is necessary to develop more targeted and effective outreach methods and initiatives. Using analysis such as term frequency and term association, resource characteristics analysis, resource content analysis and data visualization, we are prepared to draw conclusions from large sets of public news resources and make recommendations as to the most effective forms of public media outreach with the greatest return on investment.

## About the Authors:

*Lori Lindberg* is Lecturer in the Master of Archives and Records Administration (MARA) degree and the archives specialization in the MLIS degree at San Jose State University's School of Information. She is the Faculty advisor for SJSU's Society of American Archivists Student Chapter - SJSU SAASC. Along with her work for SJSU, Lori has taught courses at UCLA, the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and Kent State University, as well as lectures and workshops for professional organizations and associations, including the Society of American Archivists and ARMA International. She was recipient of the WISE (Web-based Information Science Education) Consortium's Excellence in Online Teaching Award for 2010 and 2012. In addition to her academic work, Lori is an archival consultant having relationships with numerous clients, including the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, California State Parks, and the Jelly Belly Candy Company. She is a member of the Society of Indiana Archivists, Society of California

Archivists, the Academy of Certified Archivists, and most actively the Society of American Archivists (SAA), where she has served on award committees, as Chair of the Archival Educators' Roundtable and as an elected member of the Nominating Committee. Lori has been a panel presenter and moderator at SAA annual meetings, other conferences and organizational gatherings. Lori is a past member of the SAA Committee on Education and former Chair of the Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Subcommittee from its inception until August 2014. She continues as a DAS Subcommittee Member through August 2017. The DAS Subcommittee was awarded the SAA Council Exemplary Service Award in August 2015.

Lori's recent publications include an article about DAS in the SAA newsletter *Archival Outlook* (March-April 2015 issue, with Mahnaz Ghaznavi) and the entries for 'metadata' and 'recordkeeping metadata' in the *Encyclopedia of Archival Science*, Luciana Duranti and Patricia Franks, editors.

***Erin Fleak*** is currently a Prospect Research Analyst and Consultant for The Ohio State University. She earned her MLIS from Kent State University in May of 2015 with a focus in Archives, Special Libraries and Special Collections. Erin completed an internship with the Special Collections Description and Access unit of The Ohio State University Libraries including a finding aid for the Jerry Tarver Collection of Elocution, Rhetoric and Oratory on the ArchivesSpace platform. Other projects completed include an online rare book exhibit focused on Edgar Allan Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart", a marketing proposal for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Library and Archives and a journal submission entitled *Research and Electronic Resource Access: OhioLINK and Library Consortia-Is it Fair to Publishers and Authors?*. Erin continues to conduct research on access issues related to library and information centers. Prior to earning her MLIS, she earned both a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religion from Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. Her thesis work at Wittenberg focused on the progression of ecclesiastical architectural symbolism pre and post reformation. In addition to her full-time employment and research endeavors, Erin is a member of ALAO-the Academic Library Association of Ohio, and serves on the conference planning committee for the organization.