

Mapping Our Anzacs

<http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au/> Accessed 29 November 2012.

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An online archival exhibit that incorporates the [three notions](#) set forth in the [plenary address given by John Voss](#) during the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists is Mapping Our Anzacs (MOA), created by Australia's National Archives web team in conjunction with the exhibition Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice with the support of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Anzacs are members of the World War I Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. As described on the MOA "About this site" webpage, MOA aims to provide users "three ways to commemorate the original Anzacs: locate a service person, add to the scrapbook, [and] build a tribute."

Indeed, MOA successfully meets its goal while creating an interactive online experience enabling users to be researchers, contributors and archivists. As researchers, users view and use the information proffered by MOA. The service records provide basic facts about the Anzacs, which according to MOA, may include an individual's alias, service number, the geographical location of birth and enlistment, next of kin, as well as the World War I (and World War II, if applicable) dossier on the National Archives of Australia website. Users act as contributors, creating scrapbook entries and tributes, providing humanizing insights into the Anzacs. Finally, users play the role of archivists when making this additional content accessible by linking it to the proper record.

MOA takes all of this information, and to use Voss' terminology, becomes the "archivist as DJ," mashing up the content and delivering it in a cohesive experience. The factual content found in Anzac records provides both a wealth of accessible information, while also serving as access points. Individual Anzacs may be accessed by browsing by data type (e.g., viewing a list of Anzacs born in a specific location or in a specific profession) or searched for directly by family name. Users may also access and browse the scrapbook directly, with each entry providing a link to the Anzac's record.

Thus, the site is structured in the same vein as Voss' concept of archival content communities. For MOA, Voss' nodes are service records, scrapbook entries, and tributes, which are joined by links, that is, the relationships between them (e.g., selecting a geographical location provides a list of associated Anzacs), resulting in the creation of the vast, interconnected MOA site. Linking this data provides the powerful ability to make connections between individual Anzacs as well as the variety of data points. It is in this way that MOA tells the story between documents,

data, and creators. Establishing this content community and ensuring accessibility to the data, Voss' notion of the story between documents, data, and creators is inherently told, allowing users to journey from Anzac to Anzac linked by way of a series of data types and points.

While MOA succeeds in its mission to provide three methods of commemorating Anzacs, and wholeheartedly integrates Voss' three notions of linked data in its user experience, there are several, albeit minor, areas in which the site may be improved. First, the purpose and use of scrapbook pages and tributes could be more clearly delineated. At first blush, the primary difference appears that the scrapbook pages may be viewed contiguously via the main scrapbook page. In contrast, it feels more difficult to reach a tribute, as the user must either select a featured tribute on the main page, or be fortunate enough to find a link to one in an Anzac's record. Indeed, tributes appear to be inherently more private than scrapbook pages, as the help page states, "if you publish a link to your tribute, we would be pleased to hear about it." Given the interconnectedness throughout the site, it would be in the best interest of the users to make tributes more accessible by increasing their visibility to all users.

However, MOA suggests that the tribute functionality is still in its infancy, presently only allowing a user to add individual Anzacs, whereas in the future the site promises the capability of adding everyone associated with a geographic location to a tribute. Perhaps as this feature develops, the differences between it and the scrapbook pages will become more significant and meaningful.

Other potential improvements surround the interface and would increase accessibility to the Anzac content. When browsing through the data types and presented with a list of Anzacs, the user is not given an easy way to cull through the list. Instead, the user must review page by page or guesstimate by selecting a specific page number. Accessibility would be improved if users could jump to a specific letter in the alphabet, or filter by another data type. Indeed, accessibility and findability would improve across the site through the implementation of a faceted search or browse. This would enable users to find Anzacs that meet a combination of traits (e.g., an Anzac who was both an officer and born in South Wales).

Indeed, MOA's greatest strength is in how it architects the structure of its content. By utilizing the notions of archivist as DJ, archival communities, and illustrating the story between documents, data, and creators, MOA excels in providing a cohesive, intriguing user experience for learning about the Anzacs.