Actes de colloques

Ve conférence du DLM-Forum

Vth DLM-Forum Conference

La gestion de l'information et des archives électroniques en Europe : réalisations et nouvelles directions

Toulouse, décembre 2008

Information and Electronic Records Management in Europe: Achievements and new Directions

Toulouse, December 2008

Volume 1

Direction des Archives de France

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– La gestion de l'information et des archives électroniques en Europe :
réalisations et nouvelles directions –

Toulouse, 10, 11 et 12 décembre 2008

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*– Information and Electronic Records Management in Europe: Achievements
and new Directions –*

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La préparation à l'édition des actes de ce colloque a été assurée par Jean-François MOUFFLET, conservateur au département de l'innovation technologique et de la normalisation de la direction des Archives de France, avec le concours de Pierre FOURNIÉ, chef du département des publics, et Florence BARRETO, son assistante. Les contributions ont été réunies par Christine MARTINEZ, responsable de la cellule internationale de la direction des Archives de France, Dimitri SARRIS, son assistant, et Jean-François MOUFFLET.

The preparation of the proceedings of this conference for publication was carried out by Jean-François MOUFFLET, curator in the Département de l'Innovation Technologique et de la Normalisation *of the* Direction des Archives de France*, with the help of Pierre FOURNIÉ, head of the* Département des Publics*, and Florence BARRETO, his assistant. The papers of the speakers were put together by Christine MARTINEZ, head of the International Relations of the* Direction des Archives de France*, Dimitri SARRIS, her assistant, and Jean-François MOUFFLET.*

En couverture

Aux Archives municipales de Limoges, archivage des Marchés Publics dématérialisés, technologie de pointe en matière d'horodatage et sécurisation des transferts.

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Note liminaire

La Ve conférence du DLM-Forum

Créé à l'initiative de la Commission Européenne, le DLM-Forum est une association regroupant des professionnels issus des archives publiques, des consultants et des vendeurs spécialisés dans la gestion, la conservation et l'archivage des documents électroniques. Son but est favoriser la coopération et l'échange dans ce domaine, principalement au sein de l'Union Européenne. Tous les trois ans se tient une conférence générale sur ces thèmes et la responsabilité de cette organisation repose sur l'état-membre qui préside l'Union Européenne.

La Ve conférence du DLM-Forum a été organisée par la direction des Archives de France (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication) en partenariat avec l'Association des Archivistes français dans la cadre de la présidence française de l'Union Européenne. Elle a été accueillie à Toulouse du 10 au 12 décembre 2008. Son objet principal était de mettre en perspective les réalisations, les outils et les nouvelles directions constatées au niveau européen pour la gestion et l'archivage des documents électroniques. Par ailleurs cette rencontre était l'occasion idéale pour présenter le nouveau modèle d'exigences types pour la maîtrise de l'archivage électronique : MoReq2, paru en février 2008, et qui est une mise à jour des précédentes spécifications, supervisée par le DLM-Forum et la Commission européenne.

Remarques sur le recueil

Chaque article est précédé du résumé envoyé par les auteurs lors de l'appel à communications. Ces résumés sont en majorité disponibles en anglais et en français afin que l'absence de traduction intégrale n'empêche pas le lecteur de prendre facilement et rapidement connaissance du contenu des articles. En outre ces résumés ont leur utilité quand le texte n'a pas été transmis par les auteurs. Les biographies des auteurs sont insérées à la fin de l'ouvrage.

Ce recueil est édité uniquement sous forme électronique : il a donc été conçu pour être le plus interactif possible. Des liens hypertexte permettront au lecteur :

- d'atteindre l'article désiré depuis le sommaire.

- de consulter la biographie de l'auteur en cliquant sur son nom. A l'inverse, il pourra regagner l'article depuis la biographie en cliquant de nouveau sur le nom.

- de télécharger après le résumé des articles le diaporama présenté sur place par les intervenants. Ces diaporamas ont été convertis au format PDF.

- éventuellement de consulter en pleine résolution *via* un navigateur Internet les images de basse qualité insérées dans les articles en cliquant sur celles-ci.

Version et évolution de ce document

Ce document est la première version de la publication électronique du recueil, publiée le 29 avril 2009 sur le site de la direction des Archives de France.

Cette version peut être amenée à évoluer, notamment au cas où des intervenants viendraient à transmettre le texte complet de leur intervention, ou si une traduction bilingue complète du recueil serait effectuée.

Notice

The Vth DLM-Forum Conference

Created on the initiative of the European Commission, the DLM Forum is a community of professionals working in public archives, consultants and commercial providers specialising in the in the area of the management, preservation and archiving of electronic documents. Its aim is to promote co-operation and sharing in this field, mainly throughout the European Union. Every three years, a general conference on these themes is organised by the Member State that holds the presidency of the European Union.

The Vth DLM-Forum Conference was organised by the Direction des Archives de France *(Ministry of Culture and Communication) and the* Association des Archivistes Français *during the French Presidency of the European Union. It took place in Toulouse from the 10th to the 12th of December 2008. Its main goal was to focus on European achievements, tools and new directions in the field of digital records and archives management. The event was also the ideal opportunity to present the new Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records - MoReq2, published in February 2008 as an update to the previous specifications and overseen by the DLM-Forum and the European Commission.*

Some comments on this publication

Each paper is preceded by the abstract sent by the authors during the call for papers. Most of the abstracts are available both in English and French so that, in spite of the lack of a complete translation, the reader can easily and quickly find out about the content of the paper. Furthermore the abstract is useful in those cases where the full paper has not been sent by the author. Short biographies of the authors follow the papers at the end of the publication.

These proceedings are only available as an electronic publication: they were consequently designed to be as interactive as possible. Hypertext links will allow to the reader:

- to access from the summary the selected paper.

- to consult the speaker's biography from the paper by clicking on his name; conversely, it is possible to go back to the paper from the biography by clicking once again on the name.

- to download after the abstract the slides of the presentation as delivered during the conference. These slides have been converted into PDF documents.

- as a possibility, to have with a web browser a full resolution view of low-quality pictures inserted in the articles by clicking on them.

Version and further evolutions of the publication

This document is the first version of the electronic publication of the proceedings which was published on the Direction des Archives de France *website on 28th April 2009.*

This version may evolve, particularly if some speakers provide the full text of the missing papers or if a complete translation of the proceedings in the two languages is undertaken.

Séance 2
La gestion des archives électroniques et leur accessibilité

Sous la présidence de Claes GRÄNSTRÖM

Ancien directeur adjoint des Archives nationales de Suède

Session 2

Managing and

accessing

e-information

Chairing Claes GRÄNSTRÖM

Former Deputy Director of the Swedish National Archives

Shooting Ourselves in the Foot: Is Digitization Decaying the Archival Aura?

Adam B. Cowling

MAS/MLIS Candidate, University of British Columbia

The real, physical spaces of records management and archival services are collapsing inward towards an informational singularity, the virtual Web. Here, digital representations displace real world tangibility and claims to knowledge are perpetuated in greater mass than ever before. Authority is threatened and so too is archival, epistemological, and ethical credibility. The proposed paper aims to give light to some of the issues associated with the incorporation of digital information onto new technological platforms and the wide-spread proliferation of digital information on the Web. It will discuss perceived oversights of European and international e-information initiatives which fail to take into account critical aspects of traditional archival theory. First, there is an ever-increasing consensus that digitization initiatives pander to the technological whims of a largely unknown user through online organisational schema which are understood to provide increased access through the availability of reproductions, but which only provide a potentially 'undemocratic' perception of access. Second, current initiatives continue to erode record context and disregard the concept of authenticity. The influence of increasingly multi-functional Web tools and the opportunity for public exposure has encouraged records repositories to rush to digitize their holdings without much consideration for what effect this has on the continued representation of contextual materials. In some cases, the integration of Web functionality has led to an entirely new reinterpretation, where foundational archival concepts like original order and provenance fall by the wayside; eliminated is context, in favour of the juxtaposition of selected materials in the interest of creating attractive, but abstracted narratives. Virtual or "invented" records repositories, like The Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP)[1] *pick and choose archival items from any number of contexts and combine them to serve such purposes. The paper will also address a concern over misuse of e-initiative resources, which are often directed towards short-lived, description starved websites. If records managers and archivists are to resign themselves to the fact that most future sources of funding will be directed towards e-information, then they must not be satisfied with the requests of sponsoring agencies for quantity over quality, for access over contextualization and authenticity. Resource sustainability is identified as a critical issue in regard to maintaining access to and preserving e-information. Managers must take into account the costs, of both time and money, and the upkeep of a website and digital repository. Initial funding must provide for maintenance of the Web presence over its expected duration, and must account for the possible time and money needed for system migration of data and the possible re-digitization of materials as improved means become available. Taking into account the current online misconstructions, the proposed paper will conclude by expanding upon the increasingly positive possibilities for management and accessibility to e-information for those who maintain the intrinsic archival elements necessary for users to understand and interpret digital (and digitized) information in the correct way.*

See the presentation.

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[1] Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich, *The Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security,* (2007), http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm (12 November 2007).

Un cas d'auto-sabordage ?
La numérisation porte-t-elle atteinte à l'aura des archivistes ?

Actuellement, les espaces physiques réels dédiés au records management et aux services d'archives sont en train d'imploser et de converger vers une singularité informationnelle: le Web virtuel. Les représentations numériques y supplantent la matérialité du monde réel et le droit à la connaissance est maintenu avec des volumes de données plus importants que jamais. L'autorité s'en trouve menacée et, avec elle, la crédibilité archivistique, épistémologique et éthique. L'article proposé aura pour objectif d'éclaircir certains des problèmes liés à l'intégration des données numériques sur les nouvelles plates-formes technologiques et à la prolifération tous azimuts des données numériques sur Internet. Il traitera des erreurs que l'on a pu constater sur des initiatives de numérisation européennes et internationales qui n'ont pas su prendre en compte certains aspects critiques de la théorie archivistique traditionnelle. Tout d'abord, il existe un consensus toujours plus large selon lequel les initiatives de numérisation sont mises en œuvre pour satisfaire aux caprices technologiques d'utilisateurs, inconnus pour la plupart, à travers la mise en ligne de systèmes d'organisation censés fournir un droit d'accès plus large aux informations grâce aux reproductions disponibles, mais qui ne font que donner l'illusion d'un droit d'accès élargi potentiellement « non-démocratique ». Ensuite, les initiatives actuelles elles-mêmes continuent à saper le contexte documentaire en négligeant l'aspect d'authenticité des documents. L'influence des outils Internet dont les fonctionnalités sont de plus en plus nombreuses ainsi que la perspective de l'exposition ont poussé les dépôts d'archives à numériser leurs fonds à toute allure sans prêter une grande attention à l'effet produit sur la représentation permanente de documents contextuels. Dans certains cas, l'intégration des fonctionnalités Internet a conduit à une réinterprétation entièrement nouvelle où des concepts archivistiques fondateurs comme le respect de l'ordre primitif et de la provenance sont abandonnés en chemin ; le contexte est éliminé au profit de la juxtaposition de documents sélectionnés pour élaborer des récits attrayants, mais extraits de leur contexte. Les dépôts d'archives virtuels ou "inventés" comme le Projet d'Histoire parallèle sur la sécurité coopérative (PHP) [2] *choisissent un peu arbitrairement des pièces d'archives issues de nombreux contextes qu'ils combinent pour servir ces objectifs. Cet article pointera aussi une certaine inquiétude liée au mauvais usage qui est fait des ressources des e-initiatives qui s'orientent souvent vers des sites éphémères, peu fournis en description. Si les records managers et les archivistes doivent accepter le fait que la plupart des sources de financement futur iront aux documents électroniques, ils ne doivent pas pour autant accepter les demandes des organismes clients qui font primer la quantité sur la qualité et l'accessibilité sur la contextualisation et l'authenticité. La viabilité des ressources est identifiée comme un point critique pour ce qui est du maintien de l'accès aux données électroniques et de leur conservation. Les responsables doivent tenir compte des coûts en temps et en argent d'un site Internet et d'un dépôt numérique ainsi que de leur entretien. Le financement initial doit pouvoir assurer l'entretien du site Internet sur sa durée de vie attendue et prendre en compte le temps et l'argent nécessaires à la migration des systèmes de données et à la renumérisation éventuelle de documents lorsque des moyens plus performants apparaissent. Tout en considérant les erreurs d'interprétation que l'on trouve sur Internet, l'article proposé se terminera par un développement sur les possibilités de gestion et d'accessibilité aux données électroniques de plus en plus prometteuses qui s'offrent à ceux qui maintiennent les exigences archivistiques intrinsèques nécessaires à une bonne compréhension et à une bonne interprétation par les utilisateurs des données numériques (et numérisées).*

Consulter la présentation.

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[2] Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, *The Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security,* (2007) http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm (12 novembre 2007).

■ Introduction

The very definition of 'archives' is a subject of great contemporary debate. Much of the significance of the word's traditional meaning has been lost in its modern usage. The fundamental concepts of the real, physical space, and archives' meaning as derived from the interconnectivity of the whole *fonds*, are collapsing inward towards an informational singularity, the virtual Web. Here, it is possible for information to be accessed without a physical presence, and for electronic representations to take the place of tangible interactions. In such a place, record authority is threatened and so too is archival, epistemological, and ethical credibility. This paper aims to give light to some of the issues associated with the wide-spread proliferation of digitized information on the Web. It will explore the perceived threats of online digitization initiatives to the ever-relevant principles of archival theory, and to the future sustainability of the archival profession as a whole. This paper will focus on four identifiable threats. These are the ever-increasing consensus that digitization initiatives must pander to the technological whims of a largely unknown user; the continual erosion of context and disregard for authenticity; the misrepresentation of both archives and the archivist; and the misdirection of critical resources.

One must ask if the push for a reinterpretation of the archival theoretical structure, brought on by the challenge of digitization, is based on any proven and established fundamental change; or, have we just been taken in by the potential of the user's insatiable appetite for content, and afraid of being left behind? This paper aims to encourage archivists and records managers to take heed of the potentially jeopardizing effects of wide-spread digitization and accessibility via the Web.

■ Pandering to the Unknown 'User'

There are a number of reasons for which institutions choose to digitize primary source materials. These include, but are not limited to, pressure from users and the general public, pressure from sponsoring agencies or public authorities, a desire to participate in the idea that the Web is a universal deposit of all human knowledge, and the pressure or intention to remain up-to-date. These reasons all relate to the perception that archives should satisfy the needs of the user. But who is this user? One would think that the hysteria surrounding the development of digitization initiatives was based on some influx of clear quantitative information, but considering how important this information of user behaviour would seem to be, few studies have directly addressed the issue.[3] The seemingly unfounded assumption seems to be that users want easier, faster access to information; that they will be satisfied if they can view a wide assortment of digital reproductions online.

There seems to be a misconception about the access that is provided through digital reproduction and its capacity of opening up archives and digital repositories to a greater breadth of users. What is in fact provided through digitization is a mere perception of access. The satisfaction of users towards a reproduction in place of an original may be associated with what Walter Benjamin identified as that mode of human sense perception which shifts over time.[4] The increasing functionality of the Web has further shifted user perception away from what is real, towards a satisfaction with what is perceived as real because it is easily accessible.

There is a destructive element to the promise of liberal access which provides effortless exposure to vast amounts of digital information. This statement may seem in direct opposition to the popularized notion of the 'democratization' of knowledge which new technologies allow. However, there is something to be said for labour. The!re is something to be said for time. If all is immediately at our finger tips, the value of deep investigation will be lost. The serendipitous nature of knowledge, which has drawn generations of citizens to archives, will mean nothing if we loose that connection to the real thing. One might say that digitization maintains a connection to the real for researchers of today, but that is because those of our time still posses a remnant of the conception that these materials represent the real thing to be found in a physical space.

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[3] Ian G. Anderson, "Are You Being Served? Historians and the Search for Primary Sources," Archivaria 58 (Fall 2004), 86.

[4] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Illuminations: Essays and Reflection, ed. Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968. Reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1988. Originally published as Illuminationen. Frankfurt a.M., Germany: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1955), 222.

However, as time passes, it would seem likely that people will become accustomed to digitized materials so easily accessible, and will loose the connection to the tangibility of the unique item. There will be no challenge of investigation. A search will instantaneously get the result you are looking for, and you will expect it every time. There will be no more surprises, no more joy of coming across something that few people have seen before, because everyone will have already found it with the very same ease with which you now find it in front of you. When everything is so easy, there is no effort required, and with no effort, there is no reward, and with no reward, no joy, and with no joy, no point. There is something to be said for the labour and the time of it all.

■ Erosion of Context and Disregard of Authenticity

Digitization is a major task in selection. It is difficult, or even impossible to digitize everything. Thus, how are certain materials selected so as to represent the context of the whole? The influence of increasingly multi-functional Web tools and the opportunity for exposure has encouraged archivists to rush to digitize their holdings with little consideration for what effect this has on the continued representation of bonded information. In some cases, the integration of Web functionality has led to a whole new reinterpretation of the archives, where foundational archival concepts like original order and provenance fall by the wayside; eliminating archival context in favour of the juxtaposition of selected information in the interest of creating a new stage from which to present a 'historical' narrative. Removal of a record from the context of its interrelationships with other documents threatens its ability to serve as evidence. "Virtual archives" or "invented archives", which pick and choose items from any number of digital repositories and combine them in this way, represent projects of this nature. *The Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP)*[5], for example, combines in a single narrative, materials from the Public Record Office (PRO) at Kew/London, the US Department of Defense at Washington, DC, and materials cited as simply a CIA Historical Declassification Release.[6] *Montreal, 500 Years of History in Archives*[7] reproduces single items selected from a group of twenty-three Montreal repositories and places them within the text of a historical narrative with little to no descriptive or contextual information. While the project may present an introductory experience for the casual user, the initiative's creators would have done greater justice to their holdings had they represented them using a "classic" archival approach. Being faithful to this approach involves the reproduction of archival sources in the same way researchers access them in a paper environment, avoiding any bias which might be introduced by a different arrangement. Archives best represent themselves and their holdings when *fonds* and series digitized are organized and presented in their original context, preserving their original structure and organization.

"Invented archives'" are not archives, and it should be made absolutely clear that such projects do not represent an archival effort, but rather reflect institutionally generated exhibitionism. Even if these projects were to identify themselves as such, they still contribute to a misrepresentation of archival materials on the Web. They represent a blatant violation of the principle of archival impartiality, and pose a significant threat to the authenticity of records.[8] Referring to one of the largest image digitization projects in the world, that of Corbis Corporation, Geoffrey Batchem writes that its efforts have, "erased the aura of authenticity…and replaced it once and for all with the simulated glitter of reproducibility."[9] While rarely on such a scale, the combined effort of over-enthusiastic archivists to provide access to digitized reproductions is not unlike Corbis Corp. What we are experiencing is desensitization to the real. It is the transfer of value from the original to the perception of value of the reproduction. It is a loss to what is real, and a ignorant satisfaction of 'access' to what is not.

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[5] Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich, The Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security, (2007) http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm (12 November 2007).

[6] William Burr and Robert A. Wampler, eds. "Lifting the Veil on Cosmic: Declassified US and British Documents on NATO Military Planning and Threat Assessments of the Warsaw Pact," The Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security, (21 May 2002) http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic.cfm?lng=en&id=14968 (12 November 2007).

[7] City of Montreal and GARM, Montreal, 500 Years of History in Archives, http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/archives/500ans/portail_archives_en/accueil.html (12 November 2007).

[8] Authenticity, as we know, is the trustworthiness of a record as a record; the quality of a record that is what it purports to be, free from tampering or corruption. See InterPARES 2 Project, "Authenticity," InterPARES Glossary, http://www.interpares.org/ip2/ip2_terminology_db.cfm (12 November 2007).

[9] Geoffrey Batchen, "The Art of Archiving," in Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen, eds. Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art, (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1998), 49.

■ Misconceptions about Archives and Archivists

The continued accommodation of user whims by digitization initiatives threatens the position of responsibility traditionally entrusted to archives and archivists. By creating the impression that digitization initiatives are another form of entertainment, an additional source of online distraction, archivists run the chance of damaging their professional profile in the eyes of sponsors and researchers. One is reminded of Georges Duhamel, who in expressing his clear detestation for film, lamented that it represented nothing but a distraction, whereas art, demanded a viewer's concentration.[10] The same sentiment can apply to the changing perceptions of archives. The shift from the concentration on robust archival quality to the consumption of shallow quantity should be identified as a destructive force proliferated by blind enthusiasm for digitization. Archives demand more from their user. They can only be fully understood by use and by perception. A tactile appreciation of archives cannot be accomplished solely through visual means, but must rather be accompanied by the enablement of habit. Digitization hardly affords the required means to comprehensively understand and experience archival information. While the multi-faceted functionality of digitization initiatives can be seen to provide a new informational experience, such functionality destroys what has traditionally been a thought and use driven process of knowledge building. Archives, through digitization initiatives, become just another form of mass media, like any other; and the archivist is relegated to the role of director, forced to concede to popular appetites.

■ Misappropriation of Resources

Digitization initiatives, many of which fail due to a lack in strategic planning, divert funding and resources away from archival processing and even endanger the capacity for institutions to create and maintain online finding aids that more properly address the functions and responsibilities of archives. Furthermore, if institutions become accustomed to the funding of digitization initiatives, which only provide for shallow description, it is likely that future funding will treat limited description as the norm, eliminating the need for rich description and further diluting the contextual essence of archives. Archivists must not be satisfied with the requests of sponsoring agencies that only fund digitization initiatives. The importance of maintaining the physical repository must be communicated to sponsors, so that funding is not entirely siphoned away into the virtualization of information.

Sustainability is a critical issue in regard to the management of resources and the funding of digitization initiatives. Archivists must take into account the costs, of both time and money, for the upkeep of digitization initiatives. Initial funding must provide for maintenance of the Web presence over its expected duration, and must account for the possible time and money needed for system migration of data and the possible re-digitization of materials as better tools become available. Further costs will always be incurred, even if no changes are made to content, due to servicing of servers, backup creation and logging, user requests, error correction, and the maintenance of digital objects. These financial requirements can be a continuing burden for institutions with irregular or unstable funding sources. While it may not be possible for those engaged in the management of archival materials to ignore the Web, they must approach it with caution and with a view to long-term sustainability, so as to avoid wasting more money on mediocre efforts.

As more information is digitized, a preference to provide access solely to digital reproductions will become more prevalent. The capacity of archival institutions to maintain continued access to original materials is thus threatened by the ease by which access to electronic information can be refused. While archives as a place can be physically appropriated in order to gain access when citizens are denied, as was done during the French Revolution[11], wouldn't the new 'democratized' system simply require the flick of a switch to remove access? Web publication of digitized information also provides sponsoring agencies the opportunity to justify cost cutting measures such as mergers and reduction of reading room services. It opens the way for sponsors to make claims that, since digital copies are available online, there is little reason to maintain current hours of

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[10] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 239.

[11] After French revolutionaries took control of the French archives, Article 37 of the Messidor decree proclaimed that "Every citizen is entitled to ask in every depository…for the production of the documents it contains." See Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution," A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice, edited by Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, (Washington D.C: National Archives and Records Service, 1984), 5-6.

operation for access to originals. According to *The Vancouver Sun*, the merger of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia with the Royal B.C. Museum resulted in a "new ideological mantra" of cost recovery. New reading room access hours were implemented as a result of the measures. Full service hours were made available only when the average working person would be unable to visit, resulting in the archives being inaccessible 87.7 per cent of available time each week.[12] The article's author asked how this could satisfy the province's statutory mandate to 'provide access' to its citizens. A response from the province to such a question would likely include a URL to a digital repository. In this case, tax dollars have funded a merger and a digitization initiative which are now endangering citizens' rights to original materials. Here, we see not democratic access provided to the citizen, but a mere eluding gesture providing the perception of access.

■ Past the Point of No Return? Suggestions for the 'Future' of Digitization

Here, we will not rescind the arguments discussed above, but will nevertheless give recognition to some potential benefits of archival digitization. These include the provision of access to those who might not normally be capable of accessing archival holdings, due to geographic isolation, physical disability, etc; the potential for small lesser funded archives to build awareness of their holdings; the potential use of online initiatives as educational aids; and digitization's contribution to preservation by reducing the physical handling of original materials. It may seem naïve to believe that institutions will abandon digitization initiatives for the few reasons elucidated in the paragraphs above, therefore, the following suggestions will be proposed so as to contribute to a sort of re-conceptualization of the digitization process.

Institutions should ensure users are provided with a means to acquaint themselves with archival terms and arrangement, through the availability of tutorials, glossaries, etc. If digitization initiatives are to be used for research or as educational resources, the first lesson should be on how to use archives. An institution's digitized Web presence should at all times maintain archival arrangement, even when full text searching of the online finding aids is enabled. Institutions should ensure that users are able to browse hierarchal levels if they so choose. If institutions are fearful that the common user will be turned away by large amounts of contextual information, the Web presence should provide a means by which deep, robust contextual description can still be viewed. This could take the form of an abstract view of a contextual summary and a full text view of the entire description.

The purpose and target audience of online digitization initiatives should be made evident to users, as should the institution's selection and presentation methodologies. Archival networks and archivist associations should consider a grading or ranking system of some kind to rank the comprehensiveness of digitization initiatives. In this way, users can determine the likely usefulness of the site depending on their particular needs.

Archivists should set as a priority the need to make sponsoring agencies aware of the fact that funding can be better directed and utilized towards more worthwhile projects and preservation efforts. Archives should consider, and weigh carefully, the pros and cons of putting only finding aids online versus both finding aids and digitized materials. If archives find it necessary to place digitized materials online, they should take steps to ensure confidence in the digital reproduction. Archival networks and archivist associations should emphasize, among their members, the importance of utilizing agreed upon standards for all aspects of an institution's digitization initiative. For aspects of the digital online representation that do not fall under an existing standard (e.g., new web development or finding aid encoding tools), archives should be cautious of their implementation, and should become involved with other archival bodies to research these areas, and look towards the possibility of developing standards for their use. Archival networks and archivist associations should promote knowledge sharing among the information professions, so as to develop the most useful and effective means by which to establish a healthy and cooperative Web presence. Competitive behaviour by renegade information organizations (e.g., to implement the newest technological gizmo before anyone else), should be highly discouraged within these knowledge sharing networks.

Archives intending to develop an archival digitization presence would likely do well to consider the theoretical concerns over what an archive is and what in the future it may be as a digital resource, while

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[12] Stephen Hume, "Cost recovery, limited access subvert the archive's role," In The Vancouver Sun, (31 October 2007), 1. http://www.canada.com/vancouversun/columnists/story.html?id=20eed08f-a368-4cb7-8e0b-8095de588787&p=1 (10 November 2007).

additionally taking into account the more practical questions of archival management. Those capable of doing this work must be capable of thinking critically about the long term effects and sustainability of electronic archival information. Digitization initiatives may have some positive attributes; however, these can only remain positive so long as the digitization initiative remains supplemental to the physical archives.

Information will inevitably be sourced by users from the myriad options that the Web will continue to provide, and it does make sense that archives have representation on this medium; but, we must not get ourselves caught up in the transitory technological zeitgeists of the day. We should not let the current popularity of a technology in its early stages of development dictate and decay our present and future work. In these times, we must think critically about what digitization means to long term sustainability, and should identify those threats to the valuable physicality of the archival space. This paper has attempted to bring a few of these threats to light so that they can be further discussed; including the questionable accommodation of general user behaviour; the weakening of context and neglect of authenticity; the misrepresentation of archives and the archival profession; and the misallocation of resources. Archival knowledge has stood the test of time, and it is something archivists should have the faith to stand confidently by through changing times and societal shifts.

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