

**Archives, Postmodernism, and the
Internet:
The Return of Historical Narrative in Archival Public Programming**

By

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History (Archival Studies)
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

© April 2005

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Abstract

This thesis argues that postmodernism and the Internet have begun to affect the nature and place of public programming in Canadian archives. The thesis maintains that they have prompted a return to historical narrative, a key feature of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century public programming in Canadian archives. This tradition was undermined in the late twentieth-century by the assertion by archivists of a distinct professional status apart from their former identity as historians. This thesis maintains that the understandable profession-building priorities of the new archival profession shifted attention and energy from public programming concerns and public programming based on historical narrative. The efforts of some archivists in the late 1980s to advocate for a higher priority for public programming reflect discontent with the often marginal status of public programming. The arrival in archival circles of postmodernism and the Internet in the 1990s has aided this effort considerably. This thesis maintains that as a result there is a detectable new commitment to making public programming (based on historical narrative information) a central feature of archival work.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Early Public Programming in Canadian Archives	5
Chapter 2 Implications of Postmodernism and the Internet for Archival Public Programming	33
Chapter 3 The Return of Historical Narrative in Archival Public Programming	60
Conclusion	89
Bibliography	98

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Professor Tom Nesmith, of the archival studies program at the University of Manitoba, for his guidance in the editing of this thesis. Though the ideas were mine he suggested directions I did not fully envision upon first draft. I would also like to thank Tom Anderson of the Provincial Archives of Alberta for proofreading drafts and Raymond Frogner of the University of Alberta Archives for his assistance in locating sources, both from the University of Alberta Library System as well as his personal collection. Most of all, I would like to thank my best friend and spouse, Eun-jeong Jung. Without her constant encouragement and occasional cajoling, this thesis would not have been written.

Introduction

“So power is always at play in the archive. And archivists, from the beginning and always, are political players.”¹
(Verne Harris, 2000)

Although South African archivist Verne Harris’s statement about the inevitable political entanglements of archives reflects that country’s turbulent past, it is equally applicable to archivists everywhere. It reminds archivists of the ‘postmodern condition’ in which they work, wherein knowing is shaped toward social and thus political ends by means of communication such as archival records and archiving ideas and practices. Harris’s comment is especially instructive in light of the impact so far of the Internet as a mediating factor in making archival materials more accessible. While some archivists still hold on to the traditional archival idea that they are unbiased custodians merely tending and passing along “authentic” records of impeccable integrity, the increasing role of the Internet is making it clear that archives and records are anything but that. Indeed, the records (and narratives about them and the past that archives are now under great pressure to feed to the Internet) reveal perhaps more than ever the mediated and political nature of information from archives and archival work.²

¹ Verne Harris, Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa, (Pretoria: National Archives of South Africa, 2000), 80.

² Interestingly part of this great pressure may be caused by the success of the Canadian archival tradition as historical repositories. Founded to preserve Canadian history, Canadian governmental archives are often grouped into governmental departments responsible for culture and thus more predisposed to value the historical use of records rather than archival records management. Two examples: The Provincial Archives of Alberta is a member of the Historic Sites Branch of Department of Community Development and Library and Archives Canada is in the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Widespread access to the Internet seems to be abetting this major postmodern paradigm shift in archival practice.³ The ability to disseminate information to an audience unhindered by spatial boundaries has allowed archives and archivists an opportunity to vastly enhance public knowledge of their holdings. As with any professional group undergoing rapid change, archivists have reacted with varying degrees of enthusiasm to the opportunities afforded them by the Internet. Some have grasped these changes wholeheartedly, while others have been more reluctant to embrace change. Archives that are participating in the Internet revolution have done so in a number of ways -- from the digitization of documents and finding aids, to the creation of online databases of descriptions and the development of virtual exhibits. There is no consensus on how archives (and archivists) can best utilise the Internet. It will be the purpose of this thesis to throw light on how Canadian archives have adapted to the opportunities provided by the Internet. It will also attempt to show how an analysis employing postmodern insights helps us understand the role of archiving in shaping knowledge in the Internet age.

The thesis will move from an analysis of the history of archival outreach and public programming in Canada to a discussion of the Internet and its possible uses by archivists.⁴ It will be argued that Canadian archival practice, through its goal of fostering Canadian patriotism and unity, has traditionally viewed outreach as an important facet of archival practice. In order to understand better the Internet and archives, the motives behind archival outreach need to be known. Traditional Western archival thought, which

³ In this thesis, the term Internet will be used to describe anything disseminated on a public electronic network. Most, but not all, the material to be discussed is disseminated through the World Wide Web. Nevertheless, as the World Wide Web is a relatively new phenomenon, exists as a part of the Internet, and excludes important facets of the Internet such as e-mail, the more inclusive term Internet is utilized throughout.

⁴ In this thesis the terms outreach and public programming can be seen as interchangeable. They refer to any publicizing by archivists or archival institutions of the existence and uses of records and of information about the services, roles, and methods of using archives.

held sway in many countries until about 1990, has been based on the belief that the correct meaning of records could be known and preserved indefinitely by archives and that to achieve this goal the archivist must be the unbiased guardian of the records. Postmodern thought, though slower to gain a foothold in the archival profession than in other fields, has allowed archivists to re-examine their self-perception as non-partisan observers and allowed archivists a perspective from which to reevaluate their impact on records. The postmodern perspective has helped archivists see their own key role in shaping knowledge, not just in guarding it.

The timing of this rejection of archival positivism has coincided with the spread of the Internet. It will also be the purpose of this thesis to examine how postmodernism (with its acceptance of the inevitable mediating role of archival records and archiving actions) and the Internet have allowed for the creation of a new view that sees outreach as a central tenet of archival practice, on a par with traditional archival practices such as appraisal and description. The thesis will also discuss how this newfound emphasis on outreach programming illustrates the exercise of power through archives. Social and political power has always been wielded in archives, but this has often been overlooked or downplayed by archivists and users. As archival use of the Internet has become commonplace for activities such as virtual exhibits, a better understanding of the use of power and agency in their creation is necessary.

Once the concept of power in archives has been more thoroughly explored, a more general analysis of archival uses of the Internet will be offered. The discussion will include cultural institutions such as art galleries and museums, but the scope of the analysis will also include Internet sites mounted by individuals and non-profit

organizations. An analysis of archival uses of the Internet will then be undertaken. The study will conclude with some recommendations for the future of archival involvement with the Internet.

It is hoped that this thesis will provide a better understanding of the ramifications of archival participation in cyberspace. Through analysis of both archival and non-archival websites, better use of the Internet by archives may be possible. And, as archival outreach with a postmodern sensibility explicitly contradicts the traditional myth of archival positivism -- neutrality and impartiality -- a more coherent understanding of the motives, biases and powers of archives should emerge.

Chapter 1: Early Public Programming in Canadian Archives

“No war ever had happier sequels; for in 1775, and still more, in 1812, the French- and English-speaking Canadians drew together in defence of their common country, side by side with the regular army and navy of a Guardian Empire and under the welcome aegis of the British Crown.”¹ (Arthur Doughty, 1911)

“... the archivist is not and ought not to be an Historian”²
(Hilary Jenkinson, 1922)

Given Dominion Archivist Arthur Doughty's interest in the archivist's role as historian, unlike his British contemporary Hilary Jenkinson who espoused the very different view given above, he would have likely seen the public programming opportunities offered by the Internet as a positive development in archival practice.³ Although the Internet has greatly enhanced the visibility of and audience for archival outreach, it should be noted that outreach has always been a concern of many archivists. In perhaps the most influential work on archival theory ever published, Muller, Feith and Fruin's 1898 Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives maintains that “[T]he final duty which is incumbent on the archivist in connection with the archival collection entrusted to his care is the publication of the most important documents.”⁴ However, the authors then build on

¹ Arthur Doughty, The King's Book of Quebec (Ottawa: The Mortimer Co. Limited, 1911), 125.

² Hilary Jenkinson, A Manual of Archive Administration (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1922; reprinted: London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1937), 123.

³ Among Doughty's many other historical writings are: The Cradle of New France: A Story of the City Founded by Champlain (London: Longmans Green 1909), A Daughter of New France: Being a Story of the Life and Times of Madelaine de Vercheres, 1665-1692 (Edinburgh: Ballantyne Press, 1916), The Acadian Exiles: A Chronicle of the Land of Evangeline (Toronto, Glasgow: Brook, 1916). Doughty also co-edited, with Adam Shortt, Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian Peoples and Their Institutions (Toronto: Publishers' Association of Canada, 1913-1917).

⁴ Samuel Muller, Johan Feith and Robert Fruin, Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives (1898; translation, 1940, by Arthur H. Leavitt, reprinted, Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), 187.

that thought with a refrain that seems to resonate through later archival writing on outreach by maintaining that publication “is a duty of honour, not an official duty.”⁵ It is this unfortunate belief that outreach is not an integral part of archival practice that has allowed it to be considered by many an afterthought in comparison to such necessary activities as appraisal, arrangement and description.

The notion of archival objectivity, espoused by Muller et al and most famously codified by Jenkinson, has hindered archival public programming.⁶ The Jenkinsonian concept of archival objectivity saw the archivist as an impartial observer whose job was to maintain archival records created by others. Thus the archivist must not impose his or her own values upon the records, as the archivist would if he or she made the mistake of working with them like a historian would. The fact that by its very nature outreach clearly involved the archivist as an active participant in the process of interpreting historical records and information likely caused many archivists to shy away from this aspect of archival work.

Interestingly, although Muller et al are considered proponents of archival objectivity, their manual quite clearly allows archivists to select important documents for publication. Perhaps this selection was explained away through a positivist assumption that we can all agree on what is “important.” This inclusion of selection for publication indicates that even where nineteenth-century archival thought allowed for what seems like interpretation, it may well have been seen as objective judgement.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ A good introduction to Jenkinson’s work can be found in Selected Writings of Hilary Jenkinson, Roger Ellis and Peter Walne, eds., (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1980).

There are aspects of both Canadian and American archival practice that should have overridden the Jenkinsonian notion of objectivity. The writings of Theodore Schellenberg of the American National Archives dismissed objectivity as an archival goal by the 1950s.⁷ Yet, American archivists continued to neglect public programming until the 1980s when Elsie Freeman (who would later publish other articles on public programming as Elsie Freeman-Finch and Elsie Finch) began decrying the lack of American archival public programming.⁸ And while Schellenberg's pragmatism was welcome, he did not concern himself much with public programming.

The perceived Canadian neglect of outreach is puzzling. The longstanding Canadian emphasis on "Total Archives," or the idea that public archives should acquire records of all kinds, from both government and private sources, in order to document all aspects of Canadian history, lent itself to publication and exhibition.⁹ Moreover, the largest and most prominent Canadian archives have been publicly funded with the goal of fostering Canadian and/or provincial and local identities.¹⁰ This goal was enshrined in the Public Archives Act of 1912, which gave for the first time a legislative basis for the work of the federal Public Archives. The means of

⁷ For more on Theodore Schellenberg see his seminal work Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

⁸ Elsie Freeman-Finch has published a number of articles on public programming; all are worthy of consultation. For a succinct summary of many of her ideas, please see Elsie Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View," The American Archivist 47 no.2 (Spring 1984).

⁹ For a basic introduction to the Total Archives concept, please see Wilfred Smith's "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," in Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance, Tom Nesmith, ed., (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1993).

¹⁰ The connection between "Total Archives" and the fostering of Canadian national identity has been best articulated by Laura Millar in "Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada," Archivaria 47 (Spring 1999). Millar's periodization of Canadian archival history in this article was the model for the periodization of public programming in Canadian archives beginning on page 9.

furthering this sense of nationalism was mainly historical research by the few academic users of archives, and not major efforts at outreach by archivists themselves to the general public. Canadian archives looked to improve services to their most valued client base, academic historians and affluent amateurs and antiquarians. Canadian archivists saw their repositories largely as centres for scholarly research. They sought the support of social and political elites for this activity. These energetic outreach activities contradict later analysis that dismisses the tradition of outreach in Canadian archives.¹¹

This critique was probably prompted by changes in archival work over the course of the twentieth century. By the 1990s, writers on public programming faced concerns in their daily archival work that were not present to the same degree in the first ninety years of the history of the Public Archives. Canadian archivists in the late twentieth century were dealing with a much larger and more varied archival clientele than Doughty. While Doughty was able to focus on the needs of historians, modern day archivists also daily deal with an array of other academics, the archives' own sponsors, genealogists, filmmakers, novelists, the media, and many others. This range of users of archives did not exist to this extent in Doughty's day.

Canadian archival practice thus changed over the course of the twentieth century in response to a widening user base, among other things. To gain insight into those changes in relation to public programming, certain phases in Canadian archival history can be identified. The following periodization of the history of Canadian archives is offered: from 1824 and the creation of the Literary and

¹¹ Perhaps the best example of this viewpoint can be found in Gabrielle Blais and David Enns's "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91).

Historical Society of Quebec to 1948 and the appointment of W. Kaye Lamb as Dominion Archivist; from 1948 to 1975 and the founding of the Association of Canadian Archivists; from 1976 to 1995 and the launching of the first archival Internet sites; and from 1995 to the present and the influence of both the Internet and postmodernist thought on Canadian archives.

In the period from 1824 to 1948, archival practice was primarily driven by a desire to preserve the history of the young colony and then country. Most of the archivists in this period had little formal archival training; instead they tended to have backgrounds as journalists or by the mid-twentieth century as academic historians.¹² With the arrival of Kaye Lamb in 1948, archivists began to recognize that proper care of archives required formalized training and practice. This in turn led to greater efforts to standardize archival practice and training. By 1975, archival practice had developed to such an extent that Canadian archivists felt a need to have their own association separate from the Canadian Historical Association and so formed the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA). Shortly after its formation, the ACA began publishing the academic journal Archivaria, thereby strengthening Canadian archivists' arguments that they were distinct professionals with their own knowledge base. Archivaria provided Canadian archivists and others with a venue to exchange research and ideas on archival matters and develop the profession further. By 1995, the Canadian archival profession had thrived through two decades of formal development and was well positioned for entry into the fourth phase, a phase

¹² The first two heads of the Public Archives, Douglas Brymner (1872-1902) and Arthur Doughty (1904-1936) were journalists before becoming archivists. Their contemporaries, the first archivist of British Columbia, R.E. Gosnell, the first archivist of Ontario, Alexander Fraser, and the first Records Commissioner of Nova Scotia, T.B. Akins, were journalists with antiquarian interests.

fuelled by the arrival of the Internet and postmodernism and which sees a partial return to some ideas prominent in the first phase, or to the concept of archives as a provider of historical narrative information, and not just records, but this time through the Internet.

The First Stage: 1824-1947

The foundation of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1824 provides the earliest indication of interest in preserving the documentary heritage of what would become Canada. The society, which was founded with the intent of “showing that the more men become acquainted with the history of their country, the more they prize and respect both their country and themselves”¹³ shows that even at its earliest stage the use of history as a means of promoting patriotism was the focus of what would become Canadian archival practice. Using monetary support from the Legislative Assembly of Quebec, the society began a program of research and publication. Members of the society visited London, Paris and New York to search out and transcribe documents related to Canada.¹⁴ Similar activities were also undertaken in Nova Scotia by the mid-1850s, but it would be the creation of the Public Archives of Canada in 1872 that would formally launch the Canadian archival tradition. However, it is almost certain that the collecting patterns of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec influenced the early policy decisions at

¹³ Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, “Address to the Public” as printed in The Centenary Volume of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (Quebec: Evenement Press, 1924), 167.

¹⁴ Ian Wilson, “‘A Noble Dream’: the Origins of the Public Archives of Canada” Archivaria 15 (Winter 1982-1983), 17.

the Public Archives and led to a holistic collection tradition that would be later be termed “Total Archives.”

This holistic approach to acquisition, which was strongly supported by the first two Dominion Archivists, Douglas Brymner and Arthur Doughty, lent itself well to an appreciation of archival outreach. Brymner, the first Dominion Archivist (1872-1902), maintained that his ambitious acquisition program was part of a “noble dream” to document the history of Canada. An analysis of the annual reports of the Public Archives of Canada reveals outreach to have been an ever-present concern. Not only did these reports function as outreach documents due to their annual publication of historically significant finding aids, they regularly outlined different aspects of outreach and public programming in their opening section “Report on Historical Archives.” As early as 1883, Brymner was using these annual reports to publicize his “Total Archives” mandate by calling for the donation of “family or other papers that throw a light on the social, commercial, municipal, or political history of the country.”¹⁵ In 1884, Brymner continued his plea for the donation of private papers and also talked of the need to publish an index of registers of the *Actes de Foy et Hommage* as early as possible.¹⁶ Brymner felt that an index of the “Actes,” which document the early land grants for New France, would help the Public Archives better deal with the numerous inquiries it received into this information.¹⁷ Thus even in 1884, the Public Archives of Canada can be seen as striving to deliver client-driven service. A review of the annual reports for the rest

¹⁵ Government of Canada, A Report on Canadian Archives, 1883 (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1884), 17.

¹⁶ Government of Canada, A Report on Canadian Archives, 1884 (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1885), viii.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vi.

of Brymner's tenure as archivist reveals similar concerns about cultivating a larger audience among historical researchers for the archives' materials. But it was Brymner's death in 1902 and the appointment of Arthur Doughty as Dominion Archivist in 1904 that saw the PAC dramatically increase its emphasis upon outreach.

Doughty, who was Dominion Archivist until 1935, was undoubtedly devoted to outreach, at least to academia and the Canadian social and political elite. In his first report as archivist, he called for expanded hours of operation for the archives in order to meet the needs of researchers (primarily university students and professors) who were unable to get to the archives during normal working hours.¹⁸ During his tenure the archives regularly published inventories and adopted a policy of remaining open twenty-four hours a day to facilitate research by scholars. Doughty's desire for intensive use of "his" collection inclined him to advocate for outreach, but mainly to scholars. Further evidence of his concern about outreach may be seen in his second annual report for 1905, which opens with a strenuous call for the publication of a comprehensive guide to the records held at the PAC. No doubt Doughty hoped that such outreach would bring more clients into the archives, but he would not have expected many who were not academic historians. As Doughty notes:

It would seem that little argument is requisite to prove that the first thing to be done in order to render the information contained in the mass of our records available to the public, is to let the public know what records exist and where they are to be found.¹⁹

¹⁸ Government of Canada, A Report Concerning Canadian Archives For The Year 1904 (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, Printer To The King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1905), xlv.

¹⁹ Government of Canada, A Report Concerning Canadian Archives For The Year 1905 (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, Printer To The King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1906), vii.

Doughty saw his archival work as a means to an end -- a national history that would foster the unity of the seemingly fragile young country. He thus vigorously pursued historical projects that furthered his goal and his institution. By 1906, just two years after having been appointed Dominion Archivist, Doughty was actively involved in planning the celebration of the Quebec Tercentenary. Indeed, he wrote the historical narrative for the celebration's official history.²⁰ The First World War provided Doughty with another occasion to pursue his goal of using the Public Archives to promote national unity. He sought to make it the repository of Canada's war records. But Doughty had a rival for the records of the Canadian military. Lord Beaverbrook, Max Aitken, had in 1915 secured a commission as the head of the Canada War Records Office (CWRO) and was already working with a staff of eleven officers and seventeen men when Doughty entered the scene.²¹ By 1916, when Doughty travelled to England to conduct a survey of Canadian War Records, Aitken's CWRO was well established in military circles. Doughty was concerned that his powers as Dominion Archivist were being superseded. He was also anxious about Beaverbrook's disregard of provenance.²² The two came to have an amicable relationship once Aitken agreed that Doughty could have the CWRO records after the war. This fit well with Doughty's interest in promoting the Public Archives

²⁰ For more on Doughty's involvement with the Quebec tercentenary, see H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

²¹ Robert McIntosh, "The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory," *Archivaria* 46 (1998), 6.

²² *Ibid.*, 12.

through outreach. Once the war ended Doughty planned to publish an inventory of the records accumulated during the conflict.²³

While the Public Archives of Canada was the most notable example of early Canadian archival practice, its mandate was by no means unique. Partly because they emulated PAC's example and partly because they also evolved in the same piecemeal fashion as the Public Archives, the Canadian provincial archives, to varying degrees, offer researchers access to both public and private records in the "Total Archives" tradition. The Public Records Commission of Nova Scotia, the Archives of Ontario, and the Provincial Archives of British Columbia offer some contemporary examples to compare with the Public Archives during the formative years of Canadian archival development. All of these archives were greatly influenced by strong personalities who were aggressive collectors and firm believers in the holistic acquisition program that is now known as "Total Archives." Like Brymner and Doughty, Thomas Beamish Akin, appointed the first Commissioner of Public Records of Nova Scotia in 1861, R.E. Gosnell, the first archivist of British Columbia (appointed 1908), and Alexander Fraser, named the first Archivist of Ontario in 1903, were journalists with historical interests that led them to archives.²⁴

Little has been written about Doughty's successor, Dr. Gustave Lanctôt. Like Doughty, Lanctôt was a historian as well as an archivist, although Lanctôt was a far

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ For more on R. E. Gosnell see Terry Eastwood "R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894-1919," in Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance, Nesmith, ed. For more on Akins see C. B. Cuthbertson's, "Thomas Beamish Akins: British North America's Pioneer Archivist," Acadiensis, 7 no.1. For Fraser see Barbara Craig, "Records Management and the Ontario Archives, 1950-1976," Archivaria 8 (Summer 1979) and Donald Macleod, "'Quaint Specimens of the Early Days': Priorities in Collecting the Ontario Archival Record, 1872-1935," Archivaria 22 (Summer 1986), 12-39.

better educated historian.²⁵ Lanctôt was well enough regarded as a historian to be appointed official historian of the Royal Tour of 1939, a role he appears to have relished and which fits well with the Public Archives' tradition of outreach through the historical research role of the archivist in the service of society's elites. Lanctôt's annual reports, however, also reveal greater appreciation of a wider range of outreach activities than Doughty's academic leanings gave him. Lanctôt's first report mentions the Archives' success in staging an exhibition commemorating the centennial of the 1837 rebellion.²⁶ Although the Archives had regularly held exhibitions in the past, Doughty did not consider exhibits to be important enough to merit mention in his reports. Lanctôt also seems to have taken great pleasure in the administration and acquisitions of the historical museum and the war museum, and included notable acquisitions and attendance figures in his annual reports. Reflecting his dedication to the museum, Lanctôt's report for 1939 also documents the acquisition of several royal artifacts (including a gold plated telephone) but only one document, a letter from General Wolfe to his mother written just prior to his death on the Plains of Abraham.²⁷

The Second World War saw Lanctôt increase PAC's modest involvement in general public outreach through participation in the Victory Loan Campaign, in which posters collected by the archives from the First World War were lent to the

²⁵ Lanctôt's commitment to writing historical narratives while an archivist is evident in his many publications. They include *L'administration de la Nouvelle-France: l'administration generale* (Paris: Champlain, 1929), *Le Canada, d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Montreal: editions Albert Levesque, 1934), *Garneau, historien national* (Montreal: Fides, 1946) and *Jacques Cartier devant l'histoire* (Montreal: editions Lumen, 1947).

²⁶ Government of Canada, *Report of the Public Archives for the Year, 1937* (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, I.S.O. Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1938), v

²⁷ Government of Canada, *Report of the Public Archives for the Year, 1939* (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, I.S.O. Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1940), 7.

Department of National Defence and displayed in towns across Canada.²⁸ Lanctôt also eagerly participated in organizing the disposal of war memorials to aid the war effort when, as the Chairman of the Military Museum Board, he organized the recall and sale of war trophies of armaments from the Great War. Once returned, these armaments were either melted down or sold, resulting in thirty tons of brass and steel for industrial production and a government profit of \$2626.37.²⁹ The 1941 report also contains information about several exhibitions in both the Archives Museum and the War Museum and meeting space and tours provided to the Ontario Chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire and the Associated Country Women of the World.³⁰ Lanctôt's interest in exhibitions and the museums under his jurisdiction was constant until his retirement in 1947.

The Second Stage: 1947-1975

Although there can be no questioning of the dedication of Brymner, Doughty and Lanctôt as well as the rest of the early staff at the Public Archives, it is the appointment of Kaye Lamb as Dominion Archivist in September 1948 that, through the codification of archival practice and the massive expansion of public records responsibility, would firmly entrench the Public Archives as one of the leading archival repositories in the world. Like Lanctôt, but unlike their predecessors, Lamb was formally trained as a historian. Unlike them all, he had had considerable

²⁸Government of Canada, Report of the Public Archives for the Year, 1941 (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, I.S.O. Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), vii.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

professional archival experience -- at the Provincial Archives of British Columbia -- before becoming Dominion Archivist. While holding that office Lamb made a number of contributions to academic historical writing and served as president of the Canadian Historical Association. He continued to publish academic histories after he left the office in 1968.³¹ Lamb set about securing a more systematic transfer of federal government records to the PAC, something that Brymner had hinted at and Doughty and Lancôt had strived for. Lamb also recognized the importance of formal training for archivists for this new government records work and annually sent an archivist to take archival courses at American University in Washington.³² Though Lamb's efforts to make the Public Archives a government records repository will remain his greatest legacy to Canadian archival practice, the early years of his tenure saw two factors that greatly affected the Canadian tradition of archival outreach. These were the arrival of microfilm and in 1949 the establishment of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (commonly known as the Massey Commission after its chair Vincent Massey).

Aided by the Massey Commission's endorsement of the nationalistic cultural aims of archives in Canada, Lamb worked to strengthen the Archives' image as a protector of Canadian culture.³³ That the Public Archives won this endorsement was probably due to two factors. First, Lamb was personally well connected in Canadian

³¹ Lamb was president of the CHA for 1957-1958. His historical works included those he edited and wrote introductions to such as Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: The Journal of Daniel Williams Harmon, 1800-1816 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957) and The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1960) and monographs such as The History of Canada: From Discovery to Present Day (New York: American Heritage Press, 1971) and History of the Canadian Pacific Railway (New York: Macmillan, 1977).

³² William G. Ormsby, "The Public Archives of Canada, 1948-1968," Archivaria 15 (1982-83), 37.

³³ Millar, 115.

cultural circles and was thus invited to speak to the commission on a regular basis on a variety of topics.³⁴ Secondly, four of the five commissioners, including chairman Massey, were long-time members of the Canadian Historical Association and thus likely supportive of the work done at the Public Archives.³⁵ The commission report is also important because it recognized the value of establishing strong regional archives rather than centralizing all material in the Public Archives.³⁶

Lamb's respected status in Ottawa cultural circles can be attributed in part to the reputation he had as a forward thinker by, for example, his enthusiastic acceptance of microfilm as a means of improving access to the archives by academic historians. Copying of material, usually by hand, had long been an important practice at the Public Archives, but the advent of affordable microphotography fuelled an explosion in copying in the 1950s. Lamb understood the opportunities provided by microfilm and quickly stepped up copying schedules, both in Europe and in Canada.³⁷ Documents selected by PAC staff in Europe had been transcribed by hand. The development of microphotography spurred a massive increase in the efficiency of the copying process. Microfilm provided copies at a

³⁴ Paul Litt, The Muses, The Masses and the Massey Commission (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 45.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁶ Millar, 115.

³⁷ In fact, Lamb's early conversion to microfilm may have helped him obtain the appointment as Dominion Archivist. According to J. W. Pickersgill, in his foreword to the special Archivaria issue devoted to Lamb, it was Lamb's donation of microfilm copies to Prime Minister Mackenzie King of newspapers that King's grandfather (William Lyon Mackenzie) had published in the early nineteenth century that first brought Lamb attention in Ottawa. See "Kaye Lamb in Ottawa" Archivaria 15 (Winter 1982/83), 5-8.

speed described by Lamb as “immeasurably beyond the capacity of copyists working by hand.”³⁸

It is likely that Lamb’s library background (he had also been Provincial Librarian in British Columbia) fuelled his passion for microfilm. By the early 1940s, the Library of Congress in Washington was filming whole runs of newspapers and the potential literary uses of microfilm were the topic of much discussion by librarians.³⁹ It appears that Lamb was the first archivist in Canada to utilize microfilm on a mass scale. One of Lamb’s first expenditures at the PAC was the purchase of a microfilm camera. He soon entered into agreements with the British Public Record Office, the Archives Nationales in Paris, and the Hudson’s Bay Company to begin projects to microfilm archival records relating to Canada. By 1956, the federal government had recognized the PAC’s expertise with the new medium and transferred to the archives the administration of the Central Microfilm Unit, which had previously been under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Printing and Stationary.⁴⁰

By the mid-1950s the microfilm unit was filming several million pages of documents per year and in 1958, largely due to the microfilming of census records, managed to film a staggering total of 11,656,355 pages.⁴¹ Additionally, Lamb recognized the extensive outreach potential of microfilm and by the mid-1950s the Public Archives was extensively participating in the interlibrary loan of microfilmed

³⁸ Government of Canada, Report of the Public Archives for the Year, 1949 (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, C. M. G., B.A., L.Ph., Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1950), x.

³⁹ Nicholson Baker, Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 25.

⁴⁰ Government of Canada, Report of the Public Archives for the Years, 1955-1958 (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, C. M. G., B.A., L.Ph., Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1959), 11.

⁴¹ Government of Canada, Annual Report 1955-1958, 11.

materials. Yet Lamb was also cognizant of the implications of making too many copies of the PAC's records, fearing that by selling filmed copies of records the Public Archives would lose control of access conditions and thus potentially break promises made to donors concerning restrictions on use.⁴² The access benefits of microfilm drove many of the administrative decisions at the Public Archives of Canada in the 1950s and 1960s.

By the time Kaye Lamb retired in 1968, every Canadian province had established an archives to handle the records of its respective government. And all of the provincial archives had adopted the PAC's tradition of "Total Archives" and its holistic acquisition mandate. In 1970, Wilfred Smith was appointed Dominion Archivist and continued many of the policies begun by Lamb. Microfilm was still an important facet of the outreach goals of the PAC and Smith, likely inspired by the politics of the time, developed a diffusion program whereby microfilm copies of documents of national importance such as census and homestead records, were distributed to other Canadian archival repositories at little or no cost.⁴³ By then archivists working in repositories other than the PAC had begun to view themselves as members of a profession distinct from the historical profession, with different goals and problems.⁴⁴ Until 1974, Canadian archivists had used their training and close ties with historians to pursue their professional goals through membership in the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) and participation in the Archives Section of the CHA. As early as 1964, archivists involved in the CHA had discussed

⁴² Ormsby, 37.

⁴³ Danielle Lacasse and Antonio Lechasseur, *The National Archives of Canada, 1872-1997* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 23.

⁴⁴ Michael D. Swift, "The Canadian Archival Scene in the 1970s: Current Developments and Trends," *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83), 55.

forming their own association and by 1974 a special committee of the Archives Section was formed to explore the possibility. This "Committee of the Future" discovered a majority of archivists in favour of forming their own association, and in 1975 a constitution for the new group, the Association of Canadian Archivists, was adopted at a meeting in Edmonton in June. The new ACA had about 200 members.⁴⁵ In 1976, the ACA published the first issue of its journal Archivaria and Canadian archivists then had both a formal association and a new avenue to disseminate information and views about archival practice and theory in Canada.

The Third Stage 1975-1995

With the arrival of the ACA and Archivaria, a new wave of archival discussion animated Canadian archives and Canadian archival theory made significant strides. Archivaria quickly became known for its high quality and it promoted a new sense of academic community among archivists in Canada. Although articles by PAC archivists could be found in almost every issue, the early issues of Archivaria also contained articles from archivists working at provincial, municipal and corporate archives, indicating that the ACA was truly a national association, at least in English Canada.⁴⁶

Along with launching Archivaria, one of the first actions of the newly formed ACA was to call for the creation of a graduate program of archival education. In

⁴⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁶ Unsuccessful efforts had been made to include Quebec's archival community in the ACA. Quebec archivists opted to form their own association (the Association des archivistes du Québec). Members of the ACA and AAQ participate in the Bureau of Canadian Archivists, an umbrella group that meets twice a year to discuss common problems and issues.

June 1976, the ACA adopted a document drafted by Hugh Taylor and Edwin Welch entitled "Guidelines Towards a Curriculum for Graduate Archival Training Leading to a Master's Degree in Archival Science."⁴⁷ These guidelines called for the formation of a graduate program within a variety of possible departments: history, library science, and management studies are all mentioned in the ACA guidelines. In 1981, the University of British Columbia launched the first such program. This initiative reflects the new profession's understandable focus on developing its own specialized knowledge base. Canadian archivists continued to focus inwardly on profession-building in matters related to the internal administration of their increasingly complex archives throughout the 1980s. Perhaps the best example of this is "Rules for Archival Description" (RAD), which was published in 1990 by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists (BCA).⁴⁸ The development and application of RAD involved a major pan-Canadian effort which remained a priority in Canadian archival work from its beginnings in the early 1980s across the 1990s. In RAD Canadian archivists finally had a national standard that provided guidance in a then key priority area of archival work, description. Many Canadian archivists not only saw RAD as a sign of their distinct expertise but also as a unifying, professionalizing force in the new archival community.

Although public programming was not as high a priority as the development of archival theory and scholarship, education, and description, some began calling for more attention to it in the mid-1980s, encouraged in part by American archival

⁴⁷ Terry Eastwood, "The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), 35.

⁴⁸ For a more detailed analysis of the complex history of RAD see Kent Haworth "The Voyage of RAD: From the Old World to the New," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993).

writing and the new client-centred focus of many commercial business practices. Most of the proponents of public programming in the 1980s concerned themselves with creating archives that were more user-centered. The initial leader of this new movement was American archivist Elsie Freeman, who in 1984 said that greater attention should be given to the needs of the rising number of users of archives who were not academic historians.⁴⁹ She argued that through user surveys, archives could know their new clientele better and begin to serve them more effectively by bending the other aspects of archival work – appraisal and description – more directly to provision of information content that users want.

Freeman influenced many archivists to reconsider the status and nature of public programming. Soon articles began to appear in archival journals that touched on educational outreach and improving archival reference and access. In 1986, public programming concerns prompted the Association of Canadian Archivists to make them the theme of its annual conference, entitled “Facing Up, Facing Out: Reference, Access and Public Programming.” That the conference organizers considered these three matters to be integral parts of archival practice and worthy of a conference is significant. The conference title itself contains an appeal to “face up” to the problem of the overlooked, secondary status of client services and outreach and to “face out” more to users of archives during a time of largely inward looking profession building.

Some of the most significant papers at the conference were published in an Archivaria supplement that remains the most comprehensive analysis of the theoretical implications of public programming available in one source. As could be

⁴⁹ Freeman, 1984.

expected, all of the authors call for improved client services and links with the public. However several of the articles deserve further study, as their ideas are important to public programming in the postmodern world. Terry Cook urged archivists to be wary of American corporate culture's customer service fads, and not to overlook the basic need to set the holdings of archives in the context of their creation – so that as many uses of archives as possible can be served. He thought that this contextual approach, rather than one which stresses direct provision of the information content of records, would serve researchers better in the long run. He also argued that while archivists should be sensitive to user needs, many users do not know what they want and many uses of archives cannot be predicted. Cook also maintains that to follow user needs will skew archival service away from the sponsor's administrative needs and erode archival expertise, which is best grounded in the contextual analysis of the provenance of the records.⁵⁰ Cook's conclusion bears the most relevance to this study and thus merits quotation:

Rather than the new public programmers bending with every shift in market demand so that users' needs determine the very appraisal and description of archives, the outreach advocates should use their skills to convince users that what archives have is worthy of their attention. Or, in the (regrettable) jargon of the market that seems to be in favor, archives should not stock on their shelves the goods which customers want, rather, they should convince customers to buy what is already there.⁵¹

As will be shown later, Cook's vision can be achieved in no more appropriate manner than through use of the Internet as a public programming tool.

⁵⁰ Terry Cook, "Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91), 127.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

Cook's article was an obvious response to Gabrielle Blais and David Enns's article "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives." Blais and Enns demand the inclusion of public programming as a core archival duty. They argue that once public programming has been accepted as such, archives will be able to plan public programming activities accordingly.⁵² It is here that Blais and Enns elucidate the true weakness behind outreach in Canadian archives – it had not been implemented comprehensively enough. Blais and Enns call for a sharp shift toward a new public programming that embraced and sought to expand the wider clientele arriving at archives by the 1980s. They sought to bring archival services to a broader public than ever before, and in so doing make public programming a powerful driver of archival work among all members of an archives staff, rather than a peripheral activity carried out mainly by the leadership of an archives among elite academic researchers and the archives' funders.

Ian Wilson's article in the same issue of *Archivaria* is also noteworthy, in part because, as the current Librarian and Archivist of Canada, he is in a position to undertake many of the proposals he outlined. Wilson shows his deep commitment to public programming, particularly the public relations aspects of exhibitions. As Wilson notes: "there is no reason why archives cannot emulate museums and provide structured, even entertaining historical experiences for visitors" and "if archives wish to increase use without substantial staff increases, we must devise ways to make the archival experience less staff intensive."⁵³ He then goes on to list

⁵² Blais and Enns, 102.

⁵³ Ian Wilson, "Towards a Vision of Archival Services," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91), 95.

exhibitions as one of the ways this goal can be achieved. Writing in 1990, Wilson could not have foreseen the Internet, yet his article shows a strong commitment to the kind of innovative public programming the Internet invites. Under his leadership, the Library and Archives Canada has expanded its website and developed several uses of the Internet as public programming tool.

One other theme of the nascent Canadian archival literature dealing with outreach in the late 1980s and the 1990s bears mention: the use of archival materials in schools. As will be shown in later chapters, archival participation in the school system has become one of the ways archives have used the Internet to further their outreach goals. Canadian archives have not been very successful in bringing archival material to schoolchildren. Arthur Doughty in the 1920s attempted to put together packages for educators to use.⁵⁴ Doughty's efforts were largely unsuccessful and partnerships between PAC and educators mainly consisted of tours of the Public Archives' museum. As scholarship in archival studies and outreach broadened, several educators and archivists began exploring the possibility of using archival materials in the classroom more systematically. Leading Canadian teacher educators Ken Osborne and Sharon Anne Cook were the most prominent educators involved in attempts to revive this effort in the 1980s and 1990s.

Ken Osborne, then a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, offers a useful outsider's perspective on the broader outreach potential of archives through his article "Archives in the Classroom."⁵⁵ Osborne sees archival

⁵⁴ Government of Canada, Report of the Public Archives for the Year 1930 (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1931), xx, cited in Ken Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom", Archivaria 23 (Winter 1986-1987), 26.

⁵⁵ Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," 16-40.

material as a useful pedagogical tool for teaching the “new history” in Canadian classrooms. Unlike traditional history taught in Canadian schools until the early 1970s, the “new history” focused less on the formal political climate of the times and more on the daily life of those who lived in the past. Moreover, the “new history”, Osborne claims, must be interactive and multifaceted, and instead of providing students answers should provide them an opportunity to come to their own conclusions. Osborne views archival material as an especially effective means for achieving these goals in history teaching, but laments the unsystematic way archives and educators have worked together in the past: each side, already overworked doing their respective core duties, viewed the other as having limited commitment to the various projects undertaken.⁵⁶ Osborne offers several recommendations, most of which stress the importance of archivists and educators working together, while utilizing their respective strengths to develop appropriate curricula and archival teaching tools.

Sharon Cook, writing almost ten years after Osborne, offers a useful practical test of many of Osborne’s ideas. Cook, a teacher educator at the University of Ottawa, participated in a project initiated by then National Archives of Canada to produce educational material for use in the public school system. The material was taken from the NAC’s 1994 exhibition “Prime Ministers of Canada.” This project, likely inspired by Ken Osborne’s call for constructive cooperation between the teaching and archival professions, involved an archivist with experience in education and exhibitions, a university teacher educator, and a curriculum developer with the Ottawa Board of Education. Building on the Canadian tradition of “Total

⁵⁶ Ibid., 17.

Archives,” the group produced a board game that employed a variety of archival media, including textual documents, photographs, sound recordings, and graphic materials. Upon completion of the project, the board game was distributed to teachers in Ottawa and Quebec and was considered a useful classroom resource by teachers who used it.⁵⁷

Cook also offers several reasons why public programming with the school system justifies archival participation in educational projects. She says that participation will improve archivists’ “exceedingly low” profile with the general public.⁵⁸ It could make the general public more aware of what archivists really do and perhaps stimulate interest in archives, thereby improving acquisitions and building the support of future taxpayers. Cook advises against producing computer-based educational material, citing a belief that educators are somewhat jaded about the efficacy of computer-based learning materials as well as her personal view that educational material should reach as large a target audience as possible, something that electronic educational material fails to do.⁵⁹

A discussion of a 1998 American study of the use of archival materials in education by archivists and educators at the University of California-Los Angeles concludes this review of literature on archival outreach to the education system. Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, Yasmin B. Kafai, and William J. Landis offer a far more detailed analysis than Osborne and Cook of the potential and pitfalls of using archival materials in the classroom. Gilliland-Swetland et al initiated contact with two grade four teachers at a school affiliated with UCLA. The two teachers, already

⁵⁷ Sharon Anne Cook, “Connecting Archives and the Classroom,” *Archivaria* 44 (Fall 1997), 109.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

somewhat conversant with archival materials, agreed to participate in the study through a series of entry, progress and exit interviews. The authors, using their own knowledge of the archival sources available, opted to create a teaching module using the Donald Ryder Dickey Collection from the History of Medicine Collection in the UCLA Biomedical Library.⁶⁰ The researchers then developed educational activities that used archival material to help students study plant and animal specimens and to take field trips to areas surveyed by Dickey almost a hundred years before. At the end of the project, both students and teachers deemed the work rewarding and worthwhile, but noted that extensive archival involvement in the process is necessary for success.⁶¹

Educational outreach may be viewed much like other outreach activities such as exhibitions, archival museums, and publications. When implemented, they have had modest success in raising general public awareness of archives, but have never been viewed as a core archival duty. Yet, through the 135 years of Canadian archival history since the founding of the Public Archives such outreach activities have remained a constant feature of archival practice. Outreach has been the unspoken mandate of almost every Canadian archival organization. For the most part Canadian archival tradition aimed to further elite academic historical research and national and regional political and cultural aims rather than to acquire and authenticate government documents. This emphasis on the historical role of

⁶⁰ Donald Ryder Dickey was an early-twentieth-century naturalist who collected 7000 images of animals and plants as well as 50 000 specimens of birds and mammals, many of which are housed in the UCLA medical library.

⁶¹ Anne J. Gilliland Swetland, Yasmin B. Kafai, and William E. Landis, "Integrating Primary Sources Into the Elementary School Classroom: A Case Study of Teachers' Perspectives," *Archivaria* 48 (Fall 1999), 111.

archives, while elitist and academic in initial orientation, did result in the acquisition of a wide variety of archival materials which, when historical interest and societal conditions permitted, eventually placed Canadian archives in an enviable position to undertake more active and broadly based archival outreach programs.

The Fourth Stage 1995-

In 1995, the National Archives of Canada went online, an act that marks the fourth stage in this periodization of archival history in Canada. It is probable that NAC was the first Canadian archives to have an online presence. The arrival of the Internet coincided with rising interest in postmodern thought among archivists. These two developments greatly influenced archival thinking and practice in the ten years since 1995. Archives can now reach a much wider audience through imaginative use of the Internet, which the unsettling questioning of conventional ideas by postmodernism could only encourage. This did not happen immediately, however. Archives first used the Internet primarily as a means of dissemination of traditional archival services and information content such as RAD descriptions. Thus the first large scale forays by archives onto the Internet involved the mass digitization of fonds level descriptions through portals such as the Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN) (now Archives Canada). This represented a major achievement by the new archival profession, but still reflected the profession's priorities of the pre-Internet 1970s and 1980s. By 2001 when CAIN was a reality, the attention of the Canadian heritage community had shifted

significantly to digitization of actual documents and creation of narrative exhibits. Archivists responded by moving beyond their earlier profession-building priorities and into greater support for and direct participation in making narrative historical content available at archival websites. This seems to reflect a new opening toward closer relationships with historians, perhaps healing some of the rifts when the two professions separated in the 1970s. At the same time, this historical content is directed at a much wider public audience than the traditional academic history clientele of archives. The move towards providing narrative content has become the centerpiece of Internet public programming in this fourth stage and will be discussed further in chapters two and three of this thesis.

The view espoused in this thesis is a revisionist one. Few other Canadian archivists who have written about outreach take the view that outreach has always been an important facet of Canadian archives. In fact, most articles on Canadian outreach and/or public programming begin by lamenting their prior neglect by Canadian archivists. Blais and Enns claim that it was “not until the early 1980s that archivists began to seriously consider public service and examine their obligation to make holdings available to the public.”⁶² In the early 1990s, American archivist Timothy Ericson complained about “how badly ... the archival profession has fallen short in promoting the use of archival materials.”⁶³ A tradition of outreach existed in Canada, but with an academic focus. Elsie Freeman and Canadian counterparts such as Blais and Enns questioned that focus and wanted to attract the many other types of new clients that the more competitive funding environment of the 1980s

⁶² Blais and Enns, 101.

⁶³ Tim Ericson, “‘Preoccupied with our own gardens’: Outreach and Archivists,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91), 114.

and 1990s made necessary. This refocusing of outreach activities was further spurred by the Internet and the advent of postmodern thought among archivists, which together seem to be making outreach a much more central aspect of Canadian archival practice.

Chapter 2: Implications of Postmodernism and the Internet for Archival Public Programming

“But history is never neutral.”¹ (Daniel Parenti, 1997)

“In the past few years, the National Archives has gone from serving 40 000 or so researchers to serving more than one million on line....The National Archives is opening the archival records in ways our predecessors barely imagined.”² (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002)

“There is no unedited collective memory.”³ (Gary Taylor, 1996)

Although Canadian archivists have always engaged in public programming, the arrival of postmodern thought in archival discourse has provided an impetus for the formal disavowal of archival objectivity, and greater openness to public programming activities. Postmodernism has caused many Canadian archivists to reconsider their role in the handling of the documents under their care. If, as the postmodernists believe, the archivist is a participant in the record's creation, through continual negotiation with others in society who are involved in this process, there is no longer reason for archivists to avoid public programming because of concerns about bias. The problems associated with the control of electronic records have further weakened this neo-Jenkinsonian position.⁴ If archival control is necessary upon the electronic record's creation through the use of archival templates or systems designed by archivists to ensure records of

¹ Daniel Parenti, *History as Mystery*, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), 183.

² Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *National Archives of Canada: Performance Report for the period ending March 31, 2002*, (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2002), 5.

³ Gary Taylor, *Cultural Selection. Why Some Achievements Survive the Test of Time – And Others Don't*, (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 124.

⁴ Perhaps the most prominent supporter of the positivist neo-Jenkinsonian position is Luciana Duranti of the University of British Columbia's Archival Studies program. Duranti is also one of the central figures behind the International Research on Permanent Long Term Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) authenticity task force. For a good introduction to Duranti's writings see her article “Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications,” *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995).

organizational activities are created, then the neutrality of the archivist in the records creation process has been broken, even long before the records reach the archives. The archivist's involvement with the record is now more obvious, inevitable, and even welcome in areas such as public programming. Even to argue that archival intervention in the record creation process is and can be limited is akin to claiming to be a little bit pregnant. One cannot dance back and forth across this archival threshold.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect of the computer revolution that both postmodernist and positivist archivists can agree on. The Internet and the World Wide Web are opening up to archives an audience many times larger than conventional walk-in or mail reference clients. Web statistics are notoriously ambiguous (after all what constitutes a visitor? page hits, cookies planted, first time visitors?), but it can safely be assumed that the web's potential audience of billions vastly exceeds the traditional archival client base. In April 2002, I contacted six major North American cultural institutions to inquire about public usage of their web sites.⁵ Although all six replied, only two were willing to share their web statistics. These two institutions, the National Gallery of Art (NGA) in Washington D.C. and the National Archives of Canada (NAC) in Ottawa, had website statistics that showed Internet visitors at least equaled traditional walk-in clients.⁶ Moreover, through a telephone conversation with Neal Johnson, a digital media consultant for the NGA, it was revealed that the NGA's website traffic was increasing by 40% annually while the walk-in traffic remained constant.⁷ Should the statistics continue

⁵ These institutions were the National Archives of Canada, the (American) National Archives and Records Administration, the National Gallery of Canada, the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and the Smithsonian Institution.

⁶ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, National Archives of Canada: Performance Report for the period ending March 31, 2002, 2. Telephone conversation with consultant Neal Johnson of the National Gallery of Art, April 12, 2002.

⁷ Telephone conversation with Neal Johnson, April 12, 2002.

at the same rate, and Johnson believes they will, the website traffic will soon vastly exceed walk-in numbers. There is no reason to believe that the NGA's experience is not representative of other cultural institutions, archives included.

Although most archivists can agree on the utility of the Internet (by 2002 almost all Canadian archives had some sort of web presence), there still appears to be debate about the use of the Internet for public programming. As will be seen in chapter three, there exists a vast discrepancy in the use and quality of Internet sites among major cultural institutions. Moreover, many Canadian archival sites offer archival content either through token exhibits consisting of scanned photographs or in web pages consisting of practical information such as opening and closing hours and contact numbers. Nevertheless, there are repositories, some quite large and well funded, others much smaller and likely stretched for funding, which offer well-designed Internet public programming offerings such as detailed, contextually satisfying virtual exhibits or searchable databases of archival descriptions. It will be demonstrated in this thesis that electronic public programming is the most inexpensive, easily produced, and though this is yet unproven, the most effective way for an archives to publicize its holdings to the sponsoring institution and the general public. To do this, however, demands that an archivist accept responsibility for her or his role as an active participant in the creation of the exhibit. Though many archivists prefer to use the term bias to describe the ingrained ideas that we impart consciously or subconsciously upon the records in our control, I prefer the more euphemistic term agency. Thus, if an archivist is comfortable acknowledging the use of archival agency in mounting an exhibit, he or she should have

no problem in successfully mounting a significant public programming presence on the Internet.

Before entering into a discussion of the liberties postmodernism has given archivists, it is imperative to contextualize the underlying technological change that has thrust electronic public programming into the forefront of archival practice at the beginning of the twenty-first century: the creation and proliferation of the Internet. It is hard to believe, considering how entrenched the Internet has become in day-to-day archival work, that few archives have had a web presence for more than ten years.⁸ To understand the effect the Internet has had on archival public programming, it is important to briefly study the development of the Internet prior to archival involvement.

Historians of the Internet, likely reflecting the postmodern times they are writing in, tend to stress the randomness of its development. As these historians tend to have backgrounds in the history of science and technology, it is not surprising that they have utilized technological historical ideologies in their work. Contrary to traditional chronological narratives of technology that portray a linear structured advance towards progress, these historians see the Internet as an artifact that was (and still is) constantly changing to reflect new users, societal pressures and needs. This perspective is drawn from the writings of those who see technologies as social constructs. A further elucidation of these ideas offers insights into both the development of the Internet and the effect this new technology is having on traditional archival thought. The Dutch historian-engineer Wiebe E. Bijker, for example, views technology as the product of a series of negotiations between all the different actors involved in the creation and development of

⁸ The National Archives of Canada launched its website in December 1995. It is safe to assume that NAC was among the first Canadian archives to go online. The British Public Record Office also went online in 1995.

a technological artifact. The inventor, consumer, potential consumer, and in fact, all other social groups with an active or potential interest can be seen to be influencing the development of an artifact. Technological development is driven by adaptation and uses of the artifact by the different actors. Although this view rightly points to the variety of actors who influence a technological artifact, it does not differentiate between the powers of different social groups over the development of the artifact. Still, its stress on the varied influences behind a technological change mirrors well the early collaboration of the groups involved in the development of the Internet. That the Internet developed as a loosely organized network of academics and engineers, whose diverse backgrounds allowed it to flourish in ways unimaginable if controlled by a single source, has become the view accepted by most historians of the Internet.⁹

This perspective on the development of technology and the Internet may also be applicable to the archival practice of public programming. Bijker shows through his studies of the history of the bicycle, Bakelite plastic, and fluorescent lighting that technological artifacts go through a process of sociological construction that eventually enters a stage when one social group's perspective becomes dominant. Bijker calls this stage closure or stabilization.¹⁰ To achieve closure or stabilization, several competing social groups discover that their specific needs are satisfied in different ways by the same

⁹ Perhaps the most comprehensive history of the Internet, Janet Abbate's Inventing the Internet (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999) takes this approach. This is not really a surprise as Abbate studied under the historian of technology Thomas P. Hughes who advocates a similar constructivist approach. For more on the history of the Internet, see Hughes's "Networking: Arpanet" in his Rescuing Prometheus (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998). Although this has yet to be articulated by historians of the Internet, other writers on the development of technology take a much more complex postmodern view of the interaction of agents and systems. For a brief introduction see Michael Callon's "Society in the Making: The Study of Technology as a Tool for Sociological Analysis" in The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology, edited by Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor J. Pinch (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987). Bruno Latour develops a thesis similar to Callon's in We Have Never Been Modern (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

¹⁰ Wiebe E. Bijker, Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs: Towards a Theory of Technological Change (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 283.

artifact and effectively become a single, larger social group.¹¹ Once this stage has been achieved, much of society views the development of the technology as a natural process and the interpretive flexibility of an artifact disappears.¹²

For archivists, the applicability of the concept of closure and stability to this study of the Internet and electronic public programming may seem obvious. Archival public programming, instead of being considered an afterthought of archival practice, is becoming an essential aspect of the work of almost every archival repository through the popularity of the Internet. Due to the expansion of their client base, made possible by the Internet, repositories are being strongly encouraged (perhaps forced) by funders to emphasize public programming as a central part of their mandate. Archival user groups, whether academic historians, other academics, genealogists, or others are now part of a dominant social group in research, which views electronic public programming as central to their use of archives. Archivists, attempting to satisfy client needs (and the desires of their sponsors), are in the process of reorienting their services to fill this need. Although the actual practice of archival public programming is far from reaching closure, the participation of archives in electronic public programming has in fact reached such a state of closure. It is no longer acceptable or even feasible for a mid- to large-size archival repository to be without a website. Most smaller archives have a website and/or participate in networks such as the Archives Network of Alberta (ANA) or the Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN).¹³ Those that do not have a website are held back

¹¹ Wiebe E. Bijker, "The Social Construction of Bakelite: Towards a Theory of Invention" in The Social Construction of Technological Systems, edited by Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor J. Pinch (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987) 183.

¹² Bijker, Bicycles, Bakelite, and Bulbs, 86.

¹³ Both the Canadian Archival Information Network (now also known as Archives Canada) and the Archives Network of Alberta are examples of multi-repository databases of descriptions of records that allow users to explore the holdings of multiple repositories when conducting a search for archival

by economic, personnel, or technical difficulties. Addition of web content has become a daily activity in most archives and funding of traditional non-web projects has become increasingly difficult to obtain.

With the prevalence of archival participation in electronic public programming it is difficult to imagine that this change occurred over only a period of ten years. It can be safely assumed that when Canada's largest and most prominent archives, the National Archives, went online in 1995 it was in advance of most other Canadian archival repositories.¹⁴ How did this change happen so rapidly? The appeal of reaching a much larger audience for archival services and the ease of employing the Internet go far to explain its quick adoption. The arrival of postmodern thought in archival circles is another key factor in the development of electronic public programming. Interestingly, postmodernism seems to have arrived almost simultaneously with archival websites, Terry Cook observes that the first mention of postmodernism in an archival setting occurred in 1994.¹⁵ Although the word postmodernism may not have been used until 1994 in archival writing, Canadian archivists such as Brien Brothman had written from that perspective as early as 1991.¹⁶ The publication of the English-language version of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* in 1996 thrust postmodernism into mainstream archival

information. None of the technological costs (such as storage and maintenance) of these databases is borne by the institution, which greatly encourages participation. The ANA database also offers a searchable database of photographs that allows Albertan repositories to publicize their photographic holdings at no cost to themselves. The ANA database can be accessed at www.archivesalberta.org while Archives Canada can be accessed at www.archivescanada.ca (Both last accessed May 15, 2004)

¹⁴ Government of Canada, *National Archives of Canada- Annual Review 1995-1996* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1996), 14.

¹⁵ Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001), 20. For another relatively complete bibliography of postmodern archival writing see Nesmith "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *The American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002), 24.

¹⁶ Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991). Richard Brown's "Value of 'Narrativity' in the Appraisal of Historical Documents, The Foundation for a Theory of Archival Hermeneutics" also appeared in *Archivaria* 32.

thought and, just as important, thrust discussion of archives into a much wider intellectual circle in society. Derrida, arguably the most influential postmodern philosopher of his time, saw archives not as a mere static repository but as an agent in the formation of societal memory. Derrida also claimed that how a society constructs and makes available its memory or archives is a barometer of the health of its democracy: "Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution and its representation."¹⁷ The above quote is actually strikingly similar to ideas espoused by positivist archival theorists such as Sir Hilary Jenkinson and more recently Luciana Duranti, but Derrida sees much less of a naïve positivist slant to the statement as he also states "[T] here is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory."¹⁸ Derrida's work helped to expose certain aspects of archival work to a much larger audience, but the difficulties of digesting the complexity of his writing may also have led many archivists to eschew developing deeper understanding of the relationship of postmodernism to their daily work responsibilities.

Reluctance to embrace postmodernism may also arise from its encouragement of a sometimes unsettling multiplicity of interpretations of phenomena, including archiving activities and records. As Terry Cook says, postmodernism is a difficult term to define -- in a truly postmodern fashion, it can mean different things to different people.¹⁹ However, many would agree that postmodernists hold the view that human communication cannot reflect a single identifiable reality. Thus there is always more to know, and much left out of any communication. The limited perspectives and biases of communicators move in to

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Terry Cook, "Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001), 19.

fill these gaps with what is often assumed to be common sense or a natural pattern or just the way things are. Postmodernists say it is important to try to see and challenge these limitations and any and all orthodoxies that are based on them. Thus these orthodoxies or methodologies (or assumptions) must be examined and judged in part on the motivations behind their creators, proponents and opponents. To quote Terry Cook again, and the simplicity of his statements sums up postmodernism quite succinctly, "Deconstruction is not about destroying in endless relativist critiques, but about constructing, about seeing anew and imagining what is possible when the platitudes and ideologies are removed." Therefore, he adds, "postmodernism is an opening, not a closing, a chance to welcome a wider discussion about what archivists do and why, rather than remaining defensively inside the archival cloister."²⁰

Cook's comments come out of a line of thinking most prominently identified with Jean Francois Lyotard, who famously defined postmodernism as "incredulity to metanarratives."²¹ Thus, for archivists, postmodernism can be seen as challenging two dual orthodoxies that have governed Canadian archival practice throughout the twentieth century. The first orthodoxy challenged is the Jenkinsonian tenet that archivists are neutral guardians of records. Instead, and this realization frees archivists to participate more fully in archival public programming, archivists (and clients, administrators, technical personnel and all other actors within the archival sphere) are inherently biased, and this bias should be acknowledged and examined in all aspects of archival practice, including electronic public programming. Secondly, as evidenced by Total Archives and the Public Archives Act of 1912, much of Canadian archival practice has been driven by

²⁰ Ibid., 22.

²¹ Jean Francois Lyotard, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, The Postmodern Condition, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiv.

metanarratives such as nation or community building. Postmodern analysis of archival practice, and the constant questioning of metanarratives, challenge archivists to reexamine the very core of their work.

Of course, the power and bias described by postmodernists have always been present in the archives. Arthur Doughty espoused a more "scientific" academic history based on archival evidence, but many of his comments also reveal his agenda of promoting Canadian nationalism. Indeed, he felt the two went hand-in-hand.²² As Verne Harris notes at the beginning of this study, "power is always at play in the archive. And archivists from the beginning and always, are political players."²³ To show that archivists have always played an active (and not always exemplary) role in handling their records and the operations of their archives, numerous examples from the past can be cited. Like Doughty, medieval archivists were interested in using records to further their own agenda -- in extreme cases documents were destroyed for various reasons by societies (and archivists) interested in reshaping their own history. Historian Patrick Geary offers a compelling case study of medieval archivists who were willing participants in reshaping history. Geary examines the papyri of the Merovingian monastery of St. Denis and comes to the conclusion that in the eleventh century a "rich archive, reaching back to the dawn of institutional archival formation, was systematically pillaged and destroyed in order to build from its fragments a more useful and appropriate past."²⁴ Geary illustrates how monks of the eleventh century, in order to prove their separation from the episcopacy and

²² For example, perceiving a threat from Max Aitken's Canadian War Records Office during World War I, Doughty sent a memo to Prime Minister Robert Borden outlining his concerns about the CWRO's records in relation to its violation of the 'scientific' archival principle of provenance (McIntosh, 12), yet numerous other comments by Doughty reveal that fostering Canadian nationalism was his prime concern.

²³ Harris, 80.

²⁴ Patrick J. Geary, Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 107.

thus maintain the advantages of that separation, systematically set out to destroy or alter the documents that supported an opposing interpretation. As papyrus was not readily available for use in the eleventh century, archivists were forced to reuse seventh century papyri in order to make forgeries. Papyri was turned over, the recto sides glued to pieces of parchment or to the recto sides of other papyri to hide their content, and a new and more usable history was then written on them by monks skilled in the art of forgery.²⁵ These papyri were in turn sent to Rome in 1065 to be examined by the synod and subsequently upheld the monastery's favourable relationship with the episcopacy. It was only through analysis by later diplomatists that the forgeries were uncovered. The systematic destruction and alteration of records took place as a society attempted to rewrite its own history.²⁶

Modern records have also been manipulated by both archivists and records creators in order to offer evidence amenable to those wielding power. Use of archival records in propaganda is most obviously illustrated through studies of totalitarian regimes such as in apartheid South Africa or Nazi Germany. The Nazis utilized archival records to further their warped political and societal views. For example they used archival genealogical records to identify and persecute people of Jewish ancestry.²⁷ By following directions from their superiors, German archivists likely caused the imprisonment and death of many Jews during this period.²⁸ In a more positive example of archival agency, South African archivist Verne Harris jeopardized his own career by acting as a

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ For another analysis that looks at record destruction in the Renaissance, see Richard Brown's "Death of a Renaissance Record Keeper: The Murder of Tomasso da Tortona in Ferrara, 1385," *Archivaria* 44 (Fall 1997).

²⁷ Wolfgang Ernst, "Archival Action: the archive as ROM and its political instrumentation under National Socialism," *History of the Human Sciences*, 12 no. 2 (May 1999), 13.

²⁸ Ernst estimates that up to 80 per cent of German archivists were members of the National Socialist party; *ibid.*, 29.

whistleblower in the South African government when he told the South African media about the covert destruction of apartheid era documents.²⁹

That apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany would manipulate archival records in order to pursue their twisted ideologies is not surprising, but surely overt manipulation of records does not occur within the sanctity of Western European or North American archives, considered by many in power to be essential to sustaining “our democratic way of life,” as then United States Senate Leader Trent Lott commented in 1997 after visiting the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).³⁰ Similar sentiments can be found in the writings of archivists such as Doughty and Jenkinson, as well as other politicians. That Lott, a contemporary and member of the same political party as Richard Nixon, could hold such sentiments could be seen by some as naïve at best and by others as disingenuous at worst. Evidence that western democratic states exert pressure to control the availability and interpretation of records, sometimes with duplicitous intent, can be seen through the following examples.

In 1991, over seventy-three years after World War I ended, military historian Denis Winter was able to prove that British General Sir Douglas Haig systematically modified his own war diaries to preserve his historical legacy in a much more favourable light. Moreover, Winter shows that many others aided this deception. They include Haig’s family members, government bureaucrats, and record keepers presumably acting on instructions coming from their superiors. Winter offers several viable reasons for this deception. Haig’s family was concerned about preserving his legacy while government officials were initially concerned about morale and later about preserving the reputation

²⁹ Harris, 73.

³⁰ Lott’s comment can be found in Nesmith, “Seeing Archives,” 33.

of the government. However, the most important factor to be considered for this study is that records are not neutral organic traces of transactions but malleable texts. To quote Winter: “[T]he credentials of each letter, diary, or set of minutes have to be established and even the most nutritious are like those fish, highly valued by the Japanese, which kill the unwary. Meticulous processing and the most precise culinary techniques are required.”³¹

For any reader still skeptical of archival involvement in the creation and interpretation of records, numerous recent examples could also be cited, including the withholding of publication of audiotapes created by Richard Nixon while president,³² the Australian Heiner Affair which saw the destruction of documents,³³ and the 2004 participation of the National Archivist of the Philippines in a forgery in order to further his own personal goals.³⁴ These examples illustrate how archives can be caught up in wider political pressures which can undermine their claims to be neutral entities.

³¹ Denis Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991), 314.

³² Daniel Parenti, in *History as Mystery*, outlines how former President Nixon aggressively litigated to prevent the release of his presidential audiotapes, presumably to preserve a positive view of his political legacy. In 1975, Congress ordered the release of thirty-seven hundred hours of audiotapes of conversations between Nixon and his aides. As the repository where the tapes were held, NARA became a central part of the litigation. After a legal ruling declaring “private” portions of the tapes to be the property of Nixon, NARA decided that all but a small portion of the tapes were “private records” and thus the property of Nixon. It is only natural to wonder whether NARA decided to interpret the concept of “private” more broadly than it might have because of the litigation. 151.

³³ In 1989, the Queensland government of Wayne Goss ordered the records of the Heiner Inquiry (named after the investigation's head Noel Heiner) into abuses at the John Oxley Youth Center destroyed. The records were immediately shredded by employees of the state archives. The adherence to the order by the archives, though legal, called into question the relationship between archives and their sponsors. For a more detailed account of the Heiner Affair see Chris Hurley, “Records and the Public Interest: The ‘Heiner Affair’ in Queensland Australia,” in Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace eds., *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002), 293-307.

³⁴ In January 2004, the Director of the National Archives of the Philippines, Ricardo Manapat, was accused of falsifying the marriage certificate of presidential candidate Fernando Poe's parents, in order to prove that Poe was born illegitimately, and thus was not a Philippine citizen but an American, and therefore ineligible to be president. According to Filipino custom children born out of wedlock take the nationality of the mother. For ongoing coverage of the Manapat affair, see Philippine Headline News Online at www.newsflash.org and search Manapat (last accessed March 4, 2005).

Undoubtedly there have been many other cases of archival complicity in the creation of "history," but most have probably remained undiscovered. Archival intervention in the records is usually not as obvious as the most notorious cases suggest. In fact all archival work, whether it is reference, appraisal, description or any other aspect of archival work, allows the archivist to modify the records in his or her custody without detection or even physical handling of the record. Shakespeare scholar Gary Taylor summarizes how the intellectual work of drawing on memory and representing the past affect what can be known of the past in ways that are directly applicable to such archival intervention in history of the records. He observes that memory has a variety of effects and characteristics:

1. Memory actively constructs representations. 2. Every representation is a combination. 3. Representations are not equal to the realities they represent. 4. Representations are always partial. 5. Memories are emotive. 6. The gap between representation and reality is filled with artifice, imagination and feeling and 7. All representations are communications, and memory in particular is a representation that communicates across time.³⁵

For Taylor, these truths lead to four pathologies in the memory of culture. The first pathology, the traditional hostility to certain representations, is seen through several religions' prohibition of any pictorial or objective representation of God. Religious hostility emanates from a belief that there is a danger that the deity may be replaced by the representation (idolatry).³⁶ In some religious thinking, however, belief in the possibility of perfect representation of God leads to the second pathology, fundamentalism. For Taylor, fundamentalism easily moves into the third pathology,

³⁵ Taylor, 114.

³⁶ Ibid., 115

nostalgia, and a belief that celebrates the great value and authenticity of older things or traditions, something that all working archivists are aware of -- the older the media the more likely the positive appraisal. Hence painting might be considered by some to be more authentic than black and white photography, and in turn black and white photography more authentic than colour photography. Nostalgia, or a desire for a direct contact with reality, leads to the fourth pathology, realism, or the view that we can have certain and direct knowledge of reality. However, Taylor claims that realism "asks for what no representation can give and rejects much of what it does give."³⁷

Taylor then demonstrates how combining or 'chunking' contributes to memory. We remember all representations as a series of combinations, be they letters, words, numbers or other representations. Every memory is a collective memory. The author then concludes his thoughts by claiming that since no representation can be considered complete in itself, we must ask what does this representation of representations leave out?³⁸

Taylor also offers an interesting perspective on the ever changing transformation of records through an analysis of the authenticity of and possible changes in Diego Velazquez's 1656 painting *Las Meninas*, a painting of the Spanish royal family. *Las Meninas*, like all forms of media, is itself a representation and reflects a memory. After detailing many possible transformations, it becomes clear that the original is no longer the original. It has become a representation of a representation. Taylor then shows how all representations become subject to four transformations. The first is that as a representation ages, greater amounts of information external to the representation itself

³⁷ Ibid., 116.

³⁸ Ibid., 120.

must be brought to bear on its interpretation if we are to hope to understand it. This ever lengthening distance from its moment of creation means that the additional information ends up changing its original meaning. Secondly, reproducing a representation alters it. The third transformation occurs when the representation decays or is altered by changes in the environment; to preserve as far as possible its original essence it must be repeatedly restored, physically or imaginatively. Lastly, whether or not the representation is restored it will naturally occupy a different environment and this new context of interpretation will alter the representation.³⁹ Taylor calls those who perform or make possible these transformations editors. For Taylor every cultural representation that becomes a collective memory has been edited. If it has not been edited in this transformative process over time, it no longer exists or has been forgotten.⁴⁰

Taylor provides several examples of how *Las Meninas* was edited, both culturally and physically in the 350 years since Velazquez painted it. Taylor notes that the editor often remains invisible.⁴¹ A well-edited piece will retain little trace of the editor; while a poorly edited one will be obvious in its alterations. All media have been edited and changed over time, and without an understanding of the context surrounding both the creator and the editor, it becomes impossible to understand the representation. Although archivists have always acted as editors, it was only when undertaking public programming that this became obvious and led to the tensions archivists have felt around public programming opportunities.

This editorship can be seen to inhabit every aspect of archival practice -- appraisal, description, access, public programming and every other facet of archival work.

³⁹ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 124.

⁴¹ Ibid., 134.

Every decision made in archives causes the archivist to act as an editor of the records in his or her custody, but none more so than the opening (or closing) of records to archival clients. For any archivists doubting their role as an editor, I offer an example from my own work life. Upon being hired as a Private Records Archivist at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in July 2003, my first responsibility was to sort out the status of records acquired as permanent loans in the 1970s and 1980s. After having several groups demand a return of records long held at the PAA on permanent loan, the PAA decided to clarify the ownership status of the remaining permanent loans. Letters were sent to those who had deposited records on permanent loan to request clarification of the ownership status of their records. When I began this project, the number of clients still classified as having deposited permanent loans was twenty-seven, and included groups and individuals as diverse as the Alberta Cricket Association, the Debolt Golf and Country Club and the former Alberta Progressive Conservative Cabinet Minister David King. Letters were sent to all twenty-seven in August 2003. By April 2004, the PAA had received notification from thirteen that they would now donate their records to the PAA. However, of these thirteen donations, only one group, the Edmonton and District Labour Council, has had its records described and available in the PAA's reading room and in the ANA database.⁴² The reason why this group received preferential treatment offers an example of an archivist -- me -- acting as an editor.

The EDLC was formed through the merger of the Edmonton Trades and Labour Council (ETLC) and the Edmonton Labour Council (ELC) in 1958 and existed to offer labour unions a united voice in labour negotiations with business. In the 1970s the EDLC

⁴² The RAD compliant description of the Edmonton and District Labour Council fonds can be accessed at <http://asalive.archivesalberta.org:8080/access/asa/archaa/>. Then search Edmonton and District Labour Council (last accessed March 4, 2005).

deposited several accessions of its records on permanent loan at the PAA. These records include minute books dating from the ETLC's incorporation in 1905 to the late 1970s. As an archivist with an academic background in Western Canadian history, I was immediately interested in this continuity of the records of an organization so closely tied to the development of industry in the Edmonton area. Moreover, as the chronology of the minute books seemed to provide a contemporary account of labour union activities during the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, I began a much more detailed analysis of the records than I had made with any of the other permanent loan records. Surprisingly, at least to me, very little mention of the strike is made, illustrating that an omission can sometimes be as meaningful as the text itself. My foray into the records and personal interest in their subject matter prompted me to write a RAD compliant fonds level description of the EDLC fonds for the PAA holdings. It is naïve to think that many other archival decisions on what is described, and thus disseminated to the public, are not made just as arbitrarily.

Motive is always present in decisions made in an archives and public programming is an integral, not peripheral, aspect of archival practice. Nevertheless, theory is not everything, and most archivists assigned to public programming activities such as exhibits, virtual or otherwise, will likely search for practical manuals instead of theoretical articles perceived to be of less use to an archivist on a deadline with a demanding boss. Three practical works on public programming and the mounting of traditional exhibits have been mainstays of much archival practice in the English-speaking world. They are worthy of examination as they are all associated with large archival associations and identify the various pressures these organizations have in balancing the practical needs of their constituents with the ideological biases of their

fundings. These manuals are likely consulted by archivists and others when developing that most common product of public programming, both the traditional and virtual exhibit.

Gail Farr Casterline's Archives & Manuscripts: Exhibits was published in 1980 in the Society of American Archivists Basic Manual series. Casterline offers a detailed summary of the procedures involved in setting up an archival exhibit. She chooses, however, to concentrate on the physical aspects of exhibits, such as humidity controls, and discusses very minimally the theoretical aspects of archival exhibits. Although she discusses choosing a topic, she tiptoes around the issue of archival objectivity by suggesting various tame themes such as "Way Back When" exhibits, without analyzing the reasons behind the choice of an exhibit topic. Casterline does include the warning that exhibitors "should make a careful distinction between exhibits that are intentionally memorializing and purportedly 'objective'."⁴³ By placing the word objective in quotation marks, Casterline is obviously indicating her doubts about the possibility of archival objectivity; unfortunately she chooses not to elaborate on those doubts. Although her text is extremely light on the theoretical aspects of mounting an exhibit, Casterline's manual offers a practical resource for any archivist planning either a traditional or virtual exhibit.

Ann Pederson's chapter "User Education and Public Relations" appeared in 1993 in Keeping Archives, a publication of the Australian Society of Archivists. Much of what Pederson offers rehashes some of Casterline's ideas, and the chapter's location at the end of an otherwise excellent work lends credence to the assumption that public programming is a task for the archivist to undertake once the more important archival work is finished.

⁴³ Gail F. Casterline, Archives and Manuscripts: Exhibits (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980), 12.

The final works to be examined are the chapters on archival exhibits and public programming in Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, a popular American manual published in 1989 and edited by James Gregory Bradsher of the National Archives and Records Administration. Bradsher and Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler (also of NARA) wrote the chapter on exhibits. Editor Bradsher chose to separate exhibits from public programming. This treatment of exhibits on their own allows for a more complete consideration of them. Unlike Casterline and Pederson, who seem to look at exhibits activities undertaken in an ad hoc manner, Bradsher and Ritzenthaler begin their analysis by calling for the creation of a written policy statement that defines the objectives of the program and its place in the overall priorities of the institution.⁴⁴ The policy statement should define exhibit target audiences as well as the resource and staff allocations for the program. After outlining the importance of a written exhibit policy, the authors move on to the thornier issues of types of exhibits and the choice of a topic. Bradsher and Ritzenthaler touch on the issue of objectivity but decline to comment on it in depth. Readers are advised that “[G]ood judgment and taste must be exercised in selecting an exhibit topic.”⁴⁵ Archivists are unlikely to be in agreement on what these subjective matters are. The authors do elaborate somewhat by advising readers to avoid mounting displays dealing with “why” questions, such as “Why did the Civil War happen?” They offer no discussion of the politics behind their advice, however, or their implicit defence of the status quo.⁴⁶ These authors, like Casterline and Pederson, concentrate on physical

⁴⁴ James Gregory Bradsher and Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, “Archival Exhibits” in Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, edited by James Gregory Bradsher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 229.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

and aesthetic matters related to exhibits and provide valuable technical advice on mounting them.

The chapter on public programming in Bradsher's book that is written by Kathleen D. Roe of the New York State Archives also offers interesting ideas on generating public interest in an archival repository but does not touch on the ideological foundation for such actions. Although she notes "[P]ublic programs serve a crucial function for archives by acting as the interpreter between the archives and the public,"⁴⁷ she unfortunately neglects to explore the ramifications of such a statement. If public programs act as such a conduit, then one would think a much broader elucidation of this concept would be necessary to understand its implications.

Although the three traditional archival manuals reviewed above remain valuable resources on traditional technical matters relating to the mounting of an exhibit, they are all underwhelming when providing guidance to an archivist mounting an exhibit in the twenty-first century. While ignorance of electronic issues was inevitable due to the date of writing, their almost complete omission of theoretical issues surrounding archival exhibits indicates a continuing 'head in the sand approach' to the inevitability of bias in the mounting of any exhibit. However, several more recent articles have been written that deal with the politics and problems of public programming in the United States and Canada, and will be used to augment the works already reviewed. Perhaps not surprisingly all of these articles come from, or are inspired by, the field of museology. Unlike archives, museums view display as the culmination of their work, and as such, it

⁴⁷ Kathleen D. Roe, "Public Programs" in Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, edited by James Gregory Bradsher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 218.

is only natural that the discussion of museum exhibits in the postmodern world is already in full swing.

American archival educator Elizabeth Yakel, in her article on the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in 1993, shows how the new reality surrounding exhibits, pressure groups and the politics of memory may affect both libraries and archives that mount exhibits.⁴⁸ Before proceeding into Yakel's analysis, a very brief summary of the Enola Gay controversy is necessary. In 1993, the Smithsonian began plans to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima by the Enola Gay, the warplane used to drop the first atomic bomb. The Smithsonian initially planned a complex exhibit that many veterans' groups felt questioned the validity of the American decision to use the atomic bomb. Protests were mounted and eventually the Smithsonian was forced to amend the exhibit and make it more amenable to the veteran's groups.

Yakel feels that the Smithsonian grossly mismanaged the affair and that with proper management the fiasco could have been avoided.⁴⁹ If Smithsonian management had been more attuned to public opinion and memory, she thinks it would have realized that the American public is still unable to accept questioning of American justification of the nuclear bombing of Japan. Once the controversy began, Yakel thinks the Smithsonian could have curtailed it through dialogue with veteran's groups.⁵⁰ She feels that the Smithsonian did not use the media as well as the veterans did. Yakel highlights this controversy in the hope of preventing further controversies over the mounting of exhibits.

⁴⁸ As an example of how history is shaped by memory, the actual exhibit was entitled "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II," with the Enola Gay aircraft on display as a part of the exhibit, yet it is remembered as the "Enola Gay Exhibit."

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Yakel, "Museums, Management, Media, and Memory: Lessons from the Enola Gay Exhibition," *Libraries & Culture*, 35 no.2 (Spring, 2000), 301.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

She believes that the Internet is opening up huge, untapped markets for archives and libraries and one of the ways to tap into this audience will be the virtual exhibit.⁵¹

As the Enola Gay exhibit shows, this public relations bonanza could rapidly become a nightmare if improperly handled. Thus the exhibitor must actively seek out and collaborate with groups or individuals directly related to the exhibit topic. Designers must attempt to foresee and assess possible controversy and administrators must develop public relations skills in order to deal with the general public and the media in a favorable manner. Lastly, and most importantly, Yakel maintains that exhibitors must begin to acknowledge that exhibits are created by people with biases, and not by impartial organizations. This can be done by openly acknowledging the creators of all aspects of the exhibit. This may for some at least reduce the appearance of authority that an unsigned exhibit can evoke and the hostility that may generate.⁵²

Although the Enola Gay exhibit may be the most prominent of the controversial museum exhibits in the 1990s, it was by no means the only one. The Smithsonian had earlier received protests against its graphic depiction of war in its 1991 exhibit entitled "Legends, Memory and the Great War in the Air." And the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto was almost shut down in 1990 by protests against its exhibit "Into the Heart of Africa." The creators of the ROM exhibit were well aware of public opinion from the onset but felt that their postmodern critique of colonial collecting practices would illustrate the folly of colonialism and racism. ROM curators consulted members of the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 302.

black community before mounting the exhibit and made changes at their request.⁵³ Nevertheless, the exhibit generated strident, almost violent protest by several ethnic and student groups over the depiction of Africans in European documents dating from the colonial era.⁵⁴ "Into the Heart of Africa" revealed Canadians to be as volatile as their American neighbours in their responses to museum exhibits, if not more so.⁵⁵

The above analysts of exhibits, from Casterlane to the ROM, counsel caution and careful choice of topic to avoid offending stakeholders. Only Yakel, with her belief in identifying authorship, offers remedies beyond a careful avoidance of controversial issues. But is this enough? Quite likely, caution as a central tenet of exhibit preparation will result in timid exhibits devoid of opinion. What may be more useful is building upon the concept of authored exhibits to more fully acknowledge the decision making process of the exhibit. Along with authorship, guests could view funding details, and should they be so inclined, curator meeting notes and exhibits committee minutes. This openness, coupled with meaningful dialogue with stakeholders of the exhibit, would likely minimize many of the problems afflicting exhibits in the 1990s. It might not eliminate all of them, but might at least result in a more thoughtful exchange of differences of view that might remain, rather than noisy public controversies that threaten to squelch anything but the most timid exhibit themes.

⁵³ Margaret Cannon, The Invisible Empire: Racism in Canada (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1995), 134.

⁵⁴ The home of the creator of the exhibit, Professor Jeanne Cannizzo of Scarborough College, was the site of protest demonstrations and vandalism. Protestors at Scarborough College also verbally assaulted her and prevented her from conducting classes.

⁵⁵ For detailed analysis of the "Into the Heart of Africa" controversy see Cannon The Invisible Empire and Henrietta Riegel's "Into the Heart of Irony: ethnographic exhibitions and the politics of difference," in Theorizing Museums: representing identity and diversity in a changing world, edited by Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

Although much can be learned from the two controversies, it must be noted that both surrounded traditional museum exhibits. Unfortunately, while many museums, art galleries, libraries and archives have mounted virtual exhibits, very little academic discourse on the topic of virtual exhibits has surfaced. David Silver offers a rare in-depth analysis of virtual exhibits. Silver is concerned more with the structure of virtual exhibits than their content, and thus avoids discussion of any of the interpretive and political issues plaguing traditional exhibits. Nevertheless, he offers an interesting perspective on virtual exhibits and, specifically, their differences from traditional exhibits and the opportunities this new medium offers.

Due to the lack of theoretical literature on the topic, Silver's work is an extremely useful resource for anyone attempting to create a virtual exhibit. Before examining four prominent virtual exhibits, Silver provides a summary of some of the issues and problems facing exhibit designers. He notes that a virtual exhibit is multi-linear. Unlike traditional exhibits, each visitor chooses a personal pathway through the exhibit, which, while liberating (or frustrating as in a poorly designed site), reduces the curator's authorial voice.⁵⁶ This authorial voice is further weakened by the fact that a virtual exhibit is aspatial, and accessible to anyone with a computer and a modem, anywhere in the world through the Internet.⁵⁷ Silver also describes how, again unlike traditional exhibits, the virtual exhibit is always changing and thus can be considered a "perpetual work in progress."⁵⁸ It is this ongoing design process that most excites Silver. If a virtual exhibit is always changing, then visitors will return often. Moreover, the virtual exhibit allows,

⁵⁶ David Silver, "Interfacing American Culture: The Perils and Potentials of Virtual Exhibitions," *American Quarterly*, 49 no. 4 (December 1997), 828.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 827.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 828.

even encourages, visitor interaction, and this can be incorporated back into the exhibit. To borrow from Silver, who himself borrowed from Marshall McLuhan, in a virtual exhibit "the medium is truly the message."⁵⁹

Silver classifies virtual exhibits into three categories, *the virtual version*, *the missing wing*, and *the hyper-real*. A virtual version is an exhibit that mirrors a traditional exhibit that an organization has mounted and often uses to publicize the physical exhibit. The second type, the missing wing, also mirrors a physical exhibit but adds materials not included in the physical exhibit and thus extends the exhibit. The third type, hyper-real, is an exhibit that exists only in virtual form. According to Silver, the hyper-real exhibit is the one best suited for a virtual exhibit as the exhibit is designed specifically for the web.⁶⁰

Virtual and traditional exhibits, though a large part of archival public programming, are by no means the only way for an archives to mount an online presence. Archives have also used the Internet to mount finding aids, offer access to digitized documents outside formal exhibits, publicize events and routine information on their location and opening and closing hours, and share policy statements on best practices. The different uses of the Internet by archives prompt a myriad of questions. For example, does the Internet merely exist as "fast paper" for producing copies of finding aids or does the availability of archival finding aids over the Internet represent a shift from traditional archival practice? Are virtual exhibits just exact replicas of traditional archival exhibits or are they a different version? If online finding aids and exhibits are malleable, how should archivists acknowledge changes in them to a potentially unknowing audience? Does the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 830.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Internet mediate information (and thus shape knowledge) in new ways? It is hoped that through this chapter any theoretical objections to the utilization of the Internet by archives have been removed. To borrow from Bijker's model, and to acknowledge postmodernism's freeing influences, archival use of the Internet has reached a state of closure. Canadian archivists can thus revive and, as we shall see in chapter three, are reviving the early Canadian tradition of employing historical narrative.

Chapter 3: The Return of Historical Narrative in Archival Public Programming

“Although unintended, the Internet is the quintessential example of a large scale anarchist organization. There is no hierarchical authority controlling the Internet, the subunits participate voluntarily, information flows freely, individuals join and exit associations at will.”¹ (Dana Ward, 1998)

The previous chapter illustrates how entrenched archival use of the Internet has become in Canada. This chapter examines actual uses of the Internet by archives, galleries, museums, and others in this country and elsewhere in order to find guidance and inspiration for archives in their use of cyberspace. The chapter concludes by suggesting what these uses imply for the nature of archival work: a central role for public programming and a revived historical research role for archivists.

In The Future of the Past, American journalist Alexander Stille talks about the ruptures that take place in any time of rapid change.² For everything that is gained, he claims, something must be lost, and this loss should be examined. Stille observes a loss of contact with or memory of the past amid the rush of economic and technological change. This sense of loss may prove to be a boon to archives and others interested in history. It may lead to a desire to learn about the past. Stille illustrates this by discussing how genealogical websites have become incredibly popular, second in number only to pornography sites.³ If society reacts to the loss of historical knowledge through a desire to retain a memory of the past, archives and other cultural institutions may be in a position to offer interpretations of the past that serve this need and enhance their position.

¹ Dana Ward, “Syllabus and Readings: Anarchy and the Internet (Fall 1998)” Anarchy Archives, <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/dward/classes/Anarchy/anarchyinternet98.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

² Alexander Stille, The Future of the Past (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2002), x.

³ Ibid., 330.

Indeed, this may have been occurring from the time archives (and other cultural institutions) began using the web.

But these cultural institutions have not been the only ones using the web to disseminate their own version of history. The great hunger to do so has prompted a wide variety of individuals and groups to use the web to convey a historical memory. Stille points out that the Internet has been a great equalizer. Any person or group with a minimum of technological skill can put together a web page that expresses their own views. In the pre-Internet world, publicizing one's own views, whether mainstream or dissenting, was difficult. The web, however, offers a venue, if designed properly, that allows access to an enormous audience and a much wider range of opinions. This availability of knowledge is one of the great attractions of the Internet to those outside the traditional mainstream. Evidence of this can be seen in an analysis of online sources relating to almost any historical event.

You won't find information about any of these events in an American history book.⁴

Thus begins a webpage created by the Black Holocaust Society about the Tulsa race riot of 1921. On June 1, 1921, fears that a black man was to be lynched over an accusation of his improper behavior towards a white woman caused Tulsa to erupt into one of the worst race riots in American history. Although the riot had already been the subject of considerable scholarly interest -- at least two scholarly books and several academic and popular articles -- Dr. Gregory E. Brown, Director of the Black Holocaust

⁴ Dr. Gregory Brown, "White Race Riot," Black Holocaust Society, <http://www.blackwallstreet.freesevers.com> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

Society, chose to mount a webpage devoted to the subject.⁵ Like more mainstream treatments of the riot by historians Alfred L. Brophy and Scott Ellsworth, Brown lays the blame for it on white society and the white police force. Brown's web analysis, however, is much more powerful than Brophy's and Ellsworth's monographs. The Black Holocaust Society chooses to term the incident a "White Race Riot" whereas Brophy and Ellsworth both identify the event only as a riot. Brown's website is well researched and offers a timeline, photographs, and links to articles about other race riots. More important, the narrative provided by Brown is much more accessible than the works by Ellsworth or Brophy. Researchers have to acquire one of the few physical copies of Ellsworth's or Brown's books, probably in specialized academic libraries; anyone with an Internet connection can access Brown's site.⁶ Using the Yahoo search engine for the term Tulsa Race Riot, the Black Holocaust site comes in as the twelfth entry.⁷ That said, the website likely only attracts those who are actively researching the topic.

For a better sense of the number of websites offering perspectives and narratives outside the mainstream on political and social issues, one need only look to the plethora of sites devoted to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. A search on Yahoo for "9/11 conspiracy" provides an unbelievable 3 020 000 hits.⁸ A

⁵ See Alfred L. Brophy, Deconstructing the Dreamland: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Scott Ellsworth, Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

⁶ It should be noted that Ellsworth has also mounted an essay on the Tulsa Race Riot on the Internet. It presents the moderate view found in his monograph that white rioters caused the escalation of violence, but avoids the polemics of the Black Holocaust site. It also offers very little interactivity and is essentially the virtual version of a standard paper document. This website "The Tulsa Race Riot" can be accessed at <http://www.tulsareparations.org/TulsaRiot.htm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁷ Yahoo Search Engine.

<http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=Tulsa+Race+Riot&sm=Yahoo%21+Search&fr=FP-tab-web-t-173&toggle=1> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁸ Yahoo Search Engine. "9/11 Conspiracy search,"

<http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=9%2F11+conspiracy&toggle=1&ei=UTF-8&pstart=1&fr=FP-tab-web->

random sample of the first 200 sites offered shows that they are almost exclusively from non-mainstream groups and individuals. No attempt will be made here to analyze the contents of these sites – except to mention that they vary in content from the relatively professional⁹ to those representing rants from individuals with personalities obviously skewed towards a predilection for conspiracy theories.¹⁰ For this study the content of these websites is not important. What is more interesting is that the Internet has empowered countless numbers of people to invest their own time and money in ensuring that their strongly held views on the 9/11 tragedy reach a maximum audience. This allows their version (or narrative) to be heard. As time passes, these accounts then become part of the historical resource base and narrative for many other Internet users. As these few of many more examples show, the Internet's increasing role in providing such historical information is striking. This seems very likely to create the public expectation that archives should provide similar narrative historical information at their websites.

Another type of historical and archival use of the Internet is made by groups and individuals who use it to archive their own materials or documents they have gathered. Thus organizations publish and archive newsletters and minutes on their websites, preserve correspondence, publicize their photo collection and preserve other interactions with members electronically. These are merely electronic representations of paper documents, serving as a type of fast paper and fulfilling archiving functions that the

t&b=1 (last accessed March 4, 2005). It should be noted that this number will change over time, as search engines by their very definition are dynamic.

⁹ Search result number 8 was from the well-respected alternative web news site AlterNet. It can be found at <http://www.alternet.org/story/14873>. (last accessed March 4, 2005).

¹⁰ A more personal opinion on possible 9/11 conspiracies can be found at <http://www.subtafuge.com/printout13.html>. The author is anonymous. (Last accessed January 18, 2004. Inactive March 4, 2005. Copy available on request).

group would have performed before the evolution of the Internet. Of equal interest are collectors of documents who present them on the Internet to describe a historical event or subject. Perhaps these individuals deserve the title "Internet Archivists."

The "Anarchy Archives," which calls itself "An Online Research Centre on the History and Theory of Anarchism," is an interesting example of this new phenomenon. Professor Dana Ward of Pitzer College in Claremont, California has developed a fairly comprehensive site related to the history and development of anarchism. For Ward his mission is clear: "[M]y goals are eventually to provide at one site the collected works of the major anarchists and an online history of anarchists and anarchist movements worldwide, including a graphics archive."¹¹ The Anarchy Archives includes detailed accounts of the lives and ideas of prominent anarchists such as Michael Bakunin and Emma Goldman.¹² Within these sections of the site are subsections which provide the anarchist's biography, collected works, bibliography, a commentary about the anarchist, and a subsection with graphics -- primarily illustrations of earlier anarchists and a mixture of illustrations and photographs of more recent ones such as Noam Chomsky. The Anarchy Archives also holds full and partial reproductions of several historical pamphlets and periodicals, histories of events such as the Haymarket massacre and the Spanish Civil War, and course outlines and assignments for Ward's course "Archives and the Internet."¹³

¹¹ Ward, "Anarchy Archives," http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/aboutus.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

¹² The page on Bakunin can be accessed at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/bakunin/Bakuninarchive.html. The Emma Goldman page is at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/Goldmanarchive.html (both last accessed March 4, 2005).

¹³ The syllabus for "Archives and the Internet" can be accessed at <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/dward/classes/Anarchy/anarchyinternet98.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

Ward's website is an extremely useful resource on a topic typically outside of mainstream interests. However, judged by traditional archival theory based on provenance, the "Anarchy Archives" is not an archives, but a collection.¹⁴ Ward has collected documents written or produced by a variety of sources and amalgamated them arbitrarily by subject to form his "archives." Most Canadian archivists would not describe the material as a fonds. If it was in a conventional archives they would describe it as the Anarchy Archives series in the Dana Ward fonds or most likely the Dana Ward Anarchy Archives Collection. Ward's lack of much concern for provenance is common among such Internet archivists. Just like many of the walk-in clients at any archives, they are more interested in subject matter than provenance. Should this lack of concern about provenance and archival integrity matter? Does the quality of the material suffer due to the lack of accompanying information about the context of the creation of the material? I argue that these Internet archivists merely more clearly articulate what has long been the practice in repositories that contain private (non-institutional) records -- that provenance for many of these records is also often suspect. Yet Canadian archivists have been willing to accept, arrange and describe these records because of the valuable historical information they provide. This interest in historical value has overridden concerns about provenance since the early history of Canadian archives in the nineteenth century.

Although Dana Ward is a professor of political science and not a professional archivist, he has made his "Anarchy Archives" as comprehensive as possible, and

¹⁴ In the Canadian Rules for Archival Description, a manual accepted by almost all Canadian archives as a governing authority for Canadian archival practice, a collection is defined as "[A]n artificial accumulation of documents of any provenance brought together on the basis of some common characteristic, e.g. way of acquisition, subject, language, medium, type of document, name of collector, which may be treated for descriptive purposes as a unit under a common title." Canadian Committee for Archival Description, Rules for Archival Description, (Ottawa: Canadian Council of Archives, August 2003), D3, available online at <http://www.cdnCouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

complied with legal requirements such as proper use of copyright.¹⁵ The work of other Internet archivists, although equally passionate about their subject, does not always match Ward's quality and comprehensiveness. A quick scan of the Internet delivers sites "archiving" histories of such disparate topics as the Samurai, the rock group Pink Floyd, and mathematics.¹⁶ The sites vary in quality, but most are fairly well done -- no doubt due to the dedication of those motivated to create a website. The Internet allows the sites to be disseminated to a worldwide audience.¹⁷ Similar to Professor Ward's site, all three of the sites above utilize the term archives in a non-traditional manner. Although they are developing online "archives," their sole motivation is the collection and dissemination of information about their topic. They have no interest in provenance, preservation of original order, or any other traditional archival practice.

Does the new phenomenon of "Internet archives" affect how traditional archives use the Internet? Established archives still adhere to the principle of provenance in arrangement and description of their holdings. Many traditional archives, however, place material on the web in the same manner as "Internet archives." They, too, focus on the dissemination of interpretive information about records rather than on the records themselves. The recent merger of the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada may show that there is a systematic rethinking of traditional practice

¹⁵ Anarchy Archives, "Archives Contributions,"

<http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/dward/classes/Anarchy/anarchyinternet98.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

¹⁶ The Samurai Archives can be found at <http://www.samurai-archives.com/>. The Pink Floyd Archives, developed by music historian Vernon Fitch, can be found at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/PFArchives/pfa.htm>. Fitch, a private collector who has been acquiring Pink Floyd memorabilia since 1975, is a good example of how traditional collectors have utilized the Internet to provide access to materials that they have always collected. The Math Archives can be found at <http://archives.math.utk.edu/>. (All last accessed March 4, 2005).

¹⁷ As of March 4, 2005, The Pink Floyd Archives has had 1,966,150 visits. However, as with many Internet statistics, caution is advised. It is not known whether the counter counts only unique visitors or every visitor every time they come to the page.

underway in many cultural institutions. The Canadian government, by merging the two institutions, feels the line between them had become blurred, and that the synergy produced by the merger will produce one knowledge institution that will make such interpreted historical information more readily accessible via the Internet.¹⁸

The Library and Archives Canada has begun to do so by expending a large portion of its energy on the creation of virtual exhibits featuring archival records. Virtual exhibits have become one of the most common ways archives provide interpretive commentary on their records. In the next section of this chapter, a survey of how selected archives utilize virtual exhibits will show a common connection between conventional archives and the untraditional 'archiving' websites just examined. Societal expectations about the Internet are pushing conventional archives (and other cultural institutions) towards making interpretive historical narratives (like those provided by the untraditional 'archives') the focus of their online offerings, rather than archival descriptions organized by provenance or massive amounts of archival records.

As seen in the previous chapters, Library and Archives Canada has been a leading interpreter of Canadian history. Its website at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html> offers a huge amount of information on a variety of historical topics including Sport, Aboriginal Peoples, and Philately and Postal History. LAC makes extensive use of virtual exhibits to convey this information. "Canada and the First World War" is one such exhibit.¹⁹ It covers a topic that is accessible to anyone with a passable knowledge of

¹⁸ The Library and Archives Canada act can be found at http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/3/parlbus/chambus/house/bills/government/C-8/C-8_4/C-8-4E.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

¹⁹ Library and Archives of Canada, "Canada and the First World War," <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/firstworldwar/index-e.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

Canadian history.²⁰ The opening page of the exhibit offers a visual montage of war images and offers the visitor several viewing options via hyperlink. These include two main pathways: “We were there” and “Did you know that....” The “We were there” hyperlink takes visitors to a page containing biographies of eight Canadians who experienced the First World War. These biographies range from prominent people, such as Sam Hughes, the Canadian Minister of Militia (1911-1916), to ordinary Canadians such as Lois Allan, a war worker from Ontario. The exhibit successfully integrates archival documents into the biographies, whether Allan’s personal diaries, photos of her with her friends, or Sam Hughes’s 1916 letter of resignation from the militia.

The second pathway (“Did you know that....”) attempts to contextualize the exhibit with information about Canadian society during the war. Topics covered include the home front, Native Canadian contributions to the war effort, and issues such as women’s suffrage that were important in the war years. This section helps the visitor understand Canadian society’s reaction to war, but makes few attempts to include actual archival documents. Instead the basic text is offered with hyperlinks that lead to other textual descriptions of a subject. The remaining sections of the exhibit are intended to aid further research and include links to other organizations and a very limited listing of LAC holdings related to the war. The site also lists contributors to the creation of the exhibit and provides site updates.

This exhibit is similar to other LAC virtual exhibits and illustrates its commitment to providing interesting narrative for their clients. The section “We were there” is well

²⁰ Although “Canada and the First World War” does not make heavy use of visual media, at least one quarter of the exhibits on the Library and Archives Canada website use visual media. It may be that virtual exhibits, and their heavy dependence on visual records, may cause an increase in the use of visual records in archives.

done and intermixes actual archival documents with text, thereby serving to personalize the lives of the people included and create a link between LAC's holdings and the general public. The other main section "Did you know that...." offers little more than a brief textual analysis of the Canadian war effort similar to what could be found in a textbook. Very little effort was made to include archival documents in this section and thus the section does little to publicize LAC's holdings. In addition, while the site credits are welcome, they are far too brief, and no attempt is made to describe the exhibition's goals or mission. LAC likely has a policy regarding exhibitions, but none could be found in a search of its website. Thus the viewer is left with little knowledge of the context surrounding an exhibit's creation. This exhibit, and all of LAC's exhibits, indicates that it sees interpretive narrative as a vital part of its online presence.

The next institution to be analyzed is the American National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at www.nara.gov. NARA's website also reveals a tendency to emphasize narrative interpretation. The hyperlink on the opening page to the online exhibit hall is prominently placed. On this page, NARA lists hyperlinks to digitized versions of important documents in American history such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation. Each document is accompanied by a textual narration explaining its significance and is linked to materials associated with the documents. In addition, NARA offers a "Digital Classroom" that provides lesson plans to teachers interested in utilizing archival documents in the classroom.²¹ The featured documents are an important part of NARA's virtual exhibit experience. NARA offers a series of virtual exhibits on topics ranging from World War II

²¹ The "Digital Classroom" page can be found at <http://www.nara.gov/education/classrm.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

posters to presidential gifts and African-American life. It should also be noted that over half of the exhibits are explicitly based on visual arts.

Due to the similarity between LAC's "Canada and the First World War" and NARA's Second World War exhibit "A People at War," the latter was chosen for further analysis. The NARA exhibit has seven different categories representing aspects of the war effort.²² There are segments on the different war fronts, science, women, and the beginning and ending of the war. Each section describes a part of the war by intermixing textual analysis with archival photographs and links to other archival documents. Perhaps the most poignant example of the possibilities of interlinking narrative text and documents can be seen on the "War in the Pacific" page, which retells the tragic story of the Sullivan brothers of Waterloo, Iowa.²³ Embedded in a paragraph on the deaths of the five brothers in the sinking of the *USS Juneau* are links to a letter from one of the brothers to the Secretary of the Navy pleading that the brothers be assigned to the same ship, a letter from their mother to President Franklin Roosevelt concerning their safety, and a letter from Roosevelt to Mrs. Sullivan expressing condolences on the deaths of her sons. Here one can see the emotional impact of archival documents in their power to personalize a complex global historical event such as World War II. The rest of the exhibit employs the same technique of mixing archival records into narrative stories.

Both NARA and LAC present interpretive history as a vital part of their web presence. If archives can be seen as valuing narrated interpretation, then one would

²² NARA, "A People at War."

http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/a_people_at_war/a_people_at_war.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

²³ The "War in the Pacific" subsection of "A People at War" can be found at http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/a_people_at_war/war_in_the_pacific/doris_miller.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

assume that archives could learn from cultural institutions such as museums and art galleries, which view exhibits as their ultimate mission. The Canadian Museum of Civilization's homepage at www.civilization.ca/expo/expoe.asp offers an aesthetically pleasing and comprehensive listing of the site's holdings. Of particular interest to this study are the hyperlinks for Virtual Exhibitions²⁴ and the Virtual Museum of New France.²⁵ At first glance, these sites seem comprehensive (together they list 52 virtual exhibits). The end result, however, is disappointing. Some exhibit themes are presented in depth. The majority is not. All are merely virtual versions of physical exhibits. One exhibit entitled "Watching TV" details the history of television, yet offers nothing more technologically advanced than photographs of old televisions and a narrative about TV written in plain text.²⁶ Most of the virtual exhibits at the Museum of Civilization are like this one, which suggests that the Museum of Civilization views the Internet as merely a cyber companion to its physical exhibits. The museum has little to teach an archives about use of the Internet.

The American counterpart of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Smithsonian Institution, considered one of the best museums in the world, has a website that lives up to the institution's reputation. As an example of the dynamism of the Internet, the Smithsonian's website has changed completely since this study began. The original pages can still be accessed through the Internet Archives Wayback Machine. Since they are a good indicator of the technological questions all Internet sites must

²⁴ The Virtual Exhibitions address is www.civilization.ca/expo/expoe.asp?type=virtual (last accessed March 4, 2005).

²⁵ The Virtual Museum of New France can be found at <http://www.civilization.ca/expo/expoe.asp?type=vmnf> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

²⁶ Canadian Museum of Civilisation. "Watching TV," www.civilization.ca/hist/tv/tv01eng.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

grapple with, the old pages will still be the focus of this analysis.²⁷ In April 2002 the front page offered links to the “Virtual Smithsonian” where visitors are asked whether they are there for the first time and whether their computers have high bandwidth or low bandwidth.²⁸ First-time visitors are directed to a page that explains that the “Virtual Smithsonian” is being developed with the future in mind and is thus more suited for those with high bandwidth Internet connections.²⁹ The institution does offer a version of the “Virtual Smithsonian” for its low bandwidth visitors and it is there that this analysis begins.³⁰ The Smithsonian requires visitors to download a program called QuickTime 4, a process that takes 45 minutes using a 56k modem. As many Internet users have become accustomed to immediate access to a site, this requirement will likely discourage a great many low bandwidth users. Once visitors have installed QuickTime, they are directed to a virtual gallery with three categories entitled “Imagining,” “Discovering,” and “Remembering.” Each of these categories is subdivided into several more subcategories. For example, the “Discovering” section contains six different topics including air exploration, space exploration and the evolving earth.³¹ Although each topic contains images of several different artifacts, the low bandwidth experience of the “Virtual Smithsonian” is extremely unsatisfying. Each subcategory offers only a very brief textual

²⁷ The Internet Archive, a truly groundbreaking source of online information, can be found at <http://www.archive.org/> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

²⁸ The Smithsonian Institution homepage can be found at <http://www.si.edu> (last accessed March 4, 2005). The Virtual Exhibition page for April 2002 can be found using the Internet Archives’ Wayback Machine at <http://web.archive.org/web/20020124234520/2k.si.edu/> (last accessed March 4, 2005). The up-to-date exhibition page is at <http://www.si.edu/exhibitions/> (last accessed March 4, 2005). The low bandwidth site is for visitors using a dial-up modem of 56K or less. The high bandwidth can be used by anyone with a high-speed connection such as cable.

²⁹ Smithsonian Institution, “First Time Users,” <http://2k.si.edu/2k/plugin/test.html> (last accessed January 23, 2005).

³⁰ The Smithsonian low bandwidth site address, though difficult to find on the up-to-date site, is still accessible at <http://2k.si.edu/2k/low/> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

³¹ The “Discovering” section’s address is http://2k.si.edu/2k/low/node_discovering.htm (last accessed March 4, 2005).

analysis and then a digital reproduction of the artifact. Nothing more. No multi-media experience is offered, and no serious attempt at interlinking themes or ideas is made.

After viewing the low bandwidth site, the warning about designing a web site for the future becomes more ominous; the Smithsonian is clearly not interested in catering to those with dial-up modems. As most dial-up users are likely to have more modest incomes, and as high bandwidth and network users are likely to be more affluent, the Smithsonian is practising a form of class distinction in the design of its virtual exhibits. It can be argued that the Smithsonian is being proactive as the dial-up modem will soon be a relic of the past. Still the classification of users is disturbing. Internet technology is always changing and tailoring a website to the more technologically advanced will always leave a segment of the audience behind.

For high bandwidth visitors the site provides a truly interactive multimedia experience. For example, in the "Air Exploration" exhibit, low bandwidth viewers receive only a scanned picture of the Wright brother's aircraft engine, but high bandwidth users are able to watch videos of the restoration of the Wright brother's first plane to achieve flight, listen to audio files detailing the construction of the plane or zoom in for a closer look at different aspects of the engine.³² Viewers are also linked to Smithsonian collections considered similar to the exhibit and, in an interesting link between virtual exhibits and marketing, are able to shop online right from the exhibit's page. In addition some exhibits are also able to show 3-D images of the artifact. From a technical standpoint the high bandwidth site is well done, but its contextual analysis is minimal for many of the exhibits. Like the slower version, all of the exhibits are authorless and thus

³² The "Air Exploration" high bandwidth webpage can be accessed through http://2k.si.edu/2k/node_rotunda/indexe.htm. After reaching this page click "Discovering" and then "Air Exploration." (last accessed March 4, 2005).

the Smithsonian can be seen as propagating a “correct” view of history. This is somewhat surprising as one of the common criticisms of the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit is the anonymity of its authorship.³³ The high bandwidth version of the Smithsonian is technologically far superior to almost all other sites reviewed. However, like the other sites, it offers narrated interpretation of its exhibits.

The last group of institutions to be reviewed is art galleries. Like museums, art galleries also view exhibits as a primary part of their mission. One would thus expect art galleries to mount fairly advanced virtual exhibits. The National Gallery of Canada quickly disappoints.³⁴ Although the main home page is well designed, the exhibit page is just a simplified version of physical exhibits already mounted.³⁵ The context is limited, and the display consists solely of digitized images of works of art. The obvious intent of this site is to provide information for potential visitors to the gallery in Ottawa and not to provide a standalone virtual experience. The site does provide details of exhibit authorship, however.

Unlike the National Gallery of Canada, the American National Gallery of Art (NGA) offers virtual versions of several of its main exhibits.³⁶ Like the Smithsonian and others, QuickTime must be installed, but unlike the Smithsonian, there is no differentiation between high and low bandwidth. Each virtual exhibit is clearly mapped out by using a virtual map of the physical exhibit. The virtual exhibit “Sculpture of

³³ Yakel, “Enola Gay,” 302.

³⁴ The National Gallery of Canada’s web site can be found at <http://national.gallery.ca/> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

³⁵ This can be found at http://national.gallery.ca/english/default_13.htm (last accessed March 4, 2005).

³⁶ The National Gallery of Art’s homepage can be accessed at <http://www.nga.gov/> while the virtual exhibit site can be found at <http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/webtours.htm> (both last accessed March 4, 2005).

Angkor and Ancient Cambodia” contains 10 rooms.³⁷ When the visitor clicks on a virtual room, an actual panoramic picture of the physical exhibit appears. The NGA offers a relatively complete contextual description of the room, which allows visitors to gain a greater understanding of the exhibit. Viewers are able to zoom in on objects and click on them to receive more information about an actual picture or artifact. While the general exhibit environment is favorable, the NGA exhibits do have some weak spots. The exhibits are authorless and little effort is made to enter any sort of custodial history of the artifacts or the process of their creation. However, a search of the web site reveals a clearly defined mission statement and a sub-section on exhibits that outlines the institution’s exhibit mandate.³⁸

Analysis of these six cultural institutions has made apparent some interesting revelations. In my view, the archival sites were as good as or superior to several of the other sites. All three of the American sites showed significant commitment to reaching out to online visitors, while the Canadian national museum and gallery sites appear to view the online exhibit as an afterthought to their traditional exhibits. Library and Archives Canada provided the most satisfying Canadian virtual experience. Only the high bandwidth Smithsonian site regularly utilized the multi-media potential of the Internet. The Smithsonian could have provided a low bandwidth experience similar to American National Gallery of Art or, as will be seen, the Chicago Historical Society. If the majority of these well funded (at least for the arts) institutions are barely mounting adequate

³⁷ The “Sculpture of Angkor and Ancient Cambodia” Virtual Exhibit can be found at <http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/cambodia/camrmenter-0.htm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

³⁸ The NGA’s exhibit mandate can be found in its mission statement at <http://www.nga.gov/xio/mission.htm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

virtual exhibits, is there any hope for smaller institutions which also see virtual exhibits as a public programming tool?

Several records repositories that are mounting successful virtual exhibits will now be examined. The first, the Chicago Historical Society, is large and well funded. The others are small and medium-sized Canadian archives that have embraced the web as a public programming tool. This illustrates that effective exhibits are not only the domain of the large well funded repository.

The Chicago Historical Society (CHS), considered by some in the American cultural community to be the best-funded cultural institution in America,³⁹ has made a substantial effort to develop and maintain elaborate virtual exhibits on its websites.⁴⁰ As might be expected, its homepage is well designed and the exhibit hyperlink is prominently displayed. Upon clicking on the hyperlink, visitors are brought to a page that has virtual versions of physical exhibits and exhibits that are mounted only on the web.⁴¹ Perhaps the best of the virtual exhibits is "The Great Chicago Fire and the Web of Memory," mounted by the CHS and Northwestern University.⁴² The exhibit is divided into two sections, the "Chicago Fire," and the "Web of Memory." Each section is further divided into eleven chapters, and each chapter has three sections: an essay written by curator Carl Smith, "Galleries" containing artifacts, photographs and visual documents relating to the essay, and "Libraries" where digitized versions of archival documents await the visitor. The exhibit is massive. Smith claims that it contains 350 different web

³⁹ Telephone conversation with Neal Johnson of the National Gallery of America, April 11, 2002

⁴⁰ The Chicago Historical Society web site can be found at <http://www.chicagohs.org/> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁴¹ The "Online projects" listing is in the upper right corner of the Exhibition page at <http://www.chicagohs.org/exhibition.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005)

⁴² "The Great Chicago Fire and the Web of Memory" web exhibit can be found at <http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/index.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005)

pages, an extremely large number considering it was launched in 1998.⁴³ It nicely blends complex narrative that provides context with images and documents held by the society. Smith wrote all of the essays. There is a clear authorial voice to the exhibit. Those who disagree with the essays can feel they are disagreeing with one man's opinion and not a hegemonic truth espoused by a faceless organization or a society.

The site is also technically superior to any others reviewed. Like the Smithsonian, "The Great Chicago Fire and the Web of Memory" offers a multi-medium experience involving text, sound, and streaming video. Unlike the Smithsonian, the exhibit's designer does not neglect low bandwidth users. Although some options will not work on older machines with low bandwidth connections, the curators note that the vast majority of the site was designed to reach visitors using equipment as dated as the 386 processor and 14.4k modem.⁴⁴ The CHS has shown that virtual exhibits can succeed even with dated technology. CHS's exhibit also illustrates that when given the organizational resources and commitment that traditional (non-archival) cultural exhibits often receive, a significant successful exhibit can be mounted online. Like the archives examined above, the CHS invests more in providing guided narrative histories at its website than in making its records available there.⁴⁵

The extensiveness of "The Great Chicago Fire and the Web of Memory" is highly appealing. It is heartening to see that some cultural institutions are well funded, but archivists toiling in smaller, less well-known archives may need more suitable role

⁴³ Carl Smith, "Can You Do Serious History on the Web?" *Perspectives: The Quarterly Newsletter of the American Historical Association*, February 1998, 5.

⁴⁴ The CHS's technical requirements page can be viewed at <http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/support.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁴⁵ One wonders whether American historical societies see exhibits and public programming as more central to their core functions than American public archives. This is a topic that certainly merits more study.

models. Several smaller Canadian archives are demonstrating that virtual exhibits need not be prohibitively expensive or technologically advanced to be effective. And they too follow the pattern of providing interpretive history rather than focusing exclusively on access to their records. The City of Richmond Archives in British Columbia has mounted two virtual exhibits that highlight its holdings. Both are prime examples of how a small archives can mount a virtual exhibit.⁴⁶ The first exhibit "We will remember them: The Lives behind the Richmond Cenotaph" was largely inspired by archival volunteer Mary Keen and contains pictures and life stories of four Richmond citizens killed in the two world wars.⁴⁷ Although the exhibit only uses archival photographs, it is a good example of the effectiveness of a small virtual exhibit in personalizing and publicizing an archives. The second exhibit "History of Richmond Municipality - by Mary Thompson" is based on a school project done by then grade 8 student Mary Thompson in 1923.⁴⁸ The exhibit is the digitized version of her school project, with some minor narration. It shows that private records such as diaries, letters, and, in this case, a school project, can be worked into significant online exhibits with few resources. The exhibit is a good example of how archival documents can be married to interpretive history.

Though standalone virtual exhibits have been the most common means used by archivists to create a virtual presence, they are not the only way archives are utilizing the new technology. The Internet has seen archives follow the recommendations of some of the pre-Internet public programming boosters such as Sharon Cook and Ken Osborne by

⁴⁶ The City of Richmond Archives home page can be located at

<http://www.richmond.ca/cityhall/archives/about/about.htm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁴⁷ The City of Richmond's "We Will Remember Them: The Lives behind the Richmond Cenotaph" can be viewed at <http://www.richmond.ca/cityhall/archives/exhibits/remember.htm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁴⁸ The virtual exhibit "History of Richmond Municipality- by Mary Thompson" can be viewed at <http://www.richmond.ca/cityhall/archives/exhibits/history.htm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

developing collaborative projects with non-archivists to provide online programs that publicize archival records for non-traditional users. The University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections (UMA) is a good example of a small- to medium-size repository that is attempting to mount virtual exhibits that also utilize educational materials to publicize its holdings and improve its position in the community and university. The UMA has mounted seven separate special exhibits as well as several thematic guides and digitized finding aids for much of its holdings.⁴⁹ Of particular interest is its "Canadian Wartime Experience: The Documentary Heritage of Canada at War," a guide that combines digitized archival descriptions with selected archival material for use in school curricula.⁵⁰ It is the only smaller archives found by this researcher to include multi-media files in its virtual exhibits.⁵¹ The fact that a smaller repository is able to utilize sound in its online exhibits indicates that mounting multi-media items is neither difficult nor expensive. Why do other archives and museums not do so more in their exhibits? While the UMA deserves credit for innovation and commitment to virtual exhibits, it should also be noted that the vast majority of its special exhibits are scanned photographs with little to no contextual narrative provided. Still, the combination of online finding aids with exhibits both on the website and in the "Canadian Wartime Experience" site

⁴⁹ The University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections homepage web address is <http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/archives/>. A hyperlinked listing of its virtual exhibits can be found at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/exhibit.htm> (both last accessed at March 4, 2005).

⁵⁰ "Canadian Wartime Experience: The Documentary Heritage of Canada at War" can be accessed at http://www.umanitoba.ca/canadian_wartime/ (last accessed February 22, 2005).

⁵¹ It should be noted that the UMA has only one exhibit using a sound recording (of a 1949 University of Manitoba convocation speech by Eleanor Roosevelt). It can be accessed at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/roosevelt/index.shtml> (last accessed March 4, 2005). Contrary to the Smithsonian's complaints about the limitations of older systems, the sound files were downloaded quickly and played using a Pentium 166 processor and a dial-up connection with a 33.3k modem.

indicates that the UMA has recognized a need for both traditional archival description and interpreted narrative content on their website.

The City of Winnipeg Archives is another repository that has utilized a narrated exhibit as a central part of its web experience. With the exception of one exhibit, the City of Winnipeg Archives and Record Control web page offers very little web content.⁵² However, the promise shown in “Pathways to Winnipeg History 1874-1974” indicates that this new municipal archives program well understands the importance of having a significant web presence as a public programming tool.⁵³ “Pathways” offers digitized documents, photographs, and teaching materials in a tightly packaged narrative environment. Web viewers are offered information on a variety of topics ranging from council communications to the periodic typhoid scares the city of Winnipeg experienced from 1874 to 1909. The exhibit is built on this narrative, which guests navigate through pages detailing interpreted events from Winnipeg’s past.

Also in Winnipeg, the Centre du Patrimoine archives of the Société historique du Saint-Boniface has also offered a heavily narrated history of the French community in Manitoba through the “Au Pays de Riel” exhibit.⁵⁴ Using archival documents as props within guided narrative slideshows, “Au Pays de Riel” offers narrative on topics such as Louis Riel’s father and the founding of the Société historique du Saint-Boniface.

⁵² The City of Winnipeg Archives and Record Control web page can be accessed at <http://www.winnipeg.ca/clerks/docs/archives/archives.stm> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁵³ The “Pathways to Winnipeg History” webpage can be accessed at www.winnipeg.ca/pathways (last accessed March 4, 2005). “Pathways” also received prominent local media attention when it was launched. A front page story in the *Winnipeg Free Press* informed readers about it. Staff archivist Jody Baltessen is quoted there as saying “If we are going to be relevant, we have to respond to changing types of media. The Internet is where it’s at.” See *Winnipeg Free Press* (February 20, 2005), A1 and A2.

⁵⁴ The “Au Pays de Riel” exhibit can be found at <http://www.shsb.mb.ca/paysriel/accueil.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

Another example of the combination of narrative with educational materials is the Archives Society of Alberta's online educational program "Archives in the Classroom - Letters from the Trunk"⁵⁵ Coordinated by the Archives Society of Alberta, "Letters from the Trunk" is a cooperative effort by archival professionals and educators that allows primary and secondary students an opportunity to learn about the richness of the immigrant experience in Alberta. Interestingly, perhaps in an attempt to preserve archival objectivity, but more likely because educators were more comfortable with this aspect of the project, archivists selected archival materials suitable for the project while curriculum developers designed the site and wrote the narratives. The ASA also used "Letters in the Trunk" to develop an online archives tour using the Provincial Archives of Alberta as its model.⁵⁶ The online tour allows interested visitors the opportunity to see archives in a way not visible to the general public. There are photographs of all areas of the archives and the use and value of archives are presented from a variety of viewpoints including those of archivists, historians, and genealogists.

It would be incorrect to leave the impression that Canadian archives have abandoned their traditional role of providing access to archival records in the Internet age. Although some archival websites are devoted primarily to narrative historical interpretation through the use of virtual exhibits, many archives offer online access to their holdings through digitized records and finding aids. Library and Archives Canada, as it has been across the history of Canadian archives, is a leader in this field. LAC has devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to provide digitized versions of their

⁵⁵ The Archives Society of Alberta's "Archives in the Classroom - Letters from the Trunk" can be found at <http://www.ataoc.ca/archives/main.html?> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁵⁶ The online tutorial can be accessed at <http://www.ataoc.ca/tutorial/core2.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

most commonly used documents. Thus LAC offers scanned images of First World War attestation papers and Government of Canada Orders in Council 1867-1882.⁵⁷ It also offers information about records in its holdings in a variety of ways. For topics such as Western Land Grants, the LAC has created name searchable databases that provide easy access for web clients to search for the legal land description of their ancestors' homesteads.⁵⁸ LAC also offers descriptions of the fonds in its holdings. These descriptions, which are linked to the national database of archival fonds on the web at Archives Canada, allow clients to discover fonds-level descriptions pertinent to their search. Additionally, by including it in a national database, this material has become available to a much larger audience. Finally, although it has not yet begun to offer the service, Librarian and Archivist of Canada Ian Wilson has expressed publicly on several occasions his interest in offering digitization on demand.

Though not yet available in Canada, digitization on demand has been offered at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) since 2000. In an article on the program, Ted Ling, Director of Legislative and Accessibility Projects at the NAA, proclaims digitization on demand to be neither as difficult nor expensive to administer as was commonly thought.⁵⁹ The NAA, motivated by a desire to make its records more accessible to distance users, allows users of its website to request digitization of records at no cost. Once digitized, the records are linked to the records description on the archives RecordSearch database. The NAA finds overhead digital cameras the most efficient way to produce large amounts of

⁵⁷ Both of these databases of digital images can be found at http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/0201_e.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁵⁸ The Western Land Grants database can also be accessed at http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/0201_e.html (last accessed March 4, 2005).

⁵⁹ Ted Ling, "Taking it to the streets: why the National Archives of Australia Embraced digitisation on demand," *RLG Diginews* 6 no. 4 (August 15, 2002). Available on-line at <http://www.caldeson.com/RIMOS/ling02.html> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

digitized documents. Though one of the prime arguments against the digitization of such a large amount of records is cost, the NAA found digitization on demand to be quite cost effective.⁶⁰ Indicating that digitization on demand was a viable long-term strategy the NAA was able to digitize 442 906 pages in the first six months of the program.⁶¹

The Australian approach to digitization is substantially different from the LAC's. The latter has opted to digitize thematically (as shown earlier in this chapter) those documents considered to be heavily used. Perhaps this should not be surprising as the Canadian Archival System has long reflected a desire to foster national pride, while the Australian archival system reflects the traditional British recordkeeping model.⁶² The Canadian model of selecting records for digitization follows the pattern laid down by Douglas Brymner and Arthur Doughty and other public archives across the history of archives in Canada. Records important to the development of the state are identified by archivists and carefully packaged for public consumption. Although the Internet has changed the medium of communication for this activity, it remains the same. The Australians, by allowing clients to select records for digitization rather than choosing themselves, have offered an innovative means for client interaction and the possibility of access to records that may not have been made available had the records been selected by an archivist. It should also be noted that digitization on demand is merely a portion of the NAA's website. Other features embrace interpretative narrative content similar to LAC.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁶¹ Ibid., 7.

⁶² For an introduction to the development of the Australian archival system, see The Records Continuum: Ian MacLean and Australian Archives First 50 years, edited by Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Clayton: Ancora Press, 1994).

⁶³ For example, the NAA offers exhibits on such nation building topics as Australian Prime Ministers and the history of Australia as seen through its documents. The NAA's website can be accessed at <http://www.naa.gov.au/> (last accessed March 4, 2005).

Other archives in Canada tend to mirror the LAC model. They tend to digitize small, selected amounts of their records – quite often photographs – and house them in searchable databases. Most archives also offer at least a portion of their descriptions of records online, both in-house and on Archives Canada and their provincial portals. Many archives offer digitized finding aids too, either as standard html pages or written in XML in order to utilize Encoded Archival Description (EAD).⁶⁴

What can be suggested from this review of archival uses of the Internet? It has become clear that an archives can use the Internet in many ways. Virtual exhibits are common on archival websites. They vary in style and content and may likely merely be most archives' first foray into use of the Internet. Archives and others are using the Internet to make available digitized documents, provide basic content information, and in the case of the Archives Society of Alberta and the University of Manitoba Archives, as a way to partner with non-archivists such as educators.

What can be suggested about the impact of these developments on the archival profession and archival work? These case studies show that the Internet is making public programming a vital, not secondary, aspect of archival practice. The Internet eases a problem which has kept archives from occupying a more central place in the minds and lives of their communities – the difficulty of accessing archival records and the information in them. As this problem eases, public programming will likely become increasingly central to archival work, as there will probably be greater and greater

⁶⁴ For an introduction to the differences between HTML and EAD as well as a user study of how some archives have been utilizing EAD, see James R. Roth, "Serving Up EAD: An Exploratory Study on the Deployment and Utilization of Encoded Archival Description Finding Aids," The American Archivist 64, no. 2 (Fall/Winter, 2001).

demand for it, as the Internet evolves into a more practical tool for rapid access to massive amounts of multi-media information.

What kind of information from archives will the Internet convey? Thus far, as indicated above, a mixture of types of information has appeared: from basic information about location and hours of operation to virtual exhibits, school curricula materials, thematic guides, digitized documents, and sophisticated systems of provenance-based records description. But the emergence of narrative historical information seems particularly noteworthy at the various Internet sites examined here. The appearance of countless Internet sites such as the Anarchy Archives and the Black Holocaust Society strongly suggests that those who are not professional archivists working in formal archives, but have similar historical interests, are taking advantage of the Internet to bring their narratives and documents to a wide public. If we include the massive number of genealogical websites in this group, there are far more of these types of websites on the Internet than conventional ones sponsored by formal archives. These other sites are creating a large and growing public demand for narrative historical information based on archival materials. This may be fuelling a public expectation that *all* archival websites should do the same, if they wish to attract the attention and support of their communities. Conventional archival websites seem to be responding to this demand to guide the visitor through a narration of selected historical topics illustrated with archival records. Although most archivists may be loath to admit it, the examples studied here suggest that the narrative has become more important than the archival record on the Internet. This trend towards narration can perhaps be seen best in the ASA's "Letters from the Trunk" and "Au Pays de Riel" at the website of the Centre du Patrimoine archives of the Société

historique du Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg, both of which offer narratives that use archival materials rather than focusing on records per se.

The Internet may be having the effect of drawing archivists into a greater commitment to provision of historical narratives, as that is prominent at most sites examined here. This may well be because public enthusiasm for historical information may be increasing as accessibility to it through the Internet grows, and because Internet users may expect to have narrative historical information delivered to them, just as it delivers to them vast amounts of narrative information from other key areas of life. This may well be drawing archivists back into historical research roles they once clearly had in Canada, but have tended to eschew since the 1970s when they established a distinctive professional identity. This does not at all mean an end to the distinctive archival profession, or a turning back of the clock to a time when archivists were simply historians like those in the education system. It may mean (and rightly) that archivists may grow closer to their historian allies in day-to-day work, such as in public programming, and use more historical information and research skills to perform these and other *archival* tasks than they once thought they would need.

It also seems to be no coincidence that these developments occurred as postmodern ideas came to the fore in Canadian archival circles. These ideas make it difficult to maintain that sharp distinctions do and must exist between the work of historians and archivists, such that archivists need to remain impartial, above the historical fray, and thus they do not interpret the past in their work, only historians do. As the discussion of Gary Taylor's work in chapter two suggests, the archival "editor" is also profoundly shaping an understanding of the past. The archival hesitation to undertake this role, as

seen in the discussion of traditional public programming literature in chapter two, only obscures archival historical commitments and prevents archivists from playing a more active, open, and truly professional role in a function now vital to archival success in society -- public programming.

The trend towards dissemination of narrative historical information at archival websites revives an older tradition of archival service in Canada. As shown in chapter one, many Canadian archivists have long thought that they must make historical information about Canada's development more accessible in order to foster patriotism and other social benefits. This tradition suffered some setbacks with the emerging professionalism of archivists since the 1970s and their increased commitment to the new profession's bedrock concept of provenance and an understandable more inward focus on archival administration and related profession building. Provenance placed a priority on describing and making records available according to an understanding of their origins, rather than their information content. Provenance-based descriptions have been the overwhelming first choice of archivists for website content, as Archives Canada well indicates. Narrative historical information, however, is now rejoining provenance-based descriptions on archival websites. These types of information are being joined there by growing numbers of digitized archival records. But what of the future for this information technology of such immense potential for archives? What direction should archives take on the Internet? What types of information should be emphasized, if any? What particular user needs should be considered, if any? The answers to these questions will be negotiated over the next few years as archives, users, and funding bodies work to define the role of Canadian archives in the twenty-first century. What has become clearer is that

due to the Internet, postmodernism, and the resulting acceptance of archival involvement in interpreted narrative, archival public programming currently plays a more central role in Canadian archival practice than it has at any time in the past 135 years. There is nothing to indicate that this development won't continue for the foreseeable future in Canadian archives.

Conclusion

Canadian archives may well use the Internet to obtain a more prominent role in Canadian heritage circles and society. This may help fulfil a longstanding ambition for many Canadian archivists. In chapter one, outreach is shown to have always been a feature of Canadian archival work. All of the Dominion and National archivists from Douglas Brymner to Ian Wilson have recognized the importance of outreach. This support from the senior archivist in Canada, and thus the most prominent archives, positioned outreach prominently in Canadian archives. This tradition sees the archival record more as a historical than juridical document. It led to the Canadian tradition of "Total Archives" and the housing of private and public records together. Thus Canada diverged from the tradition of the record keeper uninvolved in historical research that Jenkinsonian archival theorists have espoused.

Much of the credit for instilling outreach in Canadian archival practice early on goes to the first two Dominion Archivists, Douglas Brymner and Arthur Doughty, and their desire to use the archival record as a means of fostering Canadian unity and identity. Doughty, Brymner, and other early Canadian archivists were journalists by trade and this likely led to an increased appreciation of the narrative importance of archival records. Doughty, in particular, as the main focus of his outreach, sought to foster among the Canadian socio-economic and intellectual elites the development of the academic historical profession in Canada as the primary conduit for this narrative to the rest of society. Doughty's own historical writing, involvement in the Quebec Tercentenary, and pursuit of

Canadian records of the First World War indicate his strong desire to share and document the narrative of Canada's major historical events. The narrative was as important as the record itself.

Doughty's successor, Dr. Gustave Lanctôt, continued and expanded this tradition by serving as the official historian of the 1939 Royal Tour and by writing academic histories of French Canada. The arrival of W. Kaye Lamb as Dominion Archivist in 1948 confirmed that tradition, but also marks the beginning of greater recognition of archivists as distinct professionals in Canada through specialized training. Lamb was also a staunch believer in outreach and the fostering of Canadian nationalism and cultural development through archives, as his presentation to the Massey Commission indicates. Lamb employed microfilm to enhance the availability of the PAC's holdings to scholars across Canada for the first time.

The third stage in the development of the Canadian archival profession (1975-95) saw the formal recognition of archivists as a profession separate from historians (with the creation of the Association of Canadian Archivists), and with this development, a marked increase in systematic scholarly archival discourse (in the association's journal Archivaria). This stage also saw the first scholarly debate about the merits of public programming in archival practice. Yet archivists emphasized more other aspects of professional development during these years, as they sought to acquire the distinctive knowledge needed to administer the day-to-day internal operations of their expanding and more complex late-twentieth-century archives. Along with the creation of the ACA and Archivaria, came other significant products of the new archival professionalism -- in the launch in 1981 of the first

master's level professional education program for archivists in Canada at the University of British Columbia and the publication of Rules for Archival Description in 1990. On this agenda, public programming became a peripheral activity.

The nearly simultaneous advent of postmodernism and the Internet have begun to change those priorities and allow Canadian archives to rethink their relationship with their records. Chapter two suggests that the Canadian archival tradition of involvement in historical research may be stimulated again by the freeing influences of both postmodernism and the opportunity the Internet presents to distribute historical information from archives to a very wide audience. Postmodern thought allowed Canadian archivists to acknowledge their involvement in actually shaping the archival record through such interpretive activities, while the Internet provides an extraordinarily attractive new outlet for that involvement.

Chapter three begins with an analysis of how certain traditional archival activities have been adopted by non-archivists at Internet sites. These "Internet archivists" mount documents and accompanying narratives on a wide range of historical topics of passionate interest to them. These "Internet archivists" are not usually much interested in provenance or traditional archival practice. Like the majority of archival researchers, they focus on the interpretation of the content of the records. This interest in interpretation instead of provenance and preservation mirrors the desires of many online users of archives and likely explains the prevalence of interpretive content on archival websites. Although several features of the websites of archives and other cultural institutions are examined in chapter

three, the most noteworthy point about them is that archives tend to use interpretive material such as exhibits as the focus of their web presence. Archival exhibits vary in quality but they tend to be the attractive face of archival websites.

Chapter three also shows that archives are doing much more with the Internet than offer interpretive history through virtual exhibits. Archives such as Library and Archives Canada offer thematic databases on topics such as Western Land Grants and military attestation papers. Archives and archival associations also offer searchable databases of descriptions that allow name and subject search ability. Nevertheless the major finding of chapter three is that the historical narrative is becoming an increasingly important feature of archival websites. If this is seen in light of the entire sweep of Canadian archival history, as this thesis has tried to do, this role for narrative may not be surprising. Canadian archives have usually provided it to some degree. The great priority placed on it from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, however, is not seen in the late 1970s and 1980s, when archivists were moving away from historical research roles which were then thought to be the realm of their historian colleagues. The Internet may be helping to revive a neglected but important aspect of Canadian archival tradition and practice.

Chapter three closes with several questions about archives and the Internet. These questions are not easily answered. Still, guidelines can be suggested to better prepare archives and archivists for the next few years of technological change.

“What of the future for this [Internet] information technology of such immense potential for archives?”

This is perhaps the most difficult question to answer. Technology will continue to develop. Online storage will become cheaper and presentation applications will become smoother and easier to use. As with the rest of information technology, the technological aspects of mounting online public programming will continue to move away from direct involvement by information technology specialists and will be increasingly handled by staff at the archives. Thus, archival repositories should ensure that their staff is provided with opportunities for upgrading of computer skills.

“What direction should archives take on the Internet?”

Canadian archives are utilizing the Internet to offer interpretive narrative through virtual exhibits and partnerships in school curriculum development. Interpretive narrative, however important, represents a very thin slice of the holdings of a Canadian archives. The digitization of archival documents, though not as obviously, presents the same dilemma as interpretive narrative – it is an arbitrary limited representation of documents. Moreover, digitization may lower visitor statistics and revenue, as clients may be able to satisfy their needs online and not physically visit the archives or order photocopies. Each Canadian archives must figure out the proper balance between interpretive narrative, digitization and other online programming. This must not come at the expense of the day-to-day operations of their brick and mortar repository. But that said, it seems reasonable to say that archives should move as quickly as they can to place as much of their

services as possible online. The era of such “virtual archives” may well be coming, when society interacts with archives primarily through the Internet. Archives will probably be penalized more for failing to see and embrace that than for being hesitant about doing so. The “virtual archives” cannot succeed without the “real” archives behind it, and the latter may now not succeed without the former.

“What types of information should be emphasized, if any?”

In chapter two, some of the difficulties surrounding the mounting of virtual exhibits were discussed. This will continue to be problematic as all actions can be controversial. Perhaps the postmodern view that narrative is always skewed by the biases and opinions of the person authoring it can be a freeing influence. Rather than offering narrative as truth, archives can acknowledge that narratives convey partial truths as constructs of a person or institution. Thus all authors of a narrative should be acknowledged, and these authors should be encouraged to document their own decision-making process in the creation of the narrative. A similar formula should be followed for digitization projects, even those projects that provide little to no narrative. The creators of the project should be acknowledged and their decision-making process behind why groups of records were digitized and others weren’t should be documented and readily available alongside the corpus of digitized records. Additionally all potential stakeholders should be consulted concerning the narrative or digitization project. Efforts should be made to incorporate suggestions, or where applicable, ease concerns over content. While archivists should concern themselves with possible controversy, they should not necessarily shy away from it.

As long as the decision-making process behind the content is transparent, most controversy could be minimized.

“What particular user needs should be considered, if any?”

If archives want to provide services over the Internet, they must involve the user in deciding what service is needed. Unlike museums and libraries, archives have tended to ignore user studies or program evaluation as a means of improving their services.¹ Thus little is known as to what archival clients may desire from archives online and how these wants may be merged with the present archival practice of offering narratives to provide a possible framework for archives on-line in the years to come. In recent years, user studies of online archival users have begun to appear and it is likely that these studies will continue to appear until a more complete concept of the desires of the online user is more apparent.² This will have to be carefully developed as archival users come from different backgrounds and can have quite different reasons for visiting the archives.³

¹ Jacques Grimard, “Program Evaluation and Archives: ‘Appraising’ Archival Work and Achievements,” *Archivaria* 57 (Spring 2004), 74. The most comprehensive analysis of the literature surrounding archival user studies can be found in chapter 1 of Shelley Sweeney’s doctoral dissertation “The Source-Seeking Cognitive Processes and Behaviour of the In-Person Archival Researcher,” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Texas, 2002) Available on-line at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2002/sweeneys022/sweeneys022.pdf> (last accessed January 25, 2005).

² Recent user studies that focus or touch on Internet public programming issues include Anne Gilliland-Swetland “An Exploration of K-12 User Needs for Digital Primary Resource Materials,” *The American Archivist* 61, no.2 (Spring 1998); Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson “Where Is the List with All the Names? Information Seeking-Behaviour of Genealogists,” *The American Archivist* 66 no.1 (Spring/Summer 2003); Elizabeth Hallam Smith “Customer Focus and Marketing in Archive Service Delivery: theory and practice,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 24 no.1 (April 2003); Anna Sexton et al, “Understanding Users: a prerequisite for developing new technologies,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 25 no.1 (April 2004); Christopher Weir “The Marketing Context. Outreach: Luxury or Necessity,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 25 no.1 (April 2004); and Helen Tibbo “Primarily History in America: How U.S. Historians Search for Primary Materials at the Dawn of the Digital Age,” *The American Archivist* 66 No.1 (Spring/Summer 2003).

³ Though a discussion of traditional in-person users, Ian Mortimer’s “Discriminating Between Readers: the Case for a Policy of Flexibility,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 23 no. 1 (April 2002) and the responses by Stacey Gee “A Standard of Service for All? The Case for a Flexible

Although this thesis enthusiastically supports archival use of the Internet, it ends on a cautionary note. Recent developments such as the merger of the National Archives of Canada with the Library of Canada to form Library and Archives Canada suggest that archives are being viewed by their sponsors as an integral part of the heritage community. Such developments can also be viewed negatively. Canadian archives may be subsumed by the much larger museum and library communities, aided by the gradual blurring of boundaries between them offered by the common Internet portal. This blurring may be initiated by archives eager to expand their traditional user base. As shown in chapter three, archives are developing more and more programs, such as virtual exhibits, that mirror traditional museum programming. Although any form of outreach that brings about greater interest in archives can be viewed as a positive development, archivists must ensure that providing historical narratives does not overshadow other archival activities such as acquisition, appraisal, and description. The historical narrative is a useful tool, but archivists must always remember that they are not simply offering museum exhibits, and without question the highest priority, even above outreach, is the proper acquisition and preservation of the records in their holdings. While the Internet will open up new avenues to legions of new users, archivists should not neglect the records in their holdings in order to offer technologically advanced Internet sites. That the Internet must complement rather than overshadow traditional

Policy," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 23 no. 2 (October 2002) and Jenny Moran and Martin Taylor, "Lowering the Drawbridge: further thoughts on discriminating between readers," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 24 no.1 (April 2004), provide useful examples as to what archives may face from online users.

archival activities is something that must be articulated by all archivists to their non-archivist superiors.

If new users are being introduced to archives through the Internet, then concomitant increases in staff should be provided. For without proper control of the records, the archives has lost its purpose. To borrow from Terry Cook, without proper staffing that recognizes the increased demand on archives, archival use of the Internet may result in a meagre diet of fast food style archival service. It may force “archival excellence to be put on the shelf next to the Big Mac Sauce” in order to provide website visitors a quick but superficial glimpse of what Canadian archives offer.⁴ This would be a sad end to the grand tradition of archives and nation building begun in the nineteenth century by Douglas Brymner, and carried on by a multitude of Canadian archivists throughout the twentieth century.

⁴ Terry Cook, “Viewing the World Upside Down,” 127.

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