

**The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
and the Pursuit of Archival Decolonization**

by

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Abstract

Western archival institutions have both silenced and misrepresented Indigenous peoples in Canada for more than a century. These actions have in turn assisted in the colonization and subjectification of a myriad of Indigenous communities within the colonial construct of Canada. This institutional complicity in the colonization process has recently come under fire, both in academia and among the general public. Questions have arisen about how these institutions can be decolonized and how they can be used in partnership with Indigenous peoples to strengthen the Indigenous voices they once silenced. The institutional decolonization of archives becomes especially important when the archival institution in question has been given the responsibility to care for records that relate to gross human rights abuses perpetrated against Indigenous peoples. This is the case for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the University of Manitoba, which has a mandate to preserve and share the truths of Residential School (RS) Survivors.

The NCTR will be situated at the heart of this thesis as I explore the concepts of archival trust, archival transparency, and archival participation. In addition, this thesis will attempt to discover how these concepts can act as a catalyst for change, and how the NCTR can engage with them in a decolonizing manner. By examining how these three concepts have been discussed in and applied to an archival context, this thesis will develop a strong foundation on which to begin the discussion of what archival decolonization could look like for the NCTR.

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Introduction

Western archival practices have established and maintained archival institutions in Canada for more than a century. Their impact on the way we perceive and disseminate history is undisputable. Because of this, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was an eye-opening process not only for the many who were unaware of the legacy of Residential Schools, but also for archivists whose Western practices have assisted in the colonization and subjectification of Indigenous communities within the colonial construct of Canada. Awareness of the negative effects colonialism has had on Indigenous peoples has been growing within academia and the general public, revealing the truths of Canada's darkest secrets. This has led to a growing literature on decolonizing institutional constructs, and how this approach can assist in working closely with Indigenous peoples to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This becomes especially important in the context of archives responsible for the care of records documenting gross human rights abuses, and the recorded voices and truths of the Survivors affected by these abuses. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR)¹ at the University of Manitoba represents such an archive, and as such will serve as the main case study in this thesis in order to develop concrete examples of what decolonization could look like in the realm of archives.

Before exploring the various chapters of this thesis, it is important to look back at the events leading up to the launch of the NCTR as they have set the foundation on which archival decolonization can be addressed. It is also important for me to discuss my

¹ The terms "NCTR" and "the centre" will be used interchangeably to identify the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation throughout this thesis.

involvement in this process, as well as my current position as an archivist at the centre as these roles have influenced my views on mainstream archival practices, shaping the arguments put forth in this thesis.

On June 13, 2013, an agreement was signed between the TRC and the University of Manitoba (UM) that marked the beginning of the establishment of the NCTR. The UM was the successful candidate in the bidding process that included universities and other institutions across Canada, which like the UM, wished to steward the records collected by the TRC during its six-year mandate. From the very beginning, the NCTR's² technology subcommittee, a subcommittee of the larger implementation committee,³ made it clear that the establishment of the NCTR would be a transparent process to ensure that Survivors, researchers, and the general public remain abreast of any decisions being made by the committee. My past role within the technology subcommittee was to document these processes and decisions while they were happening, and I had done so by writing blog posts outlining key moments that had occurred since the signing of the agreement between the TRC and the UM. Although the blog will not be the focus of my thesis, the blogging process itself has helped change the way I look at the future of archives. As such, each chapter will open with one of my blog posts to assist in setting the stage for the themes of each chapter.

My role as an archivist at the NCTR is also important to keep in mind as the experiences I have gained while working at the centre since the fall of 2014 have strongly

² Formerly known as the National Research Centre (NRC) Implementation Committee.

³ For a description of the committee, refer to former committee member Bret Lougheed's blog post entitled "Brett Lougheed's 3 Month Mission: The Development of the NRC's Functional Requirements," *Jesse's Thesis*, WordPress, November 1, 2013, accessed December 19, 2016, <https://jesseboiteau.wordpress.com/2013/11/01/brett-lougheeds-3-month-mission-the-development-of-the-nrcs-functional-requirements/>.

influenced my outlook on the archival profession, such as my outlook on the role of archives in human rights. As such, this thesis brings with it my own personal and inevitable subjectivity since I am still an employee of the centre. In addition to discussing current NCTR initiatives as they relate to the decolonization of archives, this thesis will be critical of the centre where necessary, offering suggestions and linking these critiques to the growing literature relevant to archival decolonization.

Since the ending of the TRC's mandate, there has been a shift in focus from the TRC to the NCTR. This shift has highlighted a number of key concerns for the NCTR, including the respectful stewardship of the TRC's records on behalf of Indigenous peoples, and how to best serve the various Indigenous communities across the country. Since the signing ceremony in 2013, The NCTR has been working closely with various specialists, including Indigenous Elders, to lay the groundwork for what is the NCTR today. On November 3, 2015, the NCTR held an opening ceremony at the UM's Fort Garry Campus, where speeches were given by former TRC commissioners and invited guests from across Canada, including Phil Fontaine, Eugene Arcand, Andrew Carrier, Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, and Grand Chief Edward John. The following day, the NCTR's website went live, allowing people to gain access to a small portion of its overall collection. Now that the NCTR is in the spotlight, the aforementioned concerns are more important than ever. As the NCTR continues to develop as an archival institution specializing in working closely with Indigenous communities, so does the notion of archival decolonization as a legitimate method to break down the barriers that exist between archives and Indigenous peoples.

Centring the NCTR as its overarching case study, this thesis will seek to explore the meaning of archival decolonization, and how the NCTR can be a leading archive in

working closely with Indigenous communities. That said, what does archival decolonization truly mean? What notions applicable to an archival setting must be discussed to create both a theoretical framework and practical examples of how the NCTR can work towards implementing the notions of decolonization?

Chapter 1

This thesis will begin with a discussion of arguably the most important aspect of archival decolonization: trust. What makes an archive trustworthy? What can archives do to work towards building trusted relationships with Indigenous peoples whose lives have been affected and disrupted by colonization? Does the NCTR have the proper tools to work towards these trusting relationships, and if so, how can these relationships be maintained? This thesis will be limited in scope as direct consultation with Indigenous communities was not possible due to the time and budgetary restraints of a master's thesis. That said, I have accessed Indigenous voices where possible to help shape my perspective and outlook on archives. By interacting with colleagues, both past and present, I have had the opportunity to learn from Indigenous perspectives on archives and memory, and how these notions can interact and be influenced by traditional Indigenous knowledge. I also bring my own Métis perspective to this thesis and the notion of decolonizing archives, as I have done since entering the UM's Archival Studies Program in the fall of 2012. My work as an archivist with the Urban Aboriginal Archiving Project (UAAP) has also provided me the opportunity to learn from Indigenous peoples and organizations interested in preserving the history of urban Aboriginal economic development in Winnipeg. Governed by an Indigenous Advisory Council, the UAAP opened my eyes to the misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Western archives. This Manitoba Research Alliance research project also

assisted me in better understanding the need for Indigenous collaboration and consultation regarding archival issues as the UAAP “evolved over time and became a model example of how Aboriginal community researchers and academics can cooperate to recognize, capture and preserve urban Aboriginal history.”⁴ By thinking critically about the archival profession, and by keeping in mind my past experiences working with Indigenous peoples and organizations, this thesis strives to apply what Crystal Fraser and Zoe Todd call “Decolonial Sensibilities”⁵ to the archival profession.

Chapter 1 will begin by offering a definition of the chapter’s theme as it applies to the NCTR archives. This will be important to establish the parameters of what the chapter advocates for in relation to the NCTR’s current notions of trust. This includes the review of a number of statements made by the NCTR regarding the importance of building trust with Survivors and their families. Prior to this definition, the chapter will open with an example of a blog post I wrote during my time as an NRC technology subcommittee member. Each chapter will begin with a blog post related to the topic at hand as a way of framing the chapter with a post that sparked my interest in each of the chapter’s topics.

Space will then be given to accommodate the public’s perception of the centre, including space for those taking a more critical stance toward the NCTR. This is an important step in addressing the centre’s trustworthiness as it allows for an open dialogue, validating a range of opinions. This overview will still be limited as it does not allow for the non-published voices to share such a space. This identifies one of the centre’s most

⁴ John Loxley and Evelyn Peters, “Preserving the History of Aboriginal Institutional Development in Winnipeg: Research Driven by the Community,” *The Urban Aboriginal Archiving Project* (2015): 10.

⁵ Crystal Fraser and Zoe Todd, “Decolonial Sensibilities: Indigenous Research and Engaging with Archives in Contemporary Colonial Canada,” *Internationale* (2016), accessed March 30, 2016, http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/decolonising_practices/54_decolonial_sensibilities_indigenou_s_research_and_engaging_with_archives_in_contemporary_colonial_canada.

significant hurdles in building trust with Indigenous communities across Canada, its limited reach as an academic institution. This highlights the need for the centre to build partnerships with Indigenous organizations across Canada in order to make connections with those who are apprehensive about working closely with the centre. In addition to examining the centre's public statements on trust, this chapter will also examine the founding documents that aim to govern the centre in its day-to-day activities and long-term goals. These include the centre's Trust Deed and Administrative Agreement. This examination will unearth a number of important key points to consider, as well as points of concern as they relate to the notion of trust and the NCTR.

Following this section, a literature review of archives and human rights, and the role of archival institutions as allies of groups suffering from human rights abuses, past and present, will be presented to position the NCTR within an international context. This review will prompt a number of considerations for the NCTR moving forward as this thesis strives to offer how international examples of archives in charge of housing records of gross human rights abuses can be interpreted and applied by the NCTR. A recurring theme that surfaces throughout this literature is the need for ongoing consultation to better understand the growing needs of an institution's stakeholders. In the context of the NCTR, these stakeholders include a variety of individuals and organizations, but most importantly, Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast. How can the NCTR implement community engagement initiatives as a way of building a network of relationships with the hope of maintaining these relationships?

Following an analysis of various community engagement projects, including the NCTR's community engagement sessions, key documents regarding the rights of

Indigenous peoples and archival materials will be discussed in order to better understand how they could be incorporated by the NCTR as a way of honouring the Survivors' voices and truths currently cared for by the centre. These documents include the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the United Nations Joint-Ortlicher Principles. This chapter will end with final reflections based on the lessons learned throughout the chapter. By thinking critically towards the NCTR's past and current notions of trust, and applying the theoretical frameworks around archives and human rights and the importance of continuous community engagement, this section will develop suggestions for the NCTR to consider. More than solely the duty of the NCTR Archives, other NCTR departments including Education, Research, and Administration will play an important role in the NCTR's continued efforts to build and maintain trustworthy relationships with its stakeholders.⁶

Chapter 2

Archival transparency will be the focus of Chapter 2 as it proposes the need to render archival processes transparent as current archival standards do not address how a lack of archival transparency has led to the public's unawareness of archives. Such unawareness can also be interpreted as a mistrustful relationship in the context of archives and human rights. Following the opening blog post and definition of the term transparency in the archival context, an overview of archival transparency theory will be presented as a way to understand how rendering archival processes transparent can become a facet of

⁶ The term stakeholder is used throughout this thesis not only to signify those who hold a financial stake in the centre, such as the UM or other institutional partners, but also the Survivors and their families who have a stake in the centre's continued role as the home of Survivor voices and truths. The pluralization of the terms voice and truth is important to note as this thesis will try not to place all Survivors within a singular Survivor community. By doing so, this illustrates the need for the NCTR to cast a wider net when consulting and listening to Survivors and their families.

archival decolonization. Archival transparency on an international level will be addressed as experiences from international archives and archivists can assist the NCTR in better understanding the benefits of both documenting and sharing its processes with its stakeholders.

Examples of how transparency theory has been put into practice will also be provided to highlight past initiatives in an effort to understand how they could be incorporated by the centre moving forward. These examples will also shed light on a number of platforms that could be implemented to foster increased transparency. Such platforms include, but are not limited to social media services. However, these examples also highlight the issues with adopting specific platforms as users' needs and interests are fluid, leading to a lack of interest if archival institutions do not remain abreast of the most current and up-to-date methods of communication with the general public. Transparency measures are only as good as the methods used to disseminate the information. My blogging process will be used as a case study to highlight the challenges of using blogging for transparency purposes. By rendering my own process transparent, I will in turn provide examples of how the NCTR could incorporate transparency as another dimension of its processes.

This chapter will end with a summary of the chapter's findings on archival transparency in order to offer practical suggestions for the centre to consider. It is important to note the distinction between transparency as an act of promoting open information and institutional awareness, and archival transparency as the process of documenting and disseminating archival processes. In order to pursue the latter, initial steps must be taken to ensure that documentation exists to have the necessary tools to implement the former.

This distinction becomes especially important in the case of archives housing records of human rights abuses, such as the NCTR. This section will build on this by sharing how the NCTR has begun documenting certain processes with the goal of transparency in mind by producing accompanying reports. Such a report, although not painting the entire picture of the process at hand, does provide the centre with a mechanism to implement and improve upon as certain processes evolve.

However, this example reinforces the importance of better understanding how people access information. Is social media or the NCTR's website an adequate distribution method for the centre's transparency reports? How would such a method function in areas with limited or no access to the Internet? These are all factors that must be taken into account when developing an archival transparency framework. That said, is the creation of reports to document archival processes truly a move away from a colonial method of information dissemination? How can the NCTR turn the notion of transparency through documented processes into a more decolonized approach to archival transparency?

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 will build on this by providing an overview of participatory archiving as an important process not only to collect additional metadata, but also to build relationships with Indigenous communities to further understand their needs, and how archives and archivists can in turn work towards meeting these needs. In addition to providing reports written by archivists, participatory archiving provides the opportunity to promote the importance of embracing multiple narratives; opening up archives to the idea of listening to Indigenous voices outside of the archival records.

With a more transparent approach to archival processes established, archives can look towards implementing measures of user participation in an attempt to decolonize archives. The idea of inviting the general public to assist in archival processes is by no means a new concept, however consulting with and learning from Indigenous communities in Canada to better understand their needs regarding the archiving of RS records is indeed an area in need of further examination. With the NCTR still in its infancy, it will be important to carefully establish a well thought out process to ensure the needs of those affected by the RS legacy are acknowledged and addressed, while understanding and accepting that not all needs can be met. This chapter begins by providing a definition of participation in the archival context. By doing so, the remainder of the chapter will have a base on which to develop the theoretical and practical frameworks of a participatory archiving model. A literature review will then be conducted to learn from what has already been discussed within the archival community to better understand recent developments and the limitations of participatory archiving in the context of decolonization. As seen in Chapter 2, these limitations include, but are not confined to the inadequate internet access of remote communities, and the ever-changing ways in which people access and use information.

A series of case studies will be examined to link the aforementioned literature on participatory archiving with the growing examples of archives experimenting with various platforms to achieve varying levels of participation. These examples highlight projects in the early stages of implementing participatory measures, as well as others attempting to use advances in technology to create a space that promotes user generated metadata and actual data uploads in the form of record donation. Each case study will also include

important takeaways for the NCTR, including both cautionary tales and thought-provoking ideas in need of further review by the centre before a participatory platform can be established.

This leads to the final section of Chapter 3 that provides practical examples of how the theoretical notions of participatory archiving can be applied to the NCTR, which is a Western archive specializing in preserving both records documenting Indigenous peoples, as well as records created by Indigenous peoples. By breaking down the idea of the NCTR being a “living archive,”⁷ this section discusses avenues, both digital and in person, that represent a starting point for the NCTR and its participatory goals. These avenues also assist in highlighting the need for continued consultation with Indigenous peoples as the creation of a participatory platform is only relevant if the intended audience accepts its legitimacy. Without this consultation process, and without a broad scope to create a network of relationships with a significant number of communities, participatory archiving at the NCTR would suffer due to a colonial process based on the “build it and they will come” mentality.

In addition to a general overview of the three chapters’ concluding sections that strives to offer practical suggestions on how the NCTR can implement the notions of archival trust, archival transparency and archival participation, this thesis will conclude by offering avenues in need of further research as the notion of archival decolonization is still in its infancy. A common theme throughout is the increasingly important need for the NCTR to consult with all Indigenous peoples as it continues to develop as a resource for

⁷ Brett Lougheed, Ry Moran, and Camille Callison, "Reconciliation through Description: Using Metadata to Realize the Vision of the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53:5-6 (2015): 597.

both RS related records, and the growing documentation regarding reconciliation. However, this cannot be a static engagement limited to those with adequate internet access or experience working closely with a Western archive. This highlights the need for archives, including the NCTR, to acknowledge and value the voices and concerns of Indigenous peoples in regard to archives. By making the effort to listen and understand what and how Indigenous peoples can contribute to the development of archives, the NCTR will be well on its way to becoming a leading archive in the pursuit of archival decolonization.

Chapter 1 What Makes an Archive Trustworthy?

The following section is a blog post that I wrote on September 30, 2013 to discuss the notion of building trust between archives and Indigenous communities while archiving records related to Indigenous peoples.

The Urban Aboriginal History Project: Building Trust through Participatory Archiving

On Wednesday, September 25th, I participated in an interesting discussion during one of my University courses (History 7392: Archives, Public Affairs, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada) after being asked to read an article by Michelle Caswell entitled *Rethinking inalienability: trusting nongovernmental archives in transitional societies*. In the article, Caswell discusses how archival institutions in Cambodia can establish trust with the individuals who were affected by the Khmer Rouge Genocide. Naturally, we took this thought and applied it to Canada to try and brainstorm how the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) National Research Centre (NRC) could build trust with the Survivors of the residential schools and their families. In the University of Manitoba's vision statement that was included in their proposal to become the repository for the TRC's archive, the idea of "stewarding" the records of the TRC is often used, emphasizing the fact that the U of M would not own the records. Instead, they would be housing and preserving the records for an undefined period of time, or until an Aboriginal archive is established that could take on the responsibility of managing such a large collection.

The University of Manitoba's vision for the NRC

Yet, Caswell suggests that stewardship must be based on trust. That being said, how can the NRC build trust? My classmates and I agreed that it is going to take more than just applying the idea of "stewardship" to build trust. It is going to take initiatives and programs created by the NRC, using the records found within their holdings in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, organizations and members of the general public. In the University of Manitoba's official proposal document (not yet available to the public), they outline some key ideas such as allowing the public to arrange, describe and add new records to the NRC (the notion of co-curation that I discussed in my previous post), as well as having an online forum that would aim to help connect people who have been separated from their families and communities because of residential schools.

A good example of a participatory archiving initiative can currently be found in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The Urban Aboriginal History

Project has been established to collect and preserve the records of Winnipeg based urban aboriginal organizations (the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg to name a couple). In addition to these records, interviews have also been conducted with some of the pioneers who have contributed to the establishment of said organizations. In terms of participatory archiving, this project has involved young Aboriginal students to help process the records (appraisal, arrangement, description) as well as conduct and edit the interviews. In fact, seven members of the project will be presenting at a colloquium taking place at the University of Manitoba on October 5th entitled “*I have never forgotten his words*”: *Talking about Indigenous Archives*, including Aboriginal committee members from the project. The goal of the panel will be to discuss the significance of the project as well as the direction in which it is heading. Perhaps if my family and friends attended the colloquium they would finally understand the work that I am doing, and perhaps they would begin to understand what an **archivist** really is.

<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/humanities/indigenousarchives.html>

In addition to promoting the colloquium, I am also mentioning it because it is important to understand the context in which the NRC is being established. The Canadian archival landscape is currently being flooded with the terms “participatory archives” or “collaboration” and “community”, but this notion of a more participatory way of archiving has not been put into practice. Although projects such as the Urban Aboriginal History Project do exist, larger archival institutions across the country seem to be holding back in terms of Indigenous and participatory archiving... yet, perhaps this is a good thing. Perhaps this should be a grassroots movement that is built from the ground up to ensure that the stakeholders’ voices are included and heard every step of the way.

And now it is time for me to practice what I preach. What do you think can be done by the NRC to try and establish trust? One of the purposes of this blog is to gain outside perspectives regarding the establishment of the NRC and I hope that the subject matter of this particular post will help kick-start the dialogue around the NRC and trust building.

Please stay tuned for more NRC updates.

Jesse Boiteau¹

¹ Jesse Boiteau, “The Urban Aboriginal History Project: Building Trust through Participatory Archiving,” *Jesse’s Thesis*, WordPress, September 30, 2013, accessed May 3, 2016, <https://jesseboiteau.wordpress.com/2013/09/30/the-urban-aboriginal-history-project-building-trust-through-participatory-archiving/>.

1.1 Introduction

The notion of archives building trust among core users and the general public is not a new phenomenon, however building trust with Indigenous communities that have a stake in archival institutions across Canada is indeed an area of study that has only emerged more recently.² Although organizations such as the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) have produced resources to guide archivists tasked with caring for “Aboriginal Archives,” the tone of such resources has been one-sided, lacking the understanding that not one guide can be applied to all Indigenous communities. Since their inception, Western archival institutions have not made a sufficient effort to build trust with Indigenous communities in terms of outreach, the types of records traditionally collected, or not collected, and how those records have been described and arranged. By not allowing space for Indigenous voices, and by not collecting records depicting Indigenous peoples and cultures created directly by Indigenous peoples, archives have created a divide between themselves and Indigenous communities in Canada. In order to better understand how the notion of building trust plays a pivotal role in the decolonization of archives, the term “trust” as described by the NCTR will be studied and further developed to establish a guiding principle that can be applied throughout the thesis. Additionally, the publicly available documents that have been released by the NCTR will be examined to determine how the

² The ACA’s *Aboriginal Archives Guide*, although dated by today’s standards as it was produced in 2007, is a glimpse into the archival inadequacies of understanding the needs of Indigenous communities. The ACA states, “This booklet was developed in order to promote the role of archives in meeting the administrative, educational, and cultural needs of Aboriginal communities, and to foster the establishment of archives in those communities,” ACA, *Aboriginal Archives Guide*, accessed November 29, 2016, http://archivists.ca/sites/default/files/Attachments/Outreach_attachments/Aboriginal_Archives_English_WEB.pdf. This statement is problematic because it promotes the idea that Indigenous communities in Canada do not have established archives. This undermines the Indigenous knowledge preservation that has been in place for centuries, and erroneously suggests that one guide can teach all Indigenous communities the ways of Western archival thinking. This thesis will counter the “one size fits all” paradigm by instead proposing a set of guiding principles, including building trust relationships, to help the NCTR decolonize archives.

NCTR differs from a more traditional archival institution in how it approaches collaboration with Indigenous communities. Following this analysis, a review of the archival literature on stewarding records of human rights abuses will be conducted, and a number of case studies involving community engagement will be presented in order to situate the NCTR on a global scale in terms of adopting trust building measures, and how these measures can assist in building lasting relationships in the pursuit of decolonization.

Since the establishment of the TRC and now NCTR, the notion of decolonizing archives has made its way to the fore, which brings along with it the very notion of trust. This idea of decolonizing archives can be seen both in academia, as well as in various publications, such as those with a focus on social justice. In the article entitled "Decolonial Sensibilities: Indigenous Research and Engaging with Archives in Contemporary Colonial Canada", Crystal Fraser and Zoe Todd begin by framing archives in Canada as institutions, often run by various levels of government or church entities, which in turn leads to strict access restrictions to records deemed sensitive by the "bureaucracies"³ that govern archival institutions. That said, Fraser and Todd state that the NCTR is "an adequate starting point for conversations about re-defining archival challenges and its political burdens, especially with its extensive online and digitised records, but, in all its innovation, there are limitations even to this collection."⁴ This thesis examines these limitations and continues to build on the conversations that have been started by authors such as Fraser and Todd to contribute to the long-term discussion on decolonizing archival institutions that house colonial records, and that continue to approach archival processes through a colonial lens. Fraser and Todd conclude by questioning the very act of decolonizing archives. They offer instead the

³ Fraser and Todd, "Decolonial Sensibilities," accessed March 30, 2016.

⁴ Ibid., accessed April 4, 2016.

notion of applying decolonized sensibilities to the relationships between archives and Indigenous peoples. By analyzing and applying the notion of building trust with Indigenous peoples, the NCTR and other archives that house culturally sensitive materials would be better equipped in the context of decolonization than by "simply digitising content or hiring Indigenous archivists."⁵

1.2 Trust and the NCTR

Situated at the heart of the NCTR, the notion of “trust” represents one of the Centre’s main pillars as discussed in its mandate and expressed on its website. It is by establishing trust with Survivors, their families, and the general public that the NCTR can become a leader in decolonization and building lasting and meaningful relationships between archives and Indigenous communities across Canada. The NCTR’s website has listed three statements regarding the notion of trust that will now be discussed to better understand what trust truly means to the centre:

Statement 1: “Trust is earned. You can never take it for granted. Trust is a path that we walk – one built on understanding and respect. Trust is central to all work at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR).”⁶

This statement emphasizes the need for long-term relationship building as a way of continually building trust between the NCTR and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. It also suggests the notion of an ongoing journey, requiring further

⁵ Ibid., accessed April 5, 2016.

⁶ “National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – Trust,” University of Manitoba, accessed August 30, 2016, <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/trust.html>.

understanding of the needs of Survivors and their families. In order for this to happen, the NCTR will need to establish continued consultation with Survivors, Elders, and Indigenous organizations as an ongoing practice regarding the outlook and direction of the NCTR.⁷

Statement 2: “For years, the records of the Residential Schools were locked away from Indigenous communities. Even now, many Communities do not have a trusted location to store their most sensitive documents and oral histories.”⁸

This statement on trust relates to two archival functions, access and preservation. In order for the NCTR to establish and maintain trust, access must be granted where records were not made accessible in the past. Although certain record sets such as government records relating the Residential Schools were indeed available through Library and Archives Canada (LAC), they were buried in a way that even an experienced researcher would have a difficult time navigating the records. By making these record sets more easily accessible, along with additional church documents and Survivor testimonies, the NCTR will stay true to its mandate, and in turn work towards earning the trust of its stakeholders. That said, it is also important for the NCTR to acknowledge and respect the privacy of the Survivors being depicted in its records, denying access when deemed necessary or appropriate as per Survivor input.⁹

⁷ This statement will be further developed throughout this chapter in the discussions around the NCTR’s Governing Circle and community engagement sessions.

⁸ “National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – Trust,” University of Manitoba, accessed August 30, 2016, <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/trust.html>.

⁹ It will be important for the NCTR to work with Survivors and their families to better understand their needs in terms of access and restrictions. The take-down policy discussed later in this chapter is an example of this, however additional Survivor input regarding access protocols of new NCTR acquisitions could assist in building trust.

It is important to note that access to records is always a moving target as there exists a fine line between withholding and releasing too much personal information. This is especially contentious for the NCTR as several factors contribute to the release of information, including the UM's Access and Privacy Office, the NCTR's Head of Archives, and the access restrictions associated with the records transferred to the NCTR. Another important factor that cannot be overlooked is the control that Survivors are given over their own private statements. For example, the TRC and now NCTR has a policy in place to honour statement providers' changing wishes if they find it appropriate to revise the access restrictions associated with their statement(s). However, this does not encompass other record sets being withheld or released that include personal information, such as quarterly returns and other student lists found within the school files series, or other government records or church documents. To address this, the NCTR has created a take-down policy to offer Survivors the opportunity to request a record be pulled from the NCTR's public database if they feel it is necessary to do so. This policy will be discussed at length later in the chapter.

The second part of this statement that relates to trust is the long-term preservation of the NCTR's holdings. In order for future generations of Canadians, including intergenerational Survivors, to have access to the records related to the RS system, the NCTR must be innovative in its digital preservation standards and in the establishment of a trusted digital repository (TDR).¹⁰ That said, does innovation in technology truly lead to trustworthiness? If so, who determines the trustworthiness of a TDR in the end? Greg Bak

¹⁰ A TDR is a robust digital preservation platform used to both preserve and manage digital collections. There are standards and checklists that exist to conduct audits in the process of establishing a TDR (ISO 16363 for example).

sheds light on these important questions, concluding that trust should not be measured by an objective standard or a quantifiable certification, but rather by the relationships that an organization establishes with its core users. In doing so, Bak proposes a shift in language to usher in this more complex notion of trust by utilizing the term “trustworthy digital repository” rather than “trusted digital repository.”¹¹ This notion of trustworthiness versus trusted is an important distinction in the context of the NCTR as perhaps instead of determining whether or not the NCTR is trusted by Survivors and their families, it is more important to monitor and evaluate the trustworthiness of the centre’s actions and decisions, and whether or not the centre is truly working at maintaining lasting relationships with communities across the country.

Statement 3: “The NCTR is committed to being a trusted location where sacred and sensitive Indigenous records are honoured and preserved. The NCTR will ensure that Indigenous peoples have [a] say in how their records are handled.”¹²

This final statement provided by the NCTR regarding trust touches on the importance of Indigenous consultation when handling the records housed by the NCTR. This chapter will delve into the importance of accommodating and respecting Indigenous voices in the decision-making processes of the centre. By doing so, I will strive to build on this statement made by the centre to better understand the logistics behind such a process, and why it is essential for these voices to be valued in order to establish and maintain trusted relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people across the country. These

¹¹ Greg Bak, “Trusted by whom? TDRs, standards culture and the nature of trust,” *Archival Science* 16 (2016): 397.

¹² “National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – Trust,” University of Manitoba, accessed August 30, 2016, <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/trust.html>.

three statements made by the NCTR regarding trust will help guide this chapter to better understand the importance and meaning of trust as it relates to the NCTR and its stakeholders.

It is important to acknowledge that a more Western-style institution such as the NCTR, striving to take a more decolonized approach to its work with Indigenous peoples, can learn from its Indigenous stakeholders. That said, what does the term trust mean in an Indigenous context? It is difficult to discuss such a concept in an academic setting without painting all Indigenous communities with one brush, concluding that trust has one singular meaning to all Indigenous people in Canada. It is also difficult to elaborate on Indigenous notions of trust within the confines of an academic thesis without consulting with Indigenous communities to better understand how archives can play a role in bridging broken relationships that divide Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. In Australia, Sue McKemmish has worked on the Trust and Technology project¹³ that advocates on behalf of Indigenous communities working with Western archival institutions. In the project's final report, they conclude the following:

At several points the researchers point to the need for paradigm shifts - for socio-legal systems, institutions and information professionals to rethink their foundations, to learn to recognise the ways in which these foundations are based on, and hence preference, Western understandings of evidence and memory to the exclusion of Indigenous ones, and in turn, to take on board the reality that these dominant paradigms have contributed to the marginalisation and colonisation of Indigenous Australians.¹⁴

¹³ "Trust & Technology Project" Monash University - Information Technology - Trust & Technology Project, last updated November 23, 2012, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://infotech.monash.edu/research/about/centres/cosi/projects/trust/>.

¹⁴ "Research Outcomes Part 3: Implications for Researchers and Educators," MONASH University - Information Technology - Trust & Technology Project, last updated November 23, 2012, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://infotech.monash.edu/research/about/centres/cosi/projects/trust/final-report/6-implications.html>.

Such a paradigm shift in Canada would see archival institutions acknowledge their role in the marginalization and colonization of Indigenous Canadians, which could lead to a rethinking of their Western foundations to accommodate a more decolonized approach. This thesis strives to better understand what a decolonized archive may look like, using the NCTR as its main case study. Yet further research and consultations will be necessary to fully understand the role of archives in reconciliation or decolonization as there is a “need for a transformation of academic research so that its methods and outcomes value and embody an Indigenous worldview.”¹⁵ To better understand the NCTR’s role as an archival institution pushing the boundaries of what a decolonizing approach to archival practices may look like, the following section will discuss both how the centre has presented itself to the public, and how the public has in turn perceived the centre.

1.3 How is the NCTR perceived, and how has it presented itself?

Before analyzing the publicly available documentation released by the NCTR, it is important to acknowledge the recent publications that have been produced regarding the NCTR in order to better understand how it is perceived by outside sources. Such publications have begun to appear both in academic journals as well as in more informal settings such as blogs and news sites. In the blog post entitled “Assessing the National centre for Truth and Reconciliation,” Sean Carleton, Crystal Fraser, and John Milloy discuss the strengths and limitations of the NCTR, and caution future users of the institution that much work still needs to be done by the NCTR. By making such a claim, they hope to “spark a conversation about how historians might critically engage with this new resource

¹⁵ Ibid., accessed December 12, 2016.

to help shape the future of residential school research and to aid meaningful reconciliation.”¹⁶ They address the controversy around the NCTR and the decision to include Independent Assessment Process (IAP)¹⁷ records in its holdings, as well as the incompleteness of the NCTR’s database as illustrated by the limited number of its records available online. The authors urge “historians to critically engage with the NCTR in ways that can challenge some [of] its operating assumptions and call attention to its gaps in an effort to open new avenues of historical research and political action.”¹⁸ The controversy surrounding the IAP records and the notion of preserving sensitive testimonies have also been discussed by others, such as Moira Farr of *University Affairs*.

Moira Farr discusses the controversial notion of archiving the records related to the IAP process. Upon explaining how private testimonies given during the IAP process could be preserved, she explains that “It came as a shock to many who told their stories – confidentially, they believed – to adjudicators behind closed doors that their words might be preserved for posterity.”¹⁹ This raises a moral dilemma for archivists who strive to document the past by preserving collections in their entirety for a more “complete” history. However, should it be up to archivists to determine what should be kept and what should be destroyed in the context of a process that included the documentation of Survivors’ testimonies? If archivists truly wish to move beyond the barriers created by a colonized

¹⁶ Sean Carleton, Crystal Fraser, and John Milloy, “Assessing the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation,” *ActiveHistory.ca*, WordPress, November 25, 2015, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://activehistory.ca/2015/11/assessing-the-national-centre-for-truth-and-reconciliation/>.

¹⁷ To learn about the IAP process, refer to Tom McMahon’s article entitled “The Final Abuse of Indian Residential School Children: Deleting Their Names, Erasing Their Voices and Destroying Their Records after They Have Died and without Their Consent,” (October 27, 2016), available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2812298.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, accessed May 23, 2016.

¹⁹ Moira Farr, “Questions raised over preserving sensitive Truth and Reconciliation testimony,” *University Affairs*, October 7, 2015, accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/questions-raised-over-preserving-sensitive-truth-and-reconciliation-testimony/>.

way of documenting the past, perhaps they should be inclusive of the creators' wishes in regard to the appraisal of archival collections. That said, the records created by the IAP process are an invaluable collection that not only help to tell the history of the RS system, but also the outcomes of IRSSA and the process established by the Government of Canada in an attempt to repay Survivors for what was taken from them, the loss of family, culture, language, and education. The process itself has been scrutinized as a misguided attempt by the federal government at "healing" the wounds left behind by the RS system, increasing the importance of its preservation.

Tom McMahon, former Executive Director of the TRC, has recently released an article in which he discusses the potential destruction of records and oral testimonies of RS Survivors that were recorded during the IAP process, and how the destruction of these records without the consent of the Survivors who went through the process "will be the final abuse the residential school system inflicts on the children."²⁰ Throughout the article, McMahon passionately endorses the IAP records as an essential piece of the RS history that must be preserved as the "voices and experiences of residential school children cannot be heard in the millions of archived records that were provided to the TRC. Those records were written by and for church and government officials."²¹ Although the thousands of private and public statements provided to the TRC by Survivors, their families, and former RS staff do indeed include a number of the voices and experiences that McMahon believes are missing from the government and church records, the fact that IAP records could be destroyed without the consent of the IAP claimant has led to McMahon's frustration, and

²⁰ Tom McMahon, "The Final Abuse of Indian Residential School Children: Deleting Their Names, Erasing Their Voices and Destroying Their Records after They Have Died and without Their Consent," Independent article (October 27, 2016), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2812298: 84.

²¹ Ibid., 84.

rightfully so. Yet, what is the role of the NCTR in preserving the history of the IAP process, and in turn, the voices of the Survivors who gave statements during their IAP claim, but not to the TRC during their statement gathering process?

If McMahon's wishes are granted, and the NCTR does become the home of the IAP records, the centre will have to ensure that any decisions in regard to this record set are made in consultation with Survivors and their families. This will be especially important in the cases where Survivors who went through the IAP process have since passed away, leaving behind their IAP records with no indication of whether or not they had wished them to be kept or destroyed. In such cases, does this decision to keep or destroy now rest with the courts, the NCTR, or the family of the deceased? Currently, this decision lies in the hands of the courts, yet if they do decide that these records be sent to the NCTR, the centre must ensure the records are cared for until a respectful access process is decided upon. This contentious decision about the handling of Western records that document the lives of Indigenous peoples has already proven to be controversial in the context of the TRC and how it operated as a truth commission.

Among academic sources, the consensus on the success of the TRC points to its important first step in acknowledging the past, and honoring the truths of RS Survivors. However, there are limitations to this success. In Konstantin Petoukhov's master's thesis on the evaluation of the TRC through the lens of restorative justice, he suggests that "even though Survivor groups have been consulted with regard to what the TRC's design and activities should include, the scope of the debate is quite narrow and does not seem to

advance Aboriginal peoples' political interests and power outside the TRC.”²² This sentiment will be important to consider in the following pages as the NCTR's community engagement session are discussed. Petoukhov's assessment of the limitations of the TRC have been echoed by others, such as Michael Morden in his book review²³ entitled “The Limits of the TRC” in which he concludes that the “TRC will likely settle our collective understanding of the residential schools, and build one small bridge across the canyon of indigenous-settler difference. It just will not be where the canyon is widest”²⁴ This largely unbridged canyon, as expressed by Morden, represents a significant challenge for the NCTR in identifying measures to bridge the remaining gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and more specifically in the context of this thesis, between Indigenous communities and archives. As Morden explains, “there remains considerably more storytelling to do,” and therein lies an essential task as the NCTR strives to continue the statement gathering process and reach out to those who were not included in the TRC's process. Brett Lougheed, Ry Moran, and Camille Callison²⁵ believe that by adopting the notion of a “Living Archive,” the goal of widening the reach and relevance of the centre may be possible.

²² Konstantin Petoukhov, “An Evaluation of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) through the Lens of Restorative Justice and the Theory of Recognition,” (MA Thesis, University of Manitoba, Department of Sociology, 2011): 138.

²³ The book reviewed by Michael Morden is Ronald Niezen's *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools* (University of Toronto Press, 2013).

²⁴ Michael Morden, “The Limits of the TRC Indispensably valuable for the tellers, but largely isolated from broader Canadian society,” *Literary Review of Canada* (October 2014), <http://reviewcanada.ca/magazine/2014/10/the-limits-of-the-trc/>.

²⁵ Brett Lougheed and Camille Callison were members of the NCTR's (NRC at the time) Implementation Committee, and Ry Moran is the Director of the NCTR.

According to Lougheed et al., a “Living Archive” is an archive that “facilitates Indigenous participation, collaboration, and ultimately, the process of reconciliation”²⁶ by “utilizing technological advances and incorporating Indigenous perspectives on description.”²⁷ Such technological advances and participatory ways of approaching archival description will be further developed in Chapter 3. This notion of a living archive is well suited to the discussion around archival decolonization as it is a more humanistic way of thinking about archives. As a way of building trust with Survivors and their families, Lougheed et al. point to the issues around the metadata amassed by the TRC that is associated with the colonial records provided by the Government of Canada, and the various religious entities. Although a portion of these records has been made publicly available via the NCTR’s public database, the metadata remains limited, cold, and untold by the very people represented within these records. By adopting a more Survivor-centred approach to archival description, the NCTR could begin to foster trustworthy relationships on a more personal level thanks to an approach that values the knowledge and voices of Indigenous peoples.

Now that a space has been given to accommodate the voices of those who have taken a more analytical or critical approach to discussing the NCTR, the TRC, and the handing of the IAP records, the publicly available documents created by the centre will be addressed to better understand how it could differ from a more traditional Western archival institution by adopting post-colonial practices that could address the aforementioned concerns raised by those writing about the centre.

²⁶ Lougheed, Moran, and Callison, “Reconciliation through Description,” 597.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 597.

Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Trust Deed

The *Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Trust Deed* (Trust Deed) is a document signed by both the TRC and the UM to signify the transfer of the TRC's records to the UM. The purpose of this document is "to ensure the preservation of the TRC's archives and other materials relating to residential schools" and "to make the materials accessible to former students, their families and communities, the general public, researchers and educators, in accordance with access and privacy legislation, and any other applicable legislation."²⁸ Although these first two points regarding preservation and access do not go as far as to promote the decolonization of archives or the notion of building trust, the third and final point concerning public engagement as it relates to residential schools and Indigenous issues does so "through the fostering of understanding and reconciliation."²⁹ The Trust Deed builds on this in other sections, such as the section entitled "Powers of Trustee" that outlines the inclusion of the Governing Circle³⁰ in the policy making process, as well as the notion of respect regarding Indigenous protocols, ceremonies, sacred objects, and ethics.

The inclusion of these statements in the Trust Deed is important since this section also references standard archival practices, including the destruction or disposition "of portions of the Settled Property which are duplicate, redundant, or of little or no archival

²⁸ "Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Trust Deed," jointly authored by the University of Manitoba and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, June 21, 2013, accessed June 19, 2016, http://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous_connect/media/IND-00-013-NRCAS-TrustDeed.pdf.

²⁹ Ibid., accessed June 19, 2016.

³⁰ The NCTR Governing Circle was established to help guide the centre in decision making regarding long-term projects, the centre's policies, and actions related to Indigenous culture and practices. The Governing Circle consists of seven members, representing Survivors and their families, the University of Manitoba, and the NCTR's partner organizations, with at least four of the members identifying as Aboriginal. The members serve a two-year term. A full list of the current members can be found here: http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/governing_circle.html.

value.”³¹ By balancing standard Western archival practices with references to the Governing Circle and Indigenous protocols, the UM is moving beyond a more traditional and non-transparent practice of stewarding archival records. It is important to note that a “Trust Deed” for all intents and purposes is merely a term used in a legal setting to outline the transfer of property from one party to another, or in this case, from the TRC (settler) to the UM (trustee). Misinterpreting the title of this document as an attempt to appear trustworthy would be misguided; however, the contents of the Trust Deed are important to understand in order to hold the UM accountable in the future.

Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Administrative Agreement

The *Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Administrative Agreement* (the Agreement) was signed on June 21st, 2013 by the TRC and the UM to outline how the parties involved would realize what was outlined in the Trust Deed, as well as additional goals and objectives. Although it is not a legally binding document regarding the intentions outlined in the UM’s proposal to host the NCTR, it does illustrate the UM’s commitment to uphold its intentions to the TRC, its partners, and Survivors and their families. Some of the more noteworthy sections of the Agreement in the context of this thesis are the following:

Objectives: In addition to the archival objective of creating a complete and inclusive archive that documents more than just the RS experience, the objectives outlined include a number of points regarding the establishment of a safe and open environment, with a focus

³¹ “Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Trust Deed,” jointly authored by the University of Manitoba and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, June 21, 2013, accessed June 19, 2016, http://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous_connect/media/IND-00-013-NRCAS-TrustDeed.pdf.

on establishing “a Centre for public education and engagement, commemorative ceremonies, statement gathering, dialogues of reconciliation and celebrations of Aboriginal cultures, languages and ceremonies.”³² The objectives also include a commitment to address and fulfill, as resources permit, a number of the recommendations of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.³³

Governing Circle: One of the fundamental aspects of the NCTR that makes it unique among other archival institutions in Canada in terms of how it is managed/governed is the existence and inclusion of the Governing Circle in the NCTR’s decision making processes. The Governing Circle is intended to ensure “Indigenous control over the materials held by the NCTR. It provides guidance on the centre’s policies, priorities and activities, on ceremonies and protocols, on methods and sources for expanding the centre’s holdings and resources, and on prospective partners.”³⁴ On paper, the Governing Circle appears to be a significant contributor to the centre on numerous levels. However, the NCTR has not been clear on exactly how the Governing Circle’s input has been addressed or adopted by the centre. In addition to the Governing Circle, the Agreement also outlines the creation of a Survivor’s Circle that will consist of “survivors of the residential school system, their families or their ancestors”³⁵ to advise on matters relating to the centre. On July 18 2016,

³² “Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Administrative Agreement,” jointly authored by the University of Manitoba and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, June 21, 2013, accessed July 7, 2016, http://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous_connect/media/IND-00-013-NRCAS-AdminAgreement.pdf.

³³ These documents will be further discussed later in this chapter.

³⁴ “Meet the Governing Circle,” University of Manitoba, accessed July 19, 2016, http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/governing_circle.html.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, accessed July 19, 2016.

the NCTR released a call for nominations to receive submissions for review between July 18th and September 2nd, 2016.³⁶

For the Survivor's Circle to contribute to the centre's trust building practices, the NCTR should consider how this new relationship can be made transparent in an effort to provide its stakeholders with a better sense of how the Survivor's Circle's input has led to real change regarding the administration of the NCTR Archives and the growth of the centre. By doing so, Survivors and their families from across the country would better understand the roles of the Governing Circle and Survivor's Circle. While respecting the privacy of the Governing and Survivor's Circles' members, providing such evidence as decisions impacting policy development, such as the approval of a collections policy, would serve as a transparency measure. By doing so, it would alert and assure³⁷ those who closely follow the centre's activities that Indigenous consultation is in fact leading to concrete changes in the centre's approaches to archives. To date, such measures have not been taken, which runs the risk of creating distrust with Indigenous communities who see RS records and Survivor testimonies being withheld and released by an academic institution. The following section focusses on the role of archives as allies in stewarding records of human rights abuses.

1.4 Trust and Allyship: Archives of Human Rights Abuses

Archival institutions tasked with stewarding archival collections that depict gross human rights abuses, whether community based or not, must approach archival processes using a more dynamic and open approach than a traditional archive. This is essential in the

³⁶ "Call for Nominations to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Survivors Circle," University of Manitoba, accessed July 19, 2016, http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/survivors_circle.html.

³⁷ It would also act as a form of transparency for those who are skeptical of the NCTR's consultation processes.

realm of building trust, and as such is essential to the NCTR moving forward. A number of authors have addressed this notion of modifying archival processes to better meet the needs of one's stakeholders in order to become a trusted ally in stewarding records of human rights abuses. It is important to acknowledge the literature around this topic as links can be made between the NCTR and other archival institutions with mandates and responsibilities similar to Survivor communities.

Trudy Huskamp Peterson's book *Final Acts: A Guide to Preserving the Records of Truth Commissions* is one of the few publications that strives to guide the process of archiving records collected by truth commissions. Based on her experience with the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission records, and her research into other international truth commissions, Peterson has developed a guide to be used by those managing truth commission archives, such as the archival staff members at the NCTR. Peterson's guide offers a list of questions for archives such as the NCTR to consider, including a corresponding section that discusses these questions and applies them to the contexts of international truth commissions.

Although the guide offers concrete examples of numerous truth commissions and how their records have been managed in a post-TRC era, there is a significant lack of information regarding how the Survivors represented in the truth commissions' archives have been consulted or involved in archival processes. The questions posed by Peterson, and her reflections on how these questions have been addressed by truth commissions are purely focused on issues around ownership, access, and political implications.³⁸ This raises a number of questions. Have Survivors been consulted in international TRC archival

³⁸ Trudy Huskamp Peterson, *Final Acts: A Guide to Preserving the Records of Truth Commissions* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), 15.

processes? Once TRC records have been archived, does the archival repository have an obligation to continue working closely with the Survivors represented within their holdings? Although these may not be legal questions, they do raise questions of ethics, and as such deserve space within a guide such as Peterson's. As the notion of decolonizing archives continues to grow, it is becoming more apparent that a single guide cannot be used by multiple TRC archives as it would not take into account the complex and evolving relationships between archives and their stakeholders, such as the relationships between Survivors and the NCTR.

Before discussing the NCTR's role in building trust with Indigenous communities across Canada, it is important to understand that the NCTR is not an Indigenous archive, nor will it be for many years or generations to come. It can strive to document the legacy of the RS system, and work to document acts of reconciliation that occur across Canada to preserve the moments following the end of the TRC's mandate, but as long as the centre is located on a university campus, run, governed, and influenced by the political agendas and institutional confines of the UM, it will remain an institution of memory in the Western sense. Once this notion is accepted, it is easier to understand the centre's role as the steward of records related to gross human rights abuses, and ally to Indigenous peoples. It is important to acknowledge the old adage that trust is something that must be earned, and that the relationships the centre builds with individuals and communities across Canada must benefit more than the NCTR and its holdings. Discussing the role of Western archives in documenting the Black Lives Matter movement, Jarrett Drake declares "they must build trust with the people, communities, and organizations around whose lives the movement is centered, a trust they should pursue not under the guise of collection development but under

the practice of allyship.”³⁹ Allyship will be a critical role that must be approached by the NCTR as a web of dynamic relationships with communities across Canada, rather than a singular role with the larger Survivor community.

Drake is a digital archivist at Princeton University, and his recent work with A People’s Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland⁴⁰ is a good example of the documentation of human rights abuses as witnessed and experienced by those directly affected by them. A People’s Archive “employs traditional archival methods but also draws influence from human rights and social justice approaches to documentation and evidence. The establishment of this archive serves as a potential path for the continued growth of post-institutional, community-based archives.”⁴¹ Similar to the NCTR, A People’s Archive collects and stewards the stories of Survivors whose lives and families have been systematically attacked by governmental forces. In an effort to decolonize archival practices, Drake shines the spotlight on the archival principle of provenance to illustrate the limitations of traditional archival institutions in becoming post-colonial stewards of memory. This is an interesting concept, and one that deserves further review. Drake attributes his rethinking of provenance to his experience working with born digital archives and the increase in born digital records being created by a wider range of individuals, rather than solely created by the wealthy white elite. This problematizes the notion of provenance

³⁹ Jarrett Drake, “Expanding #ArchivesForBlackLives to Traditional Archival Repositories,” *On Archivy*, Medium, June 27, 2016, accessed November 14, 2016, <https://medium.com/on-archivy/expanding-archivesforblacklives-to-traditional-archival-repositories-b88641e2daf6#.xtwlsjedu>.

⁴⁰ “A People’s Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland Homepage,” A People’s Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland, 2016, accessed November 14, 2016, <http://archivingpoliceviolence.org/>.

⁴¹ “Archives for Black Lives: Documenting Police Violence in Cleveland – An ASS Graduate Affairs Workshop,” Princeton University, Department of African American Studies, March 28, 2016, accessed November 14, 2016, <http://aas.princeton.edu/event/archives-black-lives-documenting-police-violence-cleveland/>.

as understood and applied by the Western archival profession as Drake views provenance as “a relic of the colonial and imperial era in which it emerged and also an insufficient principle to address the technical challenges of born-digital archival records and the social challenges of creating a radically inclusive historical record.”⁴² However, Drake’s rethinking of provenance is not the first of its kind. Tom Nesmith has been rethinking provenance and shaping the notion of societal provenance for decades, and as he explains in his 2006 article entitled “The concept of societal provenance and records of nineteenth-century Aboriginal–European relations in Western Canada,”: “There has been little exploration of their societal dimensions, and their place in archival theory and practice. The societal dimensions of record creation and archiving still remain a largely marginal feature of archival concern. They should be a more explicitly developed and integral part of archival theory and practice.”⁴³ Nesmith’s call to action to address the issues of provenance that apply to records of human rights has been heard by scholars such as Drake to better understand the inclusive nature of societal provenance as it relates to the documentation of societal change around human rights. In addition to rethinking provenance, scholars have begun to rethink other archival principles as a way to develop post-colonial ways of understanding the role of archives in stewarding records depicting gross human rights abuses.

In “Rethinking Inalienability: Trusting Nongovernmental Archives in Transitional Societies,” Michelle Caswell proposes that rather than following the principle of

⁴² Jarrett Drake, “RadTech Meets RadArch: Towards A New Principle for Archives and Archival Description,” *On Archivy*, Medium, April 6, 2016, accessed November 11, 2016, <https://medium.com/on-archivy/radtech-meets-radarch-towards-a-new-principle-for-archives-and-archival-description-568f133e4325#ymkpt23kc>.

⁴³ Tom Nesmith, “The concept of societal provenance and records of nineteenth-century Aboriginal–European relations in Western Canada,” *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 352.

inalienability that demands the control and retention of public records be left in the hands of public archives, we think about the role of private or nongovernmental archives as stewards of public records documenting acts of state-run gross human rights abuses. As the main case study in support of her thesis, Caswell discusses how records in Cambodia related to the Khmer Rouge genocide have moved from state controlled archives, to non-governmental archives in an attempt to safeguard the records from former Khmer Rouge perpetrators who still hold positions in government. However, a law was passed in 2005 under the guise of accountability and accessibility, declaring “the state has the right to claim ownership of any ‘public’ records in custody of an individual; the definition of individual could easily be extended to include directors of private nongovernmental organizations.”⁴⁴ This law further emphasizes the important role of non-governmental archives in ensuring the preservation of the Khmer Rouge legacy so it is never forgotten. One of the more established non-governmental archives that houses a large number of Khmer Rouge records is DC-Cam; the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Similar to the NCTR, DC-Cam houses both government records depicting human rights abuses, and stories from the Survivors of the Khmer Rouge Genocide. So what makes DC-Cam a suitable and trusted steward? According to Caswell, “DC-Cam is the rightful steward of these records because it is more trustworthy than the current Cambodian government in the eyes of many Cambodians, particularly survivors of the regime.”⁴⁵ As it can be difficult to determine the trustworthiness of the NCTR as seen by the Survivors of the RS system, it is

⁴⁴ Michelle Caswell, “Rethinking Inalienability: Trusting Nongovernmental Archives in Transitional Societies,” *The American Archivist* 76:1 (2013): 117.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

important to better understand the programs offered by archives such as DC-Cam to shed light on relationship building practices that could be implemented by the NCTR.

An aspect of DC-Cam that sets it apart from the NCTR is a program entitled “Family Tracking” that seeks “to help families locate their lost loved ones or learn about relatives and friends who died or disappeared during the regime. We welcome the inquiries of Cambodians at home and abroad, and make every effort to search for information.”⁴⁶ Although the NCTR does provide such a service to Survivors and their families seeking access to records related to residential schools, DC-Cam has also included a space on its website where Cambodians can post messages regarding missing family members. Additionally, they are utilizing the space as a means of reaching out to Cambodians in an effort to locate missing people:

Over the years, DC-Cam has been able to locate information on several people who have been missing since the fall of Democratic Kampuchea. We have not been able, however, to learn the fates of those mentioned in the letters below. If you have information on them, please contact DC-Cam.⁴⁷

Although issues around privacy would greatly impact the use of an online environment to assist the NCTR in locating information regarding Survivors and their families, programs such as Family Tracking do illustrate the importance of continued relationships and outreach as DC-Cam reaches out to all those affected by the Khmer Rouge Genocide more than twenty years after its establishment. Such a commitment to support and advocate is a significant lesson that should be taken from the example of DC-Cam as the NCTR conducts strategic planning sessions to further develop its long-term goals. However, can outreach

⁴⁶ “Survivors’ Stories,” The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), accessed November 17, 2016, <http://www.dccam.org/Survivors/Index.htm>.

⁴⁷ “Family Tracking,” The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), accessed November 19, 2016, http://www.dccam.org/Survivors/Family_Tracing/Seeking_Information.htm.

and support alone truly build trusted relationships between archives of human rights and the communities affected by past injustices and abuses? Although Caswell's example of DC-Cam offers an important glimpse into archival trust building exercises, she has also argued "that survivors should maintain control over the decision-making processes related to records documenting their abuse."⁴⁸ This statement is important when applied to the NCTR as Survivors have had limited control⁴⁹ over the decision-making processes at the centre, as previously mentioned when discussing the NCTR's Governing and Survivor's circles.

Such a notion of a more Survivor-oriented approach to managing records of human rights abuses is especially important when the Survivors and intergenerational Survivors in question have played such a pivotal role in the establishment of this archival institution. When acknowledging the fact that victims of human rights abuses documented in historical records did not make the choice to be documented, Caswell has stated that "the least we can do as memory workers is honor their ongoing sense of agency by centering them and their wishes in our present decision-making processes about how such records are treated in the future."⁵⁰ In the context of the NCTR, this statement made by Caswell would apply to the record sets produced by the Government of Canada, and various religious entities. Although it would not be realistic or advisable to advocate for complete Survivor control over such a large body of records as it is dangerous to lump all Survivors into a singular defined community, it would be a start to acknowledge that Survivors from various

⁴⁸ Michelle Caswell, "Toward a survivor-centered approach to records documenting human rights abuse: lessons from community archives," *Archival Science* 14 (2014): 307.

⁴⁹ This control has been limited to the ability for statement providers to change the consent of their private statements from private to public, or vice versa. This opportunity to alter one's consent has also been offered to those who provided a statement at a private event, such as a sharing circle or sharing panel. This process will be further discussed later in the thesis.

⁵⁰ Caswell, "Toward a survivor-centered approach to records documenting human rights abuse," 309.

communities should have more of a say in how RS records are being described, arranged, and disseminated by the NCTR.

This notion of a more Survivor-centred approach to archival thinking in relation to records of human rights abuses can be seen in Kristen Weld's book *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*. Weld's account of the activists' efforts in Guatemala to gain physical control over newly discovered records depicting government-led human rights abuses sheds light on the "formerly unimaginable victory, in which the survivors of state repression now wielded some measure of their repressors' archival power."⁵¹ The activist initiative responsible for saving these records is known as the Project for the Recovery of the National Police Historical Archives, or "the Project" as referred to by Weld. As she navigates the history of the Project and the role of archives in post war Guatemala, Weld discovers the importance of understanding how the records were used in the past as a form of "surveillance, social control, and ideological management," and how they can now be used in "democratic opening, historical memory, and the pursuit of justice for war crimes."⁵² The dual purpose of the records recovered by the Project is not dissimilar to the dual purpose of the RS records currently housed by the NCTR.

Weld raises the notion of decolonizing archives when she declares that "while we have long known that writing history is hardly the unique preserve of professional historians, we now see that archival thinking, too, derives its validity from outside the ivory tower."⁵³ Weld's book ends by presenting the painted murals of the perimeter walls of the

⁵¹ Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 252.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 253.

Guatemala police archives, painted by Guatemalan human rights organizations. These murals were painted as a visual representation of the link between “the subject of archives to the concept of justice in Guatemala.”⁵⁴ This link, along with the efforts of Guatemalan activists in preserving records of human rights abuses, is why Weld has concluded that archives matter.

In the context of the NCTR, why do archives matter? Although the political situations in Canada and Guatemala, both past and present, are drastically different, the RS records being cared for by the NCTR matter to all Canadians, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and for different reasons. For the centre to effectively build trust with its stakeholders, it will have to balance its Western archival practices with a more Survivor-centred approach to better understand why the NCTR matters to its stakeholders.

This balance between Western archival practices and Indigenous notions of archives has been discussed by Krista McCracken as a way of applying community archival practices to RS records. McCracken discusses the history of the Shingwauk Residential School Centre (SRSC), and how it has used participatory archiving to build trust with Survivors and their families. To do so, the SRSC established the Remember the Children Project (the Project) “to connect survivors with photographs of themselves and to gather information about the individuals portrayed in the photographs.”⁵⁵ To do so, the SRSC sent out reproduction photograph albums to Indigenous communities in an effort to have the students in the photographs identified by community members and sent back to the Shingwauk Archives, an archival institution governed by both the Children of Shingwauk

⁵⁴ Ibid., 254.

⁵⁵ Krista McCracken, “Community Archival Practice: Indigenous Grassroots Collaboration at the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre,” *The American Archivist* 78:1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 186.

Alumni Association (CSAA) and Algoma University. To help facilitate the Project, members of the CSAA were involved as community liaisons: “These liaisons worked with communities to set up times when the project could be explained and community members could begin to identify individuals in the photographs.”⁵⁶ Following the photograph identifying process, the participating community would be given a complete set of photograph albums to be used within the community.

The SRSC credits the success of the Project and the high amount of community involvement to Survivors who took it upon themselves to work with community members in identifying students in the photograph albums: “This willingness has been largely attributed to residential school survivors taking the lead role in introducing the project to communities. CSAA members could easily identify with the past and present realities of communities as they themselves attended residential schools.”⁵⁷ This represents an important takeaway as the NCTR begins to work more closely with Indigenous communities. Without community liaisons, it would be difficult for the NCTR to establish trusted relationships with Indigenous communities. The Remember the Children Project represents a process of establishing foundational relationships that have led to increased use of the Shingwauk Archives as the SRSC now “averages thirty-four email or phone requests per month relating to residential school photograph reproductions, identification, and research.”⁵⁸ According to McCracken, the SRSC plans to move ahead with both new and existing partners to develop a national network, as well as a new and ‘Interactive digital

⁵⁶ Ibid., 186.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 187.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 188.

space for collaboration and dissemination, including the ability for users to identify individuals in photographs online.”⁵⁹ Such a space will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

As the NCTR Archives develops its public programming and outreach initiatives, perhaps the aforementioned national network being developed by the SRSC represents an opportunity to collaborate with an archival institution that has established community ties. This concept of a national network, along with the notion of hiring community liaisons to work closely within communities to facilitate participatory archiving, and to build trust with Survivors and their families will be further developed throughout this thesis. Continuing with the concept of a Survivor-centred approach to managing archives documenting human rights abuses, the following section will review past outreach practices by various archives, including the NCTR, to demonstrate how continued community engagement is essential in understanding the ongoing needs of Survivors and their families.

1.5 Community engagement

In addition to building trust and long-term relationships, active community engagement can also aid in the creation and documentation of cultural information that has been missed by archival practices of the past. For example, “The Louisville Underground Music Archive (LUMA) project successfully applies documentation strategy, paired with a strong community engagement component, to address the gap in the historical record related to this culture.”⁶⁰ The TRC, and now the NCTR, has and will continue to undertake the task of addressing the gaps in the historical record of the RS era by documenting and

⁵⁹ Ibid., 190.

⁶⁰ Caroline Daniels, Heather Fox, Sarah-Jane Poindexter, and Elizabeth Reilly, “Saving All the Freaks on the Life Raft: Blending Documentation Strategy with Community Engagement to Build a Local Music Archives,” *The American Archivist* 78:1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 238.

preserving the stories of RS Survivors on an ongoing basis. Although the example of LUMA does not have the same historical significance as initiatives put forth by the NCTR, it does highlight the significance of blending community engagement with archives. According to LUMA, they have successfully documented the Louisville underground music scene by “collecting, organizing, preserving, and providing access to a wide variety of materials from a diverse community of bands and musicians, venue and store owners, recording studios and label managers, and fans to maintain the entire story from a broad range of perspectives.”⁶¹ This notion of creating an archive of diverse perspectives as described by LUMA represents an important takeaway for the NCTR. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the difference in institutional mandates as LUMA is mandated to collect and preserve records related to arts and culture, whereas the NCTR is mandated to collect and preserve both colonial records of human rights abuses, and the truths and stories of Survivors.

In the context of the NCTR, the relationships it strives to create with its stakeholders will have to be fostered by ongoing engagement in an attempt to gain the trust of Survivors, their families, and the general public, a task that will be challenged by the fact that the NCTR could be perceived as an organization reminiscent of a colonial agency, attempting to acquire the stories of Survivors who have felt and witnessed the gross human rights abuses of colonization. In the case of LUMA, an advisory board similar to the NCTR’s Governing Circle was created to bridge the gap between the archival institution and the general public: “we gathered an advisory board to guide us, provide advice, and use their positions within the community to advocate for the project.”⁶² As previously mentioned,

⁶¹ Ibid., 239.

⁶² Ibid., 247.

the NCTR's Governing Circle was established to bridge the gap between the NCTR Archives and Indigenous communities, yet this relationship has yet to translate into concrete examples of how such a governing body can truly make significant contributions to an archival organization. By taking a more transparent approach to documenting the Governing Circle's actions, the NCTR could illustrate to Survivors across Canada that Indigenous input is indeed shaping the future of the centre. LUMA has also neglected to elaborate on how its advisory board has consulted with the public to better understand the needs of its stakeholders. The very nature of the term "advisory" board is also problematic as it refers to a relationship of advising, limiting the amount of power given to the board regarding the ability to make decisions and interject on behalf of the institution's stakeholders.

By establishing the advisory board and continuing to engage with the Louisville underground music scene, LUMA claims to have been able to respectfully address and fill the contextual gaps in their collections by building trusted relationships with its stakeholders. This notion of building trust by filling gaps in the historical record is a lesson that could serve well as a catalyst for the decolonization of archives. Utilizing the act of community engagement must not only benefit the archives, but also those participating in filling historical gaps. As Jarrett Drake has previously explained, building trust with those affected by the movement at hand must be approached as an act of allyship, not purely as an act of collection development. Although filling gaps within the RS record will always be an important aspect of the centre's mandate, the centre should define its role as an ally to RS Survivors and their families so that its collection development is seen as more than a one-sided relationship geared towards the gathering of information.

Authors Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd have discussed the relationship between archival institutions and marginalized communities as it pertains to the ownership of archival collections. Flinn et al. discuss the issue surrounding the establishment of trust between larger, more mainstream organizations, and under-voiced and underrepresented groups or communities:

Some custodians and creators of these collections remain suspicious of the mainstream archival profession and are determined to preserve their independence and autonomous voice by retaining direct ownership and physical custodianship of their collections, at least for the foreseeable future. In this context, seeking to ensure that these valuable materials are preserved and possibly made accessible presents a number of challenges and opportunities, including an encouragement to re-examine some aspects of traditional professional practice.⁶³

These challenges outlined by Flinn et al. have been recognized by the NCTR and preliminary measures have been taken in an attempt at establishing trust. These measures include the NCTR's sixteen community engagement sessions that will be further discussed in the coming pages. However, it is the notion of stewarding collections rather than obtaining complete ownership of archival records as discussed by Flinn et al. and the UM's bid document⁶⁴ that points to the archival profession's involvement in the decolonization process. Currently, the NCTR has yet to create a collections or acquisition policy to outline its intentions regarding the acquisition of new collections and how the centre will approach the notion of ownership. If the NCTR is to break free from the confines of a Western and colonial framework for acquiring and managing archival records, it will be important to

⁶³ Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream," *Archival Science*, 9:71 (2009): 71.

⁶⁴ The UM's bid document uses the term "steward" to describe the role of the UM as it related to the records of the TRC. By doing so, the UM has made an attempt to move beyond the traditional and Western concepts of ownership to allow for a more open and decolonized manner of stewarding the records of the RS system, in trust, to protect and preserve the records for future generations. The bid document can be found here: <http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/NRC%20for%20partners.pdf>.

heed the warnings of scholars such as Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd as the NCTR's community engagement sessions and the implementation of the Governing Circle do not address issues surrounding archival ownership as it relates to RS Survivors and their families.

The notion of ownership in the archival context has historically remained untouched and unchallenged since archival institutions have been established. Documents are transferred to an archives and therefore the archives obtains ownership of them. Moreover, the archives retains the power to keep, destroy, promote, and make available the records it obtains through donation, gift, transfer, or purchase, unless restrictions are imposed on a collection at the time of transfer.⁶⁵ More recently, research into the ownership of Indigenous collections housed by archival institutions has increased in the archival

⁶⁵ This point is also true in the case of the NCTR as it has the power to destroy records deemed of little or no archival value, as per the Trust Deed.

literature,⁶⁶ challenging the very concept of ownership as it relates to Indigenous collections, or collections of records related to a specific community.⁶⁷

The process of decolonizing archives has begun in various countries with the recent surge of articles relating to community archives/archiving.⁶⁸ The notion of communities having the power, ownership, and guidance over the very records that document their history is very much a decolonizing approach to the archival profession, yet how does this apply to larger archival institutions that house both records that document the history of colonialism, as well as the history of reconciliation efforts in Canada?

Stevens, Flinn, and Shepherd discuss the notion of community archives and how this approach to archiving community records can be applied to other groups around the world. Stevens et al. discuss a wide range of community archives and projects that have

⁶⁶ The following articles offer more information regarding the ownership of Indigenous collections housed by Western archives, and the intersection between Western and Indigenous notions of ownership and archives: Laura Millar, "Subject or object? Shaping and reshaping the intersections between aboriginal and non-aboriginal records," *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 29–350; Shari Narine, "Language ownership, protection issue with archiving work," *Windspeaker*, August 1, 2016, accessed December 23, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com.uml.idm.oclc.org/docview/1812611246/fulltext/6F488B2F23A6499EPQ/1?accountid=14569>; Lorie Roy, "The Role of Tribal Libraries and Archives in the Preservation of Indigenous Cultural Identity Through Supporting Native Language Revitalization," *International Preservation News* 61 (December 2013): 8-11; Livia Iacovino, "Rethinking archival, ethical and legal frameworks for records of Indigenous Australian communities: a participant relationship model of rights and responsibilities," *Archival Science* 10:4 (December 2010): 353-372; Michelle Caswell, "Rethinking Inalienability: Trusting Nongovernmental Archives in Transitional Societies," *The American Archivist* 76:1 (2013): 113-134.

⁶⁷ On Saturday October 5, 2013, I presented at a colloquium at the University of Manitoba entitled "Talking About Indigenous Archives. The theme of the panel was "Preserving the History of Urban Aboriginal Organizations in Winnipeg: Perspectives from the Archival Team on the Challenges and Potentials of Archiving Winnipeg's Urban Aboriginal Records," and my talk discussed the notion of participatory archives, and my role as an archivist in the Urban Aboriginal Archiving Project (as discussed in the blog post that opens Chapter 1). In addition to processing collections of urban Aboriginal organizations, I also worked with Shelley Sweeney, UM Head of Archives, and project's Advisory Council to create a donor agreement that raised the notion of cultural protocols, and the notion of stewardship as a way for the project's leaders to retain some control of the collections being transferred to the UM Archives & Special Collections. The Aboriginal Archiving Project Donor Agreement can be found here: http://www.umanitoba.ca/admin/vp_admin/ofp/legal/agreements.html.

⁶⁸ For a more in-depth analysis of community archives, read Sarah Ramsden's archival studies MA thesis entitled "Defining 'community' in models of community archives: navigating the politics of representation as archival professionals," (MA Thesis, Department of History, Archival Studies, University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg, 2016).

adopted community archiving practices to outline not only the benefits to all parties involved, but also the barriers that must be addressed moving forward when adopting the frameworks of community archiving. These barriers are important to note as they represent the need for the archival profession to acknowledge and value alternate sets of expertise that are brought to the table by communities as they relate to the archiving of their own records. Archives must therefore both acknowledge and leverage the knowledge of the communities in the process of transferring their records in order to create lasting and meaningful relationships built on trust and respect. The authors conclude by emphasizing the importance of ongoing engagement between archives and the communities transferring their records in order to establish a successful and mutual relationship: “Above all success depends on genuine commitment across an institution; engaging with community archives, as with all forms of community engagement, must be more than just a box ticking activity or a fringe pursuit for a small minority of staff.”⁶⁹ This commitment to engagement on an institutional level has been documented in a number of colonized countries that share a similar history with Canada regarding the systematic removal of children from their homes for the purpose of cultural genocide.

In Australia, and more specifically the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Libraries ACT has coordinated a number of community engagement sessions with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in an effort to “promote literacy, learning and the pleasure of reading; and to inspire and connect people, engaging them with their

⁶⁹ Mary Stevens, Andrew Flinn, and Elizabeth Shepherd, “New frameworks for community engagement in the archive sector: from handing over to handing on,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16 (2010): 72.

community and the world.”⁷⁰ Although this mandate does not align with that of the NCTR, the relationships developed by Libraries ACT with Indigenous peoples represents an important takeaway to aid in the development of the NCTR’s outreach and community engagement endeavors. Fiona Blackburn associates the following words with community engagement, based on her research on community engagement in Australia: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower, partnerships, accountability, belonging, commitment, and communication.⁷¹

In 2010, Libraries ACT created a number of services based on community engagement with members of the community and other government departments in an effort to “build partnerships and connections with other ACT government directorates, organisations and groups within the community, to result in programmes and activities that would improve library services and boost community participation in and use of their libraries.”⁷² The community engagements put in place by Libraries ACT were based on ideas brought forward by Libraries’ staff members who were hired specifically for community engagement. Library experience was not the determining factor in the hiring process, as that took a back seat to experience working within the community. These new hires with experience working closely with the communities are referred to as Community Liaison Officers. Such a concept is relevant in the context of the NCTR as it moves forward with continued outreach services to reach a wider range of communities. By enlisting the help of those who already have close community ties, the centre would have the ability to

⁷⁰ Fiona Blackburn, “An Example of Community Engagement: Libraries ACT and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities,” *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 45:2 (2014): 121.

⁷¹ Blackburn, “An Example of Community Engagement,” 123.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 125.

better understand the needs of these communities, an important goal when striving to become a trustworthy archive.

Working closely with senior librarians, the Community Liaison Officers worked within predetermined specializations, or programs. For example, trained librarians worked more closely with developing collections, whereas “Officers or librarians whose specialisation reflected a personal passion tended to have existing links with relevant groups in the community and built on those. Engagement officers with other professional qualifications tended to develop programmes and activities reflective of that expertise.”⁷³ This notion of incorporating and valuing the knowledge of those directly impacted by the activity or collection at hand is exactly what Caswell endorses in the context of having Survivors of genocide work directly with and process records relating to genocide.⁷⁴ Once again, this applies to the NCTR and the need for Survivor and Intergenerational Survivor participation in the processing of the NCTR’s archival collections.

Elizabeth Joffrion and Natalia Fernández explore how non-Indigenous heritage organizations have interacted with Indigenous communities in the United States since the 1980s, and how these relationships have evolved into the creation of policies and protocols pertaining to Native American cultural heritage. According to Joffrion and Fernández, “At the center of any successful collaboration is a process for initiating and building relationships based on trust and mutual respect. Establishing trusting relationships is

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁷⁴ Although it did not deal specifically with records of human rights abuses, the principles of the Urban Aboriginal Archiving Project discussed in the blog post at the beginning of this chapter do align with Caswell’s plea to have the persons represented in the records involved in the processing of the records. One of my duties as one of the archivists of the project was to supervise Indigenous undergraduate students who were hired to assist in describing and arranging the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (IMFC) collection. Although they had no formal archival training, they brought important cultural knowledge regarding the history of the IMFC, as well as knowledge regarding Indigenous ceremonies and cultural practices.

especially critical for partnerships designed to share cultural resources or expertise held by tribal and nontribal organizations.”⁷⁵ Throughout the article, Joffrion and Fernández refer to a number of documents, such as research projects, policies, and protocols, to help outline a set of principles with which to follow when Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups collaborate on projects related to Indigenous culture or knowledge. These documents, such as the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (the Protocols), are important in the archival context because they can provide “guidance in understanding Indigenous values, perspectives, and ways of knowing, and they offer important policy and legal considerations related to the management and care of Native American cultural resources.”⁷⁶ In order to better understand the importance of such documents to the archival profession, it is critical to take a closer look at the Protocols and how they have contributed to the discussion around Indigenous or decolonizing ways of archiving Indigenous archival material.

The Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (the Protocols)

The Protocols were drafted in April of 2006 by a group of nineteen Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals who worked closely with Indigenous culture and heritage, such as archivists, librarians, museum curators and historians, to serve as a set of “goals to which we all can aspire.”⁷⁷ The Protocols were not intended to be used as a set of step by step instructions, but rather as a set of guidelines or best practices that can be adapted to fit the needs of the organization intending to adopt them. It is also important to acknowledge that

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Joffrion and Natalia Fernández, “Collaborations between Tribal and Nontribal Organizations: Suggested Best Practices for Sharing Expertise, Cultural Resources, and Knowledge,” *The American Archivist* 78:1 (2015): 193.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁷⁷ “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials,” First Archives Circle, April 9, 2007, accessed June 17, 2016, <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/PrintProtocols.pdf>.

all Indigenous communities are unique, and that the protocols should also be adapted to meet the needs of said communities. Although the Protocols cover a number of important topics surrounding access, intellectual property, copyright, and education, the section that will be discussed in this chapter refers to relationship building practices based on mutual respect.

When discussing the initial interaction between a collecting institution and an Indigenous community, Blackburn states that:

Relationship building can be challenging, particularly when the partners have different traditions and perspectives relating to specific rights and customs, such as those associated with access and use of cultural documentation, the application of Indigenous knowledge to define context for cultural materials, and/or best practices for the responsible stewardship of Native American heritage.⁷⁸

This sentiment is echoed in the Protocols, which outlines best practices to establish a respectful relationship based on trust and respect. That said, the Protocols clearly state that “it will take years for institutions and staff to develop essential trust relationships with a community. Weeks, months, or longer may be required to gain an understanding of Native American perspectives on issues and to work through solutions and approaches to problems, in consultation with communities.”⁷⁹ The Protocols also identify concrete procedures regarding consultations with Indigenous communities, and also provide links to tribal leader directories and other Indigenous institutions and stakeholders. They also caution the users of the Protocols to be careful when approving access requests if the proper consultation process has not yet been established. Finally, the Protocols advocate for the

⁷⁸ Blackburn, “An Example of Community Engagement,” 193.

⁷⁹ “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials,” First Archives Circle, April 9, 2007, accessed June 19, 2016, <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/PrintProtocols.pdf>.

use of memoranda of agreement, or memoranda of understanding, when establishing document agreements, and to honour the commitments and agreements agreed upon by the two sides involved. Although the Protocols represent a very important step in the decolonization of archives, its most important accomplishment will come once they are adopted by collecting institutions that are willing to incorporate them as part of their mandates, breaking down the colonial constructs that have been hindering relationships between archives and Indigenous people for many years. To date, the NCTR has not incorporated the Protocols in its processes. Moving forward, it will be important for the NCTR to interpret the Protocols to better understand how they could be introduced to the centre in a way that will benefit its relationship-building with Indigenous communities. It will also be important to remember and refer to the Protocols when the centre drafts its policy and procedure documents. Additionally, these documents should be made publicly available to illustrate how documents such as the Protocols are being used to help guide the centre.

**The United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
(the Declaration) and the UN Joint Orentlicher Principles**

The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007 and published in March 2008. It is an historic document because it affirms that “indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such.”⁸⁰ The Declaration consists of two sections, the first being a three-page annex that

⁸⁰ United Nations, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 107th plenary meeting, A/61/L.67 and Add.1, September 13, 2007, published March 2008 by the United Nations, accessed June 25, 2016, http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

outlines what it affirms and recognizes, and the second an additional twelve pages of point form articles outlining the intentions behind the Declaration. According to archivist Jennifer O’Neal, although the Declaration does not represent an actual treaty or law binding document, “the purpose and specific articles of the Declaration can instead serve as an aspirational policy tool to influence, advocate, and educate various areas of practice, including the development, management, and stewardship of tribal archives, libraries, and museums.”⁸¹ This statement is critical to the decolonizing process of archives, and should serve as a call to action for institutions such as the NCTR that are striving to adopt decolonizing practices in an effort to contribute to the process of reconciliation. As indicated by Blackburn, the Declaration can be widely implemented in society, and help to guide and improve relationships between governments and Indigenous communities. This is something that could lead to changes in government policy, and in turn, the mandates of archival institutions:

The declaration explicitly encourages harmonious cooperation between governments and Indigenous communities, prohibits discrimination against Native peoples, and promotes full and effective participation in matters concerning them. It also emphasizes the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures, and traditions, and to pursue development in keeping with their cultural needs and aspirations.⁸²

So how could the Declaration be implemented by the NCTR? How could it influence the way the NCTR interacts and collaborates with Indigenous communities?

For the NCTR to use the Declaration as something more than a symbolic gesture to prove its adoption of Indigenous protocols, documents such as the Protocols and the

⁸¹ Jennifer O’Neal, “‘The Right to Know’: Decolonizing Native American Archives,” *Journal of Western Archives* 6:1 (2015): 15.

⁸² Blackburn, “An Example of Community Engagement,” 194.

Declaration must be infused in both policy documents, and procedure manuals as a way to influence the actions and decisions of the centre. A practical starting point would be for the NCTR to publicly endorse and “Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint-Orentlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples’ inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.”⁸³ This passage is the TRC’s Call to Action 69 that applies to Library and Archives Canada, however it could easily be applied to the NCTR and its mandate. Although the argument can be made that the NCTR has already accepted the most significant and important call to action when it was given the responsibility to safeguard the records amassed by the TRC, it is perplexing that not a single TRC call to action attempts to instruct the centre on its responsibility to adopt the Protocols, the Declaration, or the United Nations Joint-Orentlicher Principles (the Principles).

The Principles are especially interesting as they refer numerous times to the role of archives in the “protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity.”⁸⁴ A number of the thirty-eight principles outlined in this document pertain to both the role of truth commissions as “official, temporary, non-judicial fact-finding bodies that investigate a pattern of abuses of human rights or humanitarian law, usually committed over a number of years,”⁸⁵ and the responsibility of archives to preserve memory and

⁸³ “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action,” Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, accessed November 30, 2016, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf: 8.

⁸⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Report of the independent expert to update the Set of principles to combat impunity*, Diane Orentlicher, UNCHR, 61st session, UN Doc E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1, February 8, 2005, accessed November 30, 2016, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/109/00/pdf/G0510900.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, accessed November 30, 2016.

provide access to records of human rights abuses. Principle 4 states that “victims and their families have the imprescriptible right to know the truth about the circumstances in which violations took place and, in the event of death or disappearance, the victims’ fate.”⁸⁶ One of the principles that stands out in the context of the NCTR and the goal of archival decolonization is Principle 17: Specific measures relating to archives containing names as it states that “All persons shall be entitled to know whether their name appears in State archives and, if it does, by virtue of their right of access, to challenge the validity of the information concerning them by exercising a right of reply.”⁸⁷ Herein lies a starting point where the NCTR could leverage these principles to pursue a decolonizing approach to documenting the truth. By endorsing documents such as the Principles and incorporating them into policy documents and other guiding principles, further possibilities regarding the implementation of these documents would arise. Such a move would then shed light on the importance of working closely with Indigenous communities to further understand how such documents are viewed in an Indigenous context, rather than simply applying them as a box-ticking exercise.⁸⁸

Another important aspect of the Principles is the role of archives and archivists in documenting human rights abuses and acts of genocide to serve as evidence to prevent deniability. Principles 14-18 are dedicated to the role of archives, yet archives are also mentioned in other principles to reiterate not only the importance of documenting, but also preserving evidence of gross human rights abuses for future generations. On their own,

⁸⁶ Ibid., accessed November 30, 2016.

⁸⁷ Ibid., accessed November 30, 2016.

⁸⁸ The International Council of Archives has recently released the “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists and Records Managers in Support of Human Rights” that may offer additional insights. It is available at: http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA%20HRWG%20Basic%20Principles_endorsed%20by%20PCOM_2016_Sept_English.pdf.

documents such as the Protocols, the Declaration, and the Principles do not singlehandedly constitute a roadmap to decolonizing archives of human rights abuses, nor should they. Yet, they could be interpreted and implemented as a set of guiding documents, by a specific organization, to address its own specific needs and the needs of its stakeholders.

Now that key documents that have the ability to contribute to the discussion around decolonizing archives have been reviewed, and that case studies surrounding community engagement have been discussed, it is important to shed light on the community engagement sessions that have been undertaken by the NCTR to better understand where the centre sits on the community engagement spectrum, and how the previously discussed documents and case studies could be used as learning tools for the centre or other archival institutions tasked with being respectful stewards of Indigenous material.

During the months of September 2015 through January 2016, the NCTR embarked on a series of community engagement sessions, visiting several communities across Canada to promote what the NCTR can offer, and discover what these various communities envision for the NCTR. The outcome of this collaborative and participatory process will be a series of reports to highlight what occurred at each community engagement session, as well as any suggestions made concerning the NCTR's functions moving forward. Although this represents a good start to meeting the needs of the consulted communities, it is important that the NCTR act on these findings, and ensure this exercise does not fall

under the “box ticking” category.⁸⁹ Indigenous people in Canada have been the subjects of studies since European contact, including studies conducted on children attending Residential School.⁹⁰ The reporting process outlined by the NCTR must lead into a process of relationship building in order to help, not hinder the trust it aspires to establish with Indigenous communities.

Another outcome that is more difficult to document and quantify is the relationships built with the various communities participating in the sessions. These relationships will be essential as the NCTR continues to steward both RS related records, and other records related to the communities being consulted during this process. This also sheds light on the limitations of a finite number of community engagement sessions as the act of relationship building must be a continuing and evolving process as communities are dynamic in nature, demanding continued consultation to meet changing needs and ideologies. The number of engagement sessions undertaken by the centre, although an impressive first step, does not reflect the much larger number of communities that Survivors and their families call home.

The NCTR’s community engagement team consisted of NCTR Director Ry Moran, RS Survivor and Community Engagement Coordinator Rose Hart, Report Writer Kaila Johnston, and NCTR Director of Research Aimée Craft.⁹¹ Invitees such as Eugene Arcand,

⁸⁹ With 2016 wrapping up as Winnipeg’s “Year of Reconciliation,” it is important to understand that reconciliation, or for the purpose of this thesis, decolonization, should not be seen as an exercise that can be completed in a year. This process of decolonizing archives is a concept that will be dynamic in nature, evolving over time to meet the needs of Survivors and their families. In the context of the NCTR’s community engagement sessions, it cannot be a static set of visits to sixteen communities, but rather the beginning of meaningful relationship building that must continue in the future.

⁹⁰ The TRC’s final report discusses such studies, including vaccination and experimentation. For examples, read *Volume 1: Canada’s Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939*, available at <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>.

⁹¹ Aimée Craft has left the NCTR to join the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as the Director of Research: <http://news.umanitoba.ca/aimée-craft-appointed-director-of-research-for-national-inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls/>.

RS Survivor and member of the NCTR's Governing Circle, also travelled with the NCTR community engagement team. On September 3rd 2015 Arcand and company made their way to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan where they were greeted by a room of approximately fifty attendees. In addition to sharing RS photographs and information relevant to the operation of the NCTR, Arcand emphasized the notion of listening to those involved in the community engagement sessions: "We want to make sure that all of the information is available to everyone in this country and across the globe. We're getting feedback from residential school survivors and what shape it should take and how we should move forward."⁹² Like the examples given throughout this chapter, this process undertaken by the NCTR highlights the importance of community engagement in the context of building trust and long-term relationships. This concept of inviting stakeholders to help shape the NCTR has been further emphasized by NCTR employees during other community engagement sessions. Yet, as previously stated, this must represent a first step rather than a completed attempt at consultation and relationship building. It must also extend past the community engagement team as the NCTR's various departments, including the NCTR Archives, should be influenced by these consultation sessions as they perform their respective duties.

One day prior to the Prince Albert session, the NCTR visited Regina for the first of sixteen community engagement sessions, hosted by the First Nations University of Canada. Although the community engagement team had originally planned on dividing the room into small groups to answer a number of questions in an effort to spark numerous

⁹² Khang Nguyen, "Residential School Survivors and federal government work together to achieve truth and reconciliation," *paNOW*, September 3, 2016, accessed May 12, 2016, <http://panow.com/article/531120/residential-school-survivors-and-federal-government-work-together-achieve-truth-and>.

conversations, this did not happen. Following the screening of a video created by the NCTR for the purpose of these sessions, the participants decided to begin sharing their stories and their truths immediately, not allowing the planned breakout sessions to occur. According to Rose Hart, “It was better than I expected.”⁹³ Although this may only represent a logistical change in the day’s schedule, it does reinforce the fact that the NCTR is open to listening to the Survivors and participants of these sessions, and that those participating are keen on sharing their stories and lending a hand in laying the foundation for the future of the centre. The day before the session, NCTR Director Ry Moran emphasized the importance of honouring the wishes of Survivors: “We have that protection of personal information that’s so critical, but at the same time when the survivors say, ‘I want my voice out there.’ Our job is to make sure their voice is heard.”⁹⁴ In addition to making the voices of the Survivors represented in the records heard, it will also be important for the voices of these sixteen community engagement sessions to be heard as they hold a significant stake in the success of the centre. Additionally, the NCTR must start a national dialogue, not simply with the centre’s partners, and members of the Governing and Survivor’s Circles, but with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians from all walks of life. This section will end with a Facebook comment made by Mare Fulber in an effort to draw attention to the centre’s responsibility to increase its reach beyond the UM campus, as outlined in the UM’s bid document:

The vision of the proposal committee that this not just be centralized in Manitoba/Winnipeg/UofM but that it is a starting point for the development of community archives and access to the

⁹³ Kerry Benjoe, “Indian residential school survivors and their children want to share their stories,” *Regina Leader-Post*, September 2, 2015, accessed June 25, 2016, <http://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/indian-residential-school-survivors-and-their-children-want-to-share-their-stories>.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, accessed June 25, 2016.

NCTR so that there could be a national network of reconciliatory resources that all Indigenous people had access to...I am waiting for that to roll out.....⁹⁵

1.6 Conclusion: Trustworthiness and the NCTR

As previously stated, trust is something that is earned, and building trusted relationships is an ongoing process of engagement and consultation. The sixteen community engagement sessions undertaken by the NCTR presented an opportunity for Indigenous communities to have a say in the direction and evolution of the NCTR as a truly unique blend of culture, community, and archives. However, this opportunity will be for nothing if the centre chooses to simply publish reports based on its findings gathered during the sessions. Who will follow up on these sessions? This is an important question as visiting communities to discuss the legacy of Residential Schools can be a traumatic experience, triggering strong emotions in need of ongoing support. By not following up with these communities, the centre runs the risk of creating distrust between Survivors and the centre. As the NCTR Archives Department begins to develop its consultation process with communities across Canada to better understand their archival needs and how they can help shape the NCTR's decolonizing efforts, the NCTR's sixteen community engagement sessions could serve as a cautionary tale. Although the sessions speak to the centre's willingness to consult with Indigenous peoples, the way the initiative was undertaken does not differ from past Western approaches to Indigenous consultation, such as limited engagement leading to the creation of a static report. The process also speaks to the enormous pressure that is being felt by the centre to consult and produce results in an

⁹⁵ Mare Fulber, December 15, 2016 (12:07 p.m.), comment on Amy Scanlon Boughner, "An important announcement from the Prime Minister this morning," *National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation*, December 15, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/National-Centre-for-Truth-and-Reconciliation-933534973335967/>.

understaffed environment, which has led to the issues around limited follow-up with the community engagement participants.

The NCTR's departments of Education and Outreach and Research also provide insight into how the NCTR can build trust with Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and the general public. Education plays a crucial role in the NCTR's mandate by ensuring that "Educators can share the Residential School history with new generations of students."⁹⁶ By performing this function, the NCTR's Education and Outreach department will build trusting relationships with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators across Canada as they strive to educate future generations on the history and legacy of the RS system.⁹⁷ As for the NCTR's Research department, it will play a role in fostering and promoting new research that will give further insight into the legacy of Residential Schools and its effects on all Canadians. This function will be especially important as Indigenous communities have been the target of negative research projects in the past, including experimental research conducted on children who attended Residential School. By working closely with Indigenous communities and consulting and collaborating on research topics to better understand positive rather than harmful research protocols, the NCTR's Research department "aims to become a leader that will establish new directions for research on residential schools and their legacy, Indigenous laws and rights, understanding Canadian policies, understanding and interpreting treaties, and establishing standards and

⁹⁶ "National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – Our Mandate," University of Manitoba, accessed September 2, 2016, <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/mandate.html>.

⁹⁷ On June 22, 2016, the NCTR and the Alberta Provincial Government signed the Joint Commitment to Action that commits to educating all K-12 teachers in Alberta on how to integrate the legacy of the RS system and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture into the classroom: <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=42963B5914BB5-9E75-2518-1A536E4645E07607>.

benchmarks for Indigenous research policy and operations based on best practices of Indigenous and Western principles.”⁹⁸

Although the aforementioned examples provide tangible ways of establishing and maintaining trusted relationships, it is important to note that I am not advocating for one formula or set of guidelines that should be applied to all Indigenous communities. The journey of reconciliation spearheaded by the TRC represents an ongoing process that will evolve over multiple generations in an effort to rebuild the broken trust that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The NCTR has the opportunity and responsibility to continue the work of the TRC by maintaining established relationships and creating new relationships with communities that felt left out of both the TRC and IRSSA process. Although the following two chapters do not focus directly on the theme of trust, they do offer ways of approaching the archival profession with a more decolonizing mindset in an effort to utilize archival functions to build trust with Survivors and their families.

⁹⁸ “Research at the NCTR,” The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed January 16, 2017, <http://nctr.ca/research-new.php>.

Chapter 2

Opening Up to Archival Transparency

The following section is a blog post that I wrote on November 18, 2013 to discuss the upcoming NCTR name change. This post gives a behind the scenes view of the individuals who influenced the name change for a transparent view of the process.

Changing Names and Mandate Extensions

As I dragged myself out of bed this morning (Friday, November 15), I decided that I should write a post to discuss the issue around the eventual naming of the National Research Centre (NRC). Seeing as the NRC is only the temporary name for the physical archive of the TRC, it is only natural that discussions have already begun regarding the archive's official name. Last Friday (November 8), I had a chance to see for the first time the website for the NRC: [NRC on Residential Schools website](#). Since the site has been circulated and viewed by the NRC's Information Technology Committee (a sub-committee of the larger Implementation Committee), the issue surrounding the name "NRC" has been brought to the fore and discussed by the committee's members. Assistant Professor of the U of M's Archival Studies M.A. program Greg Bak brought up the important point that the name "National Research Centre" gives the impression that academic research is the main priority of the centre. In response to Greg's comment, a number of suggestions were given by other members of the committee, including "Centre for Truth and Reconciliation" and "Centre for Truth and Reconciliation on Indian Residential Schools." As it turns out, the temporary name for the centre is the "Truth and Reconciliation Centre on Residential Schools" according to the [Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Trust Deed](#), and there is also a consultative process in place for the eventual naming of the centre as anticipated by the University's Bid for the NRC.

What are your thoughts on the naming of the NRC? Please leave any comments or suggestions below.

In related news, the TRC's mandate has been extended for one year (June 30, 2015)! This morning's edition of *Arcan-I* (Vol 103, Issue 12) mentioned the announcement of the extension. Aboriginal Affairs Minister [Bernard Valcourt](#) has released the following statement:

I am pleased to announce that the Government of Canada will work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, as well as the Ontario Superior Court to provide the Commission with a one-year extension to its operating period, until June 30, 2015, as requested by the Commission.

For more information on the extension, please follow the links below:

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2013/11/14/aboriginal-affairs-extends-trc-mandate/>
<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1384445439915/1384445654380>

Please stay tuned for more NRC (insert new name here) updates.

Jesse Boiteau¹

2.1 Introduction

Current and past archival institutions have not done an adequate job of presenting or even documenting their processes and decision making. The NCTR has made attempts at increasing transparency, such as my blog to document important meetings and events prior to the opening of the centre. Other measures have included the NCTR's website to share important documents related to its establishment and mandate.² This chapter will examine the ways in which archives of the past have struggled with transparency, and how transparency can lead to increased archival accountability in a day and age that demands and expects transparency. In order to do so, I will review the archival literature discussing transparency as it relates to archival processes to better understand what transparency in the context of the NCTR could look like. I will also review how social media has played a role in archival transparency. Following the literature review, my blogging process will be rendered transparent to fully understand the benefits and limitations of using a blog or other social media platform for transparency purposes. This chapter will conclude in the same way as the others; by outlining a practical example of how the NCTR could implement a more transparent way of documenting its processes.

¹ Jesse Boiteau, "Changing Names and Mandate Extensions," *Jesse's Thesis*, WordPress, august 28, 2016, <https://jesseboiteau.wordpress.com/2013/11/18/changing-names-and-mandate-extensions/>.

² "National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation," University of Manitoba, accessed August 28, 2016, http://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous_connect/NCTR.html.

2.2 What is Archival Transparency?

According to Transparency International, transparency is “being open in the clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions.”³ They further explain the principle behind transparency as being “a duty to act visibly, predictably and understandably to promote participation and accountability and allow third parties to easily perceive what actions are being performed.”⁴ By this definition, archival institutions have been historically non-transparent entities, not easily providing the public a window into archival decision making. Archives do indeed disclose information regarding the provenance of a record, however the rules, plans, and processes described by Transparency International are systematically left out of the historical record. An interesting take on transparency as it relates to truth has been written by David Weinberger in his 2009 article “Transparency: the new Objectivity” where he explains how transparency has become the new objectivity, using journalism as an example to defend his arguments. During the period of print-only media, Weinberger argues that objectivity was used as a tool by journalists to profess the truthfulness and thus trustworthiness of their work as it lacked the personal biases seen in other forms of print media, such as tabloids. Yet now that we live in a digital age, Weinberger argues that digital media has given us the opportunity to use transparency as a way to evaluate the truthfulness and thus trustworthiness of a given publication: “Why should we trust what one person—with the best of intentions— insists is true when we instead could have a web of evidence, ideas and argument?”⁵ Seeing as scholars such as Tom Nesmith, Terry Cook, and Joan Schwartz have argued, and rightfully so, that

³ “Anti-Corruption Glossary,” Transparency International, accessed August 6, 2016, <https://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/transparency>.

⁴ Ibid., accessed August 6, 2016.

⁵ David Weinberger, “Transparency: the new Objectivity,” *Trend-Setting Products* 18:8 (2009): 30.

archivists are active and subjective participants in the shaping of archival collections, should archivists not implement a more transparent framework around their decision making to develop a more truthful, and thus trusted record? This chapter will further discuss this idea of transparency as the new objectivity proposed by Weinberger to better understand the role of transparency as it applies to the NCTR as it is tasked with the central task of sharing the truths of Survivors, and building trust with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The notion of accountability is also an area in need of reflection in the archival profession to increase archival transparency. As it stands, archivists make appraisal decisions that determine what portions of an acquired collection have long-term historical value and are kept, and what records are deemed non-archival and destroyed. In terms of accountability, this action is often performed with minimal documentation outlining the appraisal process, and the reasons why certain records are kept and others destroyed are rarely made publicly available. Archival transparency as advocated for in my thesis represents an open and transparent way of approaching the archival profession and all of its core functions as a way of decolonizing archives. In the context of the NCTR, rendering transparent the decision-making processes behind the handling, retention, and access of records relating to the IRS system would go a long way to breaking down the colonial and institutional barriers that have hindered the relationships between archives and Indigenous people in Canada for decades.

2.3 Archival Transparency Theory

In his article entitled “Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice,” Tom Nesmith poses the following question: How can we

go about documenting the contextual information around core archival functions to better inform current and future users of archives, and what would this type of system look like? Nesmith describes such a system when he refers to Peter Horsman and the notion of "archival narratives." According to Horsman, rather than focusing on the provenance of a record, archivists should strive to document the contextual information "through description of functional structures, both internal and external: archival narratives about those multiple relationships of creation and use so that researchers may truly understand records from the past."⁶ Nesmith builds on the idea of archival narratives when he suggests using a series of essays to help document the processes behind an archival institution's actions.

Throughout "Reopening Archives," Nesmith examines a number of key archival notions and functions (the fonds system, appraisal, description, arrangement, reference and preservation) through a postmodern lens to illustrate how archivists should better explain to users of archives the multiple contextualities of records. Nesmith calls for the creation of publications that document the history of institutional record keeping as well as current archival processes. According to Nesmith, "a series of essays on the approach taken to description by the system/archives and the nature of the contextual information found in it"⁷ could offer archival users and stakeholders a much better contextualized record. For Nesmith, it would be imperative that these essays be easily accessible for the user, although the user would also have the option not to view the essay while viewing a record online. Within the essays, specific information regarding the history of the record would be

⁶ Tom Nesmith, "Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice," *Archivaria* 60 (2005): 266.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 271.

included, including a history of the institution as well as the societal and institutional contexts that have played a part in shaping the record. This overview of the record's history is important because it would provide "an overview of how this work has been done in different ways, according to different underlying assumptions, with their strengths and weaknesses, as that will alert researchers to the possible implications of the impact of this work on the pursuit and understanding of the records they are interested in."⁸ Nesmith takes this notion of understanding the processes behind archival decision making one step further by suggesting these essays include information associated with appraisal decision making and preservation reports to inform users of not only the records that have been deemed archival, but also those that have not been kept. In the past, records were destroyed in large quantities by prominent archival institutions with no documentation of what was kept and what was destroyed.

The *Preliminary Report on the Investigation into Missing School Files for the Shingwauk Indian Residential School* written by Edward G. Sadowski outlines record sets relating to residential schools that were routinely destroyed by the Government of Canada between the 1930s and the 1950s.⁹ The report opens with an overview of the history of the Government of Canada's records management issues, leading to the Department of Indian Affairs' records disposal programs. These programs led to the destruction of hundreds of thousands of pages, including records documenting the legacy of residential schools, such

⁸ Nesmith, "Reopening Archives," 272. Nesmith's proposal for archivists to write essays to document their processes is only one example of augmenting the contextualization behind archival processes. This will be further developed both within this chapter, and in chapter 3 regarding user participation as a catalyst for increased contextualization and fostering the notion of multiple narratives.

⁹ Edward G. Sadowski, *Preliminary Report on the Investigation into Missing School Files for the Shingwauk Indian Residential School* (Sault Ste Marie: The Shingwauk Project, Algoma University College, 2006), 6.

as quarterly returns and admissions and discharges.¹⁰ The reasoning for the destruction of these records was practical. In the 1930s, storage restraints required the destruction of a high amount of government documents, and in the 1940s, an even higher total volume of documents were disposed of due to the paper shortage that occurred during WWII. Today, only a small percentage of government records are deemed archival and scheduled as such. In the case of the IAP records currently awaiting their fate, it is important to reflect upon past records disposition practices that led to the destruction of records depicting human rights abuses to better understand the importance of preserving the government's interactions with Indigenous peoples.

Terry Cook also discusses the destruction of records by the Government of Canada. In 1982, the National Archives of Canada destroyed post 1945 overseas immigration application forms following the appraisal decisions made by the National Archives back in 1964, and once again in 1970.¹¹ As Cook notes, it is not so much the potential conspiracy theories around the destruction of Nazi criminal records that is most disturbing, but rather the fact that records of this significance were destroyed as a routine act of records disposal following approved appraisal decisions: "The key issue was why the overseas immigration application forms themselves had not been appraised by the National Archives as having archival value. That they had been destroyed routinely and accurately, following authorized National Archives procedures, reflecting archival appraisal decisions, was largely true, but not the point."¹² By properly documenting one's actions and processes, and ensuring these

¹⁰ Edward G. Sadowski, *Preliminary Report on the Investigation into Missing School Files for the Shingwauk Indian Residential School* (Sault Ste Marie: The Shingwauk Project, Algoma University College, 2006), 10.

¹¹ Terry Cook, "'A Monumental Blunder': The Destruction of Records on Nazi War Criminals in Canada," in *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society*, ed. by Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2002), 56.

¹² *Ibid.*, 56.

documents are made available and easily accessible to the general public, they could act as a tool for accountability, ensuring that mass destruction efforts involving archival documents would be much more difficult to cover up compared to past efforts.

However, is it enough for archivists to simply write these essays themselves; influenced by their personal and institutional biases, or should outside interpretations be taken into account and added to the record that is being created to document the archival institution and its processes? Although I believe that having archivists buy into the idea of being transparent in terms of their decision making is an important step forward, I do not believe it goes far enough to construct a balanced and unbiased record. Although perhaps the creation of a balanced and unbiased record is an unattainable goal, resulting in evident failure on the part of the archivist in question. Perhaps a more attainable goal for archivists in rendering their processes transparent is the notion of a record that is seen as fair when judged by those whose lives have been directly affected by the records in question.

In the context of the records related to the “Forgotten Australians”¹³ who suffered human rights abuses at the hands of the state and church run child welfare system in Australia, authors and Forgotten Australians Jacqueline Wilson and Frank Golding have argued for the participation of “Insider Researchers”¹⁴ in the processing of archival records that have directly impacted the insider researchers in question: “Part of the process of revealing and, crucially, interpreting the archives must involve the unique insights of those

¹³ This term is used by Wilson and Golding to signify not only the children who suffered neglect and abuses at the hands of those who cared for them, but also the adults who are still negatively affected by their out-of-home experiences, and as a result have since suffered from various forms of mental illness.

¹⁴ By “Insider Researchers,” the authors are referring to the act of researching the very records that depict one’s life, such as the example given of the Forgotten Australians conducting research and assisting archives in processing the records that document their lives in the Australian child welfare system.

who lived the experiences the records encapsulate, and must involve, too, innovative approaches to the preservation, collation, and dissemination of those records.”¹⁵ In “Latent scrutiny: personal archives as perpetual mementos of the official gaze,” Wilson and Golding discuss the process of accessing and understanding the content found within their own records related to their lives as out-of-home care children. By doing so, they have been able to discover gaps in the narrative, and push for the increased use of insider researchers as “it is no longer enough simply to have a ‘voice’ in their recovery and use in research; no longer satisfactory to be merely ‘subjects’ of the research—however, benign and ‘inclusive’ may be the researchers’ ethical intentions.”¹⁶ This statement is important in the context of the NCTR as it begins to collaborate and facilitate research projects with RS Survivors as their main subjects, including a number of former students still living today. Ongoing projects such as the missing children and unmarked burials project must include direct inclusion of the communities that have a stake in the project’s success. Such inclusion should also extend to project planning and grant writing processes to ensure the best interest of Survivors and intergenerational Survivors are kept in mind even before the research begins.

Enabling outside participation in co-creating the essays proposed by Nesmith, or the inclusion of insider researchers proposed by Wilson and Golding would go a long way not only to having a balanced and fair record, but also encouraging users of archives to engage with archives in an inclusive and respectful manner. This notion of archivists and users or archives co-creating a balanced and fair record becomes increasingly significant

¹⁵ Jacqueline Z. Wilson and Frank Golding, “Latent scrutiny: personal archives as perpetual mementos of the official gaze,” *Archival Science* 16 (2016): 107.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 107.

when the records in question document human rights abuses, such as the call for inclusion of the Forgotten Australians proposed by Wilson and Golding. The same call could also be made to offer Survivors and inter-generational Survivors of the IRS system in Canada the opportunity to assist the NCTR in describing IRS related record sets. This idea will be further explored in Chapter 3, including additional ways of fostering participation utilizing both in person and online methods. For example, social media services could offer more potential for engaging a greater number of users than the creation of essays suggested by Nesmith. Yet, it is important to understand the complexities associated with the creation of metadata associated with a digital record to comprehend both the opportunities and limitations of utilizing a digital environment to engage with various users of archives. These complexities around user participation will be further developed in Chapter 3 as enabling outside participation can be used as a catalyst for rendering the NCTR's archival processes transparent.

In addition to Nesmith's articles around archival transparency, other archival scholars such as Terry Cook have discussed how transparency should play a key role in postmodern archives. In his article entitled "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth," Cook discusses the relationship between archives and postmodernity to further explore and suggest "some practical implications of postmodernist thinking that might make the archival experience richer for archivists and their clients."¹⁷ Cook builds on this statement by positing that postmodernism can highlight all aspects of humanity by "recovering marginalized voices."¹⁸ This notion of making the archival experience richer

¹⁷ Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001): 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

for both archivists and their clients by recovering and documenting marginalized voices as eloquently worded by Cook is precisely the kind of thinking that must be further examined and built upon as the great archival thinkers of the late 20th century pass on the torch to newly trained archivists. Cook also points out that “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.”¹⁹ This statement resonates with me on a personal level.

I had the privilege of having Terry Cook as a guest lecturer during my second year of the Archival Studies M.A. Program at the UM. During his lecture, he posed the following question: should archivists attach their names to the descriptions and finding aids being made available to the general public? At the time, I had five years of experience working in archives, and I was among the majority in my class who initially responded that no, it is not the archivist’s place to share such information. Yet by the end of the seminar, Cook had all students, myself included, rethinking our current and future roles as archivists, and more precisely, postmodern archivists. It was his logic that swayed us by explaining how archivists have the responsibility to document their processes not only for the public as a measure of transparency, but also for future archivists to better understand the decisions that shaped the collections within their care. Catherine Bailey has echoed the notion of documenting archival appraisal decisions for future archivists, “for it is they that will bear the responsibility to ensure that appraisal methodology continues to grow and evolve to meet ongoing societal needs.”²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

²⁰ Catherine Bailey, "Past imperfect? reflections on the evolution of Canadian federal government records appraisal," *Archivaria* 75 (Spring 2013): 47.

Bailey's argument for documenting archival processes does, however, differ from Cook's call for accountability on an individual level as this method would not reflect the institutional processes that produced and approved for release such a document. Assigning archivists' names to records that document archival decision making would not reflect the "flaws in a government institution's recordkeeping or disposition practices, or other constraints within the operational environment in which the records were created."²¹ In the context of Residential Schools, Bailey's argument rings true. Although a number of the people running the schools did indeed perform terrible acts of violence and abuse, it is important to understand that it was the Residential School system itself that was truly the most damaging element of the schools as it ensured the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada through systematic assimilation. In addition to the efforts to remove the students from their cultures and languages through the imposition of Western education and religious practices, underfunding and a general lack of regulations also contributed to acts of neglect and abuse. Using this as an example, the documentation of the individual staff members, although an undeniably important process, cannot take away from the importance of understanding the underlying system that mandates and controls said staff members. This example of documentation and transparency within the RS system aligns with the sentiment expressed by Bailey regarding the importance of understanding the inner-workings of an institution, rather than focusing on and documenting individual staff members for transparency purposes.

In addition to his theoretical teachings, it is also Cook's practical solutions of applying his theories to archival work that represents an important area of investigation for

²¹ Ibid., 47.

an archival institution such as the NCTR. Cook's examples of postmodern archival practices that could increase archival transparency focus on three main areas; appraisal, description, and accountability. In terms of appraisal, Cook discusses the notion of macro-appraisal as a way of documenting multiple voices by analyzing the interactions between the organization producing the records and the citizens' reactions to the organization's programmes and decision making: "The point is to research thoroughly for the missing voices in the human or organizational functional activities under study during the appraisal process, so that the archives then can acquire in its holdings multiple voices, and not by default only the voices of the powerful."²² However, Cook does caution archivists to honour and respect the privacy of marginalized groups when documenting the lives of those who don't wish to be documented by a mainstream archive. This sentiment has been echoed by Rodney Carter as he explains that "While we must extend the invitation to work with and include all groups, we must recognize that there are groups who choose to work outside the archive. It is essential that archivists not undermine the right of groups to keep their own silence."²³ These statements of caution made by Cook and Carter will be especially important to consider in the context of the NCTR during the appraisal of records related to IRS Survivors, such as the records related to the IAP and CEP processes.²⁴

Cook has also identified description as an archival function that would benefit from a postmodern overhaul: "Postmodern description would reflect, in short, sustained

²² Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth," 31.

²³ Rodney G. S. Carter, "Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence," *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006): 233.

²⁴ To learn more about the history of the TRC, as well as the IRSSA, CEP, and IAP processes, refer to the TRC's final report volumes: "Reports - Truth and Reconciliation Commission," The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed January 18, 2017, <http://nctr.ca/reports2.php>.

contextual research by the archivist into the history of the records and their creator(s), and produce ever-changing descriptions as the records creation and custodial history itself never ends.”²⁵ By offering users of archives updated and evolving descriptions, the model laid out by Cook would directly reflect the evolving thought processes of archivists and the archival profession, rendering the archival function of description more transparent.

Finally, Cook discusses how accountability should play a key role in shaping the postmodern archivist. As a means of increased transparency, Cook proposes that archivists include, within their descriptions, a listing of the records and collections that were not collected and thus deemed non-archival at the time of acquisition. As a guideline to approach this process, he proposes the following questions be answered and documented by archivists in writing: “why that choice was made; which appraisal criteria were used; which concepts of value or significance were choices based on; which methodologies were employed; and which of the archivist’s personal values were reflected in decisions taken.”²⁶ These questions would then generate a record created by archivists for all to see. This final suggestion by Cook illustrates an effective way of opening the archives and fostering trust through increased transparency. The notion of a postmodern archivist outlined by Cook in 2001 is still relevant today, and could assist in shaping what a decolonized archival approach could look like tomorrow. I will build on what Cook has suggested in section 2.6 as I discuss how transparency can and should be an important factor at the NCTR.

²⁵ Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth,” 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

2.4 Transparency Theory put into Practice

In the early days of social media, there was hesitation among archives to begin using services such as Facebook and Twitter for outreach and promotional purposes, let alone utilizing such services for rendering archival processes transparent. In her chapter entitled “Double-Duty Blogging: A Reference Blog for Management and Outreach,” Malinda Triller discusses her experience using social media for outreach, reference and transparency purposes at the Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections. Similar to other archival institutions, Dickinson used to have a paper-based filing system to manage research inquiries. In this type of system, if the archival institution receives the same research inquiry multiple times, it would either have to look back in their reference records to find the appropriate answers, or else redo the initial research. At this point in the chapter, Triller urges the reader to imagine a system in which future researchers would be able to access these inquiry responses utilizing technological advances. Triller proceeds by explaining how Dickinson has utilized blogging to document and make available to the public its reference inquiry forms. The fields of information present in the blog postings reflect the fields found in the original inquiry forms, including but not limited to the type of user, how the user discovered the archives, and the purpose of the user's research. Additionally, archives staff are able to highlight certain names and create links to other archival records or collections. This is important because "each post provides a new access point to Dickinson's collections, increasing the potential that users will discover material

that would otherwise have remained hidden."²⁷ Although this system offers an attractive way of utilizing social media to document the archival processes behind reference inquiries, it does not leave room for user input or participation. If the system allowed the user to add comments and tags of their own, perhaps it could be a more collaborative and participatory way of archiving.

Theimer has also examined the ways in which social media has influenced the direction of archives and archival thinking. Theimer "proposes a broader definition of Archives 2.0 that includes a comprehensive shift in archival thinking and practice that is related to, but not dependent on, the use of Web 2.0 tools."²⁸ According to Theimer, Archives 2.0 is not solely the use of web 2.0, or social media services by archives, but rather the combination of utilizing these tools with the requirement "that archivists be active in their communities rather than passive, engaged with the interpretation of their collections rather than neutral custodians, and serve as effective advocates for their archival program and their profession."²⁹ Compared to what Theimer calls Archives 1.0, the second iteration is more focused on an open, user centered and transparent way of approaching the archival profession. Although these differences illustrate some of the key features of Archives 2.0, Theimer's passage on transparency is of particular interest to the topic at hand:

Believing in the professional value of intellectual neutrality, archivists in the past often strove to make their own activities and influence on their collections invisible to researchers. In contrast, today's archivists increasingly realize that their own decisions

²⁷ Malinda Triller, "Double-Duty Blogging: A Reference Blog for Management and Outreach," in *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users*, ed. Kate Theimer (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 209.

²⁸ Kate Theimer, "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," *The American Archivist* 74 (2011): 58.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

regarding appraisal, processing, and description should be documented and made available to researchers.³⁰

This suggests that archivists on an individual level believe in the importance of archival transparency, yet current archival practices do not reflect this as archival processes have largely remained opaque and inaccessible to the general public. Such a shift in archival thinking, as proclaimed by Theimer, has yet to lead to a significant shift in the way archives approach transparency as a legitimate facet of the archival profession. Although I agree with Theimer that offering researchers information concerning archival processes would help put Archives 2.0 theory into practice, how can archives utilize social media to successfully implement transparency and also promote participation among its users?

In recent years, archival institutions have begun to embrace the use of social media services such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. However, before advancing further into this topic, it is important to look at the differences between the terms “web 2.0” and “social media” to further understand just how archives have been using some of these services, and how other facets have been overlooked. It is important to note that the term web 2.0 predates the term social media, and that social media is simply a product of the web 2.0 era. According to David Stuart, “Web 2.0 and social media are not synonyms. There was meant to be more to Web 2.0 than merely signing up to Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest. Examining the differences between social media and Web 2.0 can give some clues to other avenues that still need to be explored by the library and information professional.”³¹ Stuart explains that although information professionals such as archivists have started to use

³⁰ Ibid., 61.

³¹ David Stuart, “Web 2.0 in libraries should be more than social media,” *Research Information*, June 7, 2012, accessed September 18, 2015, http://www.researchinformation.info/features/feature.php?feature_id=367.

social media in an attempt to keep up with the times, it may be too little too late as social media is no longer seen as “cutting edge”, but rather as a service that is largely expected on an international level. Although archives are indeed late to adopt social media, there exists ways in which they can be innovative in regard to archival participation and the acquisition of crowdsourced descriptive metadata. The notion of participatory archiving will be further addressed and developed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In the following section, I will examine my own blogging experience to offer insights into the effectiveness of utilizing a blog for transparency purposes.

2.5 My Blogging experience as a Transparency Case Study

I was first approached with the idea of creating a blog to document the processes behind the establishment of the NCTR in August 2013. The main purpose behind the blog was for the UM to remain transparent during the establishment of the NCTR. I attended numerous meetings and wrote a number of posts that highlighted important meetings between the UM and the TRC. I also discussed contentious issues around the NCTR, including the absence of the IAP (Independent Assessment Process) and CEP (Common Experience Payment) record sets in the NCTR’s holdings.³² Although my blogging process was a positive experience and well received by the archival community, it did shed light on the limitation of using a blog as one’s only means of transparency. Before discussing the limitations of the blogging process, the following paragraph will attempt to render my blogging process transparent by documenting the blog’s processes and decision making.

³² Jesse Boiteau, “1/3 Full or 2/3 Empty: The (potentially) Missing Records from the National Research Centre (NRC),” *Jesse’s Thesis*, October 25, 2013, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://jesseboiteau.wordpress.com/2013/10/25/13-full-or-23-empty-the-potentially-missing-records-from-the-national-research-centre-nrc/>.

Although the process of creating the blog was an individual exercise, the process of reviewing the blog posts prior to release was indeed collaborative in nature. The subject matter of the posts either derived from a topic that I found appropriate and important to raise, or from someone else who requested a specific topic be discussed. Depending on the subject matter, the posts required approval from multiple sources before going live via the WordPress blog.³³ For example, if the subject matter related to the TRC, the post had to be approved by a TRC employee to ensure that sensitive or confidential information was not being shared with the general public, and to ensure the accuracy of the statements being made. In addition to this, I had the first two posts proofread by more than one source to evaluate the effectiveness of my writing style in a blog setting. These evaluations and suggestions were then applied to future posts. Among the suggestions offered, both around style and content, one of the most important suggestions was to have the blog reviewed by the UM's Research Ethics Board (REB). This was an important step to take because it was thought that the blog may have to be reviewed and put on hold until cleared by an REB review process. Fortunately, the REB review process approved the blog rather quickly, enabling me to continue my blogging endeavor.

Although the blog offered a behind the scenes look at certain NCTR processes, it was not comprehensive enough to be used as a single means of transparency. In addition to the fact that it simply highlighted a select number of key events and meetings, there was a definite lack of outside participation. Although I considered myself an outsider at the time the posts were being released since I was not employed by the TRC or NCTR, the only way I was able to encourage participation was through guest bloggers and user

³³ Jesse Boiteau, "Jesse's Thesis" Jesse's Thesis homepage, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://jesseboiteau.wordpress.com/>.

comments. Although the blog has been viewed nearly seven thousand times by viewers from over twenty countries worldwide, this was an issue because the majority of the commenting was done by members of the archival profession and academia. This is more than likely due to the fact that the blog was mostly shared through archival associations. Perhaps utilizing additional means of transparency would allow for a more collaborative and participatory approach for users of archives, and more precisely the NCTR moving forward. Perhaps further research into the world of Wikis could illuminate new and exciting opportunities for archives to explore archival transparency in the pursuit of user participation.

2.6 Conclusion: Transparency and the NCTR

After reviewing past theories and practices around archival transparency, I would like to propose practical examples for rendering the archival processes of the NCTR transparent. As I have previously expressed, archival institutions have not adopted transparency as a way of shedding light on their decision-making processes. Current description standards do not have the capacity to include information relating to the actions taken by archivists during the processing of archival collections. As stated by Jennifer Douglas, “it is imperative that we start to more openly acknowledge—in both our theoretical statements and the embodiment of these in archival description—that the archives is a construction built by many hands and formed over time.”³⁴ In stating this, Douglas suggests that archivists play an active role in shaping archival collections before they are released to the public. This statement cannot be disputed, so why not include

³⁴ Jennifer Douglas, “Toward More Honest Description,” *The American Archivist* 79:1 (2016): 50.

archival practices such as appraisal and arrangement in the descriptions being made publicly available? That said, how would this be implemented?

The previous section (2.5) demonstrates an example of how the NCTR could become more transparent regarding its archival processes. By creating a narrative outlining the decision-making process and outlining those involved in the process, it promotes openness, which in turn can help in building trust, promoting participation, and ultimately assisting in the decolonization of archives. These narratives, either in the form of a blog post, wiki page, electronic report, or an appendix to an archival description, could represent a starting point for archives seeking archival transparency. Although limited resources and shrinking budgets remain the reality for archival institutions in Canada, transparency as a practice has been increasingly adopted by multiple levels of government, and as such, has become expected by all Canadians. Whether this shift towards a more transparent form of governing is more than political rhetoric remains to be determined. Although such a determination is outside the scope of this thesis, it is important to keep in mind when discussing archival transparency. In the context of the NCTR, being transparent is especially important due to the relationship between its archival collections and its stakeholders. It is also important because of the public and media microscope it finds itself under as it continues to evolve as a leading archive in Canada tasked with stewarding records documenting human rights abuses. That said, the NCTR has begun to adopt transparency measures related to the proactive release of public records.

During the spring of 2016, I saw an opportunity to increase the NCTR's transparency as I worked on making a batch of rendered videos publicly available via the

NCTR`s website.³⁵ The videos in question ranged from footage taken by the TRC during its first national event in Winnipeg, to its final closing event in Ottawa. To help document this process, I drafted a two-step process consisting of a proactive release form to be signed by both the NCTR Director and the UM`s Privacy Officer, stating the records being released have been reviewed and approved for public use. The second part of the process consists of a proactive release outcome report, outlining exactly what is being made public. This outcome report, along with the initial release form, are to be kept as an archival record to document the NCTR`s decision-making process. Additionally, these documents are to be made publicly available via the NCTR`s website and social media outlets. This is especially important because of the “take down” process that has been put in place by the NCTR. Although an actual policy has yet to be approved, the NCTR does offer its users and stakeholders the opportunity to request the removal of a record that has been made available online if they deem it not appropriate for public use. Although not an example of archival transparency as the information associated with the take down requester will remain private, it does highlight the importance of informing the public when new record sets are being made available.

If the NCTR does not share what is being released, how will people know if and when new records are being made available? Although this example serves as evidence that the NCTR is making attempts at becoming more transparent, it also highlights the need for additional transparency measures as it only represents the transparency of a single NCTR function. The creation of essays as suggested by Nesmith, the inclusion of archival accountability by providing the names of the archivists who have managed and curated

³⁵ The process of exporting audio visual files from their raw format to a more accessible format.

archival collections as suggested by Cook, and the idea of documenting the institutions processes in the creation of corporate records as discussed by Bailey offer practical ways for the NCTR to increase the transparency of its archival functions.

Jennifer Douglas also offers a practical solution to archival transparency that aligns closely with the models proposed by Nesmith:

This proposal is similar to Nesmith's and Cook's suggestions that archivists write essays to append to traditional finding aids. Appending "parallel texts" to standardized descriptions allows archivists to retain the benefits of well-established descriptive standards while also providing an extra space to include the types of knowledge that archivists have about records but that have not traditionally been included in finding aids.³⁶

The suggestion of parallel texts as described by Douglas offers an additional example of what the NCTR could adopt to increase the transparency behind archival decision making. By offering the users of archives additional contextual information behind the archival function of description, these parallel texts in the context of the NCTR would further document the descriptive processing of not only the NCTR, but also the TRC and the government and religious entities that provided RS records during the TRC's document collection process. This is important to better understand the relationships between the various transfers that eventually lead to the establishment of NCTR as the permanent repository of the aforementioned records. Douglas' proposal for a more "honest description" demands transparency because "the archives is a construction built by many hands and formed over time. Instead of hiding the "constructedness" of the fonds, we must begin to actively embrace it. Honest description is the first step toward that aim."³⁷ Although time consuming and presumably thought by most as outside an archivist's

³⁶ Douglas, "Toward More Honest Description," 48.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

“normal” line of duty, the inclusion of essays or a more “honest” approach to describing collections would assist the NCTR in building trust with its stakeholders. These honest descriptions align with Bailey’s argument that such a form a transparency should strive to document the decision-making processes of the institution in question, rather than focussing on a single archivist. However, what if the NCTR took the notion of opening up archival processes one step further by inviting and legitimizing outside participation to better describe and arrange archival collections? Chapter 3 will discuss the notion of participatory archiving and its role in archival decolonization.

As Kate Theimer has stated; "as our users change, it is natural that the way archivists work must evolve as well."³⁸ This is an important statement because it is not simply the users who are changing, but also the ways in which they use archives, which should in turn affect the way archivists address the archival profession. We live in a socially involved world that demands the ability to have individual voices heard, words read, or faces seen. If archives wish to remain relevant they must open up to a more transparent way of documenting archival processes, and allow user participation to further contribute to the contextual information associated with archival records. Wendy Duff and Verne Harris have argued that in order for an archival process to truly become inclusive and promote outside participation, it must first be an open and transparent process:

A liberatory descriptive standard cannot emerge from a process which is exclusive, opaque, and beyond the demands of accountability. Enormous as the hurdles might be, as resilient the resistances, standards writers need to seek inclusivity and transparency. The process is as important as the product. The more boundaries - geographical, cultural, class, gender, disciplinary,

³⁸ Theimer, "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," 67.

institutional, medium, and other - crossed by the process, the more liberatory its product is likely to be.³⁹

Although the NCTR has made attempts at adopting transparency measures, it could go further in rendering its archival processes transparent to move beyond opaque archival practices. The statement made by Duff and Harris, concluding that “the process is as important as the product,”⁴⁰ puts the notion of transparency into perspective, suggesting the importance of taking the time to truly understand the process behind the product. Duff and Harris believe that it is by implementing a process that crosses numerous boundaries that we can break free from our standardized ways of approaching archival description. Such a break could assist in applying decolonizing measures to the archival profession. The following chapter on participatory archiving in the context of the NCTR strives to envision a space that can accommodate these efforts to foster multiple narratives and different ways of interpreting the meaning of archives.

³⁹ Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, “Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 284.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3

Breaking down the Colonial Barriers of Archives Past through Participatory Archiving

The following section is a blog post that I wrote on December 11th, 2013 that explains how I became interested in the topic of archival participation and encourages the readers of the blog to participate in the discussion by sharing how they have adopted social media to increase transparency or encourage participation.

Is Social Media the Answer?: Achieving Archival Transparency and Enabling Participation

As I finished my last class of the archival studies program at the University of Manitoba this past Wednesday (December 4th), my mind immediately switched into thesis mode, although my body had other plans. My final paper that I handed in for my TRC course looked at transparency theory of the past as well as current endeavors that seek to use transparency as a means of encouraging participation. The final section of my paper took a hard look at this blog as a case study to determine its effectiveness as a transparency mechanism. Although it has reached a large number of people living in a number of different countries, the blog has limitations because it seems likely that it would appeal specifically to readers from an archival or academic background, which automatically limits who can participate in the blogging process through sharing or commenting. This is not to diminish the value that has been added to the blog by having people leave comments; it is simply to state that only a specific set of voices are being heard, which of course has been an archival dilemma for far too long.

Since I am assuming who my audience is based on my fear of only reaching a limited audience, it would be much appreciated if you (the readers of this post) could introduce yourselves in the comment section below. By doing so, you will either prove me wrong or reinforce my assumptions. Either way it would be a great way for me to learn something about the blog's audience, and it would also allow for the community of readers that has been following the blog to interact and participate in the discussion.

Over the past number of weeks, I have stumbled across a number of resources that have analyzed how governments and institutions can achieve transparency and in turn, user participation, by utilizing social media tools such as blogging and wikis. Kate Theimer offers one of the best summaries of archival case studies that have utilized social media to become more transparent and promote user participation in *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and our Users* (Theimer, Kate, ed. *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011). One of the case studies offered in this book that is of particular interest to my research is

Malinda Triller`s article that looks at the Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections and their attempt to use blogging as a way to improve their reference inquiry management system. Triller explains how Dickenson used to have a paper based filing system to store their reference inquiry forms (similar to many archival institutions) but moved to a more transparent way of answering inquiries. By using a blog, Dickenson is able to answer inquiries and upload the forms (redacting any personal information) to the blog for any researcher to access. By doing this, it improves the overall efficiency of the inquiry system by ensuring that the same inquiry is not researched and answered twice, and it also renders the reference inquiry process transparent by having archivists put themselves and their reference inquiries on the world wide web for everybody to see. Of course it is important to respect researcher privacy when desired.

Although this system offers an effective way of utilizing social media to document the archival processes behind reference inquiries, it only represents one way for archives to utilize social media services. Certainly there exists many other approaches that can be taken. I am curious to know if anybody has any other examples to share of archives (or other types of organizations) who use social media for transparency or participatory reasons. Seeing as I am using this blog as a case study for my thesis, I will be attempting more and more each post to encourage participation.

I strongly believe that if archives wish to remain relevant, they must open up to a more transparent way of documenting archival processes and allow room for user participation to not only improve the contextual information associated with records and improve the overall accessibility of records, but to also share with users something that archivists have been withholding for far too long: archival authority.

Please stay tuned for more NRC updates.

Jesse Boiteau¹

¹ Jesse Boiteau, "Is Social Media the Answer?: Achieving Archival Transparency and Enabling Participation," Jesse`s Thesis, December 11, 2013, accessed December 11, 2016, <https://jesseboiteau.wordpress.com/2013/12/11/is-social-media-the-answer-achieving-archival-transparency-and-enabling-participation/>.

3.1 Introduction

Increased user participation in archives is by no means a new concept. Numerous articles have been written on the subject, and archives around the world have dabbled in archival participation practices, with the majority doing so at a cursory level. Isto Huvila has recently noted this enthusiasm for discussion of archival participation, and why we have seen a lack of in-depth adoption and implementation: “the variety of its forms and its connotations in the professional and academic discussion shows equally irrefutably the discursive nature of ‘participation’ and the profusion of how it is conceptualised and practiced within the archival community.”² The archival profession as a whole has not adopted the practice of inviting the public or archival stakeholders into the archives to assist in the processing of archival collections. In the context of the NCTR, an important percentage of its stakeholders and users are the ones being documented in the NCTR’s holdings, whether it be in government or church records, or the thousands of RS Survivor testimonies that make up the bulk of the NCTR’s audio/visual holdings. The voices of Survivors and intergenerational Survivors are at the heart of the NCTR, so should these voices not also be heard and included in the processing of archival material in an attempt at decolonizing the archival profession? This chapter will attempt to define what “participation” means in the archival context, and discuss various secondary sources related to the subject at hand. It will also explore a number of projects that have implemented a participatory way of archiving to create a collection of case studies relevant to the NCTR, and the creation of a digital participatory environment. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a reflection on how the NCTR could implement participatory archiving

² Isto Huvila, “The unbearable lightness of participating? Revisiting the discourses of ‘participation’ in archival literature,” *Journal of Documentation* 71:2 (2015): 359.

by enlisting its stakeholders as “honourary archivists” in the pursuit of archival decolonization.³

3.2 Participation in the Archival Context

Participation in archives or participatory ways of archiving refer to the act of inviting the public to participate in various archival processes. It is more than actively engaging with users of archives; it enables the public to help shape the records in a way that is rarely done in larger archival institutions. By doing so, archivists must surrender a certain amount of archival authority to the user. Huvila takes up this idea of opening archives to allow for user participation when he discusses the notion of decentralized curation. With decentralized curation, the user plays a role in the curation of archives, not solely the archivist. According to Huvila, this concept of decentralized curation can be accomplished by "harnessing knowledgeable users of archival collections to contribute in the form of new and improved descriptions, translations, summaries, and relationships to other records."⁴ This act of "harnessing knowledgeable users" to help contribute and participate in the archival functions associated with the NCTR's holdings would certainly be a rewarding but challenging endeavour because of the following questions: who will have the opportunity to add information to the NCTR's database, who will mediate the incoming metadata, and to what extent will this information be mediated? These are

³ The term “honourary witness” has been used by the TRC when identifying the commission’s allies, such as the former Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Holocaust Survivor Robert Waisman, and former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine. For additional information, visit “Honorary Witness,” the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada, accessed January 18, 2017, <http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=331>.

⁴ Isto Huvila, "Participatory archive: towards decentralised curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualisation of records management," *Archival Science* 8 (2008): 32.

important questions to consider when an archival institution is considering a decentralized approach to curation as a way of incorporating elements of participation.

This chapter will analyze both the literature and practical examples around participatory archiving to better understand its function and purpose in the archival profession. In the case of the NCTR and the uniqueness of its holdings, participatory archiving will be especially important to help document the multiple voices of those who access the records related to the RS system. By doing so, the NCTR could layer multiple experiences and narratives to a single record for a more balanced and contextually rich document, photograph, or video. I will conclude the chapter by building on what has been written and what has been implemented regarding participatory archiving to help shape a model through which the NCTR could foster increased participation to ultimately aid in the decolonization of archives.

3.3 Literature review: Participatory Archiving

User participation in archives has been increasingly discussed in the archival context since the rise of social media as a legitimate tool for allowing the general public to interact with archival institutions. Natalie Pang, Kai Khiun Liew, and Brenda Chan discuss a group of articles that were written in the Australian journal *Archives and Manuscripts*. Pang et al. argue that we now perceive historical significance differently because access to information is available at our fingertips by use of smartphones or other handheld devices such as tablets. This shift in what is perceived as historically significant can also be attributed to social networking services fostering strong social relationships. Due to this shift, "The world in which one or a few professional archivists worked on the sole mission of shaping how a society remembers is being displaced by a more democratised culture

and the new generation of digitally networked archivists that are its natives."⁵ Although the technology is available and the willingness of individuals to participate is present, the authors remind us that challenges lie ahead for the archivist of today in regard to "the archivist's role(s), existing practices and how to deal with the chaos of 'wild' archives popping up everywhere and the lack of structured metadata."⁶ It will be important for the NCTR to have a detailed plan in place to ensure the proper collection of user generated metadata, however the centre must be realistic and acknowledge the fact that such a plan will have to be dynamic; adapting over time as technology evolves and the way users access and use archival records change. The article concludes by sharing examples of archival initiatives in Australia that have leveraged the knowledge of its online stakeholder communities to fill the gaps in historical records, such as the project in Melbourne that saw online communities come together to tell the history behind digital images of a painted signboard.

The Melbourne based project entitled the "Keepers of Ghosts" exemplifies the strengths of participatory archiving when faced with non-traditional forms of archival material, such as sites of memory or large painted signs that help tell the history of an urban setting. Authors Lisa Cianci and Stefan Schutt posit that by capturing these sites and signs using photography and contextualizing the images using online social media repositories, we can "enable collective memory and local urban documentation practices to develop in ways beyond the current scope and resources of custodial archives, a process that has been

⁵ Natalie Pang, Kai Khium Liew, and Brenda Chan, "Participatory Archives in a world of ubiquitous media," *Archives and Manuscripts* 42:1 (2014): 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

aided by the increasing ubiquity and mobility of networked digital devices.”⁷ This statement represents one of the most exciting opportunities for participatory archiving, however it implies that archival institutions do not play an active role in this process. If the NCTR is to be successful in its participatory approaches, it will be important to further understand how participatory archiving can assist in not only processing current collections, but also future accessions of non-traditional archival material. In the context of the NCTR, this could be the documentation of residential school sites through their history, collected through user-generated images and stories. Studies of projects such as the “Keepers of Ghosts” have also been conducted in other countries, such as the research conducted by Isto Huvila in Finland.

Huvila discusses two digital archives that have implemented projects based on the aforementioned notion of decentralized curation and also discusses the concepts of radical user orientation: “following the principle of post-modern archival science that the foremost functionality of an archival system is to make the contents of an archive available,” and broader contextualization: “making an explicit attempt to capture a wider context of archival material beyond its provenance.”⁸ Both of the projects discussed by Huvila have utilized digital technologies to address two key issues regarding the dissemination of analog records: “geographical dispersion of individual users,”⁹ and the “existence of multiple parallel viewpoints.”¹⁰ By utilizing cross-disciplinary participation, Huvila attempted to obtain additional contextual information to address the aforementioned

⁷ Lisa Cianci, and Stefan Schutt, “Keepers of Ghosts: old signs, new media and the age of archival flux,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42:1 (2014): 20.

⁸ Huvila, “Participatory archive,” 33.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

existence of multiple viewpoints as “individual researchers have expertise on different aspects of the documents and their contexts.”¹¹ Although this example speaks more to co-curation as a way to leverage the knowledge of individuals within academic fields, such as archeology, it is the notion of outsider participation that will be especially important in the context of the NCTR. The UM’s bid document¹² discusses the difference between co-curation as a cross-disciplinary collaboration process, and archival participation as a less institutional approach to leveraging the knowledge of various experts in the realm of Residential School history. Although co-curation is an intriguing and undoubtedly valuable process, it is the notion of outsider participation that deserves additional attention by the NCTR as RS Survivors and their families represent the experts in the field. The geographical dispersion of individual users mentioned by Huvila also aligns with the centre’s mandate to provide services on a national level. Utilizing the notion of participatory archiving to address the geographical barriers between the NCTR and Indigenous communities will be further developed later in this chapter.

Although these examples highlight the potential for inviting the public to participate in archival processes, some have taken a more cautious approach to participatory archiving. Authors such as Elizabeth Yakel¹³ have taken a closer look into the notion of shared authority between archives and those actively participating and collaborating with

¹¹ Ibid., 20.

¹² The UM’s bid document has been made publicly available by the NCTR. It is available at “Exhibitions - Development of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation,” The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed January 18, 2017, <http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/NRC%20for%20partners.pdf>.

¹³ Elizabeth Yakel has written a number of important articles that align with my thesis research, including the following: Krause, Magia Ghetu, and Elizabeth Yakel. "Interaction in Virtual Archives: The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections Next Generation Finding Aid." *The American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (2007): 282-314; Yakel, Elizabeth. “Who Represents the Past? Enabling Reuse and Recreation of Digital Objects in Cyberspace.” in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions: Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels*, edited by Terry Cook. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011).

archives: “We are not used to thinking in expanded ways about the nature of archival authority and we are still quite anxious about the effects of sharing that authority.”¹⁴ Because of this hesitancy towards a more shared authority model, archival institutions that have adopted participatory ways of archiving have done so in a closed environment, fostering an environment where the creation of only clearly outlined contextual information can be generated. Yakel exposes this notion of limiting user participation to finite environments in her chapter entitled “Balancing archival authority with encouraging authentic voices to engage with records” where she poses the following series of important questions:

Archivists face a conundrum: foster peer production processes with shared responsibility that impinges on, changes, and decontextualizes the records, or restrict user-generated content to a virtual space controlled by the archives? Archivists are currently doing the latter; but are we losing more in the long run? Are we also giving up something when we maintain cognitive authority at the cost of creating communities that might contribute in unforeseen ways to the archives? What is also worrisome is whether these practices actually negate peer production. By relegating user contribution to special areas and, more importantly, not trying to delegate any responsibility for the site to the community, are archives actually engaging in the social web?¹⁵

These questions represent important points of reflection pertinent to this thesis, and as such will act as a set of fundamental questions applicable to the projects and case studies utilizing participatory archiving outlined in the following pages. In the context of the NCTR, would limiting participating to simple name tagging handicap the potential for meaningful contributions from Survivors to the historical record of the RS system? Based

¹⁴ Elizabeth Yakel, “Balancing archival authority with encouraging authentic voices to engage with records,” in *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users*, edited by Kate Theimer, 75-101, (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011): 98.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

on their research, Huvila and his co-curational participants have posited that it is “more important to capture as much relevant information as possible than to strictly enforce a formal descriptive scheme.”¹⁶ As the NCTR looks to implement participatory measures, studies such as Huvila’s will be important to consider, yet it will not only be imperative for the centre to discover a method to collect information from Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers, but also to disseminate such information without losing the spirit of the transfer of knowledge. A truly innovative participatory environment built by the NCTR will have to take this into account by offering a space that fosters and embraces alternative ways of thinking about archives. Section 3.5 of this chapter will further develop the role of participatory archiving in the decolonization of archives, and the need for a dynamic method of information gathering built on a “regularly updated and supported code base with a long expected life cycle.”¹⁷

Michelle Caswell and Samip Mallick have also researched archival participation in the U.S. relating to South Asian immigrants. In their article “Collecting the easily missed stories: digital participatory microhistory and the South Asian American Digital Archive,” they discuss the South Asian American Digital Archive’s First Days Project. This project is an online community-based initiative that strives to document the stories of South Asian immigrants regarding their initial transition to life in the United States. As in the previously mentioned projects, the purpose of this particular endeavor was to “harness the power of the Internet to solicit and distribute short records of archival significance. These projects can successfully contribute to archives by filling in historical gaps, by documenting

¹⁶ Huvila, “Participatory archive,” 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

emotion and affect, and by directly involving community members in the archival endeavour.”¹⁸ This statement is very important, and prevalent among the archival literature around participatory archives. However, it does not take into account the issues around access to technology in remote locations. In Canada, internet access is limited in remote areas such as northern Indigenous communities, which in turn leads to issues around access, let alone participatory archiving. This is a significant challenge for the NCTR as its mandate and mission is to serve Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and Indigenous communities affected by the RS system.¹⁹ How can the NCTR take this into account when implementing participatory ways of archiving? Perhaps enhanced community engagement in an attempt to build long lasting relationships is a way of engaging with a broader range of users and stakeholders from locations that suffer from limited technological resources. To further understand these limitations, it is important to acknowledge the inequalities regarding access to sufficient internet speeds in remote Canadian locations.

In the article entitled "Revisiting the digital divide in Canada," the issues around limited internet access in Canada are discussed and a study is presented that reveals the outcomes related to internet access across the country. According to the study discussed in the article, “access to the Internet reflects existing inequalities in society with income,

¹⁸ Michelle Caswell, and Samip Mallick, “Collecting the easily missed stories: digital participatory microhistory and the South Asian American Digital Archive,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42:1 (2014): 83.

¹⁹ According to the TRC’s Final Report, remote Northern communities have been most impacted by the RS system due to the higher rate of school attendance per capita, and the fact that Northern schools remained open longer than schools in the South. It is because of this that the intergenerational impacts of the RS system are more apparent in Northern communities. For more information on the RS experience in the North, consult the TRC’s Final Report Volume 2: The Inuit and Northern Experience, available at “Reports - Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed January 18, 2017, http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Volume_2_Inuit_and_Northern_English_Web.pdf.

education, rural/urban, immigration status, and age all affecting adoption patterns.”²⁰ These findings will be important for the NCTR to acknowledge and address moving forward as they shed light on the major issue of limited access to some of its core users: Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and their families. These findings also conclude that internet access to communities that suffer from inequalities regarding income, education, and health care is less accessible than it is for those not facing inequalities on a day to day basis. This conclusion is especially important in the case of the NCTR as Survivor and their families live in remote communities that suffer from the stated inequalities, including inequalities regarding access to adequate internet. The ways in which the Internet is being accessed also requires further attention as the use of cellular devices as the sole medium for accessing the Internet continues to increase.²¹ This growing trend towards mobile computing should be further researched in an effort to help shed light on the realities and limitations of participatory archiving in the digital age.²²

Philip M. Napoli and Jonathan A. Obar discuss the disadvantages of mobile-only computing. More precisely, they discuss the difference between using desktop computers and mobile devices to access the Internet, and how the two media produce two separate versions of the Internet. Based on this argument, the authors conclude that “the differences

²⁰ Michael Haight, Anabel Quan-Haase, and Bradley A. Corbett, "Revisiting the digital divide in Canada: the impact of demographic factors on access to the internet, level of online activity, and social networking site usage," *Information, Communication & Society* 17, no. 4 (2014): 503.

²¹ The Haight et al. article does not discuss the differences between mobile and desktop computing. To fully understand the “digital divide” discussed in their article and how it applies to the NCTR and engagement with northern and remote communities, it is important to engage with other writers who have researched how the ways in which the Internet is being accessed has changed since the rise of the smartphone and increased mobile computing.

²² Although important to the context of this thesis, additional research into the limitations of a digital archive in terms of access and participation is outside of my research scope. This topic needs further research, and should not be ignored by the archival profession moving forward.

between mobile and PC-based forms of Internet access can reinforce, and perhaps even exacerbate, inequities in digital skill sets, online participation, and content creation. Consequently, mobile-only Internet users become, in many ways, second-class citizens online.”²³ As access to information becomes increasingly mobile, it will be important for the NCTR to understand the differences between what it offers through desktop web browsers, and web browsers used by mobile devices. This distinction will also be important to note in the context of the upcoming WITNESS case study as it deals with participatory archiving through mobile uploading.

3.4 Participatory Archiving in Practice

Notions of participatory archiving have been adopted by a number of archival institutions from all over the world. With the increase in accessibility to archival records via the Internet, it is now possible for both large and small archives to establish connections and relationships with stakeholders and the general public where relationships were not possible in the past due to geographic divides. The following case studies have been chosen because they highlight successful cases of archival participation that could be applied to an archival institution with an Indigenous focus, such as the NCTR. Elements from these case studies will aid in the development of section 3.5 that will outline a possible strategy for the NCTR regarding participatory archiving and the implementation of a more focused and participatory social media strategy.

²³ Philip M. Napoli and Jonathan A. Obar, “The Emerging Mobile Internet Underclass: A Critique of Mobile Internet Access,” *The Information Society* 30 (2014): 330.

Case Study 1: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Social Media Strategies

NARA has been utilizing a social media strategy since 2010 for community building and increased transparency in the US government.²⁴ The initial strategy was based on the principles of collaboration, leadership, initiative, diversity, community, and openness.²⁵ Upon reading NARA's 2010 social media strategy, it is clear that openness, or transparency, is an important catalyst in building relationships between NARA and the general public to foster increased user participation: "We believe openness is one of the keys to unlocking our collective potential. Peer to peer communications and networking can lead to better collaboration, more efficiency and less friction."²⁶ This notion of an open and transparent archival institution utilizing a social media strategy to create less friction with its users is an important point that aligns well with the study of the NCTR. In addition to the importance of openness, NARA's 2010 social media strategy also emphasizes the knowledge of its users and stakeholders, and how this knowledge can lead to an enriched and more accessible archival experience: "So many of you have a wealth of expertise that you have gathered over time while researching at NARA and at other archives and libraries. Your stories and contributions help illuminate the significance of our government's records to our nation's history."²⁷ In the context of the NCTR, the same statement could be used to describe the knowledge of Survivors and Indigenous communities regarding the history of the RS system: Survivors, Intergenerational Survivors, and Indigenous peoples across

²⁴ "National Archives Social Media Strategy," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed August 28, 2016, <http://usnationalarchives.github.io/social-media-strategy/introduction/>.

²⁵ "Social Media Strategy," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed August 28, 2016, <http://archives.gov/social-media/strategies/social-media-strategy-2010-12-08.pdf>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, accessed August 28, 2016.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, accessed August 28, 2016.

Canada have a wealth of knowledge that can be shared with the NCTR to better describe and arrange the collections of records that tell the history of Residential Schools, resiliency, and reconciliation. Another statement made by NARA in the 2010 social media strategy is the concept of “citizen archivists”: “Many of you are natural sharers, and we hope to foster that impulse and encourage those researchers we call citizen archivists.”²⁸ The title of citizen archivist, or honorary archivist as stated by others, is something the NCTR could use as inspiration to widen the scope of what an archivist is in the context of Indigenous collections and those who can help shed light on Indigenous collections in need of processing.²⁹ By doing so, the NCTR would acknowledge the importance and legitimacy of alternate ways of approaching the archival profession. These honorary archivists could also be recognized and highlighted by the NCTR to increase legitimacy and encourage more widespread participation.

In 2016, NARA built on the 2010 social media strategy by creating a new GitHub-based strategy to remain current and encourage further collaboration and participation.³⁰ This most recent strategy strives to highlight and document the involvement of NARA’s staff in the adoption of social networking functions over the next three years: “This new strategy document looks toward the next three years (FY 2017–2020) and will evolve over time. It is intended to serve our staff and help them create digital content that engages, delights, and illuminates.”³¹ One important aspect of this strategy is that it is not set in

²⁸ Ibid., accessed August 28, 2016.

²⁹ That said, perhaps it would be better for the NCTR to not label Indigenous participants without proper consultation.

³⁰ GitHub is an open source project host that allows space for individuals and organizations to collaborate on various projects via a web interface or social networking functions. It is most often used for the development of software, but can also be used for other projects, such as the NARA social media strategy for 2017-2020.

³¹ “National Archives Social Media Strategy,” National Archives and Records Administration, accessed August 28, 2016, <http://usnationalarchives.github.io/social-media-strategy/introduction/>.

stone, allowing space for NARA employees and the general public to help shape how the strategy grows in the next three years. Although this strategy is much more focused on NARA staff and less focused on the citizen archivist who played a larger role in NARA's 2010 social media strategy, it does discuss crowdsourcing to achieve deeper engagement. In addition to online crowdsourcing efforts, NARA is aiming to "promote crowdsourcing to on-site visitors in our physical spaces. We set two of the computers in the Boeing Learning Lab to be signed in to a general account so that visitors can easily transcribe documents on site. We have printed pieces that visitors can take home to encourage them to visit the Citizen Archivist dashboard."³² The Citizen Archivist dashboard (the Dashboard) is an interactive website that fosters user participation in archival processes such as tagging, transcribing, and translating.³³ The latter represents an intriguing concept that deserves further review to better understand how it could be applied to the NCTR to help foster participation among its core stakeholders and users. The Dashboard, along with the NARA GitHub-based social media strategy, will be further discussed in section 3.5 to help illustrate a NCTR participation strategy.

As Elizabeth Yakel has already questioned in the context of another participatory project, does the NARA's social media strategy allow room for enough creativity in its interactions with users through the Dashboard to be truly innovative in the realm of participatory archiving? If taken at face value, I believe it could be innovative seeing as it has opened the development and direction of its current strategy to the general public to better understand how the strategy could adapt to better reflect the knowledge and needs

³² Ibid., accessed August 28, 2016.

³³ "Citizen Archivist Dashboard," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed August 28, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/>.

of its users. Such a statement could be adopted by the NCTR as they have yet to implement a truly participatory social media strategy.³⁴ That said, flaws do exist in the design of NARA's latest social media strategy due to the lack of transparency regarding the collection of information. On the surface, the strategy claims to take into account the suggestions of outside participants, yet how can this be confirmed? I suppose only time will tell once the strategy is applied in 2017 whether NARA is indeed listening and implementing user input, or whether the aforementioned notions of valued outsider input regarding the development of the strategy is simply participation rhetoric. Currently, the GitHub-based strategy does not have space for the deep engagement outlined in the strategy as no space exists where the public can publicly make comments or suggestions to the strategy itself. Perhaps the inclusion of a virtual space for open dialogue such as a forum would allow for a more open and transparent way of encouraging participation? These are considerations that must be taken into account when the NCTR begins to develop its own social media strategy.

Another consideration that must be taken into account by the NCTR is the notion that archivists feel obligated to label outside participants in order to legitimize their efforts. The term honorary archivist, or citizen archivist as used by NARA, has been used as a

³⁴ The NCTR has begun to reach out through Facebook in an effort to collect stories and names of students and TRC event participants. I have personally started saving this collected metadata along with the information provider's Facebook information in my capacity of an NCTR archivist. Acknowledging that this represents the beginning of a more detailed and organized strategy is an important step, and case studies such as NARA will be applied both to my thesis research, and my role at the NCTR.

way to label non-archivists who participate in archival processes.³⁵ Kate Theimer has written in opposition of such terms as she believes they are “disrespectful to archivists”³⁶ and devalue the professional training required to conduct archival processes. Although I understand Theimer’s hesitation in adopting these terms, I do believe this sentiment sheds light on archivists’ insecurities regarding public perception that could be attributed to the public’s unawareness of archives and the role of archivists. The comment section of Theimer’s blog post is a great example of this as it has garnered much attention from archivists attempting to label what they are essentially referring to as archival volunteers.

In the context of the NCTR, the term volunteer would not do justice to those Survivors willing to share their knowledge with the centre. As seen in Chapter 1, Libraries ACT hired cultural liaison officers as a way of paying for cultural knowledge rather than simply hoping to receive the knowledge freely through volunteer work. This represents an important distinction for the NCTR to understand as it proceeds with projects aimed at collecting cultural knowledge for archival purposes. Jon Voss touches on this within the comment section of Theimer’s blog post when he discusses the “distinct difference between giving people the tools to create, contribute or share ownership in archives and cultural heritage, and the opportunity to assist archivists through volunteering.”³⁷ This distinction is even more important in the context of archival decolonization as it attributes

³⁵ Similar to NARA’s Citizen Archivist Dashboard, the Smithsonian has created a crowdsourcing platform to assist in the transcribing of their records. The distinction between the two projects is subtle, yet important to note as the Smithsonian has labelled their participants as “Smithsonian Digital Volunteers,” whereas NARA has labelled their unpaid participants as “Citizen Archivists.” For more information on the Smithsonian Digital Volunteers, visit “Smithsonian Digital Volunteers: Transcription Center,” Smithsonian, accessed January 19, 2017, <https://transcription.si.edu/>.

³⁶ Kate Theimer, “Why we need to find a term to replace “citizen archivist”,” *ArchivesNext*, Wordpress, April 9, 2010, December 23, 2016, <http://archivesnext.com/?p=1214>.

³⁷ Jon Voss, April 11, 2010 (2:29 p.m.), comment on Kate Theimer, “Why we need to find a term to replace “citizen archivist”,” *ArchivesNext*, Wordpress, April 9, 2010, December 23, 2016, <http://archivesnext.com/?p=1214>.

additional responsibility and value to the contributions made by members of the general public who possess the knowledge that is often unattained by conventional Western archival practices. This blog post and corresponding comment section offer an important view of the beginnings of archival decolonization as it has started a conversation that has unsettled a number of professionally trained archivists. Discussions such as this will be important to analyze as the NCTR develops its participatory archiving platform. Will Survivors be seen as simply volunteers as they offer parallel narratives to the colonial records housed at the centre, or will they be seen as knowledge keepers and key collaborators worthy of a title unassociated with the colonial baggage and hang-ups imposed by Western archivists? Perhaps consultation with the “non-professional” archivist to better understand their role would be a good start if we must label the “non-professional” archivists as such. Such a label is also potentially damaging in the context of Indigenous collaboration as Western archives need to accommodate Indigenous notions of archives, and archivists, rather than approaching such collaborations with a one-sided view of archives.

**Case study 2: Naming Projects at Library and Archives Canada (LAC)
and the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (HBCA)**

Project Naming is a collaborative initiative started in 2002 between LAC and Nunavut Sivuniksavut, a college program based in Ottawa, that aimed to bring photographs to Northern Indigenous communities in search of information regarding LAC’s photograph collections: “Nunavut Sivuniksavut has played a pivotal role in coordinating the fieldworkers and students who have worked their way across Nunavut in the identification of the photographs. As people were identified, Nunavut Sivuniksavut entered the data

gathered into spreadsheets and sent it to Library and Archives Canada.”³⁸ Yet upon further inspection, it was actually Murray Angus, a Nunavut Sivuniksavut instructor, who brought the idea of Project Naming forward to LAC as he understood “the majority of Inuit whose photographs are held in the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) collections were not identified.”³⁹ Such a partnership with an organization with existing ties to Indigenous communities is an important takeaway for the NCTR.

To date, the project has been successful in terms of the quantifiable number of names and captions added to the descriptive information found within the LAC’s database: “Since 2002, approximately 8,000 images have been digitized and nearly 2,000 Inuit, activities and places have been identified. Information provided by different generations of Inuit and non-Inuit has been added to the records in the database, and made available to the public.”⁴⁰ In addition to the statistical outcomes of this project, it is also the intent of LAC and Nunavut Sivuniksavut to help generations of Inuit and non-Inuit people better understand their history through enriched descriptions. By doing so, Project Naming strives to aid “members of communities connect with their past and create intergenerational bridges,”⁴¹ and seeing as the majority of LAC’s photographs of the North consist of nameless faces and activities, reaching out to knowledge keepers outside of the archival realm is the only way these faces could ever be identified. This is also true for the collections of photographs in LAC’s holdings that represent First Nations and Métis people from across Canada. On May 28 2015, LAC expanded on its original scope of Project

³⁸ “Project Naming: Always on Our Minds,” Archives & Museum Informatics, accessed August 30, 2016, <http://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw2005/papers/greenhorn/greenhorn.html>.

³⁹ “The story behind Project Naming,” Library and Archives Canada, accessed January 19, 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/project-naming/Pages/introduction.aspx>.

⁴⁰ “Project Naming,” Library and Archives Canada, accessed August 29, 2016, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/project-naming/Pages/introduction.aspx>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, accessed August 29, 2016.

Naming to include additional photographs of Inuit communities in northern Québec and Labrador, as well as photographs of First Nations and Métis people. By widening their scope, LAC has opened the door to traditional knowledge keepers situated in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities who possess a wealth of knowledge deserving of preservation

However, there are a number of limitations associated with Project Naming that should be addressed by the NCTR before implementing participatory measures. The first limitation is the lack of Indigenous languages available via the project's database. Throughout my searches in the Project Naming database, I was only able to locate descriptions in English and French, limiting the accessibility of these descriptions. Including the use of Indigenous languages in descriptions and finding aids would greatly increase the accessibility of LAC's records documenting Indigenous communities to the communities themselves. This suggestion does not take into account the difficulties associated with such an undertaking, however it is important to note as language barriers and subsequent accessibility issues represents a challenge for the NCTR seeing as it has not made attempts to address this issue.

The second limitation is the overuse of square brackets to identify the information gathered by Project Naming. During archival description, square brackets are used when the information being presented is deemed "not authenticated" to make users of archives aware that the information in question should be taken with a grain of salt as it could be an archivist's "best guess." Yet, if a photograph has a name written on the back it is deemed by archivists as "authentic" and thus does not require the cautious use of square brackets. If the NCTR is to adopt a similar project, an alternate way of identifying the descriptive

information gathered by the project should be implemented as to not attribute a higher level of value to the description created by archivists compared to those provided by some of Canada's experts in the subject matter at hand.

Finally, the third limitation is the lack of authority and acknowledgment being given to those providing the descriptive information gathered by Project Naming. In place of an individual or community name, LAC offers the following statement: "Described by the NEGNUM project."⁴² In consultation with those providing the information, perhaps the names of the knowledge and information providers should be shared and documented as a part of the historical record to better reflect the participatory nature of the project. By doing so, LAC would further acknowledge the legitimacy and importance of the information be shared.

Not dissimilar to LAC's Project Naming, the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA) has embarked on a project of their own to crowdsource the task of attributing names to those depicted in its photographs of Canada's North. The Names and Knowledge Initiative⁴³ addresses the final limitation seen in Project Naming by providing the names of those who have shared their knowledge: "We will add the names to the photograph captions, for everyone who views the records to see. With your permission, we will include your own name as the source of the knowledge."⁴⁴ This statement is important, and should be endorsed and further elaborated by the NCTR as it decides to begin collecting and disseminating user-generated information. The Names and Knowledge Initiative also

⁴² For an example see: Richard Harrington, "[James Hala]," 1949-1950, Coppermine, N.W.T., [Kugluktuk (formerly Coppermine), Nunavut], photograph by Richard Harrington, Library and Archives Canada, accession number 1976-086, item number PA-146621, reproduction copy number a146621.

⁴³ "The Names and Knowledge Initiative," The Archives of Manitoba, accessed November 20, 2016, http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/names_knowledge/index.html.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, accessed November 20, 2016.

addresses the overuse of square brackets as seen with Project Naming, legitimizing the participation of those providing the contextual information such as the names. However, this project also suffers from key issues that are important to discuss. For example, the description of the project itself is lacking in terms of how HBCA gathers and releases the information provided by the knowledge keepers of the North.

Additionally, HBCA states in the project's description that they hold "post journals, letters, maps, account books, art and film in which Inuit people, place names and ways of living are recorded, many of which are also described in the database."⁴⁵ This builds on what LAC has done with Project Naming as additional contextual information is being shared with HBCA for archival purposes. The project also uses Facebook as a way of bringing historical photographs out to communities in the hopes of discovering names and accessing traditional knowledge. In order to do so, HBCA has partnered with the History Museum in Inuvik, Northwest Territories as a way of creating a relationship with an organization with existing ties to Northern communities. In doing so, HBCA has been able not only to have names added to their photographs, but also learn from the cultural knowledge of the museum's Facebook page followers to access contextual information missed at the time of acquisition. For example, the History Museum in Inuvik posted an HBCA photograph on October 30th, 2015 entitled "'Hunting the white whale.' 1936. (Photographer: Richard N. Hourde. HBCA-1987-363-E-341/53)."⁴⁶ Although the associated comments do not definitively determine the man's name, as there are multiple

⁴⁵ Ibid., accessed December 21, 2016.

⁴⁶ The tool is identified as a harpoon drag plate, or the Inuit name illiviak: Darrel Nasogaluak, November 9, 2015 (2:34 a.m.), comment on Inuvialuit History Timeline, "'Hunting the white whale.' 1936. (Photographer: Richard N. Hourde. HBCA-1987-363-E-341/53)," *Inuvialuit History Timeline*, October 30, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/inuvialuihistory/photos/a.957562144304249.1073741911.542713652455769/957563134304150/?type=3&theater>.

names provided, the comments do indeed provide the name and purpose of the tool being used in the photograph. That said, how is this new contextual information being treated by HBCA? When looking at the record in HBCA's Keystone database, the record remains unchanged at this time.⁴⁷ This represents a learning opportunity for the NCTR as they continue to grow their social media engagement. It will be important to understand how the knowledge being shared through social media will contribute to the metadata associated with the NCTR's photographs, ultimately reshaping the photographs and how they are understood.

Case study 3: The National Archives of Australia's Participatory Archive

When navigating the National Archives of Australia's (NAA) website, there is an instant feel of online community participation. The first image that is shown on the main page is an advertisement for a project called the ArcHIVE (the Hive).⁴⁸ The premise of the project is to offer members of the public the opportunity to transcribe current digitized records found within the NAA's public database. The benefit for the NAA is that it enables the transcribed documents to be fully searchable via their RecordSearch database. This project represents a unique collaborative relationship between the Australian people and the NAA. Another interesting aspect of this project is the way in which they attempt to entice people to join in the transcribing effort. They make use of a point based system to create a sense of competition among the transcribers. Taking it one step further, there is a leaderboard present on the website that posts the names of those who have the highest number of points. Points are based on both the total number of documents transcribed and

⁴⁷ [Unidentified Inuit man] "Hunting the white whale," 1936, photograph by Richard N. Hourde, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, accession number 1987/363, item number E-341/53, location code H4-199-4-5.

⁴⁸ "The Archive," National Archives of Australia, accessed August 23, 2016, <http://transcribe.naa.gov.au/>.

the difficulty level of the transcriptions that they have completed. Although this type of gamification lends itself well to the context of the NAA and the types of records being transcribed, it would be in poor taste for the NCTR to adopt a similar model to motivate and encourage the public to assist in transcribing its public records. Yet, the model outlined by the NAA does shed light on the public's willingness to engage with archives in a way that could increase access to the records being housed by the NCTR.

Zoe D'Arcy provides background information regarding the development and implementation of the Hive. Although the records being added to the Hive for crowdsourced transcription do not deal specifically with human rights, D'Arcy does conclude that the project must widen its scope "as consultation has shown people wanting to work on "their own" material."⁴⁹ In the case of the NCTR, the Hive offers a good example of creating a space that can evolve with the needs of its users. D'Arcy's notion of consultation to better understand the direction of the Hive is a key component to ensuring the long-term success of the project. Additionally, D'Arcy's willingness to document and publish her experiences around the planning and implementation of the Hive as a Director at the National Archives of Australia is also something to keep in mind as the NCTR continues its plans to implement a participatory archiving platform. As the centre continues to develop as a leader in archival innovation and working closely with Indigenous communities, such a gesture of presenting one's experiences in implementing a platform such as the Hive could assist in decolonizing archives. Such a gesture could also lead to feedback from the participants as an act of continued community consultation.

⁴⁹ Zoe D'Arcy, "The Hive: Crowdsourcing the Description of Collections," in *Description: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections*, ed. Kate Theimer (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 14.

In addition to this collaborative project, the NAA also offers resources for communities that are interested in starting their own archive. The most notable resource is a book published by the NAA in 2007 entitled *Keep It for the Future! How to set up Small Community Archives*.⁵⁰ This book embraces the fact that more and more community archives are coming to fruition, and they have created this resource as a step-by-step how-to guide in an effort to facilitate the daunting task of establishing and maintaining a community archive. The book is available for a modest \$4.00. The Hive, along with the resources for smaller community archives, represents an interesting approach to participatory archiving that deserves further review by the NCTR as it begins to develop participatory ways of processing its collections. The notion of offering preservation advice to those not quite ready to part with their records or stories is something that could not only increase the long-term preservation of a community's records, but also build a relationship between the community in question and the NCTR. By offering such a service, a relationship could develop built on the understanding that the NCTR is not only committed to preserving the legacy of the RS system, but also committed to assisting Indigenous communities in Canada interested in preserving their own histories. Although no formal process has been established, the NCTR Archives started offering preservation advice to communities with the launch of the December 2016 website: "Preserving indigenous history is especially important to the NCTR and we aim to better understand the archival needs of Indigenous communities across Canada. The NCTR offers archival preservation advice to anyone who would like to preserve their records."⁵¹

⁵⁰ "Keep It for the Future!," National Archives of Australia, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://eshop.naa.gov.au/p/643028/keep-it-for-the-future.html>.

⁵¹ "Ongoing Opportunities to Share - How to preserve your own records," The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed January 19, 2017, <http://nctr.ca/archives-pages.php#share>.

This type of relationship could also assist the NCTR in better understanding various Indigenous handling and access protocols, a notion that speaks to the call for a decolonizing approach to archives outlined in this thesis. By moving beyond solely Western notions of archival access restrictions and long-term preservation, the NCTR could forge a path for relationships between archival institutions and Indigenous communities built on the understanding that archivists in the Western sense do not always know what is best in terms of the management of records produced by Indigenous peoples. Such an acknowledgment by the NCTR would go a long way in building relationships with Indigenous communities interested in preserving and managing their own records within their own communities. These relationships could in turn lead to a unique collaborative process, resulting in the establishment of a digital environment capable of offering layered cultural protocols tailored to the needs of Indigenous communities across Canada, as well as creating space for Indigenous input into the describing and arrangement of archival collections. These descriptions and arrangements could then be presented alongside those created by the NCTR's archivist for a more decolonizing approach to presenting and documenting records that document the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Technologies and platforms currently available to implement such a participatory and culturally inclusive environment will be discussed in section 3.5.

Case study 4: WITNESS

WITNESS does not represent a traditional archival institution as seen in previous case studies. Instead, "WITNESS trains and supports activists and citizens around the world to use video safely, ethically, and effectively to expose human rights abuse and fight

for human rights change.”⁵² Established in 1992, WITNESS was built on the vision of individuals such as musician and activist Peter Gabriel who believe that video can help to both document the truth and give voices on an international stage to those being affected by human rights abuses.⁵³ Since its establishment, WITNESS has been amassing a digital archive housing documented cases of gross human rights abuses from around the world. This example is relevant to the work being done at the NCTR as it provides examples of how user participation can lead to social justice and truth telling. In March 2011, at the TRC’s National Research Centre Forum held in Vancouver BC, former Director of Operations and Archives of WITNESS Grace Lile discussed the lack of awareness surrounding the RS system, as well as the notions of advocacy and activism within the realm of archives.⁵⁴ As Lile explains, WITNESS has been working to establish a digital asset management system with complex layering of information, including technical metadata and multiple language exporting. Additionally, Lile discusses WITNESS’s description and cataloging system that strives to allow for outside input as it should be an “iterative process, always open to future elaborations elucidation, and participation.”⁵⁵ This iterative process open to outside participation undertaken by WITNESS also extends to the challenges of providing access to and imposing restrictions on a variety of collections, as “records may be recontextualized in light of subsequent information or events or perceptions, or perspectives, sorry. Restrictions may be lifted, or imposed after the fact.”⁵⁶

The participatory nature of WITNESS, and the acknowledgement by Lile of the ongoing

⁵² “Witness - About,” WITNESS, accessed November 20, 2016, <https://witness.org/about/>.

⁵³ “Witness - About,” WITNESS, accessed November 20, 2016, <https://witness.org/about/our-story/>.

⁵⁴ “NRC Forum - Grace Lile,” YouTube Video, 20:37, talk by Grace Lile, Director of Operations and Archives, WITNESS, New York, USA, at the TRC’s NRC Forum on March 1-3, 2011, posted by “TRC - CVR,” accessed November 20, 2016, <https://vimeo.com/20574270>.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, accessed November 20, 2016.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, accessed November 20, 2016.

process of understanding the needs of one's stakeholders when stewarding records of human rights abuses is an important message that should be addressed by institutions such as the NCTR.

Regarding archiving for advocacy, Lile has provided the following definition that includes segments that speak true to the work currently undertaken by the NCTR, while others shed light on aspects that require additional attention:

To promote the living and active presence of archives and documentation to serve the work of social justice. To effect change, and to matter not just to scholars and researchers, but to the lives of real people... to prioritize access to those most affected... to enshrine trust as a guiding principle... to humbly acknowledge, regardless of our best intentions and professional integrity our own biases and limitations, and the inevitable silences and omissions which exist in every collection or narrative.⁵⁷

By acknowledging the silences and omissions that exist in the NCTR's collections, certain gaps may be identified to further understand the need for the NCTR to employ participatory practices, such as the advocacy measures employed by WITNESS to help document human rights abuses through crowdsourced videography.

Although the RS system has ended, its lasting impacts will be felt by intergenerational Survivors for multiple generations. Herein lies one of the ways WITNESS could influence the NCTR and its future participatory projects. Part of the NCTR's mandate is to continue gathering the truths of those affected by the RS system. A platform such as WITNESS offers an interesting way for intergenerational Survivors to share their truths. With the closing of the TRC, the NCTR has not adequately made it known that statement gathering services are still available to those who are interested. Moreover, this service is generally limited to those who have the means of meeting in-

⁵⁷ Ibid., accessed November 20, 2016.

person with an NCTR employee to record their statement. WITNESS offers a way of accommodating those who do not live in Winnipeg by creating a space where statements can be uploaded remotely.

3.5 Conclusion: Archival Participation and the NCTR

In the UM's bid document, clear examples are given that outline how the NCTR will approach the concepts of user participation and co-curation, including the establishment of a strong online presence where anyone with an internet connection, or access to an institution with an internet connection, will have the opportunity to engage with and add to the NCTR's holdings. In addition to bringing individuals and communities together from around the world through the use of online forums and support networks, the UM's bid document also suggests creating a space where people can add descriptions and comments to records, as well as create their own arrangements. By doing so, these new co-curated record sets would make the NCTR's holdings more accessible, richer in context, and more reflective of how various communities wish to tell their history and stories. This notion of allowing users to interact with and shape the NCTR's records also helps to foster the idea of a "living archive"⁵⁸ where Indigenous voices and perspectives are respected, honoured, and preserved, rather than having a repository consisting of mainly non-Indigenous created records, excluding the very voices of those being represented. In other words, these co-curated record sets will help ensure that the NCTR's holdings remain relevant and valued by future generations.

The social media strategy outlined by NARA for 2017-2020 is a realistic example of what the NCTR could do to strive to implement participatory measures in its social

⁵⁸ The notion of a "living archive" has been previously discussed in Chapter 1.

media practices, and to render them transparent by outlining their intentions, goals, and vision for the strategy. In addition to this, it would allow space for the NCTR's stakeholders to provide feedback on the strategy to achieve a truly participatory and collaborative process. Additionally, NARA's Citizen Archivist Dashboard goes one step further than previous participatory projects by offering the general public the opportunity to both transcribe and translate NARA's archival collections; the latter being especially pertinent to the NCTR regarding the translation of records into Indigenous languages.⁵⁹ This feature would be especially important in the translation of Survivor testimonies for increased access. The only caveat is the limitations of the NCTR's current database as it does not support the use and preservation of Indigenous languages. As this section strives to provide a practical example of implementable participatory measures, it is important to acknowledge the changes that would be required to the NCTR's current infrastructure, such as the addition of Indigenous language support in its current or future databases.

Further research and actual hands on experience utilizing these systems as parallel instruments for implementing participatory archiving practices alongside existing archival systems is outside the scope of this thesis, though it warrants significantly more attention. This work will be important in the context of the NCTR due to the aforementioned limitations associated with the centre's current database and website. One of my current duties at the centre is to conduct research into various platforms that could accommodate a robust and dynamic participatory archiving platform that includes both the technical

⁵⁹ In order to introduce a level of quality control to the translations, a potential first step could be partnering with Indigenous language instructors and incorporate quality control and translation projects into their lesson plans. For example, the University of Manitoba's Native Studies department offers a Minor in Native Languages that includes Ojibway and Cree: "Faculty of Arts - Cree," University of Manitoba - Undergraduate Admissions, accessed January 19, 2017, <https://umanitoba.ca/student/admissions/programs/cree.html>.

requirements to both collect and disseminate user-generated information and records, as well as the capacity to accommodate cultural access protocols unique to different regions and communities. The research conducted to write this chapter has assisted me to better understand the possibilities of such a system, however additional research must be done to understand the technical requirements needed for its implementation.⁶⁰

In addition to the technological aspects of implementing participatory archiving, it will be essential for the NCTR to offer in-person participation for those who are not comfortable or experienced in using technology, or for those with limited to no internet access. Similar to projects such as LAC's Project Naming, that partnered with Nunavut Sivuniksavut to bring records out to communities, making records available in person for a participatory process such as name tagging, transcribing, or translating is essential for a balanced approach to participatory archiving. It will be important for the NCTR to build its network of partners to move beyond its current relationships with colonial institutions. Without the establishment of a more inclusive network of partners, it will be difficult to fund projects to fly NCTR employees across the country in an attempt to reach a wider audience. Additionally, such an approach would not address the communities unwilling to participate with a Western archival institution due to varying levels of mistrust that can be

⁶⁰ During the fall of 2015, I began research into various digital platforms with promise of fostering participatory archiving projects. The frontrunners include Mukurtu, currently being used by the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal (<http://plateauportal.wsulibs.wsu.edu/>), the Musqueam Indian Band (<https://musqueam-fetzer.mukurtu.net/>), and the Centre for Digital Archaeology (<https://www.centerfordigitalarchaeology.org/>). The benefits of Mukurtu include the accommodation of user-generated descriptions, the implementation of customizable cultural protocols, and the ability to create content with no internet connection. Hands-on implementation is required to better understand additional benefits, and potential shortcomings. Omeka is the other frontrunner, and is used by the University of Iowa Libraries DIY History Project (<http://diyhistory.lib.uiowa.edu/>). The main advantage of Omeka is that it is open source software, and a number of intriguing add-ons exist that could be beneficial to the NCTR. These add-ons include the "Share Your Story" plugin and the "Contribution" plugin, both requiring more hands-on experience to understand how they could assist the NCTR in implementing a participatory archiving platform.

attributed to the history of government interference in Indigenous communities. It is difficult for me to offer a definitive framework for what the NCTR's participatory approach would look like as it is something that should be developed by the centre in collaboration with those involved in the participatory project. By outlining past projects, and by reviewing the archival literature on participatory archiving, I hope to shed light on possible approaches that could be implemented to suit the needs of the NCTR and its stakeholders.

The ways in which the centre can motivate individuals and communities to participate in archival processes have been highlighted throughout this thesis. As previously mentioned, Indigenous consultation and involvement is a key component of a successful participatory project. But success cannot be measured by the statistics often used by archives to validate their worth, such as research visits, reference enquiries, or database hits. Alternatively, the success of an NCTR participatory project should be measured by the relationships it creates with Survivors, intergenerational-Survivors, and Indigenous communities. This thesis strives to highlight past initiatives in order to shed light on possible practices that could be adopted by the NCTR.

In addition to engaging with Indigenous communities to better understand their needs and desired outcomes of a participatory project, it will be important to include Indigenous voices in the planning and implementation stages of projects. As seen in both LAC's Project Naming and the Shingwauk Residential School Centre's Shingwauk Project, creating partnerships between archives and members of Indigenous communities is an integral part of an inclusive process. Without LAC's partnership with Nunavut Sivuniksavut, it would have been difficult for a department of the federal government to travel to Northern communities in an effort to collect descriptive information for their

holdings. Without the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, it would have been very difficult for Algoma University to hold community engagement sessions that offered intergenerational-Survivors the opportunity “to see photographs of their family members and to piece together parts of their family histories that are often not talked about.”⁶¹

In order to form these partnerships, this thesis has discussed cases studies wherein community liaisons were hired by archives to work with communities as a way of building relationships between groups affected by human rights abuses, and memory institutions in need of cultural knowledge. Although crowdsourcing participatory endeavors are attractive to archival institutions as they strive to make archival holdings more accessible by relying on the public to freely provide their knowledge and time, it is important to acknowledge that the NCTR and other archives of human rights abuses differ from more mainstream archival institutions. The main difference being that instead of simply using crowdsourcing to have the public transcribe archival documents to which they have no personal ties, the NCTR must work closely with Survivors and intergenerational-Survivors to collect information and knowledge that only they possess. As seen with Libraries ACT in Chapter 1, paid community liaison officers were hired by Libraries ACT not based on their library knowledge, but rather for their community and cultural knowledge. The NCTR has already begun this process by hiring Survivors to visit the centre and share their knowledge with the archives, yet this model of relationship building that includes an exchange of funds for knowledge unavailable elsewhere should be adopted when planning large-scale participatory projects. This thesis has highlighted other possible ways to motivate participation from younger generations, such as the NAA’s ArchHIVE that uses gamifying

⁶¹ Krista McCracken, “Community Archival Practice: Indigenous Grassroots Collaboration at the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre,” *The American Archivist* 78:1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 186.

to attract a younger audience, and WITNESS that motivates the documentation of human rights abuses by creating a virtual space for uploading video testimonies. All of these examples of motivating participation could be applied by the NCTR as it moves forward with participatory archiving, yet the aforementioned partnerships will play an important role in ensuring the needs of Indigenous peoples are being met, and that their knowledge is never missed.

The archival profession has been discussing the concept of participatory archiving for quite some time now, leading to a healthy collection of journal articles and theses relating to the idea of opening the archives to offer the general public the opportunity to leave their mark on history and to help fill gaps in the contextual information traditionally filled in by archivists. Michelle Rydz has concluded in her thesis that “archivists and Aboriginal people must meet face-to-face to share their thoughts, listen to each others’ ideas and express concerns regarding their shared documentary past and to establish relationships of trust.”⁶² I truly believe the NCTR represents such a space, offering an environment where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can meet to discuss the future of archives as it relates to the records of the RS system and Indigenous peoples. By learning from past participatory projects, and by striving to be innovative in the realm of digital platforms geared towards the inclusion of traditional knowledge keepers, the NCTR could be a leader in reshaping the way we describe, arrange, and present archival collections. This task will not be easy, or without a need for adapting along the way. However, if the NCTR can learn from past attempts at implementing such a system, and most importantly

⁶² Michelle Rydz., “Participatory archiving: exploring a collaborative approach to Aboriginal societal provenance” (MA Thesis, Department of History, Archival Studies, University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg, 2010), 107.

learn from Indigenous communities through community liaisons to better understand their archival needs, it could truly usher in a new, more decolonizing approach to the archival profession.

Conclusion

It is important to note that although this thesis may be critical at times of the NCTR for not always pushing the boundaries of its colonial ties to Western archival practices, the centre is very much still an organization in start-up mode, trying to respond to an increasingly high rate of reference inquiries in a timely manner, and working towards making more Residential School records available as the demand for access increases. That said, it is important to think critically about an archive that is responsible for caring and preserving the records of the Residential School system in Canada, as well as the voices and truths of the Survivors and intergenerational Survivors who trusted the TRC, and now NCTR, to ensure their voices are cared for in a respectful way. Although the statements housed by the NCTR represent a significant collection of records that provides alternate narratives to those in the government and church records that document the legacy of Residential Schools, they also represent the beginning of a much longer process of decolonization.

What does archival decolonization truly mean? The notion of decolonizing archives is not one that can be set in stone, or drafted as a finite set of step-by-step instructions for institutions housing records of human rights abuses. It is a concept that must be developed on an institutional level, and should be inclusive of the cultures and stories of those who hold a stake in these archival institutions. This process should involve a deep understanding of the institution's mandate and guiding principles, as well as an understanding of the available documentation on the rights of Indigenous peoples and best practices associated with the housing and caring of Indigenous records. Western archives in Canada have played a role in colonizing Indigenous peoples, yet they now have the opportunity to learn

from these colonial contributions and apply various notions of decolonizing archives in order to understand the role of archives in building relationships with Indigenous communities. In short, archival decolonization is an ongoing journey, beginning with the acknowledgment of the role of archives in fostering damaged relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, followed by a commitment to work toward transforming these relationships into partnerships built on trust and respect.

Above all, the NCTR must work towards establishing trustworthy relationships with its stakeholders. In order to better understand its archival role as an ally to those affected by human rights abuses, the centre must reach out, listen, and learn from its stakeholders in regard to the direction of the centre through continued community engagement. The literature around archives and human rights points to a more Survivor-centred approach to archiving records depicting human rights abuses. By using this method, archival decision-making would reflect the traditions and cultural knowledge of Survivors and intergenerational Survivors in order to build trust with Indigenous communities. Indigenous protocols and documents such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint Orentlicher Principles can also play a role in decolonizing archives. By understanding how these documents could be adopted and applied by the NCTR in its policy writing and day-to-day activities, the centre would not simply be acknowledging the importance of discussing such cultural documents in academic publications, but actually putting them into practice. Such action could lead to new understandings of the relationship between Western archives and Indigenous notions of archives and memory.

Additionally, this process must also be documented and rendered transparent to illustrate how community consultation is truly leading to concrete change. This must be more than simply creating a series of reports based on the consultation process's findings. This dedication to transparency must also translate into documented archival processes as the decisions made by the NCTR's archivists could have lasting impacts on the documented history of Indigenous peoples. By opening up to archival transparency, the NCTR would embrace an honest, truthful, and ultimately decolonizing way of collecting, describing, and providing access to its archival collections.

In addition to a more robust and transparent consultation process, increased measures of archival participation could assist the NCTR in implementing its stakeholders' varying notions of archives and memory as they relate to archival functions such as description. With advances in technology come new opportunities to interact with and obtain information from the public. It will be necessary to not lose sight of what is truly important to the NCTR as digital environments can create a false sense of community. Although a digital participatory environment is an important goal, it is important to acknowledge the impossible task of consulting in-person with all Indigenous communities in Canada. That said, it is important to establish partnerships with individuals and organizations who have existing community ties. By doing so, the NCTR can foster new relationships, leading to new participatory projects tailored to communities and their needs.

Although this thesis has been divided into three distinct chapters, the notions of archival trust, archival transparency, and archival participation are truly intertwined terms, each requiring the implementation and success of the others in order to contribute to archival decolonization. Building trust with a variety of Indigenous communities will

require an open and transparent approach in order to identify the centre's intentions, and the process must be participatory in nature, including outsider input leading to concrete change to reflect the needs of Indigenous peoples. Archival transparency as a decolonizing approach must be built on a foundation of trust in order for the process to be seen as a genuine act of openness. Additionally, outside participation would assist in creating a trustworthy transparent process by including a variety of voices and experiences in the process. Participatory archiving represents one of the more innovative ways that archives can implement decolonizing approaches. With such innovative possibilities comes the responsibility of continued Indigenous consultation to determine the parameters, participants, and outcomes of participatory endeavors. The "build it and they will come" approach is not advisable as it does not offer a transparent or inclusive process, potentially leading to poorly established relationships resulting in the damaged trust that has hindered relationships between Indigenous peoples and archives for decades. Including Indigenous voices in the planning and implementation phases of establishing a participatory platform will be essential for the NCTR if it is not to lose sight of the purpose of such an initiative. It would also set the foundation for long-term relationships that would assist the centre in understanding the needs of Survivors and intergenerational Survivors, and how their needs can be met by a dynamic and innovative participatory platform.

While the adoption of archival decolonization by Western or academic archival institutions represents a shift in the way we perceive our role as archivists, it is important to understand that in order to truly move beyond a colonial method of documenting the lives of others, the centre will have to acknowledge and respect those who do not wish to have their stories documented and housed by a large institution such as the University of

Manitoba. However, the NCTR should continue to “make it known who is excluded, and do our best to offer them a place, if they would have it. By examining the gaps, those ‘blank void regions’ that are never looked at, archivists can begin to address past injustices and fill the archives with a polyphony of voices.”¹ With the release of its new website, the NCTR Archives has recently offered a new service to work closely with Indigenous communities interested in preserving their own archives: “Preserving indigenous history is especially important to the NCTR and we aim to better understand the archival needs of Indigenous communities across Canada. The NCTR offers archival preservation advice to anyone who would like to preserve their records.”² This adds another layer to the NCTR’s decolonizing efforts, and as such should be a process that is expanded upon by the centre.

Earlier in this thesis, I state that the NCTR is not an Indigenous archive because of its colonial and academic ties. That said, what kind of archive is the NCTR? Michelle Caswell turns to community archiving practices to discover their relevance to archiving records of human rights abuses. Is the NCTR a community archive? It may strive to consult with Indigenous communities as it continues to grow as an archive, however it does not fit within the community archiving paradigm as the larger Survivor community would require control over the NCTR’s holdings and decision-making processes. Is the NCTR a truth commission archive? Although the majority of its records came from the TRC process, the NCTR has always maintained that it is more than just the archives of the RS system as it will continue to grow and document the process of reconciliation in Canada. Is the NCTR a human rights archive? This appears to be the direction the centre is headed; however, it

¹ Rodney G.S. Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence,” *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006): 233.

² “Ongoing Opportunities to Share,” The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation - Archives page, accessed December 24, 2016, <http://nctr.ca/archives-pages.php#share>.

is ultimately too early to categorize the NCTR as one singular type of archive over another. If its goals of improving relationships between archives and Indigenous communities are met, and its vision of becoming more of an Indigenous archive is realized, the NCTR will truly become a unique decolonizing archive.

As the centre continues to develop, it will be important for its employees and its stakeholders to question the centre's actions in an attempt to blend the boundaries between Western archival practices, and Indigenous notions of archives. By utilizing the NCTR as a main case study, this thesis has been able to shed light on three facets of archival decolonization as it applies to the NCTR and its stakeholders. However, this thesis represents a single point of view, and as such must be taken with a grain of salt. I hope this thesis helps to propel both the theoretical framework and practical implementation of decolonizing archives. The NCTR is an intriguing case study for this research as it represents a start-up institution with a unique mandate and responsibility to work more closely with Indigenous peoples than any other archive in Canadian history. With great responsibility comes great risk, and as such the centre must learn from the lasting damage done by archives and archivists of the past to reshape the role of archives and archivists of tomorrow in the pursuit of archival decolonization.

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