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Introduction
Cara Krmpotich, 2015 iSchool Student Conference Faculty Advisor

This year’s iSchool Student Conference brought together graduate students from across programs and concentrations. As Dean Ross emphasized in his opening remarks, scholar-practitioners lead library, archives, museum, and information fields. Our fields resist any easy separation of theory and practice. I have always taken this as a productive (and if I’m honest, lucky) quality of being a researcher within these fields. As a faculty member at the iSchool, it was immensely rewarding to see just how productive our students are as they navigate, question, and re-shape emerging theory, best practice, and a changing world.

It was also immensely rewarding to hear how often the presentations had roots in a course assignment. Students took ideas and projects that began in the classroom and through their creativity, innovation, and intellectual curiosity developed them further into the papers we heard at the conference.

The opening keynote address was given by Davida Aronovitch, Managing Editor of the Canadian Encyclopedia. Aronovitch described the goals for today’s Canadian Encyclopedia as being concerned with an expanding narrative; generating “sticky” content; and encouraging dialogue. Presenters at the iSchool Student Conference attended to each of these goals as they discussed their research, exhibitions, professional practice, and prototypes.

Expanding Narratives was a focal topic for Lindsay Small who expanded our sense of museology into space, asking what space heritage should be, who it should be for, and who gets to control it. Fern Burge advocated for “Emancipatory Knowledge Media Design” as a means of bringing anti-oppressive frameworks to information studies. Kaitlin Normandin assembled a range of archival and artefactual evidence to remind us of the individuals within broader historical stories. Hannah Saunders and Leah Strudwick opened up a narrative space for research and library anxiety within information graduate studies. Nefret Salzberg told the unspoken stories of internal theft within museums and archives.

“Sticky” content gets people to engage, contribute and stay awhile. Becky Schaefer raised the paradoxical ability of ephemera to be sticky, to encourage people and ideas to stay. Mike Serafin and Lauren Di Monte identified the potential of digital humanities concepts and software tools to enhance the stickiness of information. Madeline Smolarz asked a poignant question: how can museums step into, rather than retract from, interaction? Marianne Williams explored the
possibility for aural stories to engage us more, and hold us longer. Rachel Leaton gave an example of how museums can take sticky content to the people through pop-up and mobile museums.

The conference was designed to encourage dialogue, though this was a primary concern for certain presenters, including our Saturday keynote speaker Andrea Field from the Bata Shoe Museum. Field opened a conversation on the changing role of volunteerism for both institutions and the volunteers themselves. Kate Langrell sought to bring into conversation publishers, authors, readers, and the media to map perspectives on e-books. Sheila Laroque’s exploration of the role of libraries within mental health involved a dialogue between staff and patrons in ways that sought to identify their similarities. Cynthia Dempster performed scenes from her upcoming play, inviting us to have a conversation across past and present, fact, and fiction. Sofia Kesik explored interoperability as the ability to communicate not just across technical systems, but also across professional systems. Mary Kate Whibbs asked us to interrogate our own biases and the ways we create value across our economic, political, and cultural institutions.

The audience, it must be noted, was commendable at expanding the new narratives we encountered during the conference, adding their own “sticky” content and being willing to engage in dialogue about topics both familiar and foreign.

The iSchool Student Conference organizers, Catherine Lamoureux, Cady Moyer, Robin Nelson, and Alex Somerville, asked us all to Discover! Connect! Share! Through their yearlong effort to shape the direction of the conference, identify inspiring keynotes, and build a cohesive and provocative program, we did indeed discover, connect, and share. We discovered new narratives, concepts, and possibilities. We connected across fields, programs, and concentrations. And we shared our passion for learning and teaching in all directions.

April 8, 2015
Panel no. 1: Community and Use

Museums and the Inclusion of Immigration Populations
Madeline Smolarz, Master of Museum Studies Candidate

Introduction

Over the last several decades, Canada has become a rich patchwork of people from many foreign countries who now call this nation home. To the south, the United States of America (USA) is often called a “melting pot” as its multicultural populations mix and blend together. These are not isolated occurrences exclusive to the North American context. Today, many countries are experiencing significant changes in terms of the origins of their citizens. The rise of multiculturalism in North America and elsewhere coincides with increasing rates of immigration around the globe, which is resulting in progressively diverse populations. This phenomenon has a direct impact on significant institutions, including museums. Museums do not exist in isolation of their communities and therefore should respond accordingly to community change if they are to successfully engage the people in these communities. Diversity, and more specifically, diversity as a result of immigration, is thus one of the many critical issues museums face. How can museums respond to the challenges posed by immigrant communities? Since it is outside the scope of this paper to examine the long, multifaceted history of interaction between museums and immigrant groups, the focus will be on the present. It will be argued that museums can better serve immigrant populations by noting the best practices of immigrant museums; understanding the practices of display and representation in immigrants’ homes and outdoor spaces; and implementing museum practices that have the potential to create an inclusive environment.

Exploring Immigration Museums

Immigration museums can be helpful starting points for understanding how to address multicultural populations because these museums are often created near where immigrants arrived. Therefore, they are not only situated in the very same geographical context where new immigrants first found themselves in their new country, but they also have a deep connection to the memory of that particular place. In addition, such institutions may also have direct access to immigration records and/or artefacts due to their relationship with landing sites, which then become the museum’s responsibility to share with the public. Five immigration museums have been selected from Australia, Canada, and the USA to be examined in this paper because these nations in particular have a long history of documented immigration to draw from. In each of
these cases, immigration has been ongoing since the foundations of the country and consequently, the museums that address this topic have much material to utilize.

One of the earliest immigration museums in the United States is the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, which can be found on a small isle off the coast of the state of New York. This is the location of the federal offices that received and processed tens of millions of immigrants between 1892 and 1924 seeking entry into the USA and later served as a minor deportation facility. In the mid-1980s, it was restored at the great expense of private sector donors (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 177-179). However, despite its status as a beautiful site that offers a restaurant, a substantial gift shop, and the opportunity for American Express cardholders with one hundred dollars to spend to “honor an ancestor by inscribing the person’s name on the American Immigrant Wall of Honor” (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 181), Ellis Island is a problematic immigration museum. Noting the ways in which Ellis Island is imperfect can help other museums recognize similar issues in their own practices so that the same issues can be avoided. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett notes how the museum struggles to be inclusive and rectify the exclusion that took place on the Island in the past by honouring visitors as Ellis Islanders with a certificate or medal, yet most Americans’ stories are bypassed (1998, 180).

History becomes a commodity for the descendant with deep pockets who purchases a plaque for the Wall of Honor (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 181) or partakes in corporate capitalism in the shop where “logocentrism run[s] amok” (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 185). In the end, Ellis Island is producing memories rather than working to reclaim them, although the museum’s seductive rhetoric almost persuades one otherwise (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 187). This is not a constructive way to approach diversity. Museums should not cheapen memory by ignoring approaches that are important for recovering original memories, encouraging commodification, and reducing diverse ancestral experiences to shop items that enhance stereotypes.

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum offers a more appropriate approach to addressing the experiences of immigrants. Like Ellis Island, the Tenement Museum is also in New York, USA, but instead of acting as a gateway into the rest of the country, the building at 97 Orchard Street served as a first home for thousands of immigrants along with many other buildings in the surrounding neighbourhood from the mid-1860s up until the beginning of World War II. The museum is comprised of “recreated… apartments of five immigrant families who resided in the building, and… several apartments in close to the same condition they were found
Museums and the Inclusion of Immigrant Populations

in when the museum acquired the building” (Russell-Ciardi 2008, 40). The Tenement Museum brings to mind the trials immigrants faced living in the apartment complex that are still very relevant today, which firmly situates it in both the past and the present (Russell-Ciardi 2008, 43). When the museum’s staff realized that visitors were projecting their romanticized ideas about their ancestors and historical immigrants on the Tenement Museum, they took action to complicate the museum’s subject matter. They increased the complexity of their tour content and hired immigrants to deliver tours. These guides could make connections between their personal stories and those represented in the museum while making it clear that they were not authorities on the immigration experience (Russell-Ciardi 2008, 44-46). The “Kitchen Conversations” sessions also initiated discussions about contemporary immigration with post-tour dialogues led by a trained facilitator, an initiative that has become quite successful. Moreover, the “Shared Journeys” program targeted new immigrants specifically to give them an opportunity to take part in the conversations happening at the museum about immigration and civic issues (Russell-Ciardi 2008, 48). These three changes transformed the Tenement Museum into a place that welcomes non-immigrants and immigrants alike to engage with its subject matter across the boundaries of time. The success of this institution thus serves as a role model for other museums looking to provide inclusive spaces and programs for immigrants.

Canada’s National Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia is housed in a renovated waterfront building complex that was the direct point of entry of over one million immigrants between 1928 and 1971 (Zorde 2001, 1). Pier 21 in its role as a museum opened to the public on July 1, 1999 after benefitting from renovations funded by private and corporate donations and government grants (Zorde 2001, 13-14). In Zorde’s thesis on the part Pier 21 plays in the construction of national history, some of the museum’s most remarkable exhibitionary techniques are underlined for their ability to symbolize the past and reach visitors on an emotional level:

Personalizing immigration history at the exhibit takes place through [its] use of interactive displays to communicate immigration history in a way that makes it experiential… the displays literally speak… and the bustle of an immigration shed is recreated through announcements made over a central PA system. In addition, voices [are] piped in from ceiling and wall fixtures (2001, 60).

Pier 21 also successfully incorporates multiculturalism into its exhibits. Peaceful and progressive social change, diversity, tolerance, acceptance, and effortless integration are all included in the
The way the Canadian nation as a community is imagined by the museum is also important to note: “The nation, at Pier 21, is imagined as ethnically diverse but politically and socially cohesive” (Zorde 2001, 81). To acknowledge and embrace diversity while also recognizing the common ground all citizens of a nation stand on is an ideology that can be integrated into other museums’ practices to help foster feelings of both unity and individuality. Pier 21 has undergone a great deal of change recently and will reopen in May 2015. In addition, the recent development of a travelling exhibition entitled Canada: Day 1 continues the museum’s past work by “explor[ing] the multifaceted experiences of newcomers on their first day of arrival in Canada spanning from confederation to present day, as well as the similarities and diversities of these experiences” (Canada: Day 1 Design and Offer Package 2014, 1). The five thematic sections – “Transitions”, “Arrival”, “Encounters”, “Finding Your Way”, and “Reflections” – keep the curatorial voice at a minimum so the voices of immigrants can take centre stage (Canada: Day 1 Design and Offer Package 2014, 2). Canada: Day 1 may become a permanent fixture in Pier 21 after its tour is finished as it is cohesive with the museum’s mission. Its interpretive thematic style can be easily adopted by other museums that do not include immigrant voices in their current practices.

There are two noteworthy immigration museums in Australia that utilize divergent methods when facing the issue of diversity, yet have similar successes. Boumankhar examines the Immigration Museum in Melbourne, Australia to uncover the ways it relates to the immigrant community. Opened in 1998 in a former customs office, the location of this museum has overt symbolic meaning due to its role in Australia’s immigration history (Boumankhar 2011, 62). The museum actively strives to remain in close contact with the diverse community it serves in the state of Victoria, even collaborating with them. Boumankhar relates one such effort, drawing upon a conversation with the museum’s manager: “The community displays and the festival program require a full commitment from the museum in relation to the different communities. Two museum curators have the charge… to maintain a contact with these communities… to forge a real bond of cooperation…” (2011, 79). The key idea here that can be embraced by other institutions is the importance of forging meaningful, reciprocal relationships with communities. Meanwhile, Szekeres concentrates on the Migration Museum of Adelaide, South Australia and its approaches to representing diversity appropriately, opposing racism, and raising awareness about these two issues (2002, 234). This museum is distinctly aware of the problems that stem
from having museum staff tell the story of immigrant communities, even if their opinions are considered during development. Therefore, they established a “Community Access Gallery” named *The Forum*: “[F]or a period of three months, a community group presents their own display, telling their history from their own perspective. It is an ongoing programme with four *Forum* displays a year… From the perspective of community groups *The Forum* is a resounding success” (Szekeres 2002, 239). The idea of community is thus revisited regularly and the stories of each group remain unfiltered. Ensuring that both the museum staff and the community see partnership projects as beneficial endeavours should be a goal at the heart of every museum’s plans to tackle the critical issue of diversity. It is not enough to approach a community to hear their insight, only to retreat from further interaction. Much more can be accomplished through true collaboration and representation, as in *The Forum*.

*Learning From Immigrants’ Homes and Gardens*

The characteristics of immigrants’ homes and living spaces, both indoors and outdoors, can be used to determine which museological practices increase immigrant feelings of inclusion in the museum. Interestingly, comparisons have been made between museums and these spaces before, due to basic practices they already share; they can both be customized using methods of representation and display. The reasons behind these methods may be different, but the activities they are associated with are still closely related. Many of the discussions that pick up on this relationship have not progressed much further than establishing that the similarity exists, but there are still a few noteworthy exceptions that examine it more in depth. The publications that will be outlined here either look at the inside of immigrant homes or address their outdoor counterparts, but not both simultaneously.

The geographical landscape of a person’s country of birth can be deeply ingrained in their memory and inform their sense of home. Morgan et al. concentrate on the green spaces immigrants have established in Fairfield, a municipality in one of Australia’s most ethnically diverse regions. Their study’s major argument – that people who have diverse cultural backgrounds use their outdoor spaces differently from the rest of the population –is broad enough that it can be applied to countries with similarly multicultural populations (Morgan et al. 2005, 94). There generally tends to be two kinds of activity: “The first is intensively horticultural… Secondly, there are those… who transform their backyards into exhibition
spaces…” (Morgan et al. 2005, 95). The study participants who belonged to the “exhibition” group tended to incorporate foreign motifs alongside Australian symbols, utilized objects to symbolize their sense of self, and regarded their yards as a crucial part of the public exhibition of their affiliations (Morgan et al. 2005, 98). Meanwhile, the immigrants classified as horticulturalists connected with the traditional activities and foods associated with their countries of origin through their senses (Morgan et al. 2005, 96). Mazumdar and Mazumdar’s research in the gardens of immigrant homes in California, USA contrasts with Morgan et al.’s findings. Immigrant yards were found to be “religious, cultural, ecological space[s] and landscapes of remembrance,” rather than representing strong expressions of horticultural heritage or curatorial behaviours (Mazumdar and Mazumdar 2012, 264). These results demonstrate that outdoor spaces are more complicated than previously thought, and therefore immigrant identities and their expression should also be understood as complex. Museums can take note of the role gardens and backyards have in the lives of immigrants by appealing to visitors’ senses, drawing upon the many facets that make up immigrant identities, and addressing the multiple affiliations immigrants may have through exhibitions and subsequent public programs.

Turning to indoor spaces, Boym presents a reflection on the souvenir items that appear in the homes of Russian immigrants in the USA. The author is concerned with diasporic intimacy not in terms of recovering identity through mutual nostalgia for the homeland but rather “the sense of the fragile coziness of a foreign home” (Boym 1998, 501). This intimacy is produced when the initial hardships of adjustment are over and the immigrant feels settled, even marginally. Boym does not label this concept as being particular to Soviet immigrants, so it may be applicable to other immigrant groups in this paper. Upon arrival, immigrants have little of what shaped their previous identity. They begin to adapt to their new context over time, “[y]et they continue with their memory rituals, which tell an alternative story of acculturation and survival in exile” (Boym 1998, 516). For Soviet immigrants, this involves incorporating items into the artistic displays in their homes that lend themselves to nostalgia, are given an aura of singularity by memorial narratives, and are a reflection of the homeowner’s identity (Boym 1998, 518). In the end, each home’s collection represents the eclectic, fragmented identity of its owner and also collective memory, which together “set a stage for intimate experiences” (Boym 1998, 521-522). To create a similar diasporic intimacy in museums to benefit immigrant populations, collective and individual identities should both be considered throughout the
development process of an exhibition and related programming so that they are each represented in the final product. An article from Pascali concentrates on the homes of Italian immigrants in Canada and has a narrower view than Boym, but the author does make an observation that can be extended to broader studies of immigrant homes:

[Italian immigrants] display the contents of the dining and living rooms like museum artefacts, anticipating that few visitors will use these spaces or touch the furnishings. Although this practice may seem extreme, showroom spaces such as the parlour or front room have been a common characteristic of homes. Even today, a relatively unused formal dining room is common in many households, regardless of ethnic background (Pascali 2006, 689; my italics).

The words italicized for emphasis in this passage highlight Pascali’s use of language that is often used to describe museums, but is used to discuss immigrant living rooms instead. If the practise of creating a safe and sacred space for prized objects is already occurring in the home, then immigrants may identify with some similar methods of display in museums, especially if artefacts from their own former countries are being exhibited.

**Applicable Museum Practices**

Recent scholarship provides techniques that can aid in implementing programming based on the knowledge gained from observing immigration museums and examining immigrants’ homes. The methods outlined below situate the interests of the individual as a central concern, which is important as the immigrant population is not homogeneous and every individual experience is different. Monetary barriers, visitor engagement, museological theory, and progressive education have emerged in the literature as starting points for developing practices that incorporate the conclusions drawn from the previous two sections of this paper.

Recognizing the impact admission fees have on bringing immigrants through the museum’s doors is a worthy place to begin when thinking about how to best engage diverse communities. Moving to a new country can be exorbitantly expensive, so for those who immigrate at a great cost, financial stability may not be achieved immediately after arrival. As a result, visiting cultural heritage institutions may not be high on the list of affordable purchases. Lampi and Orth’s study compares the statements made by the public regarding museum entrance fees and the actual effect entrance fees have on museum visitors. Through the arrangement of data into statistical tables and the construction of Chi-square tests, the authors determined that as entrance fees increase, first and second generation immigrants are less likely to visit the museum.
charging the fee (Lampi and Orth 2008, 94). Remarkably, “men, immigrants, people who live in the suburbs, and those with lower income… stated that they are less likely to visit the museum even at a very low fee level” (Lampi and Orth 2008, 96), which suggests that there may be further reasons why the museum is not an appealing destination for immigrant groups in addition to the fee. Even so, the initial hypothesis of the study regarding visitor numbers overestimated the amount immigrant visits would decline after the introduction of an admission fee (Lampi and Orth 2008, 99). This conclusion indicates that there is still hope for museums that want to encourage more immigrants to visit, but that a lack of free access is still often a barrier for these groups. Institutions might consider waiving their fees one evening a week or brainstorming how they can best provide immigrants with affordable options for enjoying what the museum can offer while keeping the results of this study in mind.

Secondly, once the museum succeeds in getting members of diverse immigrant communities to visit, the question becomes how to engage them to make their experience valuable. Stein et al. identify recurring themes in immigrant engagement literature that have important implications for museums, which include “perceptions, attitudes, and experience related to museums,” “leisure time values,” “intergenerational differences,” and “perceptions of learning” (2008, 184-187). How these issues present themselves varies from community to community, so they should be taken into consideration collectively by any museum serious about engaging immigrant groups in a way that cuts across ethnic and cultural boundaries. Since museums serve as places where identities are formed, the thoughtful consideration of these themes when it comes to designing exhibitions and programs becomes all the more essential. Museums should “offer opportunities for individuals to see themselves or their culture reflected in the museum experience… programs, activities, experiences, and interpretation must be aligned with the values, needs, and interests of that audience” (Stein et al. 2008, 188). Including professionals from diverse backgrounds in staffing structures is one strategy that may assist museums in translating the themes that shape immigrant communities into programming that reflects the diversity of its audience (Stein et al, 189). These individuals can provide a wealth of perspectives that may help the museum to identify and make meaningful connections with the themes that run through immigrant experiences so that they may create the kinds of opportunities Stein et al. believe are important. The resulting museum content will be beneficial for immigrant visitors because they will notice and engage more fully with the content they identify with.
Museums and the Inclusion of Immigrant Populations

Third, there are theoretical frameworks that should be considered by museums working towards immigrant inclusion. The larger theoretical umbrella that many of these approaches fall under is New Museology, which critiques the traditional focus museum professionals have on processes in their work and makes museums’ political aspects – namely the museum-community dynamic – its main concern (Whitcomb 2003, 133). Whitcomb uses her experience creating an exhibition entitled *Travellers and Immigrants* in the Fremantle History Museum of Western Australia to explore the role of museological theory from the development stage through to execution of a project (2003, 135). Influenced by the work of Tony Bennett, the author sees community access galleries as tools of the governing body for teaching societal reform. Learning is achieved through an acceptance of the country’s diverse communities so that diversity is not merely represented, but actively constructed and produced (Whitcomb 2003, 136-137). The reason why production takes the place of representation is found in the interaction between the act of curating and history; the latter is formed through a natural process and the former is not. This results in tensions between museum and community understandings of display because individuals from outside the museum do not view curatorial techniques as significant as museum staff do. Subsequently, their interests do not converge, and the curatorial method of producing meaning usually takes over (Whitcomb 2003, 139). Whitcomb then establishes that “think[ing] of museums as ‘ideas based’ rather than as focused on objects,” as New Museology encourages, generates more problems than solutions (2003, 140). The author discovered that opening up dialogue, limiting interpretive strategies, and making use of other forms of media to contextualize objects and situate them in an explanatory framework can lead to successful interpretive design (Whitcomb 2003, 147). Theory does have its place in the museum; some of the greatest interpretive strategies and exhibitionary techniques were born from a theoretical nebula. However, Whitcomb’s contribution reveals that it is best to strike a balance between community concerns and theoretical assertions in order to stimulate the meaningful engagement of immigrant populations and the dialogue they can have with museum programming.

Finally, Hein examines the stories of two women who were integral for the application of progressive education in the museum field and assesses where this style of education is situated in museology today. The progressive education tradition established by pioneer educators Anna Billings Gallup and Louise Connolly provides modern professionals with three vital legacies for education in the museum The first is the importance of including interactive components in
exhibitions, regardless of the type of museum, which has its origins in the growing acceptance of the fact that “visitors need active engagement for understanding” (Hein 2006, 171). Another is the recognition and response to the needs of the community. When looking for inspiration during the development stage, museums should shift their focus from inside the institution to the world outside, thereby “provid[ing] a rationale for reaching out to underrepresented audiences” (Hein 2006, 171). The last main legacy of progressive education is exhibitions and programming that make it their mission to “embrace and exhibit the every-day experience of ordinary people” (Hein 2006, 171). It is the stories of these individuals that are often overlooked, but this does not mean they are not worth telling. “Hands on, minds on” has become a buzz phrase in the museum world, which demonstrates that interactivity is already foremost in the minds of many museum professionals. However, museums should also put the spotlight on ordinary and underrepresented individuals whose experiences have been traditionally excluded if they want to be places where diversity is represented and immigrant populations feel included.

Conclusion

In closing, the lessons learned from inclusive museum practices, the practices specific to immigrant living spaces, and the best practices of immigration museums are important to consider when contemplating how museums can meet the challenge presented by the critical issue of diversity as a result of immigration. Museums have the opportunity to apply these findings in order to reassess and rework the manner in which they serve these populations to produce an improved, inclusive experience for them. This research is highly relevant because although immigration is already a significant critical issue in many modern societies, it will likely become even more prominent due to the effects of climate change. Over the past several decades, climate change has started to alter the global landscape. Desertification, unpredictable weather, and the melting of the polar ice caps are taking a toll on living conditions regardless of where people are living. Droughts produce inhospitable land, storms are increasing in strength and number, and the ocean is slowly swallowing shorelines. There will be unprecedented movements of people forced from their homes if climate change continues. Furthermore, immigrants’ countries of origin may be altered irrevocably or disappear entirely. Therefore, there should be more research on the methods of display and representation used in immigrant homes in particular before the places that inform these practices are possibly lost altogether. It is critical
that museums take the lead in advocating for this research so they may utilize the resulting data for creating inclusive environments for incoming and established immigrant communities alike.

References


Introduction

An interface is the means through which two systems interact. It is a common boundary that brings into dialogue multiple distinct worlds. In the context of the digital humanities, the computer interface is the space where physical texts meet digital methods and modes of representation. It is where humanistic inquiries confront computational methods. The computer interface is where readers experience what Hayles (2003) has described as both the translation and interpretation of a text into digital form (263). By both enabling and structuring particular kinds of reading practices the computer interface can be imagined as the stage for what Drucker (2009) calls the performative production of a text (170). Given the multiple and complex roles that a digital interface can play, it should come as no surprise that Compton and Siemens (2013) have called interface design “one of the most pressing issues in the future of the scholarly edition” (2).

This paper takes seriously the import accorded to the interface within the digital humanities. It will probe some of the possibilities and limits of the computer interface as a reading and research tool by unpacking theoretical and practical aspects of interface design. Drawing on the work of digital humanities scholars, and our own interface design prototyping project, this paper will describe how we used a design-oriented research (Fallman 2007) approach to reflect on broader philosophical questions related to the future of the book and the future of reading practices. Specifically, this paper will describe how our narrowly-construed interface design project helped us dig deeper into questions such as: what is an adequate representation of a text? What can, should or must be included in the translation into digital form? What can, should or must be excluded? How can digitization processes enable or foreclose the formulation of research questions and the application of research methods? How might an interface affect, extend or circumscribe reading practices? Ultimately, this paper will show the complexity involved in designing an online reading and research interface, as well as reveal interesting tensions that emerge between theoretical conceptions of the interface and actually existing tools and systems. Drucker (2013) suggests that “the task of designing an interface is probably the best exercise in reading one can provide”(217). Similarly, this paper concludes by

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suggesting that the task of designing an interface is probably the best exercise one can engage in to unpack the implications of digitization for reading and research practices.

**DOR: Building an interface for Johnson’s revisions**

Fallman (2007) describes design-oriented research (DOR) as a research method that seeks to produce new knowledge by including design activities in the research process. DOR involves producing prototypes to help researchers think through complicated theoretical issues and concerns. For this project, we employed a DOR framework to help us think through issues related to the design and use of digital interfaces in the humanities. We believed that by engaging in a prototyping exercise we could create a unique opportunity to ground highly abstracted issues related to the translation, interpretation and representation of texts. Specifically, we thought it would be interesting to catalogue features, functionalities, and tools that digital scholars describe as important or desirable in their theoretical texts and see what happens when we try to implement those same features, functionalities and tools in an online space. By engaging in this kind of play, we engage a practice that Schön (as cited by Fallman 2007) has called “problem setting” (197). In problem setting, speculative claims made in literature are tested against prototypes built during design processes. The resulting research objects help probe the contours of existing paradigms and can help researchers to think beyond the limits of those paradigms. By doing so, DOR can lead researchers to reconsider or redefine the problems and issues at stake within a given field. In other words, by refining the problem description, it may be possible to find new ideas or new ways of doing things. For this project we use DOR to help us understand how the problem of the interface is framed in digital humanities literature, how this problem can be practically addressed using XML markup and other digital tools, and what new ideas might emerge from bringing these two perspectives together.

For our prototyping exercise we set ourselves the task of digitizing and building an interface for reading a two-page spread from the revision notes that Samuel Johnson made to the “B section” of his 1755 publication of *A Dictionary of the English Language*. This primary text is comprised of both printed text and handwritten revision notes. All of the handwritten revisions that Johnson made to the “B section” were intended to be included in the 1773 version of the *Dictionary;* however, these changes were never actually incorporated into the final publication. Johnson scholar Allan Reddick suggests that the revisions made to the “B section” were omitted
from the publication for the simple reason that these notes were misplaced and never given to the compositor (Johnson 2005). In 2005, more than 230 years after Johnson revised his work, the “B section” modifications finally saw publication when Reddick edited a scholarly text containing photographic reproductions of the original revised pages, a transcription of all Johnson’s suggested changes, and Reddick’s own notes and annotations on this work. Johnson’s Dictionary has a rich and complicated history, and we thought it would be interesting to see if we could build an interface that could capture some of the dynamism of this text. Specifically, we wanted to build upon Reddick’s work by building an interface that would allow scholars to examine Johnson’s original 1755 publication of the Dictionary, the revisions he made in the “B section,” and Reddick’s notes and annotations all in a single space.

Our challenge was to produce a diachronic reading experience that would seamlessly bring primary sources and secondary research together into an integrated online interface. We wanted to show the actual changes and additions made to this text over time, as well as signal that this text—like every text—is part of a larger sociohistorical process. To this end, we pursued two interlaced goals. The first was to explore ways to mark-up the revisions in XML so that we could technically build a tool where readers could tack between Johnson’s original published dictionary, Johnson’s revisions, and Reddick’s notes. The second was to draw on scholarship from the digital humanities to design an interface that would intuitively be understood as staging a reading experience across time and as revealing the historicity of the text.

Some Theoretical Approaches to the Interface

In order to attend to our interface design goals we began by surveying some of the literature on interface design in the digital humanities. We wanted to better understand the specific qualities and characteristics that scholars working in this field valued in their digital reading and research tools. This survey of the literature revealed two broad themes that would inform our own prototyping process.

Digital Publishing vs. Digital Scholarship

The first and most salient theme that emerged was the requirement that digital reading and research tools foreground scholarship over publishing. Much of the discussion surrounding the design and development of useful digital interfaces focused on the need to move beyond
simply making a text available for reading online. Although converting an analog text into a digital format is helpful and can make a text accessible to more people, such a practice does not always allow researchers to take full advantage of the affordances offered by digitization. Simply transcribing a text into a digital space does not allow for experimentation with computational strategies. In order to ask new questions of a text, and pursue new methods to investigate a text, digitization projects must make use of sophisticated metadata, coding, and data storage tools. As Bath and Harkema (2013) suggest, the best digital humanities interfaces do more than simply make a text available for viewing; these tools make a text available for study (4). Similarly, Crompton and Siemens (2013) argue that a successful digital humanities interface “offers new ways of ordering and therefore encountering textual content” (3). By making use of mark-up and database tools, digital interfaces should enable innovative ways of engaging with texts and provide new ways to think through and with materials. Tasovac (2010) explains this approach as a move away from the creation of static objects and a step toward the development of services and interactive methods (2). The focus here shifts from digital tools enabling the presentation of text to the reader toward supporting each researcher’s unique investigative processes. Some examples of tools that digital humanities scholars describe as useful for their research include: interactive visualizations, formatting materials as relational databases that can be queried in numerous ways, and developing avenues to support user-generated content and interactions (Rockwell et al. 2013; Tasovac 2010; Wagner, Bratteteig, and Stuedahl 2010; Wooldridge 2004).

Situatedness and Meaning-Making

In addition to opening up a text for a different kind of study, digital humanities literature suggests that successful interfaces acknowledge the situated and partial perspectives of every reader and of every interface. Successful digital interfaces should not make claims to any kind of objectivity, but rather admit that they structure specific kinds of reading experiences, and, consequently, that they make particular arguments about the text. Drucker (2011) summarizes a key aspect of this theme when she argues “[i]nterface and its relation to reading …[is] an environment in which varied behaviors of embodied and situated persons will be enabled differently according to its many affordances” (12). In other words, every person will approach a given interface from a unique perspective and, as such, it remains an important task for designers and researchers to unpack the effects and affects of the specific functionalities and arguments
built into each tool. By doing so, it may be possible to make more evident the specific manner in which digital reading and research tools inform interpretations of a text. Burdick et al. (2012) highlight many of the same ideas when they argue that “[e]very migration from analog to digital is a translation that stages a certain experience of artifacts encountered online” (102). Every interface is an interpretation of the materials it represents, or, to borrow from Sperberg-McQueen (1991), every interface is a theory of the text. As an already existing interpretation, every interface can enable or disable particular kinds of analyses and meanings depending on who is engaged in the reading practice.

**When Theory Meets Practice**

Once we recognized the two key themes that emerged from the literature, we turned to our prototyping exercise to experiment with ways of designing and implementing an interface. We wanted to see if we could design a tool that would meet three interrelated goals. The first was to develop a digital tool that would enable scholarship rather than mere publishing. Next, we wanted to build an interface that would acknowledge the situatedness of reading and meaning-making practices. Finally, we wanted to develop a tool that would signal the rich history of the Dictionary.

Our main interest in our experimental phase was in testing some of the hypotheses made in digital humanities literature. We were not interested in developing a tool from scratch or even creating a fully functional and finished product. As a result, we made the decision to design our interface using XML and modular components from the open source content management system Drupal. We deployed XML using the Text Encoding Initiative’s (TEI) guidelines. TEI provided a standardized framework for analyzing and marking-up our material. Instead of developing an encoding strategy from scratch, TEI enabled us to draw upon the work of scholars engaged in digitization and mark-up projects and focus on tagging methods that would enable us to meet our design goals. Similarly, we turned to Drupal because it is a platform that specifically enables developers to select from libraries of existing tools to build customized digital products (See Appendix A for a description of the tools we used). Working with sets of already-existing tools enabled us to design quickly, to move through several prototypes, and to focus on developing our understanding of various theories of the interface all without getting bogged down in the details of building a system from scratch.
As we moved back and forth between the theories described in the literature and the practical application of those theories in XML and Drupal, we found that some concepts articulated by scholars were easier to apply than others, that some interesting ideas related to interface design and interactivity far outstripped the capabilities of already-existing digital tools, and that some concepts may, in fact, best be described as ‘vaporware,’-meaning they do not currently exist and are not likely to ever exist (Galey and Ruecker 2010). By engaging in a design project alongside a theoretical investigation of interface we ultimately gained a better perspective of the problems of interface within the digital humanities.

Digital Publishing vs Digital Scholarship

By virtue of how we deployed XML to code our materials and how we implemented various Drupal modules, we believe we were able to create an interface that allows for the study of the revisions that Johnson made to his Dictionary. Our project does not merely present this content for viewing. Indeed, our interface enables the study of multiple versions of the Dictionary text across time, including the 1755 published text, Johnson’s revisions, all of Reddick’s notes and annotations, as well as a view of what the “B section” would have looked like had Johnson’s revisions actually been published as part of the Dictionary's fourth edition. Additionally, readers have the opportunity to view all the content of the two-page spread or hone in on a specific entry for a closer examination. Moreover, the specific manner in which we mobilized our XML mark-up allows for the dynamic search and display of other query results, including generating a list of all the entries that underwent revisions or a list of all the adjectives defined in the Dictionary. Our interface enables easy comparison of numerous documents, and of numerous dimensions of those documents, within a single frame. Such a tool helps structure multiple entryways into Johnson’s materials. By doing so, our interface may help develop the kinds of dynamic relations between reader and text that Drucker (2003) suggests are integral to interpretation and the production of meaning.

In addition to carefully marking up our materials in XML so that they could enable the greatest number of views and queries, the most important aspect of our design process was approaching the material from the perspective of a researcher. We could not design in a vacuum, we had to imagine this prototype in use. Although no one on our team is an expert in lexicography, i Johnson, or the eighteenth century, we found, exactly as Bath and Harkema
(2013) note, that we could not begin the prototyping process without first considering the kinds of questions are likely to be asked of this material (4). Subject expertise must meet technical expertise in order to develop a useful and successful digital humanities interface. If we were to attempt to build upon our experimental prototype in order to develop a finished product, we would certainly need to add a scholar familiar with Johnson’s work to our team. If, as Crompton and Seimens (2013) argue, “[i]nterfaces both engage and shape the practices of the research communities they serve,” then we need to draw on the knowledge and expertise of a researcher situated within studies of the eighteenth-century in order to better understand the kinds of research methods and research questions that would be deployed within this context. More than anything else, the process of making materials digitally available for study revealed the complicated acts of interpretation that occur at the level of code, the at times uncomfortable decisions that must be made to obscure certain elements from view, and the ability to justify those decisions. These are not easy decisions, and they are not decisions that a single designer or researcher can make.

As we experimented with designing an interface that could enable the study of our dictionary materials, we found that we were able to mobilize existing tools to develop a range of entryways into our texts. There are many tools that a researcher or developer can draw upon to produce new encounters with the text. The challenge in meeting this requirement comes from being able to ask the right questions of the material and finding ways to translate those questions into code and system. Although technologies already exist to facilitate the online study of texts, putting together the right combination of technical and subject expertise on a research team remains a more salient challenge.

**Situatedness and Meaning-Making**

Designing an interface that did not overcode reading practices was a much more difficult goal to meet. In part, this difficulty stemmed from the need to unpack exactly what is meant by keeping an interface open to ambiguity and to the partial and situated perspectives of each reader. What does this look like? What does it feel like to use? How do we know when we have achieved an appropriate level of ‘openness’? Another reason for this difficulty is that existing digital technologies do not make room for ambiguity or partiality. Systems and code are highly structured, follow a rigid logic, and are not equipped to handle uncertainty. How can we mark-up
a text to allow for the greatest range of interpretation and analysis? How can we import our XML into an online space in ways that promote flexibility and alternative perspectives?

We did not come to satisfactory answers for any of these questions. We found that most of our interface’s flexibility was contingent on the kinds of tags we deployed in our mark-up and on the generous use of attributes within those tags. The more descriptive we were with our mark-up, the more we could target for user-generated queries and structured display within our online reading and research tool. However, at the same time, we realized that there was a limit to what we could tag and then productively put to use within the interface. Although almost every single word of our various dictionary texts could be descriptively marked up in some way, there was no way for us to make use of every description and produce a useable interface. The tenets of usability stipulate that online interfaces should contain an obvious starting point, make use of consistent logic, observe existing conventions, and foreground the materials presented rather than the interface itself (Blair-Early and Zender 2008). Balancing these requirements with an impulse to provide hundreds of different views and feeds of the content was extremely difficult. We struggled to find good ways to provide readers flexibility in reading and research while also making a useable tool. We were cognizant of the dangers of predisposing readers to our interpretations of the material, particularly since we are not Johnson experts; however, we found it difficult to develop an interface that was clean and easy-to-use, but also enabled novel combinations and re-combinations of materials in as many ways as possible, particularly given the short timeframe in which we were operating.

The various starts and stops we encountered as we experimented with our open interface design led us to realize that the scope of this goal may be too large for a single project to achieve. We hypothesized that ambiguity and openness may be able to emerge from the various and multiple iterations of a single project, as well as from multiple networked projects. Rather than placing the burden of designing for partiality and situatedness on a single digital humanities project, a better approach may be for digital researchers to make their coding and development processes open to others.

If digital humanities teams are free to extended, build upon and change existing work, they may be better equipped to build interfaces that can contend with uncertainty and partiality. Imagining digital humanities projects as feeding into larger research ecosystems may allow individual readers to pick and choose the tools and perspectives that suit their own research
agendas and provide opportunities for even more novel combinations and re-combinations of materials. We like this approach because it does not require that an individual project must theorize and code for maximum ambiguity. Rather, a project can strive for openness and flexibility by exposing the coding and decisions that were built into its system and allowing other readers to download, use, manipulate, and re-upload code to produce new branches of research within the same sphere. It is perhaps only by engaging with numerous projects and multiple approaches that one can begin to account for and engage with the situated and partial perspectives of many readers and researches.

A Possible Model for the Digital Research Ecosystem

Given our interest in exploring praxis and DOR, we thought we would offer some thoughts on a model for creating such a digital research ecosystem. For the same reasons we turned to XML and Drupal, we would advise making use of already existing tools to facilitate sharing and exchange. Specifically, we think it may be interesting to explore the possibilities offered by a version control system like Git. Git is a revision tool that was specifically designed to help programmers and developers keep track of their code as well as any changes made to their code by themselves or others in the programming community. Git allows users to access project code, grab pieces they need, and then recombine and rewrite as necessary to fulfill the aims of their individual projects. Every time a developer rewrites or adds to a piece of code, it creates a ‘branch’ or a ‘fork’ within Git that subsequent users can then draw upon for their own programming needs. Digital humanists could make use of Git to, for example, upload their XML files and other coding materials to a platform so that other researchers can study their decisions, clone their code, and reuse and extend their work on other projects. As Wittern (2013) suggests, such a practice would allow for local corrections, annotations, and/or additions to be merged with, or exist alongside, other projects (5). Although no tools currently exist to upload a new XML file to a platform like Drupal and have the resulting online tool automatically change to accommodate the new material, a robust versioning system may allow scholars to branch or fork their research in new, unexpected and productive ways.
Conclusions and Future Directions

Our DOR approach to interface design has shown us how valuable it is to combine research and practice when thinking through issues in the digital humanities. Engaging in such a design project provides the unique opportunity to bring together theoretical concepts relating interface design with robust tools like XML mark-up and Drupal modules. This combination of approaches helped to enrich our understanding of the problem of the interface, as articulated by literature in the digital humanities. Specifically, our prototyping project helped us understand some of the key features of a successful interface, recognize what is and is not possible to implement technically, and posit models for a more open and flexible digital research ecosystem. In addition, contributing to a design exercise helped us better understand the materials we were digitizing because this work required us to read closely, think deeply, and as well as consider larger questions that may be asked of this document by other researchers. Moreover, this exercise helped us better understand theories of the interface and consider the implications of various digitization practices. The task of designing an interface is, indeed, one of the best exercises one can engage with to unpack the implications of digitization for reading and research practices.

References


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Appendix A


We used Drupal, an open source content management to build our prototype. Drupal is very popular among programmers and developers due to its modular functionality.

This modular functionality was very useful in the parsing of our XML code and our experiments with the interface. In particular, the following Drupal community contributed modules were necessary to make this project possible:

* **Feeds**
  [https://drupal.org/project/feeds](https://drupal.org/project/feeds)
  Feeds is the module that allows content to be imported from other sources into the site’s content database. By itself, it is able to import RSS, XML, and CSV files. Essentially, this module takes data in any of the supported formats, and maps the content to fields within a custom content type.

  The approach for this project was to use Feeds to read our XML and import the data into a content type that we called Entry. Each dictionary entry would be a piece of content on our site with fields such as definition, etymology, citation, etc. Feeds would map the different XML tags to their proper field for each entry.

* **Feeds XPath Parser**
  [https://drupal.org/project/feeds_xpathparser](https://drupal.org/project/feeds_xpathparser)
  While the basic Feeds module supports XML, it does not support parsing of tags, such as `<entryFree>`, on its own. This module allows developers to configure Feeds to read any tags that exist in your XML file and provides a mechanism to map the data contained within the tags and attributes to fields within your custom content type. In our case for example, we were mapping data within the `<etym>` tag to the Etymology field within our Entry content type.

  Xpath is a query language that is used to navigate through XML documents.

* **Feeds Tamper**
  [https://drupal.org/project/feeds_tamper](https://drupal.org/project/feeds_tamper)
  Feeds Tamper is another module that extends the functionality of the Feeds module. It allows one to manipulate the data from the XML file and rewrite it before it is added to the Drupal content type. The functionality for this is best described by an example.

  For our project, we needed a way to separate different chunks of content. We will look at the Bombast example and see that there is a handwritten note that Johnson has made for this entry. During our encoding, we used the attribute `xml:id="Johnson"` to note this. However, this code does not help us display this text in different manners, or even hide it, in HTML. We needed Feeds Tamper to take any instance of this code and convert it to HTML that we could
then manipulate with CSS. Feeds tamper allowed us to define the following replacement:

From:
<handNote xml:id="Johnson">

To:
<div class="handNote-Johnson">
And of course, the corresponding closing tags.

This was done for a number of XML tags.

@Font Your Face
https://drupal.org/node/1551382
This module allowed our interface to display non-system fonts. In particular, we wanted handwritten notes to look like they were written by hand, and so we used this module to help accomplish that. It takes open fonts, in our case Google fonts, and allows for their display as HTML.

Views
https://drupal.org/project/views
Finally, Views is used to take data and manipulate how it is displayed. This is very important to this project as it allowed us to do basic things such as make a list of all of the entries and display them alphabetically.

However, it can also allow the developer or the end user to create queries to show certain entries based on different selection criteria.

While not created for this project due to time constraints, Views would enable the developer to create an interface that would, for example, show only the entries where Johnson has made a revision. If this project were extended further, it could do things like show a listing of all entries that have citations. Or even complex combinations like showing all entries in the H section, that have additions by Johnson and have accompanied notes by Reddick.
Appendix B

This document describes how we tackled the mark-up and transcription of the revisions Samuel Johnson made to the “B section” of the 1755 edition of *A Dictionary of the English Language*, as well as the notes and annotations on this text published by Allan Reddick in Samuel Johnson’s *Unpublished Revisions to the Dictionary of the English Language*. For future transcriptions, these guidelines could be followed and the resulting XML file could be imported into the parser we have created.

We were strict about following TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) Guidelines so that our resulting XML could be as close to a standard document as possible. To read this document, a basic understanding of XML will be assumed. Familiarity with parent-child relationships, attributes, and values is expected. When encoding your document, please be careful to use the proper spacing and case, as this is very important for the parser. There is a big risk of your document not being read correctly if these details are ignored.

**Document Structure**

Each XML document is opened with the `<page>` tag. The immediate child of `<page>` for the purposes of encoding the dictionary is the `<entryFree>` tag. As noted above, this structure must be adhered to in order for the parser to target each entry.

```xml
<entryFree>
```

If the dictionary entry is straightforward with no corrections for typos, no notes by either Johnson or Reddick, this tag does not need to contain any attributes. However, in order to make note of those dictionary entries that have notes or edits attached, the following attributes and values are to be used:

- `xml:id="Johnson"` - if there are any revisions made to the entry by Johnson
- `xml:id="Reddick"` - if there are notes or comments that Reddick has added
- `etym="yes"` - if this entry has information for the word’s etymology

The reasoning behind this is so that the parser can make note of which entries contain any revisions or notes and therefore allow for the ability to query the entries for those that have certain features.

Following `<entryFree>` are its three children, `<form>`, `<etym>`, and `<sense>`.

```xml
<form>
```

`<form>` contains the children `<orth>`, `<pron>`, `<gramGrp>`, and if needed `<colloc>`. `<orth>` is the orthographic form, essentially how it is spelled. `<pron>` is the word’s pronunciation. `<gramGrp>` represents the grammatical information which indicates whether the word is a verb or noun, etc. Lastly, if needed, the `<colloc>` tag is used for sequences of words that appear frequently together. In our transcription To Bomb and To Bombard are two such examples. Since Johnson chooses to add this collocation, we must make note of it in our transcription so that we can display the entries as close to Johnson’s original as possible. The
alphabetical sort occurs on the <orth> tag; however, if we added the “To” as part of <orth>, the sorting would not be correct. Therefore, collocated words have their own tag, so sorting can occur correctly by sorting with <orth>.

<etym>
This tag contains encloses any etymology if it is present. If there is no etymology, we still include the self-closing tag <etym />, which is important to the parser.

<sense>
This tag contains the bulk of the dictionary entries. <sense> has two children: <def> and <cit>, for definition and citation respectively. The definition is straightforward; it contains the definition of the word. Citation, if included, contains a quote enclosed by the <quote> tag and an attribution enclosed by the <bibl> to mark a bibliographic citation.

Notes and Revisions
Just using the tags above will be sufficient for encoding the bulk of the dictionary. For notes on encoding any revisions by Johnson or notes by Reddick, we use a few special tags.

Johnson revisions and Reddick notes
Within the etymology of the definition, there are some parts of the dictionary where Johnson had made revisions and/or added handwritten notes. For the guide, we will look at the example of Bombast. Below is the complete <etym> section for this entry:

```xml
<etym>
  [This word
  <msDesc>
  <physDesc>
  <handDesc>
    <handNote xml:id="Johnson">
      <subst>
        <del type="overstrike">seems to</del>
        <add place="above" type="insertion">mi</add>
        <note xml:id="Reddick">J. apparently begins writing the word ‘might’ above cross-out.</note>
      </subst>
    </handNote>
  be derived from Bombas-
  <lb />
  tius, one of the names of Paracelsus; a man remarkable for
  <lb />
  founding professions, and unintelligible language
  <add type="insertion">^</add>
  <lb />
  <handNote xml:id="Johnson">
    <add place="margin-left" type="insertion">
```
or from

<u> bombast </u>

the

name of some kind of

stuff perhaps of dissimi-
lar materials whence

it came to be applied

to style of which one

part suites all with

the other, as Fustian has

the same use

</add>
</handNote>
</handDesc>
</physDesc>
</msDesc>
.

To be able to use the <handNote> tag, we had to add <msDesc>, manuscript description, <physDesc>, physical description, and <handDesc>, which describes all the different kinds of handwriting within a document. It is important that you specify that the note is by Johnson by using the xml:id="Johnson" attributes for the <handNote> tag.

If there is a deletion (cross-out) and addition, you must use the substitution tag <subst>, which has the children <del> for delete and <add> for add. Further, you can specify the type of deletion as in our example with the attribute type="overstrike". The place attribute (place="margin-left") indicates where Johnson has made the addition.

If there are notes added by Reddick, we use the <note> tag, again with attribute xml:id="Reddick" to specify that this note is an addition by Reddick.
Lastly, we follow the line breaks in the text by using the <lb /> tag to specify where every line breaks. This is important in coding for an accurate representation of the text by the interface.
Emancipatory Knowledge Media Design
Fern Burge, Master of Information Candidate

Professor Ron Baecker, founder of the Technologies for Aging Gracefully (TAG) Lab and the Knowledge Media Design (KMD) Institute at the University of Toronto, coined the phrase “knowledge media design” to describe a developing discipline. At the opening of the KMD Institute in 1997 Baecker gave an address entitled “The Web of Knowledge Media Design.” He explained what KMD means and how he arrived at the purposely amorphous phrase. For Baecker, “Knowledge” refers to the sense-making process of information synthesis. Baecker is optimistic that knowledge building can create positive social change (Baecker 1997, 1). Next, Baecker borrowed from Canadian philosopher and communications theorist Marshall McLuhan to decipher what is meant by “Media”. Media are ubiquitous social “messages” that “translate experience into new forms” (McLuhan cited in Baecker 1997, 2). Anything communicative - spoken words, written words, comics, television, radio fit under the wide-reaching category of media. Finally, “Design” entails the “human endeavour of shaping objects to purposes” (Perkins cited in Baecker 1997, 2). Design, when informed by cognitive science and developed through experimental iteration, has great potential for augmenting human experiences. “Knowledge Media” combines “interactive computer and communications technology” (Baecker 1997, 4). Additionally, “Media Design” refers to a trend that “allows us to design not only the content but also the media themselves” (Baecker 1997, 5). Baecker then knits these meanings together: “Knowledge Media Design is the human-centred design of new media based on interactive computer and communications technology intended to enhance the learning, creativity, and knowledge building of communities of individuals” ( 1997, 6). My purpose in this paper is to add an extra facet to Baecker’s KMD concept. Emancipatory Knowledge Media Design encompasses Baecker’s KMD definition, but also grounds it an anti-oppressive framework.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, feminism revolved largely around the issues of white, middle-class women; dismantling patriarchal domination was the movement’s sole focus. The experiences and challenges of other groups, such as women of colour and transwomen, were excluded from feminist dialogues. In the late 1980’s, anti-oppressive thinking emerged with the aim of acknowledging the varied struggles of other groups. Anti-oppression is informed by “feminist, Marxist, post-modernist, Indigenous, post-structuralist, critical constructionist, anti-colonial and anti-racist” approaches (Baines as cited in Brown 2012, 35). Critical Race Theorist and Law
Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw invented the term “intersectionality” to describe how one’s oppression might be intensified through the interaction of multiple oppressive structures. To elaborate, as a Black woman, Crenshaw’s life has been equally affected by systematic racism and sexism. Racism and sexism cannot be separated; they overlap and interlock with destabilizing consequences. Intersectionality is used by anti-oppression thinkers to consider how “systems that administer life chances through purportedly neutral criteria [...] are often locations where racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, xenophobic, and transphobic outcomes are produced” (Spade 2011, 30). Public policy and media discourses legitimize the needs and wants of dominant groups; these nodes of power simultaneously undermine and suppress non-normative groups. Butler notes that every person’s body has an “invariably public dimension”, one that is both “assertive and vulnerable” (2004, 18-21). However, certain “social and political conditions” results in certain bodies being disproportionately targeted for violence (Butler 2004, 18-22). Women’s bodies, trans people’s bodies, racialized bodies and disabled bodies face exorbitant violence. These people form “vulnerable communities.” Anti-oppressive work seeks to alleviate this violence and restructure social and political conditions for a more inclusive society.

In my studies, I detected very little cross-pollination between knowledge media design and anti-oppressive thought. In writing this paper, I am hoping to start a productive convergence between the two disciplines. Creating Knowledge Media Design from an anti-oppressive perspective has the potential to make the lives of vulnerable communities more bearable. However, without anti-oppressive thought, Knowledge Media Design products can harm vulnerable people. I will elaborate using the Hassle Free Clinic, a sexual health clinic in downtown Toronto, Ontario, Canada, as an example. It offers free Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) testing as well as counselling services. Beyond having some prominent usability issues, the site also has a user experience problem. From the landing page, a user has three options to proceed further into the site, two of which are: “men/trans-identified clinic” and “women/trans-identified clinic”. The labelling of this site’s entry points bear witness to an attempt at inclusivity; however, the execution is deeply flawed. A major point of contention within the transgender community is that after disclosing their trans status, the immediate reaction of cis-gendered people is to ask for details about their genital arrangement. The Hassle Free Clinic site is similarly offensive. The labelling precludes transgender patients from accessing the service. Although the Hassle Free Clinic is mandated to serve Lesbian Gay Bisexual and
Transgender (LGBT) patients, this site immediately imparts an ignorance of transgender needs. To become more trans-friendly, the site should get rid of gendered entrance points. Labels like “STI Testing” and “Support Counselling” are understandable and relevant to everyone. It is important to remember that, as a not-for-profit, the Clinic likely did not have funds to hold consultations with the community or to hire someone knowledgeable about transgender issues to come in to work with the website developer.

Emancipatory Knowledge Media Design are technologies aimed at empowering vulnerable communities. A positive example is the Tribal PEACE project. New Media researcher Ramesh Srinivasan developed a web-based information system that was designed to link up the spatially separated indigenous reserves in San Diego County. According the Srinivasan, “These nations tended to maintain contact with one another but largely existed as separate communities based on blood lines. However, historical dynamics and the creation of the reservation system have fragmented and disconnected these peoples from one another and a collective cultural history” (Srinivasan 2006, 506-507). Srinivasan saw the opportunity afforded by digital design to mend this fragmentation. Srinivasan used the principles of participatory design in order to ensure that the communities cultural expertise was brought to bear on the information system design. Since the rollout of the Tribal PEACE project, the system has attracted use by the community. Srinivasan reports that educators and cultural leaders “have begun to see the system as a powerful tool in their daily purposes” (Srivinvasan 2006, 511). Furthermore, “the oral traditions of bird-singing, prayer and native languages can be easily digitized and disseminated across the reservations for archival and educational purposes” (Srivinvasan 2006, 511). The Tribal PEACE project allows indigenous communities to retain and share stories that are important to them. The project’s goal and the reflexive manner with which it was carried out aligns it with the anti-oppressive aim of what I’m calling Emancipatory Knowledge Media Design.

DocTalk is another application motivated by an anti-oppressive commitment. Doc Talk addresses the difficulty that transgender community members often have finding trans-friendly health care for gender-affirming medical treatment. For many members of the trans community, going to a clinic without prior knowledge of who they are going to see is too risky to contemplate. Information could only be exchanged through word of mouth, requiring trans people to know other trans people, which is not always the case. Once it is launched, Doc Talk hopes to serve as a hub for transgender and other gender-diverse persons. By accumulating user-generated
ratings and comments about doctors, counsellors, surgeons, and organizations, Doc Talk could connect vulnerable persons with respectful and experienced healthcare professionals. After the roll-out of this application, I think DocTalk has the potential to make a huge impact on knowledge-sharing within the transgender community.

The latter two examples that I discussed above illustrate the profoundly positive effect information professionals can have if they adopt projects that have been formulating through an anti-oppressive lens. There are also small ways to disrupt the reproduction of oppressive power structures. I would encourage all information professionals to read some anti-oppressive resources to learn how their designs can interrupt normative power structures in subtle ways. For instance, Facebook gave their users the ability to choose from 58 pre-selected gender options. Users can also choose which pronoun the site uses to refer to them. They collaborated with Network of Support, a group of leading LGBT advocacy organization. Additionally, IOS 8.3’s emojis will be subject to “skin-tone modifiers” so users’ options won’t be limited to emojis with white pigmented skin. These changes allow technology users more choice and greater possibility. My hope is that the next generation of developers, designers, and information professionals will pre-emptively apply anti-oppression techniques in their design from the early development stage, rather than as a reactive response to criticism. In this paper, I have demonstrated how a fusion between anti-oppressive thought and Knowledge Media Design has the potential to be productive and emancipatory area of study. Students, developers and designers can be instrumental in challenging oppression by seeking out Emancipatory Knowledge Media Design projects and offering their expertise to vulnerable communities.

References


**Appendix A**

Figure 1. Hassle Free Clinic landing page.
Representing Emily Carr on Stage
Cynthia Dempster, Master of Information Candidate

Cynthia Dempster is writing a one-woman play about Emily Carr. She discussed her research and creative decisions, focusing on challenges related to historical accuracy. When the play is performed, she wants the audience to feel that Emily Carr has come to life on stage. This process will involve historical bridging. Sometimes, more historical accuracy will create a sense of the past happening immediately. In some contexts, too much accuracy could diminish the illusion of the past coming to life. Costumes will represent Emily's wardrobe as accurately as possible. This will assist in creating the illusion that Emily is really present. Some of Emily's autobiographical writing will be used as part of the script. Sometimes the style of writing and use of out-dated words are inaccessible to a contemporary audience. These portions will be omitted or gently pruned to create historical bridging and a sense of immediacy. Cynthia performed four short excerpts from the play at the conference. Cynthia is choosing not to publish the paper/excerpts as the play is still a work in progress. Also, her presentation included a performance component that cannot be conveyed through the written word.
The Book Bombers: The Reading Practices of Canadian Aircrew from 1939-1945
Kaitlin Normandin, Master of Information and Master of Museum Studies Candidate

This paper is the result of research conducted during a mass digitization project of military personnel files from the Second World War at Library and Archives Canada. In the author’s capacity as an employee of LAC, she came across numerous records created by the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War. In contrast, they were more detailed than other branches of the Canadian Armed Forces. Their records include initial interviews with aircrew candidates upon enlistment that asked what their favorite author or hobbies were, as well as inventories of their personal possessions after their death. In an introduction to The Culture of the Publisher’s Series John Spiers urged book historians to integrate the specific circumstances and intentions of historical actors with broader trends (Spiers 2011). As a way to implement Spiers’ ideas, 126 individuals and what they were read were studied based on the previously mentioned records. There was no additional selection criteria aside from the qualifiers that the subjects of this study were members of the RCAF and served overseas between 1939 and 1945. As a result, there are a variety of educational and socio-economic backgrounds represented. Generally, however, all were male and between the ages of 18 and 35. The author has tried to situate these individuals within existing British and American scholarship that has looked at the commercial pressures, social tastes, as well as the intellectual and political influences on Allied readership during the Second World War. This paper does not attempt to create a comprehensive history of the reading practices of Canada’s airmen during the Second World War. It does, however, attempt to indicate potentially fruitful paths of inquiry for other researchers to take.

As noted by John B. Hench, the Second World War proved to be the best and the worst of times for publishers (Hench 2009). Able to sell out of almost any title they produced, publishers could not secure enough raw materials to produce the number of books that were demanded by the reading public. Canadian aircrew serving overseas would have entered this print-desperate culture quite early on. Britain had imported most of its paper, and almost all materials typically used for papermaking. From April of 1940 onwards, paper was rationed and imports of foreign paper were banned in November (Feather 2006). Enemy action and lack of skilled labor also proved to be challenges. Some British publishing houses lost everything after their warehouses were bombed during the midst of a particularly bad air raid (Feather 2006). The tons of pulp sent from Canada to Britain may have never reached its destination. Transatlantic shipping posed its
own perils. “Wolf-packs” of German U-boats roamed the North Atlantic, targeting convoys. Additionally, there was a distinct lack of manpower in the book industry both at home and abroad. Skilled labor left to join the Services or take up war work. These factors proved critical to the relative scarcity of new books.

Commonwealth reading practices remained quite varied throughout the duration of the war. Fortunately, the findings of British social research organization Mass Observation are preserved within the archives of the University of Sussex. Mass Observation studied the reading habits of over 10,000 individuals in 1942 (Holman 2008). There was a general acknowledgement of the scarcity of reading material among the participants, however, there was one significant new trend. Individuals stated that they were turning more towards the classics (Halsey 2011). Reprints of the classical Western canon of literature had been issued since the late nineteenth-century. It would make sense that there were more copies of these editions in circulation than the limited imprints of newer books. This may explain why navigator Patrick Heatherington had a copy of Dickens’ *The Old Curiosity Shop*, or why Patrick McCanney held onto Boswell’s *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Johnson.*\(^1\) Classic reprints also proved to be surprise bestsellers. Bookshops in London reported that Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* was the most requested work. At the time, it was only available in a chunky three-volume set (Holman 2008). The sudden popularity of the work is likely attributable to E.M. Forster’s appreciative broadcast from the BBC, after which not a single copy was to be found in shops or with the publisher (Holman 2008). In this regard, Sunderland pilot Edwin McCann of 423 Squadron (Oban, Argyll, Scotland) was lucky to have his own copy.\(^2\) Works by American novelists also proved to be popular. According to Mass Observation, the most frequently borrowed titles of the war included a number by contemporary American writers (Holman 2008). Edmontonian Kenneth Johnson was reading Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind.*\(^3\) Andrew McBain, an air gunner with 415 Squadron (Yorkshire), had evidently been intrigued by Rachel Field’s bestseller, *All This and Heaven Too.*\(^4\) Twenty-year old Kenneth Bourne had a copy of Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* among his things.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 27736, Item Number 15693; and Reference RG 24, Volume 28040, Item 23068, respectively.

\(^2\) Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 28040, Item Number 23055.

\(^3\) Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 27845, Item 17668.

\(^4\) Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 28032, Item Number 22978.

\(^5\) Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 24894, Item Number 3489.
There has been a great deal of debate between historians as regards to whether a shift in reading tastes took place half-way through the war. It has been argued that as the conflict progressed, there was less demand for ‘light reads’ than more serious material (Halsey 2011). However, light reading does not always imply fiction; it can mean reading books about sports, biographies, or releases from the popular press (Halsey 2011). The armed services definitely did enjoy action-filled books such as westerns, thrillers, and mysteries because they offered an escape from military life. Mysteries by authors such Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Ellery Queen, and G.K. Chesterton were read by Canadian aircrew. Pulp thrillers such as The Hangman’s Whip, the salaciously titled Guilty Women, and Dashiell Hammett’s The Glass Key also make notable appearances. Westerns were found in personal effects and their inventories list such titles such as Arizona Ranger, They Die with Their Boots On, Long John Rides the Range, and My Bandit Host. Zane Grey, author of Wanderer in the Wasteland and The Rainbow Trail, was frequently cited as a favorite by incoming aircrew candidates. Adventure anthologies like A Century at Sea, African Jungle Tales, Conrad’s Twixt Land and Sea Tales evidently found some readers. Overall, however, general literary fiction proved most popular. Interestingly, English verse is the second-most prevalent genre. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam makes a number of appearances, closely followed by Robert Service’s Songs of a Sourdough and Songs of a Cheechako as well as numerous selections by Tennyson, Wordsworth, Kipling, Keats, Burns, Longfellow, and anthologies of verse. The psychological uncertainties and dislocations in wartime appears to have prompted increased sales of poetry and philosophy. Obviously, Canadian airmen found meaning and solace within poetry.

The popularity of ‘light fiction’ within the armed forces can be attributed to a desire for distraction from everyday circumstances. However, it appears that Canadian airmen read fiction and non-fiction interchangeably. Works describing the current state of world affairs make an appearance in effect inventories just as frequently as best-selling fiction titles. These include Alexander P. de Seversky’s Victory Through Air Power, Taid O’Conroy’s The Menace of Japan, Hitler’s Reich and Churchill’s Britain, Edward Berstein’s Socialism in Evolution, When Britain Saved Europe, and Max Aitken’s The Spirit of the Soviet Union. Canadian airmen seemed to particularly like military memoirs, such as John Brophy’s Immortal Sergeant, They Flew Through the Sand, Heinrich Hauser’s Once Your Enemy, Arthur Donahue’s Tally Ho, Captain Patrick Dove’s I Was Graf Spee’s Prisoner, and Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s Airman’s Odyssey.
This suggests that military memoirs confirmed and reflected the airman’s own daily experiences. What unites the various pieces of evidence cited is that as a whole, it expresses the strong need Canadian airmen felt for books.

Canadian readership differed from that of the British in one important respect, that of preferences regarding the physical form of the book. By 1939, Canada was already a nation of readers, or at least, of discerning consumers of books. However, their reading habits favored American tastes rather than anything the British produced post-World War One. As Valerie Holman says, even in provinces that were disposed to the British, the Canadian reading public had two main reservations with regards to British publications (Holman 2008). First, the material was not relevant to Canadians, and second, production standards were poor. This was not entirely the fault of British publishers, who were trying to operate within the confines of paper rationing. New typographical standards reduced the allowable amount of white space and forced printers to cram as many words as possible into a page (Holman 2008). The result was ugly and difficult to read. Canada had been invested in print culture for a considerable time and was familiar with its technical operations. The print industry was one of the largest employers operating in Toronto at the time, and the same was likely true of other metropolitan centers such as Montreal (Parker 2002). The appearance and physical dimensions of books were important to the consumer, and department stores noted that the colorful designs of the American imprints sold better than the beige-colored boards of the British versions (Holman 2008).

The appealing aesthetics and portability might also explain why pocket books were popular among airmen. The American 25-cent Pocket Books had reached Canada by the early 1940s. Pocket Books actively urged civilians to purchase and mail books to loved ones in the service, which may reveal why Hurricane pilot William Walker of 28 Squadron RAF had two copies, *India Explained* and *The Knapsack Book* by Herbert Read, in his possession in Burma. Lightweight and compact, pocket books were cheaper to ship than traditional board-covered books (Loss 2003). The Canadian forces also struck a deal with the American imprint of Penguin Books. Over fifty thousand selected titles in the Penguin Pelican series were arranged to be sold at low cost through the Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes (Holman 2008). Three unnamed Penguin novels were found amongst the possessions of 23-year-old music teacher and navigator

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6 Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 28880, Item Number 36832.
John Robert Craig. The ever-practical *What’s That Plane?* Penguin spotting guide was owned by air gunner Lawrence Van Horne of 106 Squadron (Lincolnshire). Canadian servicemen overseas and at home could purchase cheap reprints without worrying about availability, and the publishing firm garnered the business of another generation of readers.

There is an astounding amount of educational works listed in the possessions of Canadian airmen. These include history books, grammars, atlases, guide books, dictionaries, mathematical works, science texts ranging from biology to physics, and technical handbooks for such subjects as photographic exposure and radio construction. Most individuals, especially those in bomber command, owned a French or German language handbook such as Magda Kelber’s classic *Heute Abend* (printed by the Ministry of Information). There was a practical reason for this. If a bomber went down in a raid over occupied territory, and a member of the aircrew managed to parachute out, they stood a better chance of making their way back to Britain if they spoke a bit of local language. The RCAF only took candidates who had graduated from high school, so aircrews were generally well-educated to begin with, but the prevalence can also be attributed to a general anxiety regarding the role of the military in education (English 2006). On the home front, an Education Services Department was set up for the Canadian forces (Holman 2008). Numerous forces libraries were set up overseas in cooperation with the British and American governments. These libraries were set up to contain 60% non-fiction and 40% fiction, in an effort to get their users to learn something useful in their spare time (Holman 2008). Therefore, the Canadian Wartime Prices and Trade Board asked printers to prioritize the production of textbooks and other educational material (Wartime Prices and Trade Board 1945). The Canadian government wanted a fighting force, but it wanted an educated fighting force that could improve Canadian society when it returned. Regardless of their motivation, it is obvious that Canadian aircrew took advantage of educational texts available to them.

Although it is undeniable that Britain, and by extension, Canada, still enjoyed significant political and cultural freedom, this is not to say that the choice of reading material was not being carefully controlled. Like other Allied nations, Britain constructed itself as a bastion of democratic values (Holman 2008). As part of this construction, Britain depicted itself through various media as the opposite of the book-burnings and total press control occurring in Fascist Germany (Holman 2008). Overt propaganda would have undermined this image. Instead, certain

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7 Library and Archives Canada, Reference 24, Volume 25126, Item Number 7637.
positive features of British Commonwealth history, culture, achievements, or sensibilities were emphasized (Holman 2008). The Ministry of Information produced its own publications, written anonymously. For the Air Ministry, an authoritative account of the Battle of Britain in illustrated format was prepared. By the end of 1941, it is estimated this publication had sold four million copies in Britain alone. Its follow-up publication, *Bomber Command*, sold one million. This may explain its frequent appearance in the possessions of RCAF airmen, including Bruce Chinnery, a navigator with 158 Squadron. Other publications produced through the Air Ministry included *Coastal Command*, found in the personal effects of navigator Allan Duke of East Orange, New Jersey; and bomber pilot Stanley Gaudin of Toronto, posted to 172 Squadron. Appropriately, 158 Squadron flew heavy bombers out of Yorkshire, while 172 Squadron flew Wellington bombers on anti-submarine patrol off the coast of Devon. This would seem to indicate that perhaps these were issued, purchased, or given to airmen.

This was not the only official publication that ended up in the hands of Canadian airmen. A pamphlet, entitled *Canada’s Air Heritage*, by Clyde Scollan, was issued to new service pilots upon graduation from Elementary Flying Training School (Canadian Fighter Pilot and Air Gunner Museum 2015). Containing four articles about First World War flying aces, it was likely intended to be inspirational to new pilots. Issued by the Minister of National Defence for Air, and published by *Maclean’s* magazine, it was printed in Canada. It is notable that the pamphlet was taken overseas by flight crew, in two respects. First, they considered it worth keeping. Second, there was a lack of reading material on the transatlantic journey to their destinations. Beaufighter pilot George Edgett, of 272 Squadron (Sicily) kept his, as did native Hamiltonian Aubrey Whitmore of 103 Squadron (Lincolnshire, UK). The second official publication to prove popular among members of the RCAF was *From the Ground Up*, by Sandy A.F. Macdonald, a ground school manual for pilots so practical it remains in use today. Obviously, the utility of such an aeronautical work was valued, given the relative scarcity of educational books at the start of the war.

The reading choices of Canadian servicemen were perhaps more carefully controlled than those of the British, due to religious influences. The Canadian Director of Educational Services

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8 Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 25045, Item Number 6173.
9 Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 27423, Item Number 9917; and Reference RG 24, Volume 27574, Item Number 12671, respectively.
10 Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 27449, Item Number 10328; and Reference RG 24, Volume 28935, Item Number 37835, respectively.
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proposed that someone in Paris should list all donations received by the armed forces so the titles could be checked against a pre-approved list and eliminated if they were not found to be appropriate (Holman 2008). A general concern that some titles may have been on the Roman Catholic index of banned books was expressed (Holman 2008). Given these restrictions, it is remarkable that air gunner Terrence Casey of 626 Squadron (Lincoln, UK) managed to hold onto not only his copy of “Sun Bathing” magazine but also a book called *Pinups*. Indeed, it is unlikely that Canadian aircrew had access to works that were banned under British obscenity laws such as D.H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterly’s Lover* or Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer*. Airmen may have been able to circumvent reading restrictions but it was common practice for the RCAF Estates Department to remove and destroy nude pictures or explicit letters or diaries from their belongings before sending them back to their next-of-kin. If they were reading censored books, that knowledge is now lost.

Book historians may never be able to completely reconstruct the reading practices of Canadian aircrew. The individuals mentioned within this paper were killed in action during active hostilities, so they can’t be interviewed or surveyed. As well, with the increasing number of veterans passing away each year, the opportunity to consult with them lessens. However, there are a huge number of records (over 17,000 in the RCAF alone) that are open and accessible to the Canadian public at Library and Archives. As well, surviving media such as film, radio broadcasts, photographs, newspaper clippings, and magazine articles from the period could help the book historian construct a nearly-complete picture of the environment readers operated in.

Considerable research has been undertaken by scholars regarding the reading experience and practices of American military personnel during the Second World War, indicating that these projects are indeed within the realm of possibility. The resources are present for serious research to be undertaken on this topic, with the only obstacle the sheer amount of material available.

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11 Library and Archives Canada, Reference RG 24, Volume 25024, Item Number 5730.
References


Not a Safe Place: Internal Theft in American Cultural Institutions  
MD Salzberg, Master of Museum Studies Candidate

Introduction

It is widely accepted that breaking into a museum and taking its collection is wrong. This paper examines one specific form of theft that occurs in museums – internal theft, sold domestically. Internal theft is committed by those entrusted with insider positions, such as board members, staff, interns, volunteers and anyone else who has “responsibilities based on trust” (Griffiths and Krol 2009, 8). This subject is an embarrassing one that many United States museums refuse to discuss, but it is the silence that enables internal theft to continue, making it one of the biggest critical issues museums face in the 21st century. Most museums that have been victims of internal theft subscribe to A.M. Wherry’s, “you keep your mouth shut” model because admitting that your institution has been a victim of theft is believed to result in losing the public’s trust (Storey, Wherry, and Wilson 1989, 111).

While Wherry discussed theft in county records offices, the potential repercussions of losing the public’s trust in heritage institutions are the same. Why would someone donate their materials to an organization that has proven itself incapable of caring for them? Why would someone donate their hard earned money to an organization that is not capable of doing its job? Why should those people who have proven they are incapable of performing their duties be allowed to keep those jobs? Those fears have created an environment where museums are frightened to acknowledge when they have been victimized. By not acknowledging that this occurs, there is no need to have a serious conversation about security practices that would curb internal theft. This secrecy, in turn, allows the theft to continue. For this reason, this paper will examine internal theft committed in libraries and archives and the measures those institutions have taken to curb the problem as a lens for museums. If museums in the United States (U.S.) look toward libraries and archives to see that these fears are unfounded, they will learn that acknowledging theft and the resulting discourse may curb the problem. There is much that U.S. museums can learn from their library and archival colleagues.

Introduction to Theft

Museums, libraries, and archives experience similar types of theft. External theft is what most of the literature on theft in cultural institutions is about. In libraries, external theft consists
of patrons not returning the materials they checked out or taking noncirculating materials. In archives, external theft most commonly consists of researchers walking out of the building with documents. In museums, the common perception of external theft is cat burglars and daring daylight bandits, which a cursory glance at art news websites shows occasionally happens.

There are two types of internal theft that occur in cultural institutions. The first is found in any office environment, which sees employees taking home office supplies. The second type is theft of collections. It cannot be stated enough that only some insiders abuse their authority in order to profit. As this is a subject that has not been greatly studied, there is no statistical data on how many insiders commit theft in cultural institutions or how often it occurs.

What has been studied is how internal theft occurs in libraries and archives, which is why the forthcoming discussion will be based on literature from the library and archival fields. For the purposes of this paper, the discussion will be framed in the context of cultural institutions, as the factors that enable internal theft in those institutions are applicable to other cultural institutions, including museums.

Elements of Internal Theft

The most prominent element that enables internal theft is trust. Trusted insiders have access to collections and are given keys, allowing them free access to collections whenever they want (Griffiths and Krol 2009, 8). Cultural institutions assume that the people they give that kind of access to will not exploit it, because they are trusted. They are trusted because they have given the institution their time, given the staff baked goods, and they are well connected in the field. This, combined with the knowledge that employees who work with the public are legally required to undergo criminal background checks, is why small to mid-sized institutions do not strictly monitor who has access to keys (Ibid., 12). At many of those institutions, there is a cabinet for keys that anyone can access. This does not mean that one should not trust one’s colleagues, but measures should be taken to secure keys. For instance, implementing procedures to ensure keys can only be checked out from one individual, such as the curator, make others aware that their access will not go unnoticed.

The second factor that enables internal theft is that many cultural institutions do not make security measures a priority. Cultural institutions do not make security visible, such as cameras and locks. When security measures are visible, they serve as a greater deterrent than simply
knowing that security measures are in place (Holt 2007, 91). Many institutions do not change security codes when there is staff turnover (Griffiths and Krol 2009, 12). It is relatively easy to assign a security code for a specific position in an institution; this is particularly common for interns. Since these codes are not always changed, former employees, interns, and volunteers can sometimes use those codes to gain access to the collection outside of their regular hours and well after their official position with the museum has ended. Preventing former insiders from accessing the collection is why alarm codes should always be changed after an individual ends their involvement with a cultural institution. Encouraging staff members to follow the open market and ascertain what is currently valuable and therefore in need of greater security, unfortunately, is not a common practice either (Ibid.). The items that collectors desire change; what was highly sought after five years ago and given extra security then, may not be in demand today. In other words, the wrong materials are being secured.

Yet another example of security not being considered a priority is the practice of not tracking where items in the collection are at all times. I have volunteered at institutions where it was not common practice to make a note in the collections management software of an object’s permanent location. At the institutions where denoting the permanent location in the software was common practice, they did not denote an object’s temporary location; they just left a note in the permanent location. Now one should always leave a note in an object’s permanent location, but by not tracking an object’s location, there is no official record as to where it is. In this case, if an object has been stolen a good lawyer can argue that an object was simply moved and not stolen.

Cultural institutions also place the feelings of insiders above securing the items in their care; they want to avoid the appearance of mistrust or insult. When an institution has suspicions that theft is occurring, they do not perform bag checks for those who have access to the missing materials (Holt 2007, 81). In retail, where theft is an accepted concern, bag checks are common as they both detect and deter theft, and rather than causing offense, the staff make jokes while their bags are being searched. When discussing the subject of security with museum professionals, where bag checks are not commonplace, the very notion of one is offensive. Employees view bag checks as a negative message, that they cannot be trusted. That is not a message that an institution wants to send, which is why, in spite of their benefits, bag checks are not implemented when theft is suspected. This should not be taken as a recommendation that bag
checks should be performed in cultural institutions with the same frequency as they are in retail; instead, it is a tool that should be implemented to stop the bleeding, when an institution suspects it is the victim of systemic theft.

Another factor that enables insider theft are an institution’s limited funds. Unfortunately, certain security measures require funds to implement and operate them. In cultural institutions where budgets are strained, it is difficult to justify taking funds away from programs, collections, and payroll in order to pay for security measures, particularly in an environment where theft is not considered a priority. This is why locks are not changed when there is staff turnover; as long as the keys are returned before the employee leaves, there is no cause to pay for new locks (Griffiths and Krol 2009, 12). It does seem foolish to assume that keys are not copied, particularly when an employee leaves an institution under unpleasant circumstances.

Installing and monitoring cameras in collections storage facilities is in many cases cost prohibitive (Ibid.). Security cameras are only effective when a human being monitors them, as cameras cannot alert officials if they witness a theft. In cultural institutions with strained budgets paying someone to monitor video surveillance could be considered a waste of salary.

While institutions make difficult decisions based on the limited resources they have, there seems to be a lack of common sense amongst cultural institutions that enables insiders to abuse their authority. There is a lack of policies for dealing with theft and institutions that do have such policies, do not consistently implement them (Ibid., 14). Rules regarding theft are of no use if they are not enforced. I grew up in museums and have heard more than my fair share of stories told in hushed tones of theft, stories that were never meant to leave the room because they were too embarrassing. My own insider knowledge combined with the numerous accounts of insider theft I have read leads me to believe that many cultural institutions do not act when they suspect an insider of theft. By refusing to act, cultural institutions are creating environments that foster theft, after all, “[i]f he steals from you once, he’ll steal ‘till he’s caught,” (Holt 2007, 87).

What seems to both enable internal theft and lead to the capture of the thieves is the website eBay. After examining numerous accounts of internal theft, it seems clear that when materials were not taken for personal use, they were most often sold on eBay. eBay allows users to make their goods available to buyers around the world, while retaining all the profits, making it an ideal place for inexperienced criminals to sell their ill-gotten gain. The nature of eBay makes it easy for false provenance to appear legitimate. It is that very nature that leads to these
thieves being caught. While searching for new research materials and gifts on eBay, researchers who studied those documents in the past recognize them and report them stolen. From there, it is easy to track down the responsible party, as it appears as though many of them use their real names on the online auction site (Dale 2007; Griffiths and Krol 2009; Twomey 2008; USA Today 2002).

**National Archives and Records Administration**

There is literature in libraries and archives addressing most of the factors that enable internal theft and some institutions are implementing those recommendations. Other measures have been taken to curb internal theft, most notably by the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which has accepted that this form of theft will occur as a result of the thefts committed by Shawn P. Aubitz. He worked for NARA for fourteen years and during that time removed documents by concealing them in his briefcase. He sold them on eBay, until he was caught in 2002 (USA Today 2002). In response to that theft, the Archivist of the U.S., John Carlin, conducted a “review [of] internal security measures,” and implemented “a number of new measures,” (McDade 2012). Those preventive policies included limiting access to the stacks of the facilities in Washington D.C., educating all staff on "stack security measures," and holding them accountable for breaches of those measures (Brackfield 2005, 1). Limiting access to the collection to those who need to be there seems fairly obvious, but conversely, it does not seem fair to exclude our colleagues. When trying to find the balance between security and access, I would prefer that there be greater security in place for the staff and greater access for the public. Holding employees accountable when security breaches occur is the best method for ensuring that security measures are implemented consistently. In the same document, the inspector general of NARA recommended that an affordable system for tracking employees inside the stacks should be tested in the Washington D.C. facilities (Ibid.).

While all of those preventive measures were being implemented, NARA implemented a reactive measure as well. In 2006, NARA’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) formed the Archival Recovery Team (ART) to track down missing and stolen materials from all NARA facilities. Initially, ART consisted of one investigative archivist and a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) special agent (Office of the Inspector General 2007). ART recovers materials through two main avenues: outreach and investigations. ART’s outreach initiatives are designed
to educate researchers and document collectors, who are most likely to come across these materials, about what is missing as well as how to identify NARA materials. The ART criminal investigations result in federal criminal charges.

One of the most successful criminal investigations ART conducted was the 2010 investigation of Leslie Waffen, the former head of the Motion Picture, Sound, and Video Department at NARA. Art was tipped off to the theft after finding NARA materials on eBay and they discovered that Waffen had stolen 955 recordings, including audio recordings of the Hindenburg disaster, before he retired (Morrison 2012). In order to execute the search warrant for Waffen’s residence, ART required five U.S. Marshals, Montgomery County Police officers, a moving truck, and a list of the missing materials (Izadi 2010). All of ART’s efforts resulted in Waffen being sentenced to eighteen months in prison, two years of supervised probation, and a $10,000 fine (Morrison 2012).

Law Enforcement Organizations

Unfortunately, ART only serves NARA, but the FBI’s Art Crime Team investigates cultural property and art crimes across the U.S. It was formed in 2004 in response to the looting of the National Museum of Iraq. It is a rapid deployment team, consisting of fourteen special agents that are assigned to specific geographical regions (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2014). While this is an excellent tool for cultural institutions, it is only effective if crimes are acknowledged by institutions and reported to authorities.

Finally, there is one municipal law enforcement organization that specializes in cultural property crimes, the Los Angeles Police Department’s (LAPD) Art Theft Detail. It consists of two detectives, who provide citywide protection for “the artistic, cultural and historical heritage,” by investigating theft, forgery, and fraud. It is interesting to note that the detail was created in 1993, making it the original cultural property law enforcement agency in the U.S. (Los Angeles Police Department 2014). This raises the question, why did it take so long for an organization such as this one to be formed, and what event caused the LAPD to create the unit?

Private Businesses

There are two types of private businesses that aid cultural institutions in the recovery of stolen materials. The first provides a database of missing art and cultural materials in which a
cultural institution can register their stolen materials. When someone is interested in buying a work of art or material culture, they can search the database to see if it has been registered as stolen (Art Loss Register 2014). The second are businesses such as Unitel, which privately investigate the theft and relentlessly work to recover the stolen materials (Unitel 2014).

**Law Enforcement Tools**

The Art Crime Team and ART are aided in their efforts by several pieces of cultural property legislation in Title 18 of the U.S. Code. Sections 641 and 2114 make the theft of any government property a federal offense. This means that stealing materials from NARA is not just material property theft, but it is also theft of government property. Section 668, makes the acquisition of cultural heritage materials from museums via theft or fraud a federal offense, but it should be noted that the law employs a very narrow definition of museum and cultural heritage materials. Section 1170 makes the sale of Native American human remains and cultural property a federal offense if one does not have legal ownership in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2014a). There are others, but the fact that theft from museums has been made a federal offense demonstrates how seriously the U.S. government and the U.S. public take cultural property theft.

**NARA Tools**

It is clear that ART is successfully recovering materials that belong to its parent organization and ensuring that those responsible for their illegal removal go to prison. In a perfect world, every cultural institution would have its own recovery team comprised of an expert and an officer of the law, but unfortunately that is not realistic. NARA is a federal agency, with a federal budget large enough for salaries and travel expenses. Other cultural institutions cannot afford to have their own recovery teams; the same is true of state historical societies. The one instance of art and heritage in local law enforcement, LAPD Art Theft Detail, consists of two detectives in one of the largest municipal police forces in the country.

Another element of NARA’s budget enables them to implement more preventive measures than other cultural institutions. They have general counsel with whom they can create legally sound policies for bag checks. They also have access to lie detectors when they suspect internal theft. They have the time to refine policies regarding qualifications for access to the collection (Office of the Inspector General 2007). When one knows the legal grounds for
Not a Safe Place

Fear of Losing the Public’s Trust

When it comes to theft, the U.S. public seems to be far angrier with thieves than institutions. If Wherry’s “keep your mouth shut” stance was correct, then the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts would have closed soon after it was the victim of the largest art theft in U.S. history. On the contrary, almost 25 years later, not only is the Museum still open, but it also continues to receive financial and material donations. This is due in part to the institution’s insistence on being open about the theft and actively working to recover the missing art. This is exemplified by their display of the empty frames that housed the missing art as well as the media kits about the theft they have on their website (Investigation Remains Active 22 Years Following Theft 2012).

The brazen theft at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum does not fit the model of internal theft this paper addresses, but it does illustrate the U.S. public's sentiment towards theft; they do not blame the institution that has been victimized, but they do blame the thieves who committed the crime. More pertinent to this paper is the theft committed by former NARA intern Denning McTague. McTague was a documents dealer who was working on a master’s degree in library science when he stole Civil War documents and sold them on eBay. When he was caught, McTague immediately confessed and refunded all of his buyers. His lawyer argued that given McTague’s lack of criminal record, not being able to work as a librarian would be punishment enough (Dale 2007). The Archivist of the U.S. Allen Weinstein addressed the court and stated that this deliberate, lucrative scheme sabotaged the institution’s “fundamental integrity,” and that there might be other documents the archives has not yet realized McTague took. The Assistant U.S. Attorney General prosecuting the case recommended a full year of jail time because "History cannot be replaced. Historical documents tell a story to generations who come long after the events occur" (Ibid.).

The judge saw truth in the Archivist of the U.S.’s words, "this is an offense against everyone in this room." Since primary source documents possess an "absolute uniqueness," everyone who walks into an archival repository "must be deterred from even thinking about searching employee’s property, it is not as intimidating to actually do it. Having policies that determine eligibility for working with the collection has great potential for curbing internal theft.
stealing them." That deterrence came in the form of a 15-month prison sentence, exceeding the 12 months the Assistant U.S. Attorney General recommended (Twomey 2008).

Members of the museum profession think of collection theft as a violation, and this court case demonstrates that the U.S. public does as well. The anger that this crime generated in the Attorney General's office as well as the District Court Judge who sentenced McTague is due to the belief that those documents were the embodiment of “America.” They serve as the basis for research that will educate future generations of Americans and are evidence of how U.S. democracy works. In other words, this was not just a crime committed against a cultural institution; it was a crime committed against the U.S. people.

When a thief steals from an institution, they are not merely stealing from the institution; they are robbing the community it serves, the subjects it documents, as well as the people who would have benefitted from the research done on that collection. While that does sound hyperbolic, in illicitly removing an item from a collection, the thief is eradicating its educational potential; the document can no longer tell its story. That is why safeguarding our collections from theft is part of our ethical and fiduciary responsibility.

The public will not denounce or defund a museum that openly acknowledges it has been a victim of an internal theft. If the past is any indication, they will direct their furor towards the insider who abused their access and demand that the institution take measures to ensure that does not happen again. Museums will only lose the public's trust if we foster an environment that enables insider theft. Once the U.S. museum field renounces its fear of acknowledging insider theft, then the museum profession will finally be able to work together to stop it.

Recommendations

What we as museum professionals need to do is create an environment in which we can have a national conversation about insider theft. This would be a safe space where shame and humiliation would be set aside in order to have a fruitful, multi-disciplinary dialogue.

A national conference hosted by the American Alliance of Museums, akin to their annual meeting, should be held to form the basis of a national dialogue and perhaps establish practices to curb the problem. This would include panels by institutions that have been victims of internal theft, as their accounts will serve as the case studies for museum professionals and museum studies students to understand the complexities of internal theft. There should be panels from all
branches of the museum profession including zoos, aquariums, and conservatories because each has their own views on security from which all can benefit. There will also be panels by the authors who have written about internal theft in libraries and archives as they have already begun to educate their field about the complexities of internal theft. There should be panels of members of OIG and at least one member of ART. Part of the OIG’s job is to prevent theft, and they can share with the museum community what preventive measures have served them well. The ART member is knowledgeable on how to track down missing materials. There should be a separate panel of the law enforcement agencies that investigate cultural property crime; in order to prosecute the insiders who commit these crimes, law enforcement must first know how thieves operate within museums, libraries and archives. Finally, there should be a panel by private organizations that track down missing cultural property and art, such as the Art Loss Register and Unitel, on the small steps institutions can take to locate missing materials.

Finally, there needs to be more funding opportunities for security measures because, without funds, implementing the new practices for curbing internal theft will be difficult. Hopefully, this new awareness of internal security threats will make private donors and foundations interested in funding security measures. This new awareness and published materials will serve as the evidential basis for lobbying Congress to provide funds for securing cultural and educational institutions that fall under the umbrella of museums, libraries, and archives.

Conclusion

Just like libraries and archives, museums collect, preserve, and share materials on behalf of the public. Securing those materials is paramount to achieving those goals. All institutions, to the best of their abilities, secure their collections from external forces and are doing a disservice to the public by not doing the same internal forces. By not acknowledging theft when it has occurred, museums are violating the public’s trust rather than protecting it. Museums, libraries, and archives have to implement more preventive measures so they will not need as many reactive ones. People who are intent upon larceny will always find a way to do so; all museums can do is impede them as much as possible, which can only be done when they follow the example set by the library and archival profession.
References


Fishing for Answers: Perceived Value and its Implications for Museums
Mary Kate Whibbs, Master of Museum Studies Candidate

Introduction

I chose the subject of value as it relates to fish because of my experience working in aquatic conservation for the last 5 years at Toronto Zoo. In many of my interactions with students and people I meet outside of work, I have noticed a sense of disappointment when people find out I work in aquatic conservation. To determine why this reaction occurs, I investigate the topic of animal welfare as it relates to fish, display practices for aquatic species at zoos and aquariums, and marketing and communication strategies involving fish. I also explore the topic of value – how it is constructed and how, with respect to fish and aquatic species, our perception of value both influences and is influenced by the three topics discussed here. The goal of my research is to gain a deeper understanding of why people have a different reaction towards fish compared to land animals and apply the findings to educational and public program design. Ultimately, the results of this investigation will lead to new and interesting opportunities for zoos and aquariums to connect visitors and program participants with fish and aquatic species - an essential component to the conservation of aquatic life and our own vital water resources.

If there is a fire, which one would you save?

If there was a fire and the choice was between saving a fish in a small bowl or a small mammal, which is more likely to be saved? In this case, we can assume that both are endangered species, easy to pick up and carry, and both are harmless to humans. No matter which animal is saved in this scenario, the heart of the decision lies beyond selecting one or the other. The more difficult question to answer is how to decide which one to save? The answer lies in our perception of value. Value is the measuring stick we use as a reference for decision-making and is influenced by a variety of factors. Consequently, questions such as which animal to save, which image to use on an advertisement, or how to apply animal welfare guidelines are more complex than they initially appear.

Value

Value is a difficult term to define – there are many different definitions of value and they are not free of subjective interpretation. In Museum Ethics, Gary Edson (1997, 73) defines value as something desired or desirable based on a relative need or circumstance and can be individual, social, economic or aesthetic in nature. Many factors influence our perception of value and some
factors affect value in both positive and negative ways, depending on the circumstance. For example, species with greater appeal (charisma) typically have greater public support (Brambilla 2013). Conversely, a lack of charisma often results in a lack of public support and conservation initiatives for the species. Taxonomy, or the classification of living things, also affects our perception of value. The Linnean system of taxonomy widely used today to classify living things originates from Aristotle’s *scala naturae* and the Great Chain of Being – both of which use a hierarchical framework to arrange living and non-living things (Brandt 2011). Fish are typically placed at the lower end of these arrangements and even though many scientists today reject Linnean taxonomy, the fact that live fish are used as enrichment for larger vertebrates (Maple and Purdue 2013) indicates that the effects of these ‘ladder’ classification systems are still present today. Furthermore, a lack of scientific understanding of fish sentience, and the use of marketing/communication techniques focused on superficial qualities of fish suggest that a value disparity exists between fish and land-based animals.

**Considering Animal Welfare**

The conversation around animal welfare – or quality of life - has been ongoing for 200 years alongside animal testing practices and as a result we have learned a great deal about animal emotions. The majority of this knowledge, however, is limited to mammals and our understanding of how fish perceive pain is not as extensive in comparison. Defining quality of life is highly debated in the scientific community and animal welfare practices are built around the definition of quality of life as it applies to a species. Animal sentience - awareness of internal and external stimuli - is generally used to determine quality of life and guides animal care practices (Chandroo 2004). Determining sentience in fish is also highly contentious and until recently it was commonly accepted among scientists that bony fish do not suffer or feel pain because they lack certain parts of the brain involved in pain reception (Soo and Todd, 2009). While evidence exists to suggest that fish do in fact feel pain, the topic is still up for dispute.

The keeping of ornamental fishes is one of the most popular hobbies in the U.S. (Tlusty et al. 2013). Aquariums are a familiar sight in public places such as restaurants and offices because of their calming effect on observers (Soo and Todd 2009); however, without a stronger understanding of fish sentience and detailed animal welfare guidelines for fish, it is possible that we are putting the well-being of one species in jeopardy for the sake of our own (Soo and Todd 2009).
Display Practices and Challenges of Connecting with Fish

Habitat exhibits and immersion exhibit design in zoos offer natural looking surroundings and eliminate physical barriers between zoo visitors and the animals (Coe 1986). This helps create a strong connection for the visitor as it appeals to several senses at once. Conversely, there is almost always glass or acrylic separating fish from zoo/aquarium visitors. There are exceptions though, in the case of touch-tanks and marine animal training experiences. Experiences like these are typically very popular and well received, suggesting that direct interaction with aquatic life evokes a positive reaction from participants and that zoo/aquarium visitors seek this type of interaction. The question remains though, how effective are these experiences in communicating information about a species? The results of a 1996 study by Jeffery and Wandersee reveal that visitors remembered what they did when interacting with aquatic animals, but not the reason behind the action. This is an important consideration when planning public and educational programs involving interactions with live aquatic animals and demonstrates that the actual outcomes of the program/experience do not necessarily match the intended outcomes.

Marketing and Communication Related to Fish

To elicit an emotional response, fear-based marketing strategies in aquariums emphasize sharp teeth and predatory behaviour (Jeffrey and Wandersee 1996). While fear-based marketing is not the only technique used in aquariums, it may be unique to them. For example, it is not uncommon for sharks to be described explicitly as predators, emphasising their sharp teeth, predatory behaviour, and ‘menacing’ appearance (Seattle Aquarium 2013). Besides fear-based language and images, superficial characteristics of fish and aquatic organisms are also leveraged in marketing and communication techniques. Unconventional shape, size, colour and behaviour are often highlighted to attract attention. The use of words such as oddity, comical, mesmerizing, and wonder is another attempt to create context for aquarium visitors and again evoke an emotional response. Ideally, these techniques lead to a sense of connection between the visitor and the aquatic species but they may inadvertently magnify the differences between terrestrial and aquatic animals and, therefore, have a negative effect on our perception of value towards aquatic species.
What does it all mean?

Decisions made within the scientific community and at zoos and aquariums regarding animal welfare practices, display techniques, and marketing and communication related to fish are all rooted in value. These decisions are not only affected by value, but their outcomes can also affect value; zoos and aquariums have the ability to drive cultural attitudes and affect changes in behaviour and perception because they often have a great deal of credibility in the public eye (Edson 1997). This is particularly significant because in many ways, the perception of value is a driving force for zoo and aquarium activities, including species conservation programs. If value acts as both the engine and the brakes of the conservation vehicle, then zoos and aquariums have a responsibility to ensure that the ‘engine’ continues to move forward by building on their already proven track record of enhancing understanding and removing barriers to learning. Further research into the construction of value, examples of best practices for aquatic animal welfare and display techniques at the local and international level, and research into visitor perceptions of fish and aquatic species at zoos and aquariums is essential in order to better understand how to facilitate connections between visitors and aquatic species, which will in turn support aquatic conservation efforts.

References


**Bringing the Museum to the People: an Examination of Mobile and Pop-up Museums**
Rachel Leaton, Master of Museum Studies Candidate

**Introduction**

This paper is concerned with pop-up and mobile museums and the value and benefits that they can bring to museum practices. This research project started with my internship this past summer 2014 with the Peel Regional Police and then continued further out of personal interest. The Peel Regional Police created a mobile museum, which I was fortunate to be able to work with and observe. The project is focused on the use of case studies to show the possibilities for Pop-up and Mobile Museums and as practical examples to model my work with the Peel Regional Police.

**Background**

Historically, museums have been known as fixed sites, where the collections and exhibits are housed. Based in their institution, the collection is cared for and used to create exhibits. Over the years, museums have become more responsive to the community and their needs (Vergo 1989, 48-50), hosting a variety of events and programs designed to engage their visitors and including specialized programs for visitors with unique needs, like the visually impaired or children with autistic spectrum disorders of sensory issues. This concern for the needs and desires of visitors and how to engage them more in the activities of the museum means constantly seeking new opportunities and new approaches to reach people. This is where pop-up and mobile museums can be useful as a practice.

Pop-up and mobile museums are seeing a rise in popularity for the benefits and opportunities that they present as many museums struggle to maintain relevance. These new forms have the capacity to increase the impact of the museum, extending it beyond the actual walls of the institution. This allows museum professionals to leave the building and directly engage the public with the activities of the museum. The unconventional spaces they occupy can help to build new audiences or engage existing ones in new ways. Pop-up and Mobile Museums create new context in which to view museums and engage with museums and culture in general.
**Pop-up Museums**

Pop-up museums have varied shapes that they take. The definitions of “pop-up museum” used by Nina Simon and Michelle DelCarlo respectively are “[n]: 1. a short-term institution existing in a temporary space. 2. a way to catalyze conversations among diverse people, mediated by their objects.” (Simon 2011, para. 1) or "a ‘museum-like’ space where people share stories with others, and learn something about someone else through conversations.” (DelCarlo 2011, para. 1) Pop-up museums are museum-style displays which take place in unusual places. They are ephemeral in their short duration, often just a day. During this short period of time, these exhibitions can have a large impact and high visibility. While pop-up museums may be restaged, many models produce a different experience each time. This is because the objects brought to the event are different each time. Generally, the majority of the objects are brought by members of the public, though there are usually starter objects brought by the museum facilitators. Pop-up museums are designed to promote engagement among people and with the practices of the institution facilitating the pop-up museum (Grant 2014, para. 5, 11). The pop-up museum is able to respond to the needs of younger generations who interact with the world in a different way and respond to programs such as this (Grant 2014, para. 1). “Pop-up” is becoming a common tactic in the contemporary culture and to not use this to engage people with museums would be a shame.

Of the two examples of pop-up museums that I would like to draw to your attention to, the first is aMUSE. This is an award-winning initiative from the St Catherines Museum and Welland Canals Centre where staff run a series of pop-up museum events to specifically target the younger audience who usually do not visit the Centre (Petry et. al. 2014, para. 2-4). These events are currently themed around decades. At these pop-up museums, all of the objects are sourced from the museum's collection, but they are housed in a local café and the pop-up display lasts for one night only. Staff from the museum are also responsible for the creation of the displays in the off-site location. They choose the objects from the collection that fit their theme with the specific focus of 2014's events being on the objects that were collected in the decade the event is celebrating rather than only objects from that period. An earlier series served to allow participants to share stories about objects from the collection. These events also have other attractions, such as live music and artists present at the event. The main focus of the activities surrounding aMUSE is engagement with the collection, collecting practices of the museum, and
the activities of the museum (Petry et. al. 2014, para. 5-6). They engage people with the collection by pulling objects that might not otherwise be seen by people, or only be seen sometimes.

Through engaging people in this unconventional museum environment, their participation is aMuse naturally draws them back to the activities of the larger museum. In a way, their event functions in a similar way to Friday Night Live at the Royal Ontario Museum or First Thursdays at the Art Gallery of Ontario. This is a type of event that they are unable to host at St Catherines Museum and Welland Canals Centre museum but through the pop-up model they are still able to take advantage of the benefits of such an event (Powell et. al. 2014). While the two may not always share audiences, any cross over is a success for the museum and it introduces a younger audience to the museum and their collection, fostering a community. This initiative offers the possibility for a large amount of promotion through social media. With everything from the selection of objects to objects which could not be taken documented on their various social media feeds in the weeks before the events. They also use their social media activities to keep people engaged in the project between events with a photo contest or challenges and highlights from the collection (Powell et. al. 2014). This is a way of engaging with a large amount of people in the pop-up activities and then the museum itself. All of this social media activity further promotes the museum and opens it up to a new audience.

The next example is Toronto Museum Services' Great War Attic project, which was designed to commemorate and collect mementos representing Toronto's contribution to the First World War (Seale 2014, para. 5-7). The pop-up museum format allowed for a great amount of community involvement in the project and direct engagement. In addition, this format allowed Toronto Museum Services to engage with the same topic across their various sites and locations with multiple dates drawing large and diverse audiences. This is a main strength of this project, as it allows for people from all over Toronto to participate. Having an event or exhibit at just one of Toronto Museum Services' sites would have limited the audience. Currently Toronto Museum Services are working with Historica Canada to create a website to share these stories and photos of objects (York University 2014, para. 4). The pop-up format allowed for the chance to connect members of the community with the museums and experts on the First World War bringing together objects from visitors’ personal collections.
The multiple dates also meant that each event was unique, repeat visitors could always find something new, and the project gained momentum over time. The objects that the public contributed to each event are what made these events so very unique. Bringing together both personal and academic histories allowed Toronto Museum Services to tell the story of Toronto's contribution to the First World War (York University 2014, para. 2-3). This deepened the knowledge of everyone in the room and also gave everyone a much more personal sense of the effects that the War had on Toronto and its citizens.

Mobile Museums

Mobile museums are exhibitions created in transportable spaces, generally a recreational vehicle, a bus, or a large trailer (IDEA 2011, para 1). Some of these exhibitions take place in historic vehicles or vehicles designed to look historical, but they are all moveable. Because of their mobility, these exhibitions can be brought to and set up anywhere that cars can be driven. Inside of the vehicle or trailer, an exhibition is set up, much like it would be in a museum. Because of the tight space constraints, the exhibits are focused narrowly on a single topic. Mobile museum projects are not as new as pop-up museums. In recent years, the need for this kind of project has become greater as museums seek to be more accessible; these outreach programs can extend the reach of museums considerably. This type of project also appeals to institutions with collections but without the space or capacity to exhibit them all, as trailers are more versatile investments than rentals or isolated cases.

Movable Museum is a project run out of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. This mobile museum project is one of the oldest of these programs with the original program starting in 1903 (IDEA 2011, para 16). The current incarnation of the program has existed since 1993 (IDEA 2011, para 18). The project consists of several buses, each with their own theme and exhibit. The buses are taken all over the city. They extend the reach of the museum to increase the impact of the collections and education by allowing it to reach more of the city. This project was designed especially for students because it was discovered that many students who are out of the central core of New York city have difficulty accessing museums (IDEA 2011, para 15). With tight school budgets, it is impossible for these children to make it to a museum even in an educational capacity. These buses and their dedicated educational staff are then able to bring the museum to students at no cost to their school.
This allows the museum to be experienced by students who could really benefit from the learning experience they offer without straining financially overburdened schools. The mobile museum also allows the visit to be part of the school day with the program not being restrained by the time it takes to transport students to the museum. The students are not the only ones who are able to partake in the mobile museums. In the summer, the mobile museums are taken to libraries where they are parked and similar programs are run at those locations (IDEA 2011, para 21-22). This further benefits the community and creates ties between the museum and the community. These mobile museums are able to cover a variety of topics. Not all of these buses can be deployed at once. Movable Museum currently has four buses that focus on topics ranging from Anthropology, Paleontology, to Astronomy. Each bus has its own permanent exhibition with a specific age group it is designed for. While these buses only operate in the New York area, the concept has inspired other similar projects. Usually, these projects originate from larger institutions that have the budgets and collections to allow for these kinds of programs.

As part of their 40th anniversary celebrations, the Peel Regional Police used the material culture collection that they had collected to create a mobile museum. This activity added to the displays that had already been created in several of the community police stations. These early displays had limited impact because people do not generally visit a police station with history in mind. The Peel Regional Police were inspired by a similar museum trailer, which is owned by the Hamilton Police. Currently, the Peel Regional Police Museum trailer is focused on the concept of then and now. There is the possibility to adapt the trailer to many more themes. As the 40th anniversary celebrations draw to a close, the future of the trailer is uncertain, but it has infinite possibilities. The trailer format allows for the museum experience to be brought to a large audience at multiple times and locations. The Peel Regional Police’s collection was not at all accessible to the public prior to this project, but it proved to be of great interest to both those inside and outside of the police force.

Using a trailer as a display area allowed for objects to be shown in a much shorter time frame but with greater impact than the initial cases in the division buildings. The trailer also involved much less of a financial investment, which allowed the Peel Regional Police to test the public’s interest in a more permanent museum. The trailer was also really appreciated by retirees of the police force, as some are not mobile or live farther away and the mobile museums could be taken to events they would already be at, rather than requiring them to make a special trip.
One of the biggest difficulties that a police museum faces is getting people to visit, especially if they have to pass by an officer-manned reception (Chris Johnstone, pers.comm.). Police museums can also be a difficult subject for many people. They are also often housed in police buildings, which are more generally associated with police business rather than culture and can be intimidating to some. The initial case initiative of the Peel Regional Police suffered from similar issues. Unlike police museums housed in buildings, the trailer suffered less from these issues. The trailer can be taken to events where interested audience already are, such as Show and Shine events, community safety events, and charity events. When open, the trailer is very visible and draws people in out of curiosity where a good interpreter can engage them in the artifacts and history presented. This gave the trailer a lot more exposure and has the potential in the future to be used as a valuable tool for the future police museum to continue to overcome the difficulties of subject matter.

Moving Forward

Pop-up and mobile museums have an amazing ability to be able to further the work of museums. However, they are not the solution for every museum and are not able to meet every need or solve every issue (DelCarlo 2012). Pop-up museums require an off-site location and enough people to make the event a success in terms of both participants and visitors. Not every topic will attract attention. Mobile museums require a lot of dedicated staff in order to make these vehicles truly effective and locations need to be chosen with care. They can also pose a risk to the collections that are housed within them, from vibrations objects experience during transport to the small spaces with a lack of proper swing space for moving objects. Further research on the topic is needed to understand current practices further and to create a better understanding of how these practices can be used to produce the best effects. This research may allow for typologies of users and visitor research to formalize our understanding of their popularity and impact.

These formats are still valuable and powerful as they speak to the way that people currently consume and produce. Being able to take our experiences with us and to engage at our convenience is increasingly part of modern life. In order to remain relevant, museums need to continue to respond to contemporary consumption and communication practices and adapt their work or develop new aspects to respond to our ever-changing world. While pop-up and mobile
museums will not work in every situation and do have their challenges, the formats do have many positive qualities that warrant their use. Ways to integrate these concepts into standard museum practices may be difficult but are certainly possible, as my case studies show, and have a great potential for reward when they are well planned. While I am certainly not advocating for the abandonment of museum buildings, the benefits of going outside the institution and bringing the museum to the people should not be ignored.

References

Chris Johnstone (Curator OPP museum) in discussion with the author, July 2014.


Transitory Treasures: Preserving Ephemera  
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The word “ephemera” is from the Greek *ephemeros*, meaning “lasting only one day.” It now applies to temporary, disposable material. Examples of physical ephemera include flyers, brochures, and even programs. People tend to keep this type of ephemera as souvenirs. I kept the conference program as a memento of my presentation. Ephemera also exist digitally. While online content is often intended to be very transitory, we are all aware that it tends to persist (Lothian 2013, 544). Nothing on Facebook is ever really gone. In addition to Internet content, digital ephemera also include e-mail newsletters, invitations, and flyers (Callaghan 2013, 27).

Even though ephemera are intended to be transitory material, many specimens have made their way into libraries and archives. Traditionally, libraries kept ephemera in vertical files. These often contained newspaper and magazine clippings as well as brochures organized into files by subject (Boese 2006, 34). Individuals tend to accumulate ephemera as mementoes of significant events in their lives. These ephemera often arrive at the archives as part of a donation of an individual’s papers. In my research on Flora MacDonald Denison, a Canadian suffragist, I found calling cards and programs that she had collected at an international women’s rights conference. Notes on the back of the calling cards were from prominent members of a militant British suffrage organization and I used these pieces of ephemera as evidence of the international nature of the suffrage movement as well as Canadian support for violence in support of the right for women to vote. Other pieces of ephemera, such as Denison’s shopping lists were of significantly less historical value.

Organizations often hold on to the ephemera they produce as a record of their activities. Historians coming across ephemera in the archives find it a valuable source. This is especially true for historians studying music, art, and protest movements. Historians of popular culture primarily use material related to performances such as concert programs and flyers for art exhibits (Bashford 2008, 459; Boese 2006, 34). Similarly, protest events such as marches and rallies generate ephemera that serves as a rich primary source for social historians (Lyons 2003, 408). As Laura E. Lyons, professor of English at the University of Hawai‘i explains:

By their nature ephemeral objects are transitory, on their way to becoming something else. Once the occasion for which they were produced passes, our response to ephemera changes; their temporal registers shift from being of the moment to allowing us to access the past. How can such material be archived in a way that preserves not just the objects themselves but also a
measure of their energy as specifically situated instances of cultural and intellectual production? The trick, it seems to me, is not to rescue such materials from the status of ephemera but to insist that their value as ephemera is necessarily double; that is ephemera speak both to the ‘vanishing present’ of the moment of their production and to the broader historical developments which they have at once documented and catalyzed (Lyons 2003, 417).

It is important for archivists and librarians to be aware of the reasons that the object is being preserved when making preservation decisions. Ephemera are fairly unique in that most pieces simultaneously have artifactual and informational value. The artifactual value lies in the aesthetic and physical characteristics of an item, while the informational value derives from its content. A good example of a type of ephemera that is both artifactual and informational is Pennsylvania Dutch Fraktur. Fraktur is a distinctive folk art style that was used to decorate documents such as birth and baptismal certificates. Some researchers may only be interested in the information written on the birth certificate, others may be solely interested in the artwork, and a third group would be interested in the document as a whole, potentially considering the interplay between art and information (Copeland et al. 2006, 197).

Ephemera present a number of preservation challenges, mostly due to its transitory nature. Ephemera, especially historical ephemera, are usually printed on very poor quality paper. The paper tends to be thin and weak with a high acid content. The acid in the paper leads it to disintegrate over time and exposure to light and water magnify this effect. Storage in acid-free media is essential to the preservation of ephemera (Makepeace 1985, 160). Deacidification is also an option; however, it can change the appearance or even damage the paper, which is a greater concern with ephemera because it is kept for artifactual as well as informational reasons. Another consideration is the age of the ephemera. Materials older than twenty years are not good candidates for deacidification because too much acid damage has already occurred. (Smith 1989, 151)

People tend to treat ephemera roughly before its arrival at the library or archives. They fold programs and brochures and shove them into bags and pockets. They tape or glue ephemera into scrapbooks made of poor quality paper. The tape or glue that holds the ephemera in the scrapbook usually degrades in a fairly short amount of time, often causing damage to the paper as well. If ephemera have been affixed to facing pages or folded to fit in the scrapbook, it will come in contact with other ephemera when the scrapbook is closed. Folding also weakens the
paper. If ephemera is stored in boxes, these boxes usually end up in basements or attics, which can expose them to water, pests, mould, and extreme temperatures (Makepeace 1985, 160-62).

Although ephemera are a broad and varied category, there are some general guidelines that librarians and archivists can follow to preserve it. The library or archives should house ephemera in archival quality media as soon as possible after receiving it. The use of acid free folders or wallets in combination with archival boxes or archival grade filing cabinets will protect the collection from light and dust. Folders, wallets, and boxes are available in many different sizes to accommodate small, large, or irregularly shaped ephemera (Smith 1985, 31-33). The temperature and relative humidity of the storage area should be consistent. The ideal temperature is 15°C, plus or minus 3°C. The ideal relative humidity for collections primarily composed of paper is 50% to 55% (Makepeace 1985, 163).

If the archivist or librarian expects users to handle the piece frequently, they can create a copy for use and permanently store the original. Photography is the best way to make copies. The heat and light from photocopying and scanning can damage the ephemera. The need to flatten the object to make a clear copy can also cause harm (Makepeace 1985, 164). Archives and libraries can also make the photographs available online. Digitization of an ephemera collection has the added bonus of the ability to link metadata with the images to facilitate searching the collection (Copeland et al. 2006, 196).

The paradoxical task of preserving ephemera, ensuring that something only intended to be temporary lasts well into the future, has led academics to re-envision the very concept of the archive. Paul Clarke, professor of drama at the University of Bristol and Julian Warren, archivist of the Arnolfini, a contemporary and performance art gallery in Bristol, see the contemporary archive as static and fixed and liken the custody of records to “house arrest” (Clarke and Warren 2009, 48).

This model does not fit the Arnolfini’s role in preserving evidence of performance art. Julie Bacon’s idea that the archive lies in the shadow of the landfill inspired Clarke and Warren to create a virtual landfill of online ephemera generated by exhibitions and events held at the Arnolfini. Their purpose was to open up access to the archives to the broader public in an attempt to have the archive closer resemble living memory instead of artificial memory. Their vision of the future of the archive is that it will be a cultural common ground that is frequently accessed by members of the public (Clarke and Warren 2009, 61-62).
Because of their context in contemporary art, Clarke and Warren emphasize the potential of the archive to serve as a rich source for sampling and remixing. My gut reaction to the use of archival documents in art is, “No, no, a thousand times no!” This reluctance is based on my background in history and archival theory; both fields strongly emphasize the importance of the original document as the best form of evidence. However, while maintaining our role in preserving culture, archivists should be open to working with artists and others who have potentially scary ideas about using records. In the case of art, I believe that copies of physical documents will often be an acceptable compromise. Because of the ease of copying and sharing electronic documents, digital archives can also serve as an artistic laboratory for both artists and archivists to discover the artistic potential of the archive. To facilitate such non-traditional use of archival material, Clarke and Warren advocate the adoption of an environmental protection model, which understands the archive as a shared resource, much the same way as we understand natural resources like water and wood. This model emphasizes respectful use, sharing, and preservation (Clarke and Warren 2009, 61).

While the ephemeral sources Clarke and Warren used in their project have recognizable physical counterparts, the nature of the Internet has changed the nature of ephemera. It could even be considered a macro-version of the Arnolfini’s virtual landfill. Most of what we use the Internet for is temporally based in the present. Since it is relatively easy and quick to publish and edit online content, Internet sources can remain current in a way that is next to impossible with physical media. However, we all know that despite constant online change, there exists what Alexis Lothian has characterized as an “inadvertent archives” (Lothian 2013, 544). This consists of the digital traces that our transitory online activity leaves. For companies, especially online interests such as Google and Facebook, these traces are a bankable asset and so they are preserved as an investment in the bottom line. Since it’s being preserved for profit, corporations treat this type of data as proprietary and limit access (Lothian 2013, 542). There are also many initiatives to reduce the ephemerality of online content through digital preservation measure. As of January 2013, the Library of Congress had preserved all public tweets made between March 2006 and April 2010 but has been unable to find a way to make the content accessible to researchers. They are continuing to archive tweet but the sheer volume alone makes the project incredibly unwieldy. In October 2012, the average daily number of public tweets was nearly half a billion (Osterberg 2013). A more accessible repository of Internet content is The Wayback
Machine which regularly archives the multiple versions that a website can take over its lifetime and makes them available to the general public. In making archived content accessible, The Wayback Machine is publishing content as well as serving as a repository, which means it must take into account the copyright status of its content. The Wayback Machine allows the copyright of the original website to be maintained and points users with copyright requests to the copyright holder, usually the creator of the original website. Additionally, creators can include copyright information in the metadata they create when they contribute their sites to The Wayback Machine (Wayback Machine).

Archivists and librarians are still establishing best practices to preserve born digital ephemera in a way that facilitates access. When the Tate Library wanted to preserve their collection of born digital ephemera, they conducted a survey of libraries in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States to find potential solutions. Most libraries surveyed have collections of e-mails and PDFs that are only accessible to staff. The librarians had not made these collections available to the public due to the amount of time required, copyright concerns, and lack of technical knowledge. Unable to find a solution in their consultations with fellow libraries, the Tate Library consulted its IT department, which suggested a digital asset management system. These systems and related content management systems allow for both the preservation of born digital ephemera and the attachment of metadata to the ephemera. Digital records are only preserved for as long as the systems they are stored on are accessible. When an archives or a library updates their systems, they will need to migrate digital collections to the new system in order to maintain their preservation. A costlier option is emulation – the re-creation of hardware and software that supports obsolete file types and storage media (Callaghan 2013, 29).

Preservation of ephemera, whether as a physical object or one of the many emerging types of born digital ephemera, requires archivists and librarians to plan carefully, think creatively, and work collaboratively with experts in areas such as paper conservation and IT. The value the ephemera bring to the collection will reward these efforts. Ephemera captures fleeting moments in time that will particularly enrich the study of arts, culture, and social movements.
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Don't Panic: The Curator's Guide to the Galaxy
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Outer space has long held great cultural significance. Throughout time, space has been conflated with heaven, eternity and the future. These are concepts which hold great meaning to those who seek to ponder the questions of the universe and humanity's place within it. All at once, space is seen as a desolate and unforgiving frontier and the salvation of the human race. From creating constellations out of star patterns to planting an American flag on the face of the moon, the cultural meaning which has been placed upon our solar system and beyond reflects deeply held beliefs. The archaeological record of space and space museums may seem as though they belong in a futuristic world. It may seem more of a conversation which belongs to the pages of a Star Trek script rather a conference paper in 2015. However, the legacy of humanity's exploration beyond Earth must become a prevalent topic within the space community. It is fraught with the very same issues as any museum on Earth. Colonialism, ownership and issues surrounding preservation must each be carefully considered. It is useful to use the lessons of Earth based museums as an analog for the preservation of a historical record in space. Space travel is moving ahead at an exponential pace. Space tourism is not some pipe dream but a very real and near prospect. The corporations which will be providing these services need a plan in place in order to properly conserve the cultural landscape of outer space.

A new wave of meaning in space arguably began on October 4, 1957 with the launch of Sputnik 1. The Soviet satellite heralded a new space age and the beginning of populating lower earth orbit with artificial objects. The rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States was waged through the achievements of astronauts, scientists, and engineers, ultimately culminating in the Apollo 11 moon landing. This had the inadvertent effect of creating a new space for material culture to expand beyond the Earth. Since 1957, tonnes of so called 'space junk' have taken up orbit around the Earth, on the face of the moon, and even Mars. The question becomes what is to be done with all this stuff? Is this simply space junk or do these artifacts have a larger cultural significance? Furthermore, what does it mean to have our cultural influence extend beyond our planet?

Surrounding the planet Earth right now are various artificial objects. Some are still in use and some can be considered 'space junk' or artifacts of a bygone era. What do we preserve? How do we even go about doing this? It is the contention of many experts that the objects in Lower
Earth Orbit (LEO) are causing a crisis which will impede future space endeavours. Alice Gorman writes, "The European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) calculates that after approximately 4200 launches since 1957, there are 10 000 objects larger than 10cm left in Earth orbit. Of these, 7% are operational spacecraft, 52% are decommissioned satellites, upper stages and mission related objects, and 41% are debris from the fragmentation of orbital objects" (2005, 2). These objects can place barriers to finding a functional launch window for new missions and new satellites to be placed in orbit. It is a very real concern that if there is nothing done about the LEO Crisis, we could get to the point where leaving Earth is no longer an option. This also means that there could be a point where humans can no longer find a suitable launch window to fix satellites that are already in Earth orbit or service the international space station. This clearly creates a problem for people who like using cell phones, watching TV, and using GPS among other things. There is also the potential for collision with current and future space craft. At first glance it would seem that the best thing to do would be to work on a viable way to clean up the space junk surrounding our atmosphere. A study from the European Space Agency states that,

A 2009 joint study of the current space debris environment performed by all major space agencies (with NASA and ESA among them) showed that even if no further space launches take place, then the space debris population will continue to increase, resulting in a continuously growing collision rate (ESA 2014).

It is not only the objects that are already surrounding our planet, but also the collisions that those objects create with each other. Thus, collisions create more pieces of debris and continue to pollute LEO.

One possible solution is what Luke Idziak would call a "Museum clustering of artifacts" (2013, 63). Around the Earth and the moon there exists what are referred to as Lagrangian points. These points are locations in space where gravitational forces and the orbital motion of a body balance each other such that a third smaller body would orbit within the first two points (Aldrin 2013, 98). There are many potential suggestions for the uses of these Lagrangian points. Some experts, most notably Buzz Aldrin, would like to use them to set up permanent bases in space for refueling or as a way stations on the way to Mars (Aldrin 2013, 100). Yet there is also the suggestion that these points could be the perfect place for museum clusters. If the artifacts could be dragged to these points they could maintain a relatively stable orbit. They would also provide a convenient spot for space tourists to visit them as a collection. As you can imagine there are many technical considerations for preserving artifacts in outer space. This is an
unprecedented opportunity to study the effects of artifacts that have been up in space for a prolonged period of time. Luke Idziak writes,

Satellites possess a truly unique style and engineered functional elegance all of their own in response to the unprecedented requirements of outer space operation, and represent the first complete departure that the Earth has ever seen in terms of situational systems design, placing satellites in a rare and unique artifact class (2013, 61).

What better way to study the materials that humans have put into space than by leaving them there? This could inform not only types of material used, but the very construction of future objects as well.

What exactly is up there? What could future tourists hope to see? For example, Alouette 1 was the first Canadian satellite launched into orbit around the Earth. It was launched in 1962 and represents Canada's first foray beyond the atmosphere. Alouette 1 made Canada the third space faring nation in the world. Although it has long since stopped working, the satellite is still orbiting around Earth. Is this something worth preserving? If you had the opportunity to experience such a milestone in Canadian technological advancement, would you? If Alouette 1 were to be destroyed or taken out of orbit, would this impoverish the national archaeological record of Canada? A strong case can be made that this satellite holds not only great technical but cultural value as well.

Looking further out, arguably one of the most significant sites in human space travel is Tranquility Base, the site of the Apollo 11 moon landing. What type of artifacts does this site include?

More than 5000 pounds of spacecraft and other exploratory gear, flags, and plaques were left behind at the landing site/base camp, along with hundreds of footprints in the soft dusty soil. There artifacts include the descent stage/launch pad, video and still cameras, scientific sampling tools, discarded life support systems, an American flag and several remotely operated scientific instruments, including a laser beam reflector, seismic detector, and a gnomon, a device to verify colours of objects photographed (Capelotti 2010, 34).

The reality is that this is a very foreign legal territory which is fraught with Earth legacies of colonialism. Does setting up mechanisms for preserving the archaeological record in space imply ownership? Would this ownership be by a nation? A corporation? Some sort of worldwide organization which is founded to deal with this exact issue? There is no definite answer as to
how this will take shape over the next little while. The issues which are faced by Earth based museums can be instructive as to what to do (and not do) in space and why.

Space exploration is often framed within a colonial context. 'Conquering' the moon or 'colonizing' Mars is common rhetoric within the space community. Even the idea of space as a frontier is regularly employed uncritically. This may be due to the fact that the American frontier is looked upon fondly in mass media as a time of great expansion and innovation. Yet, the frontier is rarely such a triumphant place for those on the opposite side of the power structure. Frontier terminology is not only problematic; it is dangerous. There is a heavy investment in portraying outer space as empty as well. Just like the American frontier, it is simply waiting to be filled (Gorman 2005, 99). The meaning of this cannot be overstated. Since Sputnik launched in 1957, space has been largely populated by artifacts and bodies of mostly white people from rich first world nations. The colonial enterprise moves forward, again uncritically, beyond Earth's atmosphere. Which stories will be told in the museums of space is largely dependent on the people who get to tell them.

UNESCO has already claimed many sites on Earth as heritage sites. These are places that are deemed significant to the entire world. While it is doubtful that seven billion people can agree on anything, John Cleere's definition of world heritage is useful – that is, "The UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972 was conceived in order to establish 'an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value'" (Cleere 1995, 63). Initially this program was set up to recognize artificial objects created by humans, but the definition was broadened in 1972 to include nonmonumental cultural property or cultural landscapes. (Cleere 1995, 63). The melding of natural landscapes with those that have had significant cultural impact has changed cultural heritage preservation on Earth. It can also be applied to artifacts in space as well. This began a push to declare Tranquility Base as one of these sites. However, according to UNESCO, the site must be tied to a specific country. Since the Outer Space Treaty states that: "outer space is the common territory of all humanity and sovereignty or ownership cannot be claimed over space or celestial bodies" (Gorman 2005, 100) the moon does not fall under these criteria. This has not stopped people from trying however. California has tried to lay claim because some of the lunar parts still on the moon were manufactured there. There has also been a push to include the lunar landing site under the protection of the National Park Services, but this has also been rejected (Chang 2012). The
protection of the Apollo lunar landing sites seems to be a can of worms which no one is ready to open. Declaring Tranquility Base as a heritage site cannot be done without explicitly tying the moon to the United States. How then to proceed? The world heritage site program has problems of its own, without beginning to include moon ownership. Much of the rhetoric around the world heritage program concerns the idea of 'universal value' - this is a vague notion that is highly problematic. Determining universal value can be seen as a form of colonialism in itself.

These ideas have become much more prevalent in the past few years. No longer are governments the sole bastion of space exploration. Corporate involvement has become much more significant and space tourism, a very real prospect. With unprecedented access to outer space, what rules can be put in place without looking like some form of colonialism? Billionaires like Richard Branson and Elon Musk are now the key holders to outer space. Private interests will largely determine the future of space travel over the coming years. Will this solve or create problems? Is focusing on a bottom line better than focusing on nationalism? Only time will tell.

Consider the Lunar X Prize, started by Google and specifically designed to have nongovernmental organizations compete for a lunar landing. The Prize will pay up to $20 million for the first team to "successfully land a rover on the moon" (Billings 2008). One team in particular, Astrobotic Technology, announced that it was their intention to land at the Sea of Tranquillity. This came on the heels of Lunar X announcing what they called a 'heritage bonus' - which would be awarded to any rover that could land and take pictures of previous human activity on the moon (Thomas 2009). Thus, a real conversation began about how to actually protect lunar landing sites. Astrobotic Technology has since rescinded their plan to land near Tranquility Base, but the question still remains: if missions are sent to the moon, is there a responsibility for preserving the cultural heritage of these landmarks? As of yet, there are no legally binding laws for space or celestial bodies. The Outer Space Treaty makes suggestions, and many countries have signed on. Yet, there is no consequence (perhaps other than bad PR) for violating a space treaty.

Preserving the cultural landscape of outer space has vast implications. This is not a Canadian issue, not an American issue or even the issue of a single space agency. Space does not, nor can it ever belong to one country or organization. Therefore, what to do with the artifacts which represent the collective heritage of the human journey into space can be informed by and possibly improve upon current museological issues. However, one question must remain at the
forefront of this endeavor: as Carl Sagan most famously asked, "Who speaks for Earth?" (1980, 263).

References


Description, Access, and Professional Identity: A Look at Critical Issues for Archivists During LAM Convergence
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As the information landscape continues to evolve, the subject of libraries, archives and museums (LAM) convergence has begun to appear more and more often in literature around archives and archival theory. While a number of collaboration or convergence projects have already begun around the world, there is still very little written about the results of such merging and its implications for archivists and the archival profession. By examining three recent articles dealing with LAM convergence, one of which is a study on existing convergence projects and two of which outline suggestions for dealing with this increased need for convergence, this essay seeks to outline the major benefits and challenges of LAM convergence, and then situate them within the larger issues facing contemporary archival theory. This essay will begin by summarizing each article, and then examining the treatment of the major themes that appear in all three. This essay will also discuss these themes in relation to broader themes discussed in archival literature to draw final conclusions about the critical issues facing archivists during LAM convergence.

Duff, Carter, Cherry, MacNeil and Howarth’s (2013) article From Coexistence to Convergence: Studying Partnerships Among Libraries, Archives and Museums is a study that examines the motivations for collaboration between memory institutions, as well as the collaboration process itself, and the results of this convergence. By interviewing mid-level and managerial staff working in five different institutions in Canada and New Zealand about their experiences before, during and after the convergence, the authors were able to identify common motivations for collaboration as well as some benefits and challenges brought about by these new structures.

In terms of motivations, the authors were able to identify six major themes which are listed as: “to serve users better; to support scholarly activity; to take advantage of technological developments; to take into account the need for budgetary and administrative efficiencies; to adapt to an evolving understanding of digital surrogates as objects; and, to obtain a holistic view of collections” (para. 27). The authors also identified many challenges faced by LAMs during collaboration such as “institutional silos” (para. 48) where different professions remain isolated in their work despite their institutions being merged, and difficulty with access systems stemming mainly from differences in description and metadata between different professions (para. 52).
Another common stumbling block was the need for workers to feel that their professional identities, values and language would still be respected and not lost during the convergence of different fields of practice (para. 53-57). However, the authors also noted many benefits arising from collaboration, mainly in the form of improved service to users, new conceptualizations of their collections, improved working methods and staff learning (para. 58).

In addition to these findings, the article also briefly discusses the top-down nature of the implementation of these convergences (para. 42-47), the role of the new iSchools movement in possibly paving the way for better collaboration in the future (para. 13-15), and an overview of existing literature on the subject of LAM convergence (para. 6-9). Overall, the authors conclude that while these institutions may share many motivations for collaborating, the actual collaboration process itself is “not easy or simple” (para. 73) and will vary widely with each unique situation. The authors also note that the single biggest challenge during all convergences will be professional identity because any institution that wants to be successful needs its workers to feel as though their professional expertise is valued and respected (para. 75).

Waibel and Erway’s (2009) article Think globally, act locally: library, archive and museum collaboration discusses the increasing need for libraries, archives and museums to work together with the goal of creating more searchable online content available from a single source. The authors open by arguing that while LAMs may be separate institutions in the real world, the rise of ubiquitous internet search engine technologies, put forth by commercial providers, has created competition for non-commercial memory institutions (323-324). The authors assert that if LAMs are to succeed in providing access to users, they must abandon their silo mentalities and move towards a state of convergence (324).

The authors then proceed to explain collaboration as a spectrum in which investment, risk and benefit all increase proportionately with the amount of convergence created within the institutions (325). To illustrate this point further, the article overviews a series of RLG workshops attended by information professionals from five North American and European institutions in which participants discussed strategies for collaboration as well as any benefits or barriers that could arise in the process. The main motivations or goals for collaboration were identified as ease of access for users, including the provision of remote access, the creation of community among users and the possibility of better funding for the host institution (327-328). Benefits of collaboration included a more coherent view of collections and a more efficient use of the institutional budget (327).
biggest barriers to collaboration were identified as separate database systems used by each profession, cultural differences between professions and a feeling of competition between LAMs for funding (327).

By examining these workshops, the authors argue that a single search capability between all LAM collections is one of the most effective ways for these institutions to collaborate. However, the authors also discuss the main drawbacks of federated searching and metadata harvesting, saying that these strategies often fall victim to poor data mapping as there is no consistent description standard across professions (330-331). Authority files that search using keywords are presented as a possible alternative because they allow for a consistent data structure and format between documents, but the authors also note that using simple keywords could cause the “rich knowledge” (332) inherent in practice-specific terminologies to be lost, thus wasting the area-specific expertise of the professionals performing description.

The authors conclude that for any collaboration project to succeed, it needs a vision, mandate, incentives, change agents, and mooring (333). The authors also briefly assert that collaboration is ultimately a much deeper process than simply working together on a project, as it requires a fundamental rethinking of structures and work processes within organizations (333-334).

The article *New Partnerships for Old Sibling Rivals: The Development of Integrated Access Systems for the Holdings of Archives, Libraries and Museums* by Katherine Timms (2010), is similar to Waibel and Erway’s article in that it proposes integrated online access systems as a way of creating collaboration between libraries, archives and museums, but it is more preoccupied with determining the best way to go about realizing this goal rather than ruminating on the implications of this new partnership. Timms opens by describing how the digital surrogates for objects, that are ubiquitous in the digital world, eliminate the need for division between LAMs in this domain, and that a unified online access system will not only increase the accessibility of collections for users and make these institutions more financially efficient, but they bypass the problem of professional identity because they allow for LAMs to work together without actually converging (68-9). The author argues that because LAMs all share the same functions of access, education, research and preservation (70) and the same activities of collecting, organizing, making accessible their collections, and preservation (71), the last hurdle left is description. Timms briefly outlines the problem by explaining that in order for data content, value and structure standards to sync up with each other they must be both technologically and semantically interoperable (78). While
technological interoperability is relatively simple to achieve, the words used to describe a record or object present a much greater challenge because they are informed by the professional practices of each domain (78-9).

The author then proceeds to overview the main strategies currently in place for creating an integrated search method such as metadata crosswalks, (the creation of a set of rules for matching sets of metadata together (80)) that allow for a high level of interoperability, but can only match data labels and will have to rely on tags to match content. Other examples include federated searching which combines many individual databases into a single user interface (82). While this method allows the descriptive practices of different professions to remain completely intact, it is slow to perform retrieval, as the databases are not actually merged (82). Metadata aggregation systems use bots to harvest metadata from other sites into a single database and allows for a thorough search but cannot accept items that do not arrive with collection level and item level descriptions already in place (83-4). Other options include hybrid systems (86), and the collection description method, which require all objects to be grouped into collections using criteria that can be applied to library, archive or museum holdings (87) which allows Dublin Core description methods to be applied across all collections and prevents valuable collection-level context from being lost (87).

Timms concludes that integrated access systems make the most sense for LAMs, as they allow these institutions to work together towards their common goals while bypassing issues of professional identity and tradition that would come with total convergence (91-92). The way the author’s argument is structured, it is simply a matter of choosing the right technology to best solve any issues that arise.

The themes of better access for users and increased ability to take advantage of new technological developments were identified as strong motivators for collaboration between LAMs in all three articles. While these themes were only touched on briefly in many instances, there is undeniable consensus between the three articles that these factors are inextricably linked. Although Duff et al.’s (2013) article discussed the themes separately, the authors also wrote that “the digital realm has brought about a paradigm shift in the sense of how audiences and users expect to interface with institutions like museums, libraries and archives” (para. 34). Waibel and Erway (2009) state that “The ability to offer users a single search to find all the material relevant to their topic was a big component of the ideal world that each of the LAM workshop sites envisioned”
These quotes make it evident that taking advantage of new digital technologies and better serving user needs are not only common motivators, but that one can act as a means to achieving the other. Timms’ (2010) article also proposes integrated digital searching as a way to increase access and asserts that these mechanisms “provide one-stop-shopping and simultaneous access to multiple databases, which may be popular with users who are already accustomed to this type of access through mainstream avenues such as Google or Amazon” (90). These arguments further tie together the two themes by demonstrating that the new digital era has not only created a new avenue for serving users, but it has also necessitated this same avenue by changing the way users think about accessing information.

However, in addition to the new benefits to user access brought about by new collaborative digital technologies, there were also many challenges inherent in the idea of collaboration between libraries, archives and museums. One of the largest challenges discussed in all three articles was the difficulty of integrating access systems, and the institutional siloing inherent in these practices.

In Duff et al.’s (2013) article, the authors highlight institutional silos as both a cultural problem and a practical one. The authors describe interviewees perceiving “differences among various groups creating silos that needed to be broken down to increase sharing of information across the various groups” (para. 49) but remarking that “systems can break down these silos faster than people can” (para. 49). This suggests that while culture is a big stumbling block, description systems are a bigger problem. However, the authors also point out the Digital Library “does not want to end up with a lowest common denominator, where ‘no one is an expert on anything anymore’” (para. 49), suggesting that while description systems and metadata standards are difficult to integrate, the disappearance of the professional culture of each field also presents a significant obstacle. Duff et al. further explain one of the largest problems of integrating different metadata systems by saying there is “an absence of a discourse and leadership” (para. 51) on the best ways to do it. While Duff et al.’s article does not necessarily provide potential solutions for these problems, it outlines the potential difficulties faced by collaborating institutions at both a cultural and practical level in much greater detail than the other two articles.

In contrast to Duff et al.’s article, Waibel and Erway (2009) and Timms’ (2010) articles are less concerned with the cultural implications of silos and devote a lot more space to presenting practical solutions. Timms’ (2010) article suggests a number of integrated searching
systems be used as a bridge between professions and maintains that “collaboration would be in addition to traditional descriptive activities rather than in place of them” (91) and that “These systems do not require compromise in how descriptive standards are applied within any one of the three disciplines” (90). Timms suggests using strategies such as federated searching, to allow the original metadata created for the record to remain intact (82) and metadata aggregation systems, which are “flexible, scalable and able to accommodate a plethora of collections description information” (85). Essentially, Timms is arguing that solving the description problem in integrated systems is simply a matter of designing a technology that is sophisticated enough to perform a search across all three domains that does not require the reformatting or alteration of existing description systems.

Waibel and Erway’s (2009) article discusses the same solutions as Timms’ article (albeit in much less detail) but still brings up one main dilemma: “To offer fielded searching of disparate data, the data has to be mapped and the lowest common denominator will prevail” (330). While Timms’ article was written after Waibel and Erway’s, and does bring up a number of solutions to this proposed problem, Timms also admits to problems such as extended retrieval times (2010, 90) and rights management issues (2010, 90) indicating that technology may not in fact be able to solve all our problems. As these widely differing opinions demonstrate, integrating access systems is not only technically difficult, but it requires LAMs to confront the more deeply rooted issues of cultural differences between professions.

Another important theme discussed across all three articles that presented a challenge to convergence was the idea of professional identities and their associated values, languages and communication being undermined or eliminated during convergence. Duff et al.’s (2013) article argues, “A person’s expertise is what gives him or her a sense of value” (para. 53). The authors also go on to say that collaboration is “not to mash [knowledge sets] together, but in fact to align them towards a practical application” (para. 53). Duff et al. theorize professional values as not only being important to staff morale, but these arguments imply that something valuable will be lost if professional identities are not respected.

Timms’ (2010) article takes a much different approach to the problem of eliminating professional identity by suggesting that integrated searching systems will bypass the problem of professional identity because the collaborating institutions are not actually merging. Timms writes that “The goal in all instances is to provide integrated access to collections information, without
compromising the high quality of the traditional descriptive records in each sector” (91) and that these solutions “do not necessarily threaten the autonomy or unique traditions of each of the sectors” (91).

Waibel and Erway’s article (2009) takes an even more unorthodox approach by suggesting that professional identity is simply an obstacle that is getting in the way of convergence and nothing else. The authors state that while profession-specific practices may have helped these institutions in the past, in the new age of digital convergence “those very practices and standards isolate cultural heritage institutions from one another” (323). The topic of professional identity then remains unaddressed for the remainder of the article except when the authors list obstacles to convergence discussed in the RLG workshop sessions as “cultural differences, etc.” (327). These arguments presented across the three articles prove that of all the topics discussed, the value of professional identity appears to be one of the most contentious issues in the study of convergence and that it will likely cause the greatest difficulty for archivists should the professions ever one day converge completely.

One more theme that is touched upon in all three articles is the limits to convergence between LAMs. Duff et al.’s (2013) article is much more skeptical of complete convergence than the others. The authors write that although recent literature around convergence seems to subordinate the differences between institutions and focus on their similarities (para. 9), “Successful collaboration depends, ultimately, on the ability of the collaborators to identify substantive commonalities as well as substantive differences in services and practices and to build partnerships that recognize and respect these commonalities and differences” (para. 9). Unlike Duff et al.’s article, Waibel and Erway (2009) embrace the idea of complete convergence, asserting that “To achieve the vision of a more unified online presence for LAMs, they need to become less fragmented and more interconnected” (24). The authors go on to describe collaboration as a spectrum in which rewards rise in accordance with the risk, complexity and effort put into the convergence (325). This spectrum theory implies that more convergence is always a good thing, and the authors bring up none of the potential pitfalls discussed by Duff et al. Finally, Timms’ article (2010) sidesteps the problem of convergence completely by stating that “It is not necessary to amalgamate institutions and professions into one converged unit” (91). Instead, Timms (2010) suggests that each institution can remain separate in the real world, because they only need to collaborate together online. By examining these arguments, it becomes evident that while
convergence has become a popular topic recently in literature about the archival profession, there is still much debate about whether or not convergence is desirable, or even possible.

The theme of digital opportunities offering an increased ability to provide user access apparent in the three articles examined above also relates to some of the larger themes discussed so far in the Archives Concepts and Issues course, such as access as of the main purposes of archives. Wendy Duff’s article *Archival Mediation* (2010) argues that without effective ways of making archival material available for users, archives are failing to uphold one of their most basic mandates (116). Duff (2010) references Terry Eastwood’s ideas to write “He notes that an archivist’s primary role is to protect the integrity of records; therefore, making records available must come after the primary duties are fulfilled” (116). Here, Duff is arguing that records cannot truly fulfill their purpose until they are actually being used, making access to records one of the most important aspects of archival theory and practice.

This importance of access as a basic way to uphold the mandates of the archival profession is seen again in Adrian Cunningham’s overview of archival thinking and Terry Eastwood’s article on the role of archival practice in upholding democracy. Cunningham (2005) asserts that “in democratic societies archives are meant to provide a means of democratic accountability as a means of empowering citizens against potential maladministration, corruption and autocracy” (24). Similarly, Eastwood (2002) argues that “citizens have a right to seek out alternative information” (63-64). One must realize that neither of these goals can be carried out without access to the information in question, thereby positioning access to information as a key part of how archives fulfill their mandates of informing the public and maintaining democracy.

Another link between themes discussed in the three articles examined by this paper and the larger themes discussed in the literature, is the relationship of description practices to institutional amalgamation or collaboration, and the archival field more broadly. Many of the main description dilemmas faced by contemporary archivists are discussed in Geoffrey Yeo’s (2010) article *Debates about Description*. Yeo opens the article by asserting that that one of the main reasons we bother describing records, is to provide contextual information about the records (89-90). Yeo also brings up two very important debates in archival description theory that are brought about by the new digital formats on which many records are now being stored and made available. Yeo argues that metadata is not only data about a record, but that it actually constitutes part of the record itself because it provides context, which is an essential part of how meaning is produced (90). In the
digital world, as Waibel and Erway’s (2009) and Timms’ (2010) articles demonstrate all too well, it is very easy to separate a record from its metadata and store or retrieve them separately. While this creates worry around what will happen if an integrated access system that works across libraries, archives, and museums is created, Yeo’s article proves that this worry is not confined only to a convergence scenario and that digital access systems also pose a problem to description methods in systems that house only archival material.

Yeo (2010) further illustrates the importance of good description standards by pointing out that in digital access systems, records are rarely arranged into any hierarchal levels such as fonds and series, and therefore, description becomes even more important because the contextual information conveyed by arrangement is no longer being provided (91-92). Therefore, description practices being altered by digital formats are not only a problem that arises during the convergence of libraries, archives, and museums but they are also being discussed in the field of archiving more broadly.

The theme of professional identity discussed in the three articles also appears many times throughout the literature examined in this course so far, mainly in relation to the development of archiving as a distinctly different practice from librarianship and other forms of history recording. Luke Gilliland-Swetland (1991) describes how American archival theory used to rely on a historical manuscript tradition in which archivists saw themselves as “humanities scholars” (163) and “historian-interpreters” (163). However, as the Public Archives tradition slowly emerged, which moved away from modeling archival practice on librarianship, “Advocates of the public archives tradition perceived themselves to be professionals with mastery over a body of specialized theory and practice” (163). Michel Duchèin (1992) also notes that in Europe, archivists have always been quite different from librarians and historians (20) and this separation caused archivists to be “recognized as autonomous and specialized” (21). These arguments only serve to further illustrate the idea that archivists’ uniqueness and expertise as a profession ties in to their sense of value.

This sentiment is echoed again in Andrew Flinn’s (2011) article on community archives that explains how many of these institutions will accept non-traditional archival items such as clothing, art, and other objects (147) normally considered the domain of museums. Flinn asserts “This has provoked a rather defensive reaction among some archivists, perhaps fearing an undermining of their professional status” (147). Here, Flinn essentially proves that this worry that archivists will lose their professional value if they practice outside of their traditional territory is not only a
problem during LAM convergence, but it is also a concern of archival theory more generally, suggesting that convergence may not be the source of the problem.

Finally, the limits of convergence discussed in our original three articles can be examined in relation to the idea of provenance discussed throughout the course. Both Catherine Hobbs (2010) and Jennifer Douglas (2010) have written articles examining the pitfalls of disturbing, ignoring, or failing to fully capture the idea of provenance. Douglas (2010) writes that when the archival profession was in its nascent stages, records were arranged by subject matter in an attempt to make them more useable, but this method was soon abandoned as it caused original context to become lost completely (24). Similarly, Hobbs (2010) describes how early attempts to include personal papers in archival collections had them split up by subject, ruining their contextual information (215-216). Both these assertions make it evident that while convergence has many benefits, the principle of provenance is very important to archival theory and practice and that sidelong it for any reason often has negative consequences for the goals of archival practice.

By examining the writings of Duff et al., Waibel and Erway, and Timms, it is evident that convergence among LAMs will bring as many challenges to archivists as it will benefits. Just as convergence can help these institutions take advantage of new digital formats and provide improved access to a broader range of users, it also brings about the problems of institutional siloing, the integration of description systems, and the issue of professional identity. While an examination of other literature in the field has shown us that description, provenance, and the nature and purpose of archives have always been issues for archivists attempting to define their profession, the possible convergence of LAMs in the future will cause us to question and explore these issues in newly emerging ways. Even though there has yet to be any consensus on many of these issues, a few key questions can still be distilled from the examination of these articles: Is it possible to have it all? Can we really design technology that will overcome all the problems created by convergence, or will compromises be inevitable? If we do have to accept compromises, what are we losing as a profession? These dilemmas can be identified as some of the critical questions to consider when archivists are faced with the possibility of convergence. We know answers to these questions may be years or even decades away, and the only certainty is that once we have embarked upon convergence there is no easy way back. By delineating the main problems of LAM convergence for archivists, decisions to implement convergence can be made with open eyes.
References


The Social Life of Libraries: Instagram and Practice at the University of Toronto
Julia King, Master of Information Candidate

David Flander says, “social network sites are not broadcast media; they are places to engage in conversation with your community” (Flander 2012, 194). Studies have shown that social media like Twitter and Instagram are on the rise with young adults (Duggan, et al., 2014). Although many libraries use Twitter, Instagram is more suited to library outreach. In particular, Instagram is a platform that allows academic libraries, especially those with specialized collections, to perform outreach and advocacy in a visual medium that allows communication and interaction with colleagues and students.

References


The Atlas of Your New Life: Applying New Librarianship to Prison Pre-Release Reintegration Programs
Carolyn Dineen, Kelly Durkin, Safia Jaffer, Carla Murphy, Lucy Szczesniak, and Meaghan Valant, Master of Information Candidates

Inspired by David Lankes' mission of libraries from his Atlas of New Librarianship which aims “to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities” (Lankes 2011, 15), as well as his application of conversation theory to libraries, we developed a proposal for a library-based program for pre-release and just released women prisoners to ease their reintegration to life outside of prison through professional and personal development.

This program would be facilitated by a community librarian through a partnership with a women’s prison and a local public library, as well as multiple community partners. The scaping process is a visual way to “display agreements and their contexts,” (Lankes 2011, 49). Our program consists of a suite of information modules for the women to select from in order to map a personalized curriculum created from community resources that will meet their unique information needs once outside of prison—in essence facilitating the "scaping" of their new lives.

Our purpose with this program is to recognize the multi-faceted roles that incarcerated women play – as mothers, partners, sisters, daughters, and members of the community – and assist them in coping with the personal, social, and professional challenges they may face during the reintegration process.

The goals of this program are to facilitate the successful transition of incarcerated women from prison life to civilian life by filling gaps in service to this part of our community, decrease recidivism rates by creating multicultural gender-responsive and trauma-responsive programming, facilitate social improvement through community partnerships, and provide these services in a fiscally responsible way.

With this presentation, we wanted to create a conversation about the role of librarians in improving society and serving socially-excluded individuals. We asked attendees to participate in a cooperative scaping activity that builds on the conversation that we began with library professionals at the OLA Super Conference.

The idea for this program came out of a group project for the INF1006 workshop “The Library as Conversation: The Information Professional as Facilitator of Conversation” in the Winter 2014 term. This program was presented as a poster at the 2015 Ontario Library
Association Super Conference. Our presentation at the iSchool conference incorporated the cooperative scaping activity input received from that presentation.

Reference

This collection features contributions from the papers and posters of the 7th annual iSchool student conference at the Faculty of Information of the University of Toronto, March 6th and 7th, 2015.

Sophia Kesik
*Description, Access, and Professional Identity: A Look at Critical Issues for Archivists during LAM Convergence*

Lauren Di Monte and Mike Serafin
*Drupal +XML: A Digital Humanities Interface Experiment*

Cynthia Dempster
*Representing Emily Carr on Stage*

Madeline Smolarz
*Museums and the Integration of Immigrant Populations*

Becky Schaefer
*Transitory Treasures: Preserving Ephemera*

Lindsay Small
*Don’t Panic: the Curator’s Guide to the Galaxy*

Kaitlin Normandin
*The Book Bombers: the Reading Practices of Canadian Aircrew 1939-1945*

MD Salzberg
*Not a Safe Place: Internal Theft in Cultural Institutions*

Fern Burge
*User Experience Design for Vulnerable Communities*

Mary Kate Whibbs
*Fishing for Answers: Perceived Value and its Implications for Museums*

Rachel Leaton
*Bringing the Museum to the People: an Examination of Mobile and Pop-up Museums*