

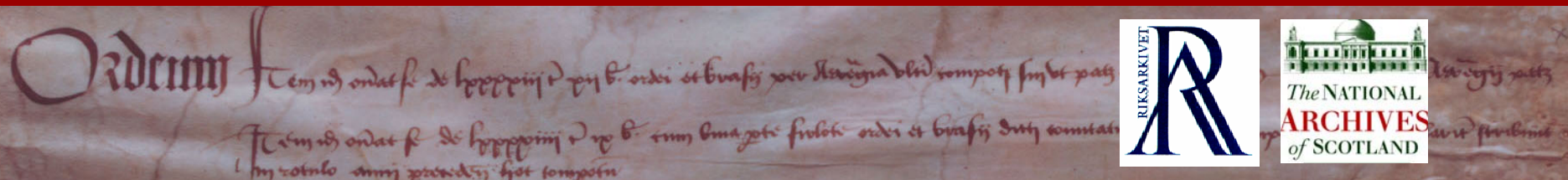
# How real archivists can learn to love the OAI

George MacKenzie

National Archives of Scotland

Göran Kristiansson

Riksarkivet, Sweden

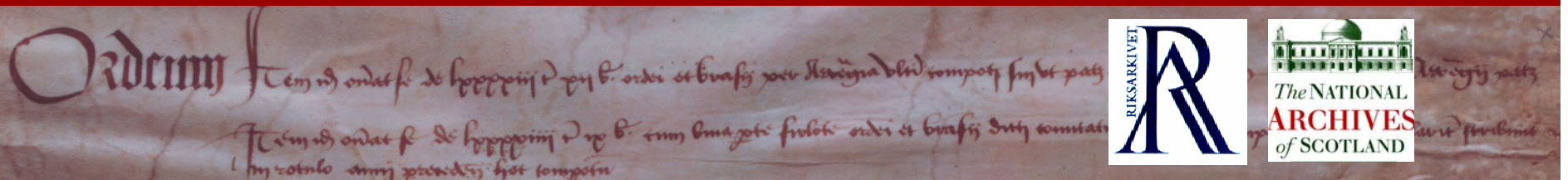


5 December 2002

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# Open Archives Initiative?

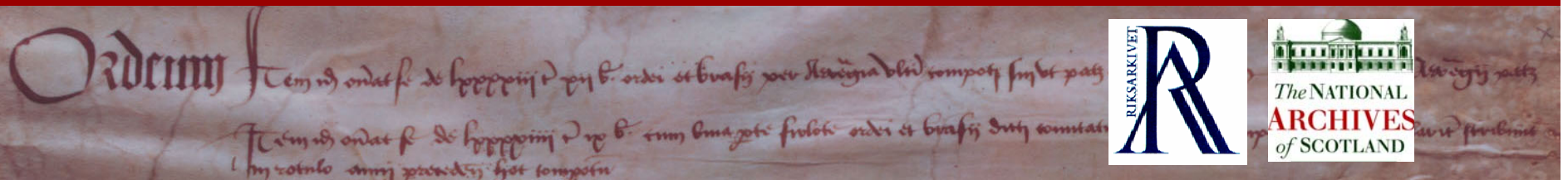
- ❑ How open is it?
- ❑ Archives, but not as we know them
- ❑ Valuable initiative with significance for resource discovery across the cultural and heritage domains.



# Archivists and the OAI

## Contents

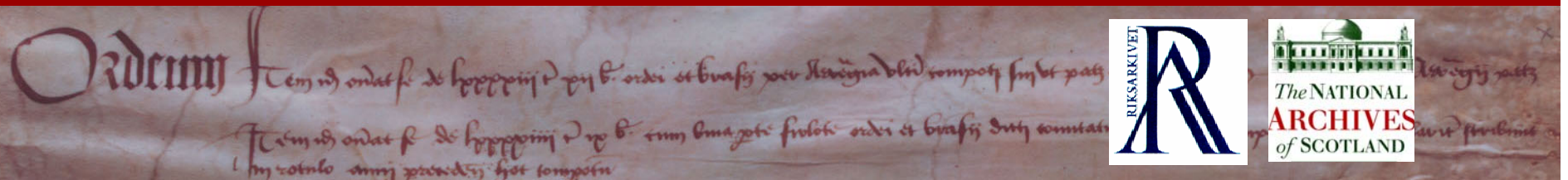
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# Archivists and the OAI

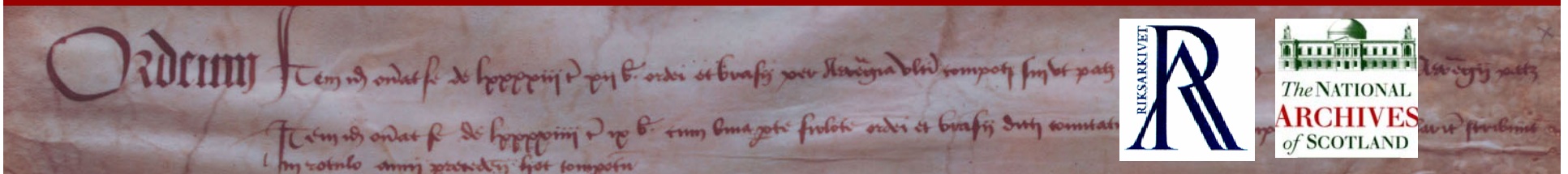
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# What are archives (and archivists) *for* ?

## Advertisement Alert



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Archives are the documentary guarantee of our rights and are fundamental to democracy and good governance.

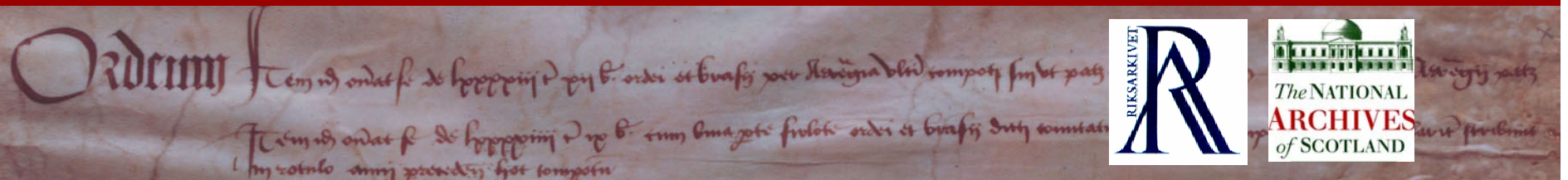
Archives are central to defining the cultural identity of peoples and nations.



# Recent Names for Archivists/Librarians (from the Wall Street Journal)

- ❑ Information Navigators
- ❑ Chief Answerists

But most users today are interested in family  
and local history – leisure historians

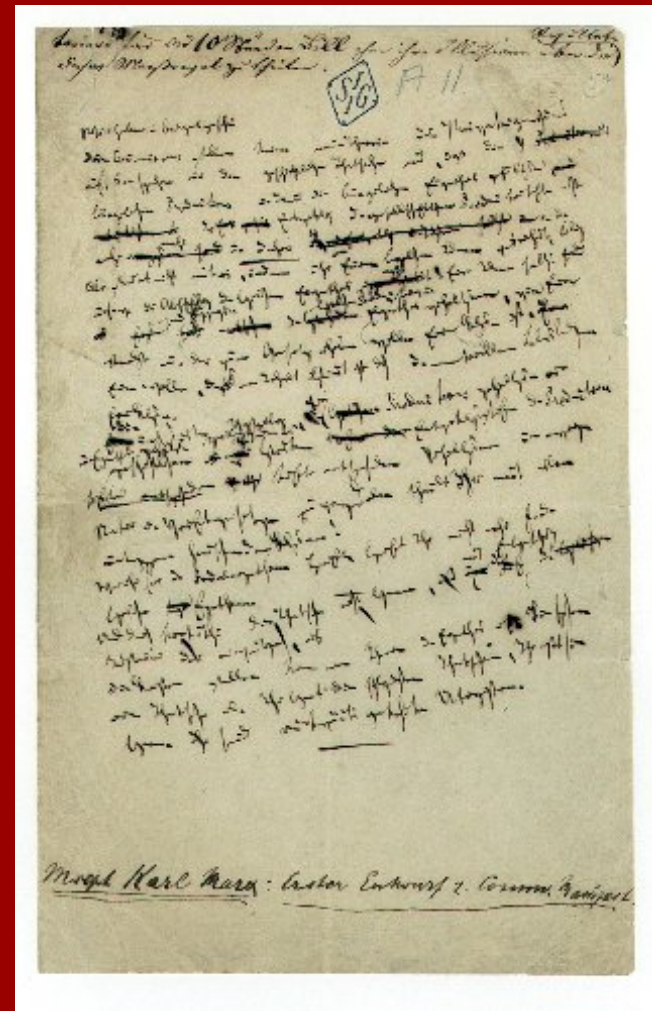




# Is this a Record ?

Not unless it has:

- Content
- Context
- Structure



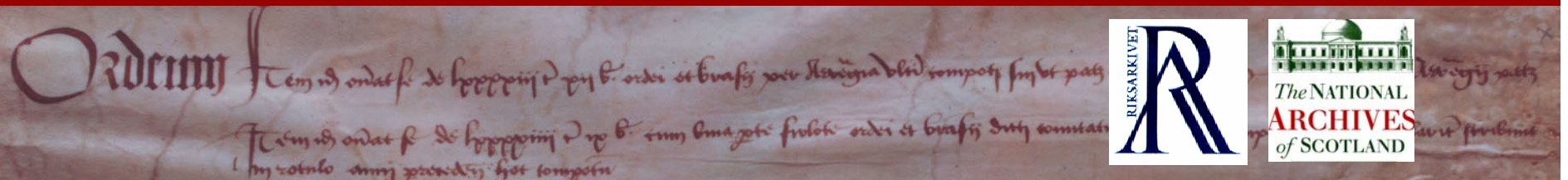
Ordinum Item id ondat se de hyspym d'p b' ordi et brasis xer Ardinga blid rompoti sm de pas  
Item id ondat se de hyspym d'p b' cum bna pte fructu ordi et brasis dny comitatu  
In rotulo annij pcedentij hnt rompotu





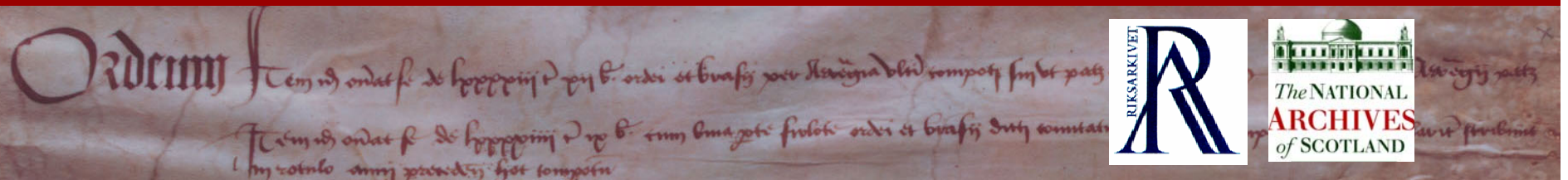
# Archivists and Descriptions

- ❑ archivists came late to standards
- ❑ archive catalogues usually provide access only to a paper (or parchment) original document.



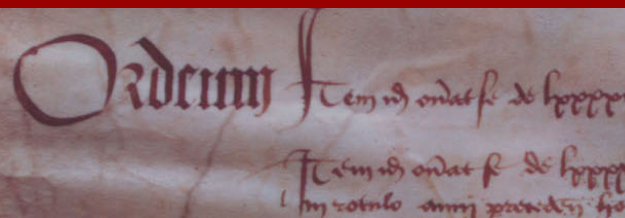
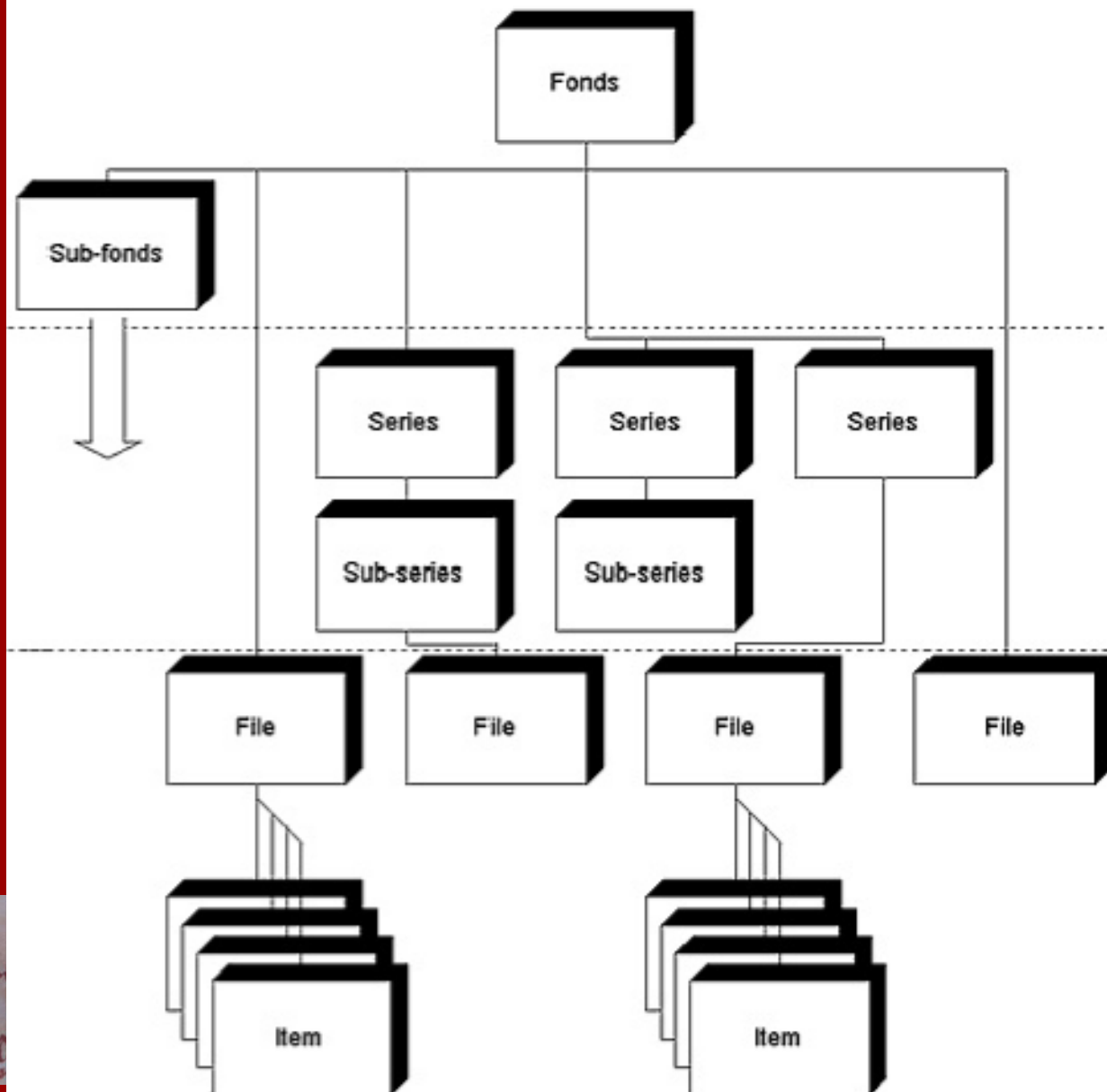
# Archival Principles

- ❑ To understand the content of a document, you must study the context in which it was created
- ❑ Provenance and original order
- ❑ Multi-level description
- ❑ Description needs to be *collective* and *contextual* (Haworth, 2001)



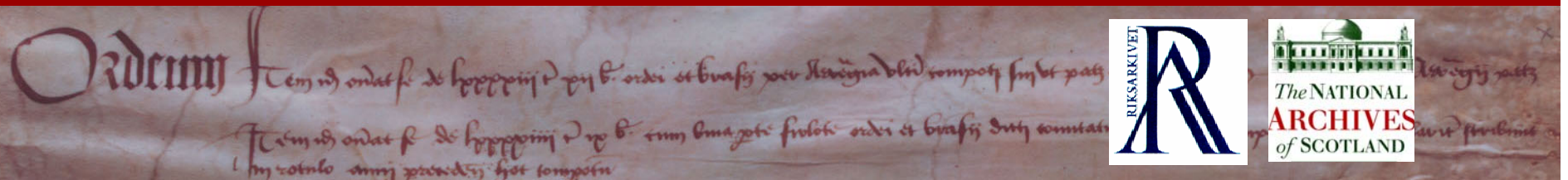
# Multi-level description

MODEL OF THE LEVELS OF ARRANGEMENT OF A FONDS



# The Importance of Context

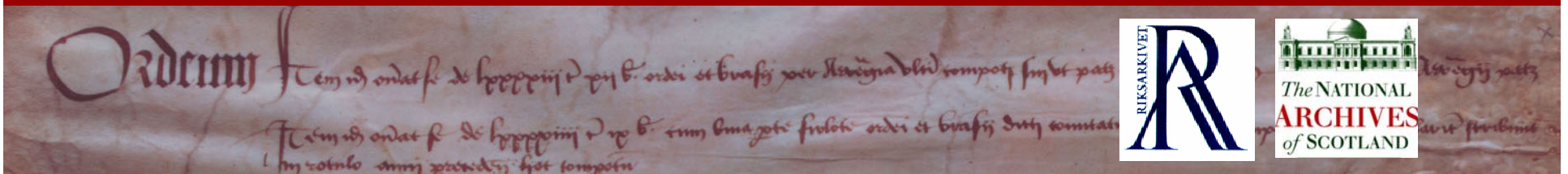
- ❑ What do we mean by context in archives?
- ❑ Context aids understanding
- ❑ Crucial in electronic environment
- ❑ Critical in cross-domain searching





# Descriptions in Context

Suppose a customer is searching for information on “Braes” a township on the island of Skye, scene of agricultural disturbance in 1882.....



The initial search returns a description of the item, giving its reference number and collection details.....

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer window titled "NAS CALM OPAC - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar displays "http://nas-calm/dservea/index.htm". The main content area shows search results for "Miscellaneous small collections of family, business and other papers", "Papers of Sheriff William Ivory (1825-1915)", and "Correspondence of Sheriff William Ivory (1881-1896)". A detailed record for the latter is shown with the following fields:

<b>CountryCode</b>	GB
<b>RepCode</b>	234
<b>Repository</b>	National Archives of Scotland
<b>Reference</b>	<a href="#">GD1/36/1/2</a>
<b>Title</b>	Correspondence of Sheriff Ivory concerning tenant unrest and disturbances at Glendale and Braes on Skye, the refusal to pay rents and intimidation.
<b>Date</b>	Mar 1882
<b>Extent</b>	17 items
<b>Description</b>	Including: (2) March 13, Peter Speirs, Sheriff Substitute, Portree House to Sheriff Ivory: concerning the failure of an attempt to precognosce several tenants of Braes; "... I would do anything rather than have a row with poor ignorant fellows - and we had Forster's example in Ireland!" (8) March 20, Norman Macpherson, Edinburgh to [J B Balfour] Lord Advocate (copy): writer is joint possessor of estates in Skye and discusses the demands of crofters for more land and the general unrest. (9) March 20, Memorandum of Joshua McLennan, Procurator Fiscal, Portree as to the

The taskbar at the bottom shows the Office application and other system icons. The Microsoft logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the browser window.

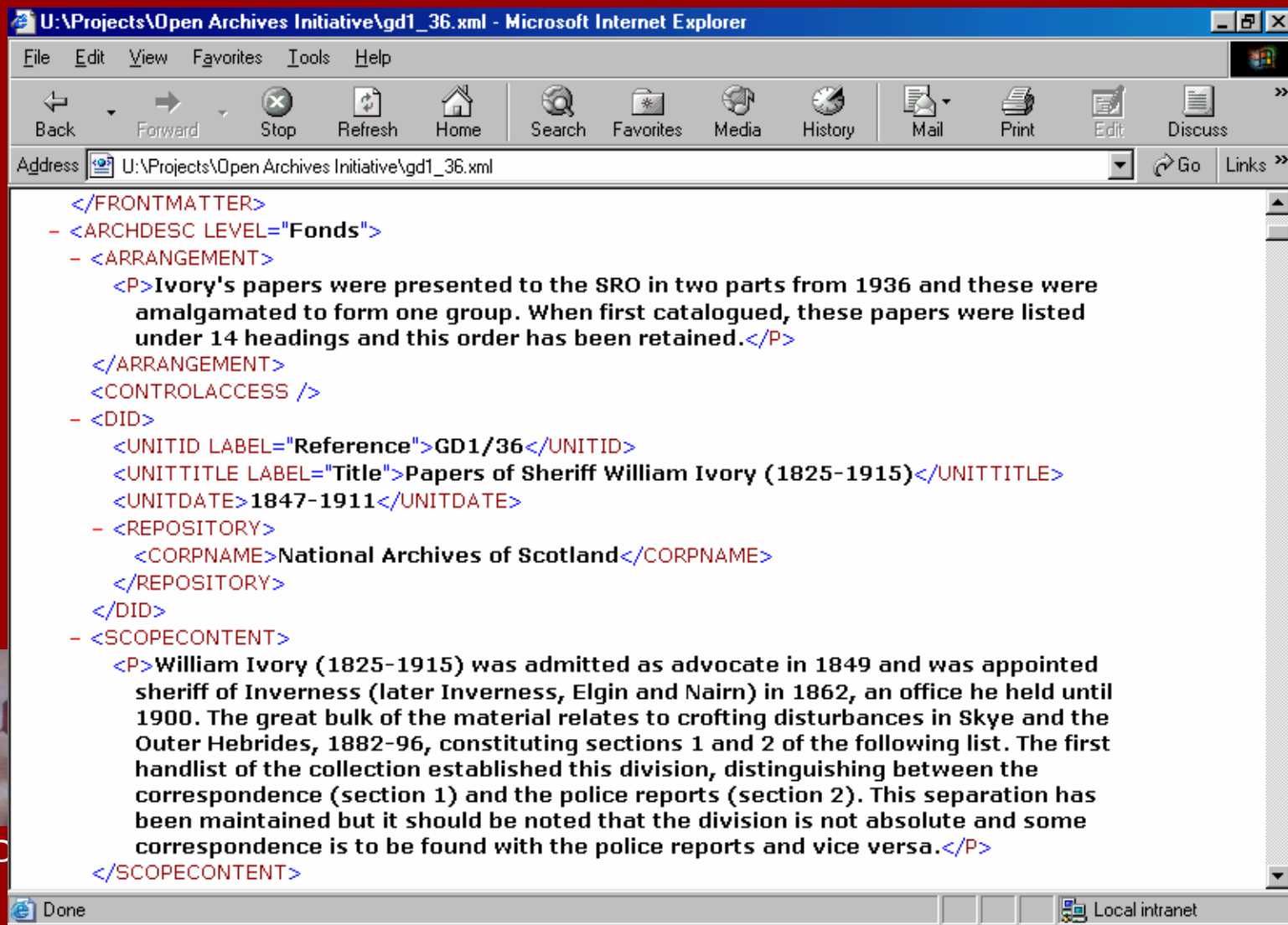
Further contextual information is available about the collection, the creator (Sheriff Ivory) and his role.....

**Search>**  
**Sort Fields>**

<b>Repository</b>	National Archives of Scotland
<b>Reference</b>	<a href="#">GD1/36</a>
<b>Title</b>	Papers of Sheriff William Ivory (1825-1915)
<b>Date</b>	1847-1911
<b>ArchivalHist</b>	Presented by Eric J Ivory Esq., 9 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, to the Scottish Record Office, HM General Register House, Edinburgh.
<b>Description</b>	William Ivory (1825-1915) was admitted as advocate in 1849 and was appointed sheriff of Inverness (later Inverness, Elgin and Nairn) in 1862, an office he held until 1900. The great bulk of the material relates to crofting disturbances in Skye and the Outer Hebrides, 1882-96, constituting sections 1 and 2 of the following list. The first handlist of the collection established this division, distinguishing between the correspondence (section 1) and the police reports (section 2). This separation has been maintained but it should be noted that the division is not absolute and some correspondence is to be found with the police reports and vice versa.
<b>Arrangement</b>	Ivory's papers were presented to the SRO in two parts from 1936 and these were amalgamated to form one group. When first catalogued, these papers were listed under 14 headings and this order has been retained.
<b>AccessStatus</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>RelatedMaterial</b>	Other documents relating to crofting unrest are noted in the short guide to material in the SRO relating to the history of the Highlands and Islands of

Done Local intranet

The description can also be exported as an EAD file.....



```
</FRONTMATTER>
- <ARCHDESC LEVEL="Fonds">
- <ARRANGEMENT>
  <P>Ivory's papers were presented to the SRO in two parts from 1936 and these were
  amalgamated to form one group. When first catalogued, these papers were listed
  under 14 headings and this order has been retained.</P>
</ARRANGEMENT>
<CONTROLACCESS />
- <DID>
  <UNITID LABEL="Reference">GD1/36</UNITID>
  <UNITTITLE LABEL="Title">Papers of Sheriff William Ivory (1825-1915)</UNITTITLE>
  <UNITDATE>1847-1911</UNITDATE>
- <REPOSITORY>
  <CORPNAME>National Archives of Scotland</CORPNAME>
</REPOSITORY>
</DID>
- <SCOPECONTENT>
  <P>William Ivory (1825-1915) was admitted as advocate in 1849 and was appointed
  sheriff of Inverness (later Inverness, Elgin and Nairn) in 1862, an office he held until
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  correspondence is to be found with the police reports and vice versa.</P>
</SCOPECONTENT>
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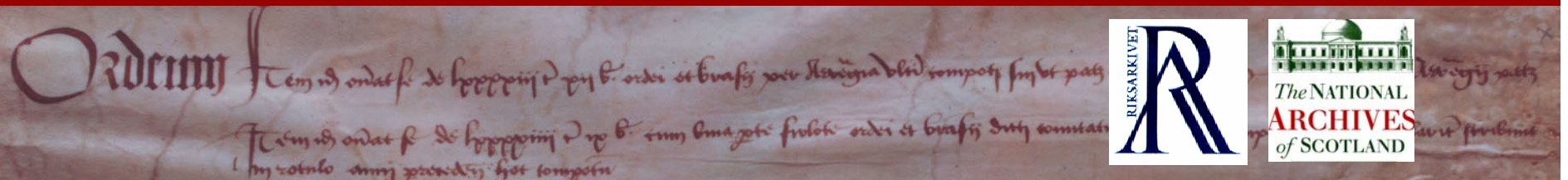
Click here



# Archivists and the OAI

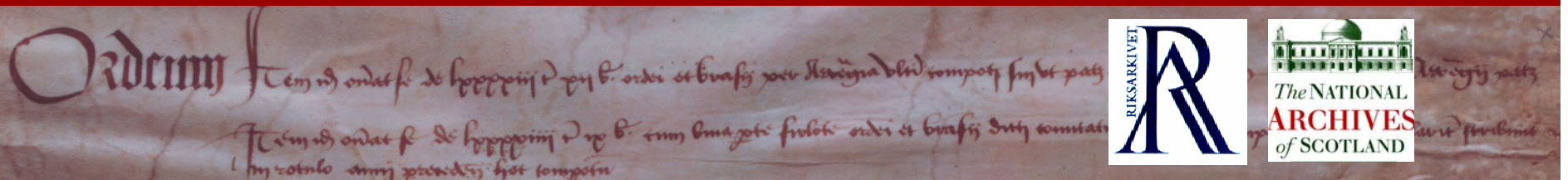
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# Interoperability: the EUAN Project

- ❑ archival principles fundamental
- ❑ build on existing standards (ISAD etc.)
- ❑ fonds (collection) level valid
- ❑ access points
- ❑ language remains barrier at Europe level



The Access  
Point Question

Culturally specific

Subjects

Easy

Place names

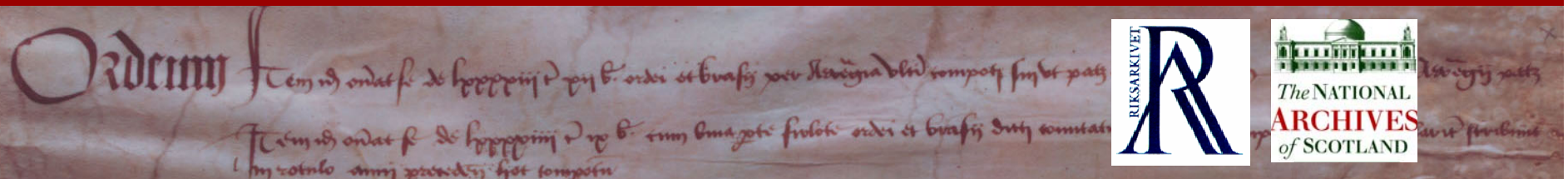
Personal names

Corporate names

Dates

Difficult

Culturally neutral



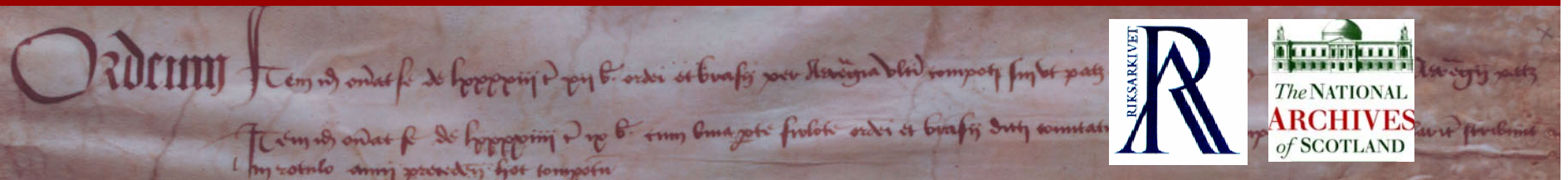
# Interoperability: archive networks

## □ SCAN

- Single database
- Collection level
- Multiple services

## □ CAIN

- Network of networks

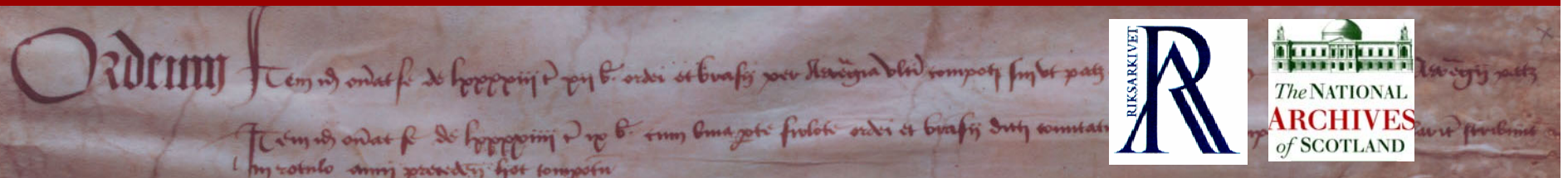




# Interoperability: archive networks

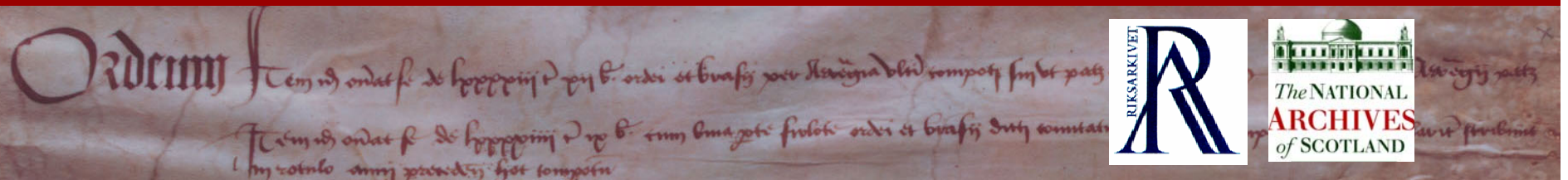
## □ NAD, Sweden

- Local and national archive institutions
- Moved from CD format to on-line
- Integrates e-commerce



# Interoperability

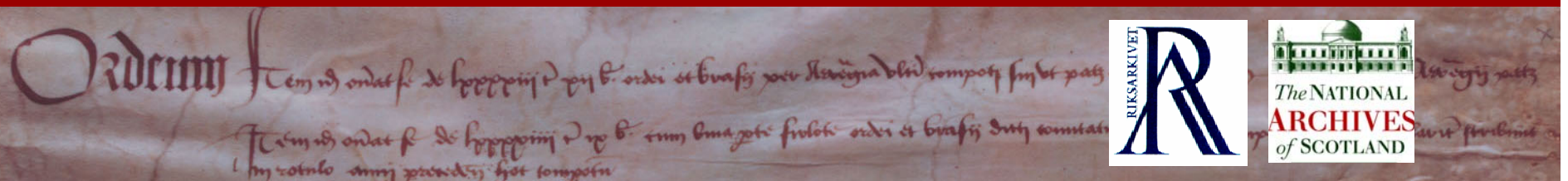
- ❑ LEAF Project
- ❑ From EAD to EAC - Encoded Archival Context



# Archivists and the OAI

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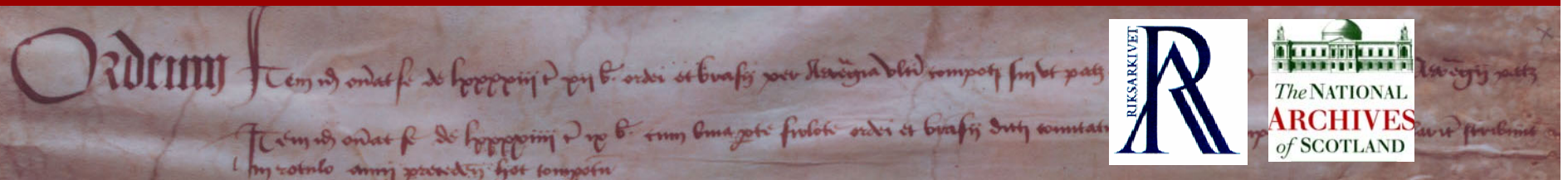
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# OAI and archival description

## □ The advantages:

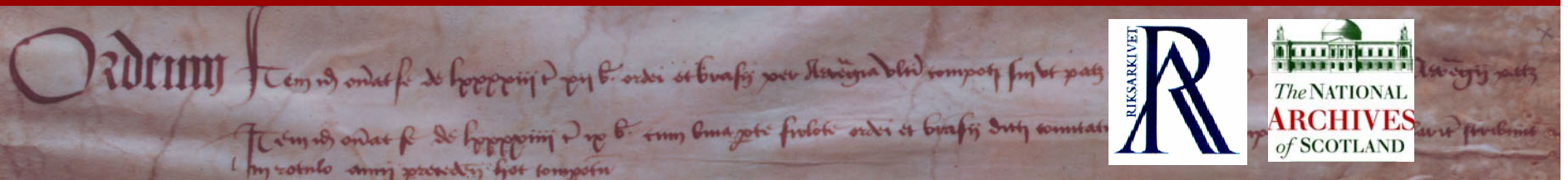
- reach new communities
- cross sectoral
- use by non archive organisations holding archives



# OAI and archival description

## □ The disadvantages:

- conflict with archival hierarchies
- loss of contextual information
- descriptions less clear, may become misleading
- users disappointed that on-line access to record is not available

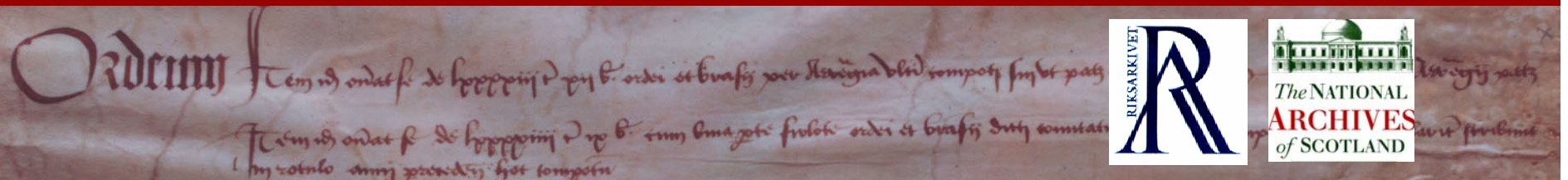




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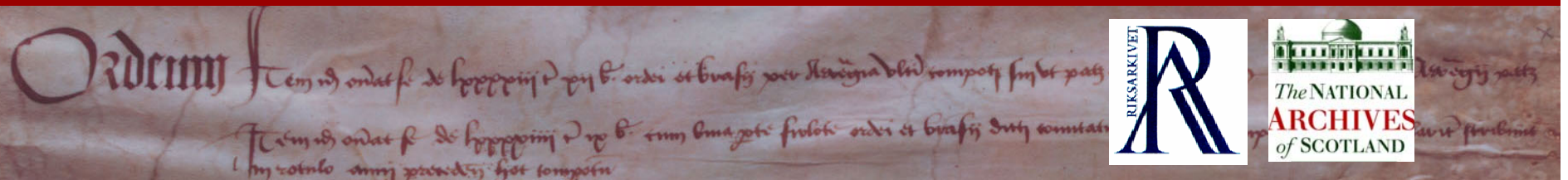
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# Real archives using OAI

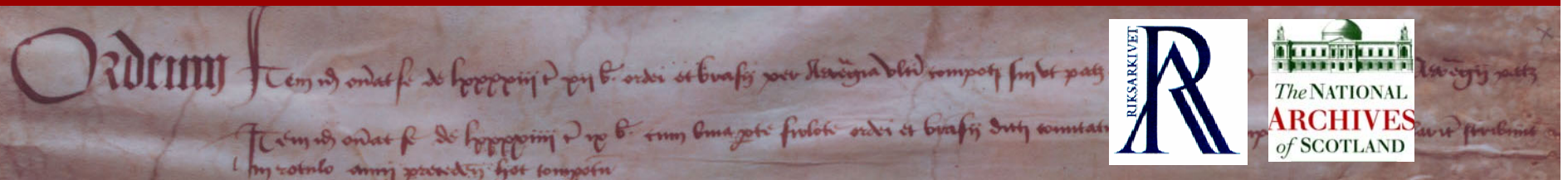
- ❑ UIUC
- ❑ AIM25, London
- ❑ Australia, Bright Sparcs



# Archivists and the OAI

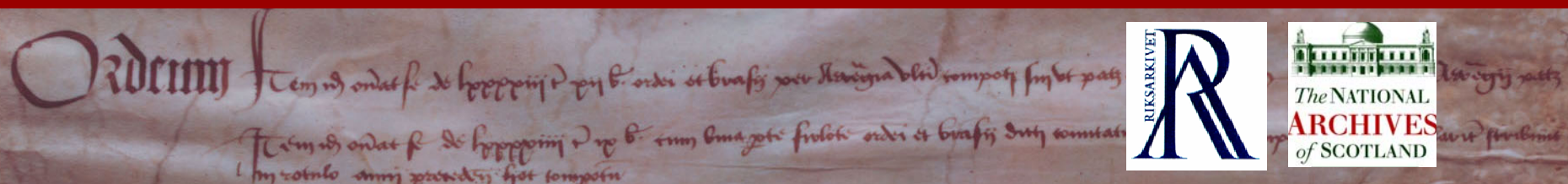
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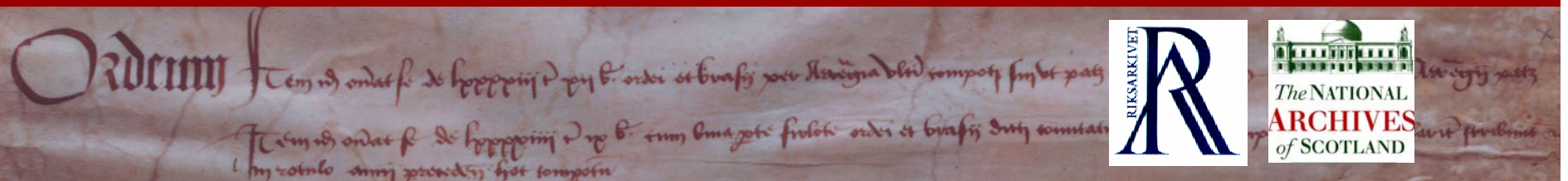
“OAI Protocols present one opportunity to re-engineer access to archival materials to provide for greater interoperability.”

Chris Prom, 2002



# Archivists may use OAI, if:

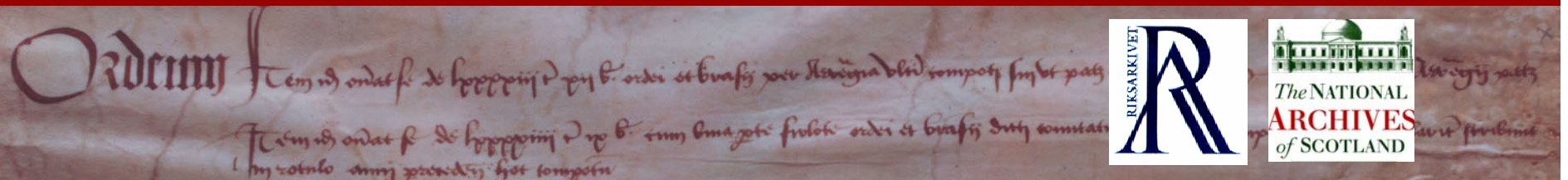
- ❑ they are confident that OAI compliant descriptions will respect their multi-level descriptions;
- ❑ they can export data in an OAI compliant way with little or no additional work;
- ❑ they believe that OAI will let them reach new, relevant audiences.





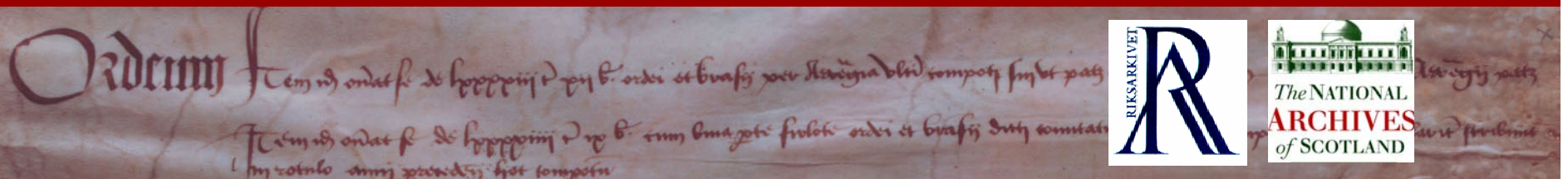
# Archivists may use OAI for:

- ❑ Fonds or collection level descriptions;
- ❑ Contextual descriptions
  - Record creators
  - Name authorities.

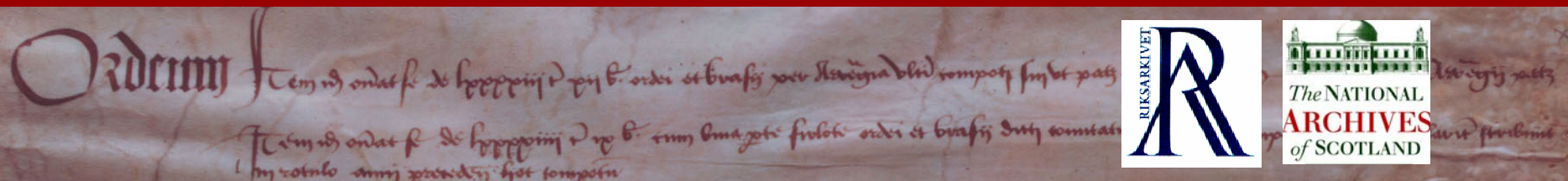


# OAI and archives - ways forward

- ❑ publicise OAI to archive community;
  - library-archive cooperation;
  - higher education community first?
- ❑ assess results for EAD-OAI from UIUC
- ❑ test OAI for fonds (collection) level
- ❑ test OAI for record creator descriptions



# Archives – the World's Memory... ..and source of all our histories



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