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No dust in cyberspace?: the effects of internet technology on perceptions of archives

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No Dust in Cyberspace?
The Effects of Internet Technology on Perceptions of Archives

By

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December 4, 2012

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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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Abstract

Drawing on research into digital technologies and their effects on society and archives, as well as research on the public image of archives, this thesis examines whether technological changes, specifically the Internet, have had any effects on public perceptions of archives and if so to determine the nature of those effects. It relies on a survey to measure possible effects of Internet technology on perceptions of archives. Findings suggest that there are a number of ways in which the Internet may be affecting perceptions of archives, including prompting both increased expectations for the provision of digital information and materials and also a decrease in the perceived accessibility and value of archives; adding possible definitions for what may be considered an "archive"; changing which tasks people associate most strongly with archives; and altering which stereotypes people are most likely to associate with archives. Responses also suggest that there are a number of influences besides the Internet which may affect the stereotypes applied to archives.

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Introduction

What do most people imagine when they think of archives? Assuming they imagine anything at all and are not simply bewildered by the unfamiliar term, they might think of a dark, windowless room, hidden somewhere in a basement, accessed through back doors and dim stairways, piled floor to ceiling with disorganized boxes and file cabinets overfilled with old folders, messy stacks of yellowed papers, and tattered, crumbling ledgers, all with a thick coating of dust. The inhabitant of such a space might be equally odd, a shuffling, nervous sort of person, as aged as some of the papers in her care, better suited to attending to the records than to other people, partially hidden behind thick glasses and a thin veil of dust stirred up by her every movement, and perhaps even shaken from her own moth-eaten clothing. The sense of times past, a dead and desiccated sort of history, hangs heavy over everything, archives and archivist alike.

Archivists have long been aware of such stereotypes associated with their work. They come across them in the same books, movies and TV shows that promulgate them to the public. Occasionally, they may encounter them in an offhanded remark from an acquaintance or see their effects in the reaction of a patron. Understandably, most archivists do not want archives to be viewed as dirty and disorganized when they spend their time cleaning and organizing the materials or to have the very people whose records they hold remain unaware or critical of their efforts. Andrea Hinding notes consternation in England over the general lack of understanding and appreciation of public records dating back as early as 1848.[1] Beyond this, greater awareness and understanding of archives may lead to greater use and

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[1] Andrea Hinding, "Of Archivists and Other Termites," *The American Archivist* 56, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 55. A committee of the House of Commons issued a report on the subject.

better funding. Many have argued that the whole point of preserving materials in archives is so they can be used.[2] Use of archives leads to greater appreciation of the services they provide, a better understanding and more accurate image, and a greater likelihood of funding and advocating for them.[3] Lack of use and the consequent lack of appreciation, on the other hand, may lead to a shortage of funding, as those analyzing the reports of the 1983 State Needs Assessment Grants found was the case for many state archives.[4]

Despite all this, writing on the image of archives, especially in depth studies, has been relatively scarce. Within the U.S., there have been only a handful of studies of the appearance of archivists in the media and even fewer surveys of members of the public to determine their actual opinions of archives. In 1992, John Grabowski called for a survey to determine if most Americans even knew the meaning of the term "archivist," yet such a study has still not been conducted.[5] Archivists, Richard Cox notes, "seem content to rely on perceptions and feelings rather than hard evidence."[6] The assumption seems to be that archivists know how they are perceived by the public, those within their profession are all equally aware of the situation and the issue does not warrant any closer examination.

When the image of archivists does come up, the focus is usually on changing not studying it. The image of archives held by the public, archivists have argued, is inaccurate and harmful to the profession. Certainly, archivists must act to bring in more users and

[2] Bruce W. Dearstyne, "What is the Use of Archives? A Challenge for the Profession," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987): 77.
[3] Hinding, "Of Archivists and Other Termites," 55; Dearstyne, "What is the Use of Archives?" 86; John J. Grabowski, "Keepers, Users, and Funders: Building an Awareness of Archival Value," *The American Archivist* 55 no. 3 (Summer 1992): 466.
[4] David B. Gracy, II., "Archives and Society: The First Archival Revolution," *American Archivist* 47 (Winter 1984): 8.
[5] Grabowski, "Keepers, Users, Funders," 466.
[6] Richard J. Cox, "International Perspectives on the Image of Archivists and Archives: Coverage by the New York Times 1992-93," *International Information and Library Review* 25 (1993): 198.

combat images of passivity, irrelevance, backwardness, and exclusivity. However, as Randall Jimerson notes, "all too often, we begin with the organization's needs and products, and then determine how to convince people to use archives."[7] Instead, he argues, archivists should start with the needs of the users and then determine how they can meet those needs using the resources in their possession. To successfully market themselves, bring in more users, and dispel the stereotypes that cling to their profession, archivists must give users what they want.

The problem is, archivists do not always know what users and, especially, potential users – those who have never been to an archives but may need the sorts of information they contain – actually want. Elsie Freeman argues that archivists operate under a series of misassumptions, falsely believing that as a profession they are user oriented, that they know their users, know how to help them, and are providing them with what they need.[8] Like the perceptions of archives, the users of archives often go unstudied, with archivists seeming to believe they already know all that is necessary. In 1987, as many as 69% of archives did not even collect basic user statistics.[9] In both cases, it seems, archivists could benefit from a better understanding of those who use the archives and those they would like to use the archives.

New technologies have complicated matters further. They make possible new forms of thinking and research, which archivists are not familiar with or prepared for, and bring in new groups of users who are unfamiliar with archives and their processes. People's

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[7] Randall C. Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity: Meeting User Needs in the Information Society," *American Archivist 52* (Summer 1989): 338.
[8] Elsie T. Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View," *American Archivist* 47 (Spring 1984): 113-4.
[9] Dearstyne, "What is the Use of Archives," 78-9.

expectations of archives and similar institutions may increase without any understanding of the difficulty of what they are asking. The proliferation of electronic records has made information infinitely more dynamic and accessible to the public, but it has also left archivists scrambling to accession these fragile and ephemeral records and find ways to preserve them and make them accessible in the future. Max Evans writes, "for the archivist, the Information Age means many more records to inventory, appraise, accession, and process. But it suggests to the rest of the world that information will be easily and quickly available."[10] As more and more of these records become available only in a digital form, archivists will also need to design systems to hold, track, refresh, migrate, and back up these files to address issues of obsolescence and the frequently short life spans of the materials on which they are stored. Gabrielle Blais and David Enns note, "the physical fragility of this medium has forced the archival and information management professions into a more active role in identifying and preserving records."[11] To accession these records before they disappear, archivists must act quickly, intervening before the record has finished its intended use, or even before it is created.

Though certainly not the only new technology having an impact on archives, the Internet epitomizes many of the opportunities and challenges presented by advances in information technology. Through the Internet, people have access to a wider array of information than could have been imagined even fifty years ago. Out of the millions of offerings available, the desired information can usually be located with a simple keyword

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[10] Max J. Evans, "Archives of the People, by the People, for the People," *American Archivist* 70 (Winter/Fall 2007): 388.
[11] Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91): 102.

search and retrieved at speeds approaching the instantaneous. People have become so accustomed to accessing information this way, thanks to what Evans terms "one of history's most astoundingly rapid adaptations to technology," that some may assume that any information they cannot find online does not exist at all.[12] Naturally, archivists are concerned about what this will mean for archives, whose contents do not and may not ever all appear online.

The nature of the sorts of records found online is strikingly different from that of traditional information carriers. Webpages, especially those containing any Web 2.0 features, are constantly changing. They may cease to exist at any time, without warning, leaving those who would preserve them in some form a small window within which to act. The content itself is not straight-forward either. Steven Lubar explains that an online text "is an active, living experience. It encourages interaction; it is linked to other texts, other places. Both authorship and content are fluid. The reader shares authority with the writer."[13] The media presented by the page may be an amalgam of digital text, image, audio, video, and interactive features. The sort of information presented on a webpage and the ways in which it is viewed and used may be strikingly different from that preserved in the bulk of archival records.

Of a number of technologies that may be affecting people's perceptions of archives, the Internet was chosen as the focus of this study.[14] This was both because of its central role in the ongoing information technology revolution and the number and variety of ways it may

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[12] Evans, "Archives of the People," 388; Richard Pearce-Moses, "Janus in Cyberspace: Archives on the Threshold of the Digital Era." *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 15.

[13] Steven Lubar, "Information Culture and the Archival Record," *The American Archivist* 62, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 19.

[14] Here the Internet refers to the computer network most commonly used to access pages on the World Wide Web. Though it is assumed that most people still access it mainly through a computer, the Internet may be accessed using other devices, such as smart phones.

affect people's understanding of archives, by bringing them into contact with vast amounts of information in general, with accumulations that are archives only in name, and with webpages posted by actual archives. The creation and spread of the archival image has long been out of the hands of archivists. Technological advancement does not necessarily change this, but it may change the sorts of perceptions of archives that these outside forces foster. Although there is some discussion of future directions for archival outreach, the focus here is on studying the image of archives, not changing it.

To understand the possible effects of information technology on perceptions of archives, it is first necessary to understand the traditional perceptions. The first chapter covers the work that has been done on studying the public image of archives. Archivists have studied the image of their profession through a number of different lenses, discussed in this chapter and used to study the common stereotypes that have long been associated with archives. Additionally, this chapter looks into the nature of stereotypes in general as a means to better understand those specific to archives and to guide archivists' efforts in taking control of their own image.

The ways in which technology may affect archives are numerous and varied. They range from the important, with potentially catastrophic consequences, to the trivial. The second chapter delves into some of the technological changes associated with the Internet that have begun to affect archives or may do so in the future. The discussion covers both the advances themselves and their effects on society at large, as well as the challenges that this poses to archives.

The third chapter examines the results of the survey used to measure the influence of the Internet on perceptions of archives. In this chapter, I examine whether the common stereotypes studied in chapter one are still prevalent, whether they are equally prevalent among all groups, and if they have been altered in any way. This is also where I look at whether the changes that technology is expected to bring in relation to archives, particularly in expectations of archives, are materializing. Though some of these changes have already been discussed, the results point to several areas which could use more study and action on the part of the profession.

The popular image of archives, in which archives are dark, dusty places filled with old, disintegrating papers and peopled by intelligent but retiring archivists, is deep rooted. It has been in place for much of the life of the profession. However, the rapid changes in information technology taking place today mean that views on those who create and keep information sources may also be changing. Though the full effects of these changes on archives remain to be seen, their nature is already becoming apparent.

Chapter 1

Glasses, Dust and History:
Traditional Stereotypes of Archives

Archival stereotypes have been long lived. They were in place well before the Internet began remaking society, in some cases going back nearly to the beginning of the profession in its modern incarnation. Archivists have examined these perceptions of archives through analysis of the media, systematic studies of the public, and the sharing of stories based on their own experiences and those of their colleagues. Often they have found a lack of understanding of what archives are and do, sometimes to the point that people cannot even form a full image of the profession. Many, however, have formed at least a somewhat coherent picture of archives and archivists. From these, certain themes have emerged as common to archival imagery. These include archivists as intelligent and dedicated but lacking in power and social skills; archival repositories as dark and dirty, usually due to their below ground location; and a view of the materials generally as closely related to history, old and paper-based, and often with some sort of implicit or explicit value judgment. Archivists have railed against these portrayals as stereotypes – mere caricatures of the profession. However, a study of stereotypes reveals that they are both useful and complex, shedding light on the many interconnections between the traits that come together to form the archival image and the reasons it may be so difficult to alter. Like all stereotypes, those attached to archives form an explanatory system meant to elucidate the identity, functions, and social standing of archives and archivists.

How Archivists Learn about Public Perceptions

There are several ways in which archivists learn about public perceptions. Much of what archivists know comes from anecdotal evidence acquired through daily interactions with the public and passed on by word of mouth. Taken together these anecdotes help archivists form a reasonably clear picture of the state of the archival image.[1] This is the sort of information that Margaret Turner uses in her examination of why the archives and records management professions might not be attracting new members in the UK.[2] The answers to Richard Barry's survey on society and archives, which asked archivists and those from related professions about their knowledge of public perceptions of archives, were likely also drawn from such evidence.[3] David Gracy cites several types of sources, anecdotes included, in his calls for archivists to take action to better their image.[4] Though useful, neither Gracy nor Turner's writings constitute full studies of the archival image.

One of the more popular ways for archivists to learn about perceptions of their profession is through studying how and when they appear in the media. Media representations are important because they both reflect public perceptions and influence them, especially in cases where people do not come in contact with archives and archivists very often.[5] Media sources may repeat certain traits and themes "perpetuating images which

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[1] Gracy, "Archives and Society," 7.

[2] Margaret Turner, "Is the Profession still Attractive?" *Comma* 2/3 (2003): 131-3.

[3] Richard E. Barry, "Report on the Society and Archives Survey." http://www.mybestdocs.com/barry-r-soc-arc-surv-report-030129toc.htm (accessed August 19, 2012).

[4] Gracy "Archives and Society;" Gracy, "Archivists, You Are What People Think You Keep," *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989): 72-8.

[5] Margaret Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'? Some Nineteenth-Century Perspectives," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 31, no. 1 (Apr 2010): 15.

eventually take on the status of stereotype."[6] Within the media, the public may come in contact with images of archives and archivists either through fiction (novels, film, television shows) or non-fiction (usually the news, either televised or in newspapers). Sally Jacobs and Richard Cox have both conducted studies on appearances of archives and archivists in newspapers. Jacobs studies local newspaper coverage in Wisconsin over an eighteen month period, while Cox examines representations in a single, widely distributed newspaper – *The New York Times* – over an eight month span.[7] Margaret Procter also uses newspapers to examine the image of archivists, focusing on nineteenth century representations, which reveal inconsistency in understandings of what the job entails as well as the venerable nature of some stereotypes associated with the profession.[8]

The nature of archivists' appearances in fiction differs somewhat from that in the news media. Arlene Schmuland studies fictional representations of archives and archivists, noting the common themes surrounding archives and their deeper meanings. In their portrayals of archives and archivists, fiction writers must create a believable image for their readers or viewers. Writers may consciously choose to make their representations match the common stereotypes so as to better speak to their readers. In painting a picture for the reader or viewer, writers add details and use descriptors that the average person might not, even if they would readily associate them with archives if asked.

A few have systematically solicited opinions of members of the general public or specific subsections, attempting to measure perceptions at the source. In 1984 Sidney Levy

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[6] Arlene Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction: An Analysis and Annotated Bibliography," *The American Archivist* 62 (Spring 1999): 26.
[7] Sally J. Jacobs, "How and When We Make the News: Local Newspaper Coverage of Archives in Two Wisconsin Cities," *Archival Issues* 22 no. 1 (1997): 45-60; Cox, "International Perspectives."
[8] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?"

and Albert Robles surveyed those responsible for allocating funds to archives, focusing on perceptions and expectations of archives and their placement and compensation within organizations.[9] State Records in New South Wales, Australia has taken a relatively active role in monitoring perceptions of themselves. In 2000 they commissioned a survey on the opinions of the general public regarding archives in general and State Archives in particular.[10] Two years later they commissioned another survey, this time focusing on the attitudes of chief executives of public offices towards record keeping and State Records.[11] All of these sources – anecdotal, media, and systematic inquiry – are examined here to develop a baseline against which to compare the results of my survey on the effects of Internet technology on common perceptions of archives.

The Lack of Public Image of Archives

It is possible that the general public has no conception of archives at all, that they have no idea what the word "archives" even means. One fifth of those surveyed on behalf of State Records New South Wales "did not know what archives were for."[12] Margaret Turner notes that one of the three most common responses to her telling someone that she is an archivist is "a blank look, followed by, 'What's that?'"[13] In 1956, Ernst Posner discovered that archivists did not appear in American literature at all, despite there being enough archivists in European literature to make a complete study of fictional European archivists 40

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[9] Sidney J. Levy and Albert G. Robles, *The Image of Archivists: Resource Allocators' Perceptions* (Society of American Archivists, 1984).
[10] *Telephone Survey for State Records*. Environmetrics, January 2001.
[11] *"The View from the Top": Qualitative Research to Investigate Chief Executive Attitudes, Opinions and Behavior*. TA Verner Research Company, November 2002.
[12] *Telephone Survey*, 7.
[13] Turner, "Is the Profession still Attractive?" 131.

years earlier.[14] All this suggests that a significant portion of society does not even have a good enough understanding of archives to have formed a clear image of them. In fact, Margaret Procter argues, the multiple responsibilities resting on archivists make their roles ambiguous, precluding the formation of a clear and well-defined image of the profession.[15] The belief that society as a whole lacks knowledge of archives can be found even outside the archival profession. Resource allocators surveyed by Levy and Robles believed that most people had "only vague notions about archives" and would not know how to find an archives if they needed one.[16]

The lack of knowledge of archives may provide a few, very small, benefits. If archivists are proactive in reaching those who do not know who they are or what they do, then they have the chance to inform their opinions without having to dispel any stereotypes. Procter suggests that archivists should use the inherent uncertainty about their profession to their advantage by recreating their image to fit current needs.[17] Secondly, though of little comfort to archivists, those who have no opinion of archives cannot have a poor opinion of them. Of the respondents to Barry's survey who believed that society had formed an opinion of archives, most believed that opinion was negative.[18] Turner notes, "records managers may well fare rather better, if only because no one has heard of them."[19]

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[14] Ernst Posner, "What, Then, Is the American Archivist, This New Man?" In *Archives & the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, ed. Ken Munden (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967), 160.
[15] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 16.
[16] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 53.
[17] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 24.
[18] Barry, "Report on the Society and Archives Survey," under "Question 1".
[19] Turner, "Is the Profession still Attractive?" 131. One records manager, a ten year veteran of the field, wrote, "most people I speak to have no idea or concept as to what that entails or its importance." Barry, "Report on the Society and Archives Survey," 8.

Archivist Stereotypes

In fiction there are certain physical traits almost invariably associated with archivists. Arlene Schmuland gives the composite image of the fictional archivists she studies as "a middle-aged, visually impaired person in badly chosen clothing."[20] These physical descriptions are meant to convey more than mere appearances. As Schmuland notes, physical traits "act as a kind of shorthand" to suggest "specific character traits" of the archivists.[21] Thus, wearing glasses and being old suggests intelligence on the part of the archivist while describing the glasses as spectacles suggests a connection to history.[22] With a few choice words, these fiction writers show readers not only how the archivists look, but the sort of personality they possess and their standing in society.

One of these suggested personality traits is a lack of social skills. To her physical composite of the fictional archivist Schmuland appends the almost universal characteristic of fictional archivists as having "almost no social life."[23] Many are depicted as detached or secluded from society and several are described as having had very limited interaction with the opposite sex, one explaining that he is in need of practice in "learning to be human."[24] Margaret Turner writes that the most common public image of an archivist is probably "of a rather introverted person who cannot relate to other people, with absolutely no social skills, probably rather odd looking and dusty (like their archives) and definitely unmarried."[25] Resource allocators interviewed by Levy and Robles often characterized archivists as

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[20] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 36.
[21] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 34.
[22] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 34-5.
[23] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 36.
[24] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 36-7.
[25] Turner, "Is the Profession still Attractive?" 131.

introverted and retiring.[26] In an interesting play on stereotypes, one, who claimed that archivists "are as varied as anyone else" noted that "some are a lot like librarians, quiet and mousy."[27] On the other hand, some fictional archivists are portrayed as condescending toward those seeking information in their archives.[28] Archivists may become possessive of their collections, exhibiting an off-putting "air of proprietorship" and territoriality.[29]

The lack of social interaction on the part of archivists may be seen both as a symbol and a result of their devotion to their work. As Schmuland finds in her research there is "a sense of loss, an ivory-tower remoteness that prevents the person from experiencing life to its fullest" associated with some of the fictional archivists and their single-minded devotion to their work.[30] When associated with the work of history, their dedication may become heroic.[31] In this light, depictions of archivists suggest "a real, but shabby, grandeur."[32]

Intelligence is seen as another crucial trait of an archivist. One of the interviewed resource allocators expressed the belief that archivists would have "a PH.D. in history or close to a PH.D."[33] Archivists are expected to be "history buffs" and to enjoy "academic" and "cultural" pursuits and activities, such as lectures, musicals, and, of course, reading.[34] The intelligence expected of archivists is scholarly, not necessarily practical. They may be interested in information for its own sake. The fictional archivist from *Chapterhouse: Dune*

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[26] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 45.
[27] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 45.
[28] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 38.
[29] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 46.
[30] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 36.
[31] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 22.
[32] Gracy, "Archives and Society," 8.
[33] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 34.
[34] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 45.

is described as being fond of "minutiae and boring excursions into irrelevant details."[35] Fictional archivists are expected to know or to be able to find the answer to a number of unusual questions.[36] Schmuland links this to the sense of duty expected of an archivist. She writes that most descriptions "add up to an image of an intelligent, serious, and effective archivist."[37] This is similar to the expectations of real-life archivists. One resource allocator commented that as part of their responsibility "to fill the needs of those they serve" archivists not only need to find requested information, but to ascertain what sort of information a person is looking for even if the person does not know herself.[38]

Schmuland finds that many fictional archivists, though portrayed as intelligent, are not depicted as influential within their organizations or treated with the sort of respect their position might be expected to garner.[39] In real life, archivists also tend not to be given a great deal of power, despite often being relatively high on the organizational ladder.[40] Archivists may share in the plight of records managers whose work is often associated with less important "women's work."[41] One of the books studied by Schmuland told of a number of librarians who had recently lost their jobs and become archivists – "glorified file clerks, really."[42] In fact, a number of images of archivists suggest they are not quite worthy of respect. David Gracy writes that archivists are perceived by the public as "permanently humped, moleish, aged creatures who shuffle musty documents in dust-filled stacks for a

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[35] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 49.
[36] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 37.
[37] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 37.
[38] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 37.
[39] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 38-9.
[40] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 46.
[41] J. Michael Pemberton, "High (Professional) Anxiety? Image and Status in Records Management," *Records Management Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (January 1996): 9.
[42] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 40.

purpose uncertain."[43] Others have suggested that eccentric archivists are viewed as failed

academics or historians "with moderate brain damage."[44]

Archivists are seldom seen as being motivated by power or money. Many believe the

archival work itself – helping the public, handling historical documents, ensuring that

material is preserved for the future, and discovering new information in their holdings – is

the main reward for archivists.[45] Fictional archivists are usually described as being driven by

"curiosity and the search for knowledge."[46] Resource allocators believe archivists are

devoted to their work because it fits their personality and interests. They are described as

"project-oriented people" who love creating order out of chaos and "the idea of the

preservation of things."[47] One resource allocator responded that archivists are "never going

to make a lot of money, so their rewards are in the satisfaction of a job well done."[48]

Despite the fact that archivists have long fought to distinguish the two professions,

members of the public often have trouble differentiating archivists and librarians.[49] Given the

similarities between the two professions and instances of cross-over, this should not be

surprising. Furthermore, associating the two may help those unfamiliar with archives form a

basic understanding of the profession. Schmuland explains, "Because library activities are

familiar to most audiences and have some similarities to archival tasks, references to

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[43] Gracy, "Archives and Society," 8.
[44] Turner, "Is the Profession still Attractive?" 132; Hinding, "Of Archivists and Other Termites," 55.
[45] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 42.
[46] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 39.
[47] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 45.
[48] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 43.
[49] Mary Jo Pugh, "The Illusion of Omniscience: Subject Access and the Reference Archivist," *American Archivist* 45 (Winter 1982): 42.

librarians and library science give readers a basic framework for the work of archivists."[50] Many of the authors she studies situate archivists in libraries or otherwise relate them to library science.[51] However, librarianship is not the only profession to which archivists are compared. There has always been a close association in the minds of the public with the work of historians, with archivists being seen as historian's helpers or even as historians themselves.[52] One resource allocator even likened archivists to archeologists who "dig, discriminate, preserve, and put what they find in order."[53]

Many recognize that archival stereotypes do not necessarily hold true in real life. For instance, archivists may be expected to possess a high level of interpersonal skills, specifically those related to customer service.[54] Many of the resource allocators polled by Levy and Robles argued that archivists were just normal people and could not be stereotyped. As one explained, "They're people just like you and me. They're no different. They have affairs, drink too much, do all the things anybody else would do. They are perhaps a bit more scholarly, but basically nothing sets them apart as a typical archivist."[55] However, the traditional stereotypes came through in many of the resource allocators' descriptions, even in cases where they claimed that archivists did not conform to a given stereotype.

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[50] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 40.
[51] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 40.
[52] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 22.
[53] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 37.
[54] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 36.
[55] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 44.

The much cited Jedi archivist Jocasta Nu, described as a "firebrand," is proof that fictional archivists need not conform to all the standard stereotypes either.[56] Jocasta's most well-known appearance is in *Star Wars: Episode 2 Attack of the Clones*, where she advises Obi-Wan Kenobi that if he cannot find the planetary system he seeks in her records, it does not exist. Fierce and imposing, she counters the image of archivists as shy and retreating. Though elderly, her age commands more respect than that of the average fictional archivist. She is still depicted as intelligent and dedicated, but this has not led to her becoming cloistered or passive. However, her reaction to the suggestion that the archives might be incomplete suggests a certain possessiveness of the collections sometimes associated with archivists. She is positioned, Eric Ketelaar argues, as "archive kingdom ruler."[57] By highlighting some of the stereotypical traits of archivists and downplaying others, the portrayal of Jocasta Nu suggests a different interpretation of the archivist which nonetheless still offers a reasonable explanation of her role.

Images of Repositories

Dust, Schmuland writes, "is the single most pervasive motif associated with archives, even outside of fiction."[58] Margaret Norton posits that most people see archives as filled with "musty, dirty files of loose papers and decayed leather folios."[59] Several of the resource allocators queried by Levy and Robles were surprised to find the archives not filled with

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[56] Jocasta has appeared in a number of writings on archives, including Barry, "Report on the Society and Archives Survey," 27; Eric Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 221-3; Pearce-Moses, "Janus in Cyberspace," 15.

[57] Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons," 236.

[58] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 42.

[59] Margaret Cross Norton, *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management*, ed. Thornton W. Mitchell (Chicago: The Society of America Archivists, 2003), 4.

"dusty boxes."[60] The image of dust may even transfer to the personage of the archivist, as the dust itself would rub off on her in her daily work.[61]

In part, dust and dirt in archives help reinforce a sense of age and history.[62] Paul Duguid recounts a trip to the Portuguese archives in which each container he opened held "a fair portion of dust as old as the letters."[63] The images of dust and dirt also suggest that archives are seldom used. Schmuland notes one striking example in which the fictional archives of the East India Company are left to rot in piles in the damp basement of the East India House, accessed through a single door, rusty from disuse.[64] In this case, not only were the records not used, or even useable, they were meant to die and disappear in the basement.[65] This also suggests a sense of disorganization, further discouraging use. Levy and Robles note that resource allocators were surprised by the efficiency of the archival programs within their oversight. One stated, "I expected just boxes of dusty papers. There were boxes of papers, but they were very well organized. They had a catalog of topics and materials that was very clear and easy to use."[66]

Archives both real and imaginary tend to be located in basements. Finding this about fictional archives, Schmuland writes that this positioning "may help account for the perception, often stated, of archives as dirty and ill-lit."[67] There are practical reasons for archives to be stored in basements. Records benefit from the lack of light and depending on

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[60] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 20.
[61] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 22.
[62] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 45.
[63] John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid, *The Social Life of Information* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000), 173.
[64] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 45-6.
[65] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 46.
[66] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 21.
[67] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 43.

the building, a better ability to maintain a constant temperature and humidity. As Schmuland

notes, in fiction non-current records tend to be kept in out-of-the-way places, which may

"represent a lack of status on the part of the office or activity located there."[68] These also

tend to be the sort of places where real people and organizations store materials they do not

use often, suggesting an inherent value judgment associated with the location of archives and

the state in which they are kept. The dust and dark of basement archives may suggest other

associations, such as that noted by Schmuland between archives and "death and the tomb,"

with authors often using "burial-related phrases to describe archives" and their use.[69]

Schmuland notes that the deceased nature of most of the people and organizations whose

records are contained in archives may further suggest such an association.[70]

Archives may also bear a resemblance to other sorts of institutions. The link between

archives and libraries is fairly obvious. One of Levy and Robles' resource allocators seemed

surprised on first visiting the archives that it was "organized in a very different way than

library materials."[71] Eric Ketelaar has suggested an archival resemblance to both temples and

prisons. The panoptical design associated with prisons, he explains, is also common in

libraries and archives.[72] James O'Toole notes a long tradition of equating archives with

shrines, both in statements about the archives and through architecture.[73] Archives have been

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[68] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 43.
[69] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 44.
[70] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 44.
[71] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 20.
[72] Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons," 227.
[73] James M. O'Toole, "The Pope and the Archives: A Study in Archival Public Image," in *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists*, ed. Elsie Freeman Finch (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 251.

built to resemble classical Roman and Greek temples and later churches and cathedrals.[74] The out of the way location of some archives, or the impressive architecture of others, combined with peoples' lack of knowledge about archives and the fact that the stacks are usually closed to the public may lend a sense of intrigue to archives. Levy and Robles write that to people who do not know much about archives they may "sound grand but mysterious."[75]

Archival Materials and the Value of Archives

The most common understanding of the contents of archives is as papers of various forms, either loose leaf or bound. The majority of the contents of most archives conform to this view, although they may contain anything from plaques and statues to articles of clothing and ashtrays, as well as reels of film, cassette tapes, LPs, floppy disks, hard drives and a variety of other storage media. Some people recognize the potential diversity of archival materials. One resource allocator stated that archives keep "records in every form imaginable. Handwritten, printed, photographs, documents, manuscripts, tapes. Many important records are now on microfilm because the quality of paper we have now is terrible."[76] Though this allocator recognizes that archives might keep records in "every form imaginable," those imaginings are still largely paper based.[77]

Technology related materials, and technology in general, are not usually associated with archives. In its 2001 public opinion survey, Environmetrics found that the public tended to be less aware of the more modern services and facilities offered by State Records, such as

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[74] Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons," 233-4.
[75] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, iv.
[76] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 8.
[77] Interestingly, when archives appear in the news media, the focus is often on non-textual materials, which may be viewed as having broader appeal. Jacobs, "How and When We Make the News," 53.

a website that allowed users to search for records in its holdings.[78] This may be because the idea of technology conflicts with the historical, "old" conception of archives. Randall Jimerson warns of the danger of allowing archives to become separated from technology, describing a possible future where information needs are filled quickly and efficiently by the "Data Archive" while the real archives, replete with "stacks of ancient Hollinger boxes" and "piles of unprocessed papers," are relegated to the basement and seldom used.[79] Somewhat more encouraging, Levy and Robles found that resource allocators viewed being "familiar with communication technology in order to handle information storage and retrieval" as an important skill for archivists, though they seemed to focus more on research and customer service.[80]

One popular conception of archival materials is as history itself. Margaret Hedstrom cites eighteenth century book illustrations as introducing the idea of "seeing" the past.[81] In fiction writing, Schmuland finds archives both as the records and the repository are "equated with history" and "at the most simplistic level, archives are not only repositories for the source documents of history, but for history itself."[82] This sort of understanding is common among the public as well. One resource allocator, in describing the contents of the archives under his/her control, explained, "this is history, one-of-a-kind history."[83] Though the respondent went on to state that the information contained in the records was very valuable, the first statement suggests the view that the records themselves are the "history." In

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[78] *Telephone Survey*, 15.
[79] Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," 333.
[80] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 35.
[81] Margaret Hedstrom, "Archives, Memory, and Interfaces with the Past." *Archival Science 2*, nos. 1-2 (2002): 29.
[82] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 29.
[83] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 16.

archives, history can become tangible.[84] Fiction writers describe walking through the stacks

as walking through history and one even depicts the theft of a volume from the archives as

the theft of history itself, with serious consequences for the present.[85]

In particular, archives may represent history as secrets or truth.[86] Schmuland cites the

multiple incidences of break-ins or attempted break-ins at archives in fiction as evidence that

the contents are viewed both as useful and as secret.[87] The belief in the truthfulness of

archives is what leads to their being viewed as an authority, as Richard Cox found them

portrayed in the *New York Times*.[88]

Many of the stereotypes about records speak to their value. Archivists naturally see

the materials in their possession as valuable and worth preserving, but there is a question of

whether members of the general public would agree. The records which they contain are the

most valuable aspect of archives. If the records held by an archives are not seen as valuable,

then the institution itself and the archivists it employs will not be valued either. As David

Gracy argues, archival records "are the core, the heart, the essence of our work. We as

archivists are defined by them as the keepers of archives."[89]

Certainly, the most concerning stereotype about archival holdings is that they are

useless, little better than trash. One cartoonist describes archives as "a dump without

seagulls."[90] Another writer portrays an archives with double-deep shelving as containing "an

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[84] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 33.
[85] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 29.
[86] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 33.
[87] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 30.
[88] Cox, "International Perspectives," 201.
[89] Gracy, "Archivists, You Are," 74.
[90] Grabowski, "Keepers, Users, and Funders," 466. Grabowski cites this description as appearing in the November 30, 1990 strip of Jeff MacNelly's *Shoe* comic strip.

outer and an inner assortment of junk" which is not worth "the time it would take to sort, list, and curate."[91] Yet, another, on a trip to donate some papers, comments that "it was Special Collections or R&D Hauling," the local trash service.[92] The head of Special Collections is "ecstatic" leading the writer to note that archivists are like scientists who study excrement, finding "value beyond reckoning in what others discard."[93] These views, unfortunately, are not limited to fictional characters. One California resident commented on the building of the Ronald Reagan presidential archives that he thought the money would have been better spent building "a hospital in his name than a library housing things that people aren't going to care about" and went on to state that he did not see any potential value in the archives unless they put on some sort of exhibit.[94]

To a certain extent, all the records in an archives that do not answer her question are worthless to a researcher, while the one that contains the needed information is like buried treasure. The inner and outer assortments of junk cited by Schmuland were encountered during a search for a particular piece of information, which was eventually located.[95] In fact, she notes, when fictional archives are viewed as valuable, it is due to "a small quantity of papers or often just a single document with ramifications to the plot."[96] As one of Richard Barry's survey respondents noted, "with all groups our users tend to perceive us only in

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[91] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 31.
[92] Gracy, "Archivists, You Are," 73.
[93] Crescent Dragonwagon, "A Journal of a Winter Journey During Eureka's Secret Season," in "I Speak Arkansaw," *Arkansas Times* 14, no.5, (January 1988): 25, quoted in Gracy, "Archivists, You Are," 73.
[94] Gracy, "Archivists, You Are," 77.
[95] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 31.
[96] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 47.

relation to their exact need – we bear the burden of publicizing our breadth to increase understanding, support, and use."[97]

At least part of the reason people undervalue archives is likely due to their lack of understanding of just what they keep. One of the interviewed resource allocators stated, "in Washington they would collect every scrap of paper ever put out."[98] Several of the works of fiction that Schmuland studies express similar views, in one instance suggesting that materials are donated to a local archives not necessarily because they "might prove useful," but because the donors believe they will be kept.[99] If the view that archives keep any and every bit of paper they can get their hands on, regardless of its value or utility, is widespread, it should not be surprising that people do not value archives as a whole. On the other hand, knowledge of the extent of weeding may spark outrage as it did for the San Francisco Public Library, which also highlighted public misunderstandings about the roles and practices of libraries.[100]

Despite the pessimistic outlook of many members of the archival profession, there are signs that society as a whole does view archives as valuable. In 2000 the Australia State Records Authority of New South Wales commissioned a survey on "community perceptions of archives and of State Records." Of the 300 adults interviewed, ninety percent thought archives were useful, eighty-nine percent saw them as valuable, and seventy-two percent saw

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[97] Barry, "Report on the Society and Archives Survey," under "Question 9."
[98] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 12. Most of the resource allocators recognized the importance of weeding to archives, one explaining "The archivist decides what to keep and what not to keep in an archives. That's very important." Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 37.
[99] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 31.
[100] C. L. Borgman, *From Gutenberg to the Global Information Infrastructure: Access to Information in the Networked World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 186-7. In this instance, it was revealed through several newspaper stories that the Library had been weeding extra and unused books, prompting the journalist to argue that it is the role of libraries to preserve books which members of the public do not use often or want in their personal collections.

them as interesting, though only thirty-three percent saw them as exciting. By contrast, only eight percent of interviewees thought archives were a waste of money, eleven percent thought they were irrelevant, and twenty-five percent thought they were boring.[101] Though eight percent of the population viewing archives as a waste of money is undoubtedly more than archivists would like, it is clear that for the most part society values archives.

Archivists usually point to the practical information that records contain as the justification for their retention. Gracy writes that archival materials are valuable for their usefulness, especially in the moment.[102] This is often true for the public as well. For instance, archives may make an appearance in the news because they contain information relevant to current issues (such as past legislation with implications for the present), on local history or important historical figures, or the information necessary to locate people who had been "lost" over time.[103]

However, archival materials may also possess symbolic value, as suggested by the conception of archives as history. Materials with an imposing form, through size, the use of decoration and expensive materials, or the appearance of age, may seem more "true," authoritative, and trust-worthy.[104] Records, especially in their original form, may hold sentimental value for people. As David Gracy states, archival holdings can give people the sense of a personal connection to the past, and make it "come alive."[105] The controversy

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[101] *Telephone Survey*, 10.
[102] Gracy, "Archivists, You Are," 77.
[103] Jacobs, "How and When We Make the News," 50-1.
[104] James M. O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," *The American Archivist* 56, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 240-1.
[105] Gracy, "Archivists, You Are," 78.

sparked by the planned destruction of original land records which had been microfilmed in Ontario highlights "the deeper emotional and social ties to records as historical artifacts."[106]

In some cases, the act of record creation or the ceremonial use to which it is put is more important than the record itself or the information it contains.[107] In these instances, records, like relics, "are revered as objects in themselves more than they are valued for their contents."[108] In their report on the perceptions of resource allocators, Levy and Robles note that there may be "more interest in objects, artifacts, than 'mere' records."[109] The very act of preserving something in an archives may give it value. Several of the fictional characters studied by Schmuland note this, though usually in a derogatory way, for instance suggesting that a tourist at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library would be less impressed if he actually knew what it contained.[110] Records in the wrong hands may also be used as tools of control, like a panopticon, to "watch" people recorded at any time without their knowledge, thus becoming symbols of oppression.[111] Destruction of records can be as symbolic as their creation, retention, and use. James O'Toole notes that "few actions are more symbolically straightforward than consigning the written words of an opponent to the flames."[112]

The symbolic nature of records is part of the reason digital surrogates may not always be adequate. The physical form of materials may convey more information than the printed matter alone, or even contradict the text of the record.[113] For instance, signs of use may help

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[106] Ala Rekrut, "Material Literacy: Reading Records as Material Culture," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 32.
[107] O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," 243-4, 246.
[108] O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," 249.
[109] Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, iv.
[110] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 50.
[111] Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons," 226, 228.
[112] O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," 254.
[113] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 65; Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 22.

to assure people of the reliability of a source.[114] In cases where records are symbolically valuable because of who created them, being able to physically interact with the record may be equally important or more so than the information it contains.[115] That a record appears "old" is often important in creating these sentiments.[116] Rekrut argues that surrogates cannot create the same sort of experience, despite often being easier to use, and that the effort in using physical records "may enable a deeper engagement and understanding of past experience."[117] Online materials give a "flavor" or "impression" of history, as one user found when viewing the digital surrogates of the Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections, but they are unlikely to inspire the same sort of awe and reverence as the original.[118]

Stereotypes in and out of the Archives

Much of what has been discussed so far falls under the under the broad heading of stereotype. What exactly does this mean? Stereotypes are not mere falsehoods. They serve as explanatory systems, helping people to make sense of causes and effects and making categories understandable as a whole so people do not have to understand each individual member.[119] Stereotypes are formed from the accumulation of knowledge through both first hand experiences with a group, some of which may only be remembered subliminally, and

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[114] Brown and Duguid, *The Social Life of Information*, 187.
[115] Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 31.
[116] Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 33.
[117] Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 34.
[118] Magia Ghetu Krause and Elizabeth Yakel, "Interaction in Virtual Archives: The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections Next Generation Finding Aid," *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 306.
[119] Craig McGarty, Vincent Yzerbyt, and Russell Spears, eds. *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formulation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18-9, 78; Ramirose Ilene Attebury, "Perceptions of a Profession: Librarians and Stereotypes in Online Videos," Library Philosophy & Practice 12, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 1.

background knowledge and beliefs about how a group should behave.[120] An image of a profession is usually constructed through contact with its members who display certain traits specific to that profession, which usually allows for a more accurate image.[121] The use of second-hand information in the formation of stereotypes, on the other hand, allows people to approach groups with a preformed image. In cases where there is not already a widespread stereotype about a group, people may use stereotypes of other, similar groups to help form one.[122] For instance, since the public interacts with records clerks they may assume that records managers are the same as or similar to records clerks and thus base their image on the more familiar profession.[123] The same phenomenon is at least partially responsible for the association between archival and library stereotypes.

Stereotypes, those of archives included, usually hold at least some truth. For instance, extensive reading as part of a graduate level program required for most archival positions may result both in increased knowledge and a need for prescription eye-wear. More significantly, there may be, or have been in the past, a professional tendency towards passivity. A number of writers have warned that archivists must not be passive or complacent, but prove that archives are "dynamic and vibrant organizations" which meet current needs. [124] In fact, group members may embrace stereotypes consciously or unconsciously as symbols of group identity and further accentuate those traits which

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[120] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 27, 68.
[121] Pemberton, "High (Professional) Anxiety?" 2; McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 68.
[122] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 129.
[123] Pemberton, "High (Professional) Anxiety?" 10.
[124] Blais and Enns, "From Paper Archives," 104; Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," 377; Richard Pearce-Moses, "Janus in Cyberspace: Archives on the Threshold of the Digital Era," *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 17.

distinguish them as a group, strengthening group stereotypes.[125] Thus, before setting out to change archival stereotypes, Schmuland argues, archivists need to identify existing images of archives and clearly define their identity and how it differs from the popular perceptions.[126] Blais and Enns state that "the public image of archivists directly reflects the image that we consciously or unconsciously project."[127]

In forming stereotypes, people draw on what is most distinctive about a group and best differentiates it.[128] The most visible or familiar traits of a profession can come to be the defining traits. Thus, many of the videos on YouTube featuring librarians involve customer service experiences, likely because this is the aspect of librarianship with which non-librarians are most familiar.[129] When these traits happen to be superficial, people may assume that they are linked to the deeper traits that set the group apart.[130] Schmuland argues that the physical traits attributed to archivists in fiction are used to explain their deeper character. This works both ways. Glasses and poorly chosen clothing may be used to symbolize intelligence and dedication, while intelligence through deep study and a complete devotion to their work may explain why archivist characters wear glasses and bad clothing. Blais and Enns argue that the "popular impression of archivists" is a mere "caricature" which archivists must counter-act and avoid confirming.[131] However, to a certain extent, all stereotypes are caricatures. They draw out and enhance what is distinctive while downplaying subtleties. This is part of what makes them useful as aids to understanding.

[125] Attebury, "Perceptions of a Profession," 1; McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 123.
[126] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 53.
[127] Blais and Enns, "From Paper Archives," 104.
[128] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 57.
[129] Attebury, "Perceptions of a Profession," 8.
[130] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 58-9.
[131] Blais and Enns, "From Paper Archives," 104.

The useful and semi-truthful nature of social stereotypes does not mean they should

be viewed as entirely benign. More than explaining the societal order, social stereotypes help

justify and perpetuate it. Haslam et al. write that stereotypes should be understood as "tools

that are developed by groups both to represent their members' shared social reality and to

achieve particular objectives within it."[132] Thus, stereotypes may be used by those in power

to maintain their position or by disempowered groups to improve theirs.[133] The same holds

true for archival stereotypes. If archivists are seen as driven by curiosity and a sense of duty,

it is understandable that they would accept positions with little pay or power. Further,

employers may feel justified in paying archivists poorly or giving them less power because

archivists are not viewed as being particularly interested in either wealth or influence.

Though there has been a great deal of attention given to the subject of the archival

image and the need for change, archivists seem to have made little headway. Margaret Turner

noted in 2003 that the image of archivists had remained largely unchanged for the last two

decades.[134] Margaret Procter goes further, suggesting that much of the current image of

archivists goes back two centuries, to when the word first came into usage in the English

language.[135] Forrest LaViolette and K. H. Silvert argue that "persistence and rigidity" are two

key attributes of stereotyped attitudes.[136] Stereotypes are often self-confirming: applying a

stereotype helps to reinforce it.[137] People are also more likely to perceive disproofs of

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[132] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 161.
[133] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 177, 179.
[134] Turner, "Is the Profession still Attractive?" 131.
[135] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 16.
[136] Forrest LaViolette and K. H. Silvert, "A Theory of Stereotypes," *Social Forces* 29 (1951): 260.
[137] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 72, 27.

stereotypes merely as anomalies or even falsehoods, which do not require a reexamination of the stereotype in question.[138]

Conclusion

If stereotypes serve as explanatory systems, what is it that the archival stereotypes explain? They illustrate that archives, like the libraries to which they are compared, keep information. In fact, they are often pictured as packed with information in the form of paper, either loose, bound, or corralled in boxes. More specifically, archives keep historical information. Age and dust are the most prominent indicators of this. Archivists may themselves become personifications of these traits through their intelligence and their age, both of which may be represented visually through the wearing of glasses. Dust also suggests that archives are seldom used, a suggestion backed up by the out-of-the-way locations of archives and perhaps explained by the portrayal of only certain documents as valuable. Once again, archivists may personify this through their lack of social interaction, a trait that can also be linked to their intelligence and dedication. The passive nature and apparent dedication to their work without any interest in wealth or influence, explains why archivists and the institutions they oversee are unlikely to have much of either.

While the public may find this explanation satisfactory, most archivists do not. Yet, perhaps because of its explanatory power, the image of archives has proven extremely resistant to change. The current archival stereotypes form a tightly-knit web, with each trait explicating several others. If archivists hope to replace these stereotypes, not only will they

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[138] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 35.

need to agree on a single interpretation, they will need to ensure that the explanation they put

forward is as concise and understandable as the one they are attempting to replace.

Chapter 2

Living Online:
The Internet as a Catalyst of Change

It has become almost axiomatic that technology causes change. The Internet has

changed and continues to change how people interact, do business, and perhaps even how

they think. A number of basic activities, from shopping to social interaction to work –

"essentially everything that people do" – have shifted to online spaces.[1] Many are now

"living online."[2] Though these changes are society wide and affect a number of institutions,

they present unique challenges to archives. Many of the obstacles archivists foresee center on

changed expectations for access to and presentation of information on the part of actual and

potential users of archives. Archives are unlikely to meet expectations for instant digital

access to their holdings and so may be seen as behind the times. These changes may also be

affecting how people approach and understand information, suggesting that they may not

understand or value the sort of information provided by archives. At the same time, time

online may be exposing people to new conceptions of the word "archive" as it is appropriated

to describe a number of digital phenomena.

Ubiquitous Access to Information

One of the biggest changes brought about by the Internet is the way in which people

seek information. The Internet is now the first place that many turn to fill an information

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[1] Mary E. Samouelian, "Embracing Web 2.0: Archives and the Newest Generation of Web Applications," *American Archivist* 72 (Spring/Summer 2009): 47.

[2] Elizabeth Yakel, "Managing Expectations, Expertise, and Effort While Extending Services to Researchers in Academic Archives," in *College and University Archives* eds. Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain (Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 2008), 266.

need.[3] By 2002 over a third of faculty and nearly half of graduate students "did all or most of their information seeking for research purposes online" while "35 percent of graduate students and 49 percent of undergraduates looked at online resources most or all of the time in their general information seeking."[4] Rather than a visit to the local library, Palfrey and Gasser write, research now means a Google search and a visit to Wikipedia, and most prefer their information delivered digitally rather than in print.[5] The fact that within its first year online 16,223 of the 19,230 visitors to the Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections site arrived there via a Google search is testament to this trend.[6]

Online, information is available almost instantaneously through a quick keyword search. The ease with which information can be retrieved may prompt people to seek answers to questions they never would have bothered with before. Now, should someone wonder when George Harrison's birthday was or who won the World Series in 1989, they can find the answer through a 30 second Google or Wikipedia search. Before, this would have meant making a trip to the library to locate and read the pertinent book or periodical, a process that could take several hours and often would not have been viewed as worthwhile. The sort of information need that Randall Jimerson describes as being characterized by a "nice-to-know"

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[3] Richard V. Szary, "Encoded Finding Aids as a Transforming Technology in Archival Reference Service," in *College and University Archives* eds. Prom and Swain, 247.

[4] Helen Tibbo, "The Impact of Information Technology on Academic Archives in the Twenty-First Century," in *College and University Archives* eds. Prom and Swain, 37.

[5] John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 6.

[6] Elizabeth Yakel, Polly Reynolds, Seth E. Shaw, Jeremy York, and Magia Krause, "Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections: Enhancing Online Use through Digital Curation," *Proceedings of DigCCurr 2007 Chapel Hill North Carolina, 18-20 April 2007*: 4. http://www.ils.unc.edu/digccurr2007/papers/yakel_paper_4-4.pdf (accessed August 19, 2012).

attitude, interesting but not essential, is well served by the Internet.[7] Information seeking may now be spur-of-the-moment and better integrated into a person's daily activities.

Internet connectivity has made geographic considerations for information far less important. Online a person can retrieve information on the other side of the world as easily as if it were located next-door, making access "independent of location."[8] The Internet allows people to connect and interact over great distances.[9] At the same time, people have had increasing access to the Internet. They can get online from their homes, schools, workplaces, restaurants, and even through their phones. This is part of the trend towards "ubiquitous computing," meaning that people will be able to access the Internet anytime and anywhere, to the point that it permeates their daily lives.

Already, the Internet is part of the lives of most Americans. In 2006, 75% of American adults used computers and nearly as many, 73%, were Internet users.[10] By April 2012, 82% of American adults used the Internet, still behind the 95% of American teenagers who did so by July 2011.[11] Teenagers and young adults are especially likely to contribute to and interact with online content. For instance, while only 37% of all Internet users had uploaded photos in 2007, 51% of young adult users had done this.[12] Between 2007 and 2011, the number of online teens who created a profile on a social networking site increased from

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[7] Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity" 339.

[8] Avra Michelson and Jeff Rothenberg, "Scholarly Communication and Information Technology: Exploring the Impact of Changes in the Research Process on Archives," *American Archivist* 55 no. 2 (Spring 1992): 253.

[9] Michelson and Rothenberg, "Scholarly Communication," 251.

[10] Lee Rainie, "Web 2.0 and What It Means to Libraries." (Presentation April 2007, Computers in Libraries 2007 Conference), 9. http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/94/presentation_display.asp (accessed August 19, 2012).

[11] "Trend Data (Adults)," Pew Internet: Pew Internet and American Life Project, http://pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data-%28Adults%29/Whos-Online.aspx (accessed July 22, 2012); "Trend Data (Teens)," Pew Internet: Pew Internet and American Life Project, http://pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data-%28Teens%29/Whos-Online.aspx (accessed July 22, 2012).

[12] Rainie, 21.

55% to 80%, while the number of adults who did the same increased from 20% to 66% between 2007 and 2012.[13] In short, a huge and still growing segment of the population is accustomed to using the Internet. Internet connectivity is on track to become as common-place and essential to daily life as a telephone line or even electricity.

One of the fears concerning new technology is that it will make archives and similar institutions obsolete, or at least unattractive. As Jimerson writes, archives may "become quaint anachronisms in a world of instant data communication, high technology, and rapid change."[14] To Digital Natives, many print materials seem "quaint."[15] Borgman posits that many see a dichotomy "between libraries and computer networks."[16] Palfrey and Gasser twice refer to "musty card catalogs" in association with libraries, despite the fact that most libraries moved away from card catalogs years ago.[17] In comparison to sleek databases and search engines which quickly produce digital results, right from a person's own living room, print materials and the institutions that hold them may seem more than quaint and old-fashioned, they may become inconvenient to the point that people will avoid them altogether. Taken to the extreme, some may question whether archives are necessary at all, as they have asked of libraries, because they believe that all information is online, or will be soon.[18]

Given the amount of information available online, many people have come to expect all information to be available there, without realizing the challenges this can pose.

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[13] Rainie, 19; "Trend Data (Teens)," Pew Internet: Pew Internet and American Life Project, http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data-%28Teens%29/Online-Activites-Total.aspx (accessed July 22, 2012); "Trend Data (Adults)," Pew Internet: Pew Internet and American Life Project, http://pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data-%28Adults%29/Online-Activites-Total.aspx (accessed July 22, 2012).
[14] Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," 333.
[15] Palfrey and Gasser, 6-7.
[16] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 169.
[17] Palfrey and Gasser, 6, 8.
[18] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 184.

Undergraduate students, for instance, may be surprised by the lack of digitized archival materials.[19] Some may even believe information they cannot find online does not exist at all and thus fail to realize the wealth of information available only offline. [20] The Internet has become the preferred vehicle of access to most materials, and those held by archives are no exception. Online visits to archives, the use of the Internet to discover primary sources, and email requests are all expected to increase and on-site visits to decrease.[21] Researchers may also be more particular about how they want information to appear online. As one observer put it, "the mantra will be: 'Everything, everywhere, when I want it, *the way* I want it.'"[22] If archivists cannot provide the information people want in a useable form, people may turn to other sources more likely to provide the desired information online in smaller, easier to interpret chunks.[23]

Archives have not traditionally had to meet these sorts of demands and may be ill prepared to do so in the present. A considerable amount of time and effort are required to digitize records and make them available online. Posting archival materials online involves metadata generation, the purchase and maintenance of scanners and servers, ensuring the archives has proper copyright permissions, and developing institutional digitization standards and policies to determine which of the millions of records in their holdings archives will digitize. Because of these challenges, it is generally agreed that most archival holdings will

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[19] Yakel, "Managing Expectations," 266-7.

[20] Pearce-Moses, "Janus in Cyberspace," 15.

[21] Krisitna L. Southwell, "How Researchers Learn of Manuscript Resources at the Western History Collection," *Archival Issues* 26, no. 2 (2002): 94, 104.

[22] Quoted in Randall C. Jimerson, "Archives 101 in a 2.0 World: The Continuing Need for Parallel Systems," in *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users*, ed. Kate Theimer (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 310. Richard Pearce-Moses refers to this as "an Amazoogle world, where people expect comprehensive information, accessible 24/7, offering immediate gratification, and customized to the consumer." Pearce-Moses, "Janus in Cyberspace," 18.

[23] Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder," 112; Michelson and Rothenberg, "Scholarly Communication," 283.

never be digitized.[24] The ease with which they can post their own materials online and the number of materials which have been posted, however, may lead members of the public to believe the archival materials they want should be there as well.

The amount of effort required to utilize archival materials, both offline and online, works to archives' disadvantage in the information seeking process. Traditional archival research has meant a large commitment of time and effort on the part of the researcher to sort through boxes of documents for relevant materials.[25] Archives may continue to be a high-effort information source even online. For example, online finding aids are usually set up and maintained by the institutions that hold the materials, meaning users must know which physical archives is likely to hold the materials they need rather than being able to search across all available online finding aids to locate both the materials they want and the institution holding them.[26] Even before they could access desired sources from their home computers, scholars consulted the sources they found easiest to use most often.[27] As Borgman writes, "information seeking follows the principle of least effort."[28] This is true online as well. If a resource is too difficult to access online, because of an unintuitive website, for instance, only "the most dedicated and tenacious of end-users" will use it.[29]

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[24] Borgman, *From Gutenberg*, 67; Michelson and Rothenberg, "Scholarly Communication," 291.
[25] Szary, "Encoded Finding Aids," 252; Pugh, "The Illusion of Omniscience," 38.
[26] Hedstrom, "Archives, Memory, and Interfaces," 41.
[27] Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder," 114.
[28] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 111.
[29] Michelson and Rothenberg, "Scholarly Communication," 247.

Archivists, like researchers, expect the Internet to make their materials easier to locate.[30] Richard Szary enthuses that Google makes anyone's site visible without any extra effort on the part of its creators.[31] However, Google searches may fail to retrieve content posted by archivists. Search engines do not distinguish between archival and non-archival sources, any more than they distinguish between reliable and unreliable ones.[32] Even if search engines do locate and return finding aids, they may be crowded out by other, irrelevant results.[33] Key word searches using names and subject headings, even when they exactly match those in a finding aid, often fail to return it in the first few pages of results.[34] Unfortunately, these types of searches are the most common ways for researchers to seek sources.[35]

Thinking and Acting Online

The amount of information available today, especially online, is astounding. Rather than not having access to enough information, people may find that they have access to more information than they can reasonably handle. Internet users have developed certain tricks and habits for dealing with this. For instance, since they have access to multiple sources of information, users may "graze" through many resources, "berry picking" the information

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[30] Kathleen Feeney, "Retrieval of Archival Finding Aids Using World-Wide-Web Search Engines," *The American Archivist* 62, no. 2 (1999): 211; Helen R. Tibbo, and Lokman I. Meho, "Finding Finding Aids on the World Wide Web," *The American Archivist* 64 no. 1 (2001): 62-3.

[31] Szary, "Encoded Finding Aids," 250-1.

[32] Hedstrom, "Archives, Memory, and Interfaces," 42.

[33] Feeney, "Retrieval of Archival Finding Aids," 218.

[34] See Elizabeth Yakel and Jihyun Kim, "Midwest State Archives on the Web: A Content and Impact Analysis," *Archival Issues* 28, no. 1 (2003-2004): 56-7; Feeney, "Retrieval of Archival Finding Aids," 218.

[35] Morgan G. Daniels and Elizabeth Yakel, "Seek and You May Find: Successful Search in Online Finding Aid Systems." *The American Archivist* 73, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2010): 537, 541.

they need.[36] Rather than reading in the traditional sense, they quickly skim a source then move on to the next one.[37] Unfortunately, this tendency may undermine the focus placed on context as a necessity in understanding archival records.[38]

The new information environment may even be affecting how people think. Nicholas Carr suggests that the tendency to skim information fostered by the Internet has diminished people's capacity for deep, focused reading and thought.[39] Technology changes how information is presented and, consequently, how people interpret that information and act on it, allowing for new ways of understanding the world.[40] Computers present a user interface to interact with the underlying programs, which determines information presentation and the language and symbols used to convey information and signify certain actions which may be taken.[41] In studying how people address an information need, Borgman notes, it is difficult to separate "how people 'naturally' do things from the way that they use tools… People search using the tools available; as the tools change, their activities change accordingly."[42]

It is possible users will fail to recognize the hand of the archivist in the information they receive. Those who make library materials available online tend to be invisible when

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[36] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 8.
[37] Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic* (July/August 2008): 3. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/6868/ (accessed July 14, 2012).
[38] Jimerson, "Archives 101," 313; Elizabeth Yakel, "Impact of Internet-based Discovery Tools on Use and Users of Archives," *Proceedings of the XXXVI Roundtable on Archives (CITRA) Meeting, Nov. 11-14, 2002, Marseilles, France*, published in *Comma* 2, no. 3 (2003):195.
[39] Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid," 1-3.
[40] Michelson and Rothenberg, "Scholarly Communication," 278; Lubar, "Information Culture and the Archival Record," 18.
[41] Margaret Hedstrom, "Electronic Archives: Integrity and Access in the Network Environment," *American Archivist* 58, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 32.
[42] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 109-10.

they do their job well.[43] Traditional reference interactions place the archivist very visibly between the researcher and the records. For some, the archivist could even become "the personification of the archives."[44] Online researchers can "bypass" the archivist.[45] They can work independently, locating and viewing finding aids and materials on their own without ever interacting directly with an archivist. However, web pages are still "a very powerful form of mediation and gatekeeping."[46] They are designed with specific goals and assumptions, and present only the information that archivists choose and in the ways they decide to display it.

With so much of daily life taking place online, what is posted there and how it is presented becomes especially important. Margaret Hedstrom cautions that it is possible "the on-line collection" will become "*the* collection" for users accessing materials solely online.[47] This is especially troubling in cases where online content is in the form of exhibits, which are meant to tell a particular story and which separate materials from their provenance.[48] Going further, Helen Tibbo suggests that in such a situation the archives website "may indeed become *the repository*."[49]

Going beyond mere information distribution, Web 2.0 has brought a social aspect to the Internet that shows no signs of retreating. Dating back to around 2004, Web 2.0 has triggered an increased use of audio, video, and image media, frequent or even almost constant updating of sites, greater flexibility and creativity in information use, and the

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[43] Brown and Duguid, *The Social Life of Information*, 6.
[44] Yakel, "Managing Expectations," 277.
[45] Yakel, "Managing Expectations," 278.
[46] Tibbo, "The Impact of Information Technology," 39.
[47] Hedstrom, "Archives, Memory, and Interfaces," 40-1.
[48] Hedstrom, "Archives, Memory, and Interfaces," 41.
[49] Tibbo, "The Impact of Information Technology on Archives," 39.

inclusion of the users as co-developers.[50] Whereas earlier versions of the World Wide Web simply made information easily available, Web 2.0 applications allow users to create their own information and to interact with the information created by others. Using Web 2.0 technology, participants can exchange relevant pieces of information or even work together to create complete information sources, each user adding the little bit of information she has to the mix and working with other users to verify content and root out mistakes and falsifications. The principle of the "wisdom of the crowd," suggests that together Internet users, usually assumed to be amateurs, can generate as good or better information than the professionals.[51] This principle can be seen at work in wikis to which individual users add bits of information to create complete sources such as those on Wikipedia or in "folksonomies" in which users add captions or subject labels to content to make it more discoverable.

If the World Wide Web has led people to believe all information should be available online, Web 2.0 may suggest that they should be able to interact with it, too. Kate Theimer writes, "social media/Web 2.0 is the way our users now interact on the web."[52] Many archivists believe that users expect, or will come to expect, Web 2.0 features on the archival sites they visit.[53] Current digital collections "appear rather static and monolithic" when compared to websites like Flickr and may leave users wishing for a better means of interacting with the images and each other.[54]

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[50] Theimer, Kate. "Introduction to Web 2.0 in Archives ... or What You Need to Know in a Nutshell!" (Web seminar, October 13, 2009), 7; Elizabeth Yakel, "Inviting the User into the Virtual Archives," *OCLC Systems and Services* 22, no. 3 (2007): 160.
[51] Jimerson, "Archives 101," 311.
[52] Theimer, "Introduction to Web 2.0," 9.
[53] Samouelian, "Embracing Web 2.0," 63-4.
[54] Matusiak, Krystyna. "Towards User-centered Indexing in Digital Image Collections." *OCLC Systems and Services: International Digital Library Perspectives* 22, no. 4 (2006): 295.

The Internet and especially Web 2.0 sites like Wikipedia have spurred concerns among archivists and other information professionals about how well users will be able to identify reliable information and whether they will care about information quality. Palfrey and Gasser found that many Digital Natives were unconcerned with information quality, some having never even considered whether or not they could trust an Internet site.[55] While the Internet does provide access to a great deal of information quickly and easily, not all of the information available online is reliable. Wikipedia, one of the most popular online destinations for information seekers, provides a good case in point. Because anyone can add or change content, there is the danger that someone could post false information, either mistakenly or knowingly. Given that archivists are in the business of maintaining and providing access to trustworthy sources, the prospect of the public not valuing the reliability of information is more than a little concerning. If they can create their own information sources, will people even care about those provided by institutions like archives?

Defining Archives Online

Online, people may encounter new terminology or new uses of familiar words as the spread of information technology creates a need for understandable names for digital phenomena. Borgman, for instance, notes the contention over the term "digital library." Some within the library profession reject the term entirely, arguing that libraries are by their nature not digital, while others, basing their definition of libraries on functions rather than materials, see the "digital library" as the logical extension of the library into yet another form

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[55] Palfrey and Gasser, 161.

of media.[56] Those in the computer sciences use a narrower conception of the term, emphasizing "databases and information retrieval," likely resulting from earlier terminology in the field that applied the term "library" to "any collection of similar materials."[57] Others, following neither of these understandings, have appropriated the term "as a convenient and familiar shorthand to refer to electronic collections" or "as a marketing ploy" and applied it to a number of databases, both online and sold on CD-ROM.[58]

This is not just due to a lack of creativity on the part of those doing the naming. Learning new meanings for old words or combinations thereof is faster and easier than learning completely new vocabulary.[59] Further, the use of already familiar terms with associated meanings may help explain the things they are appropriated to name. If people are already familiar with a library as a place containing books, newspapers, and other media full of information, applying the term to a collection of digital information or information carriers tells users what they are and how to approach them.

Archives are dealing with a similar identity crisis. The term "archive" has come to be used in a number of ways that do not necessarily correspond with the original definitions drafted by the archival community. Archivists, it seems, may be losing control of "archives."[60] This may be seen clearly in the fact that the term is often spelled "archive" and is now used as a verb.[61] Archivists have traditionally cited three possible definitions of

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[56] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 38.
[57] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 38.
[58] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 38-9, 46-7.
[59] George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 438.
[60] William J. Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," *The American Archivist* 61, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 253.
[61] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 254. Trudy Huskamp Peterson explains that archives "is plural because one record does not an archives make: an archives implies a multiplicity of documents; a fundamental

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archives: as the building or part of a building containing archival materials, as the records

themselves, and as the institutions responsible for collecting, arranging and preserving the

records. To these, "A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology," adds the professional

discipline of administering records and records-keeping organizations and "a published

collection of scholarly papers."[62] In the past, those outside the profession have used the term

to refer to "any collection of documents that are old or of historical interest, regardless of

how they are organized."[63]

In their quest to give labels to features and functions in the computer world, IT

professionals have appropriated the word. Now, instead of just referring to a building,

organization, or group of records, "archive" can mean backup data or data stored offline, the

portion of a website in which one will find older content, or even the action of transferring

data to be stored offline.[64] Online "data archives" bring information together regardless of its

provenance, thus separating items from the context so important to archives.[65] Daniel Dern

explains, "The Internet's archives are actually files stored on computers scattered across the

Internet. The term *archive* is used to refer equally to a collection of files, the computer whose

storage devices the files are kept on, or the site where the computer is."[66] Thus, Dern uses the

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condition of plurality." Trudy Huskamp Peterson, "An Archival Bestiary," *The American Archivist* 54, no. 2
(Spring 1991): 199. Marie-Anne Chabin notes a similar trend towards singular usage in the French media.
Marie-Anne Chabin, "Analyse compare de l'emploi du mot 'archives' dans les medias français," *Comma* 2/3
(2003): 57.
[62] Richard Pearce-Moses, "A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology," The Society of American
Archivists, http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=156 (accessed July 22, 2012).
[63] Pearce-Moses, "A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology."
[64] Pearce-Moses, "A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology."
[65] Huskamp Peterson, "An Archival Bestiary," 199.
[66] Daniel P. Dern, *The Internet Guide for New Users* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1994), 468. He also uses
"*archival* format" to describe multiple files and directories packed into a single file, files compressed "to
minimize storage and network transfer overhead," and "encoding binary files to permit them to be sent in7-bit
format." Dern, *The Internet Guide for New Users*, 478.

word "archive" to describe all content available online. He cautions that Internet "archives,"

both in terms of the files and the "repository or site," are not necessarily permanent, do not

always keep files indefinitely, and do not coordinate the materials they offer.[67] Though there

are clearly some aspects of these new "archives" that correspond to traditional archives – the

use of the word in these instances was likely meant to help explain the online phenomenon

by drawing a parallel to more familiar off-line phenomena – it raises questions about what

are perceived to be the key characteristics and most important functions of archives.

In some ways, the Internet may be promoting archives without the input or consent of

archivists. William Maher notes that public use of the word "archive" has increased.[68] This

popularization of the word can be seen in its use to describe everything from oldies TV

channels to NFL draft records.[69] In these cases, the word "archive" seems to suggest just

about anything old or in the past.[70] With increased usage comes a certain amount of increased

understanding. Most people associate archives with information.[71] Like the use of the word

"library," "archive" may be used to describe just about any collection of information, with

the additional criteria that the content be old or related to the past in some way. Maher argues

that there is a corresponding increase in the value of archives, reflected in the fact that many

individuals are interested in developing their own "archives" and that those outside the

profession seem eager to apply the word to a personal collection or database to lend it

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[67] Dern, *The Internet Guide for New Users*, 470.
[68] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 253.
[69] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 253-4.
[70] Jacobs, "How and When We Make the News," 46.
[71] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 253.

"panache or cachet and an air of respectability."[72] The frequent use and even misuse of the word, though perhaps causing confusion about what archives really are, is not all bad. Maher contends that archivists should "accept the positive benefits of greater societal recognition of archives" while using the opportunities provided by the misuse of the word to educate the public.[73]

Conclusion

It is clear that the Internet is affecting society in a great number of ways. It has changed how people seek and interact with information, as well as what they expect of those providing it. Increasingly, people expect information from all across the globe to be instantly available through their computers. This poses considerable problems for archivists, whose thousands of feet of records would require individual scanning and metadata generation to appear online, and which even then might not be readily discoverable. Expectations for complete information access online are unrealistic when applied to archives. Unfortunately, this is not readily apparent to many information seekers, who may view institutions that do not meet these expectations as quaint and old fashioned, or even unnecessary, and who may fail to realize the extent of materials available only in a physical form. Beyond this, the Internet has changed how people approach, process and use information, often in ways that down-play deep reading and the understanding of context. Online information is becoming increasingly dynamic. Rather than merely absorbed, it is meant to be created afresh,

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[72] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 254. One of the respondents to Richard Barry's survey noted "an increased understanding of the importance of archives as seen through the popular media." Barry, "Report," 50.
[73] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 255.

interacted with, and shared. Though laudable in many ways, the democratization of information creation may threaten the work of those who dedicate their lives to providing access to high quality information sources. Finally, the Internet may introduce the public to new conceptions of "archives" outside of those established by archivists. Though related to the old in certain ways, these new uses of the term may suggest new traits and highlight different archival functions than the original definitions.

Chapter 3

The Internet and Archives:
Discussion of Survey Results

To study current perceptions of archives and how they may be affected by Internet technology, I conducted a survey.[1] The survey was organized into four sections. The first section collected basic demographic information. The second focused on respondents' understanding of the word "archive" and some of the influences affecting that understanding. This section sought to identify whether respondents thought of archives in the more traditional sense of physical places and records, or in the newer sense of data and digital spaces. It was placed before the last two sections to avoid influencing respondents in expressing either a traditional or technological understanding of archives. The third section focused on perceptions of archives as physical spaces and institutions, of archival materials, and of archivists. This section addressed the standard stereotypes regarding archives and archivists. The final section dealt with a respondent's experience with technology and the Internet and sought to identify ways in which Internet technology might be affecting people's understanding of archives.

The likely effects of exposure to technology were determined by cross-tabulating the amount of time respondents spent online, their activities online, and where they encountered the term "archive" with the results of questions pertaining to perceptions of archives. These questions included what definition respondents most often associated with archives, multiple choice questions on the adjectives that best described archives and the skills and traits

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[1] See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

expected of archivists, and written response questions on the services provided by archives, the materials held by archives, and the role of archivists. Whether or not respondents had visited an archives in person or an archives' website were also often used for comparison purposes, as were expectations for information access and the definition most often associated with the word "archive" when applicable.

To best determine how technology might affect perceptions of archives, this survey was designed for a population with minimal experience with archives and a great deal of familiarity with information technology. The Western Washington University community (Western community) was chosen both because members could be expected to generally fit these criteria and because it represented a group which might easily be reached for surveying. The survey was sent out through the campus email system to a random sample of 35% of the active population for spring term 2012, 4,790 potential respondents. The survey received 413 full or partial responses, which is a response rate of 8.6%. However, one respondent gave inappropriate answers, two respondents did not participate beyond the informed consent page, 20 did not participate beyond giving demographic information and one only answered one question after the demographic section. These were excluded from the analysis, which brought the number of responses down to 389 and the response rate to 8.1%. Another 46 respondents did not answer any questions after the second section of the survey but were still included. Unless otherwise noted, all percentages are for respondents who answered a given question. Though this may seem like a low percentage of respondents, in sheer numbers of respondents, it outstrips nearly all of the previously conducted surveys on perceptions of archives. The telephone survey of the public conducted on behalf of State Records New

South Wales interviewed 304 members of the public, while the survey of chief executives in New South Wales had 53 respondents, and Levy and Robles interviewed 44 resource allocators for their report.[2]

As might be expected, the bulk of the respondents were undergraduates and were either between the ages of 18 and 20 or 21 and 24. The majority of respondents, 67.7%, were female. It seems that a disproportionately high number of respondents had previous experience with archives. 40.8% of respondents had visited an archives in person and 53.5% had visited an archives' website. If these numbers are indeed representative of the Western community as a whole, then this is good news for archivists. However, it seems more likely that those who had interacted with or used archives in some way responded to the survey at a higher rate than those who had not.
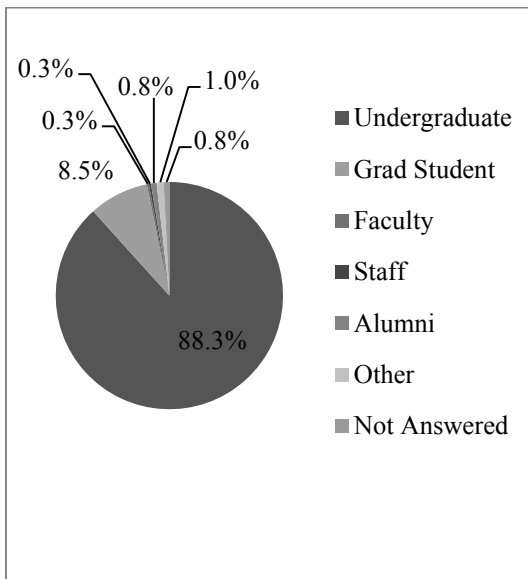
Figure 1: Respondents by affiliation with Western
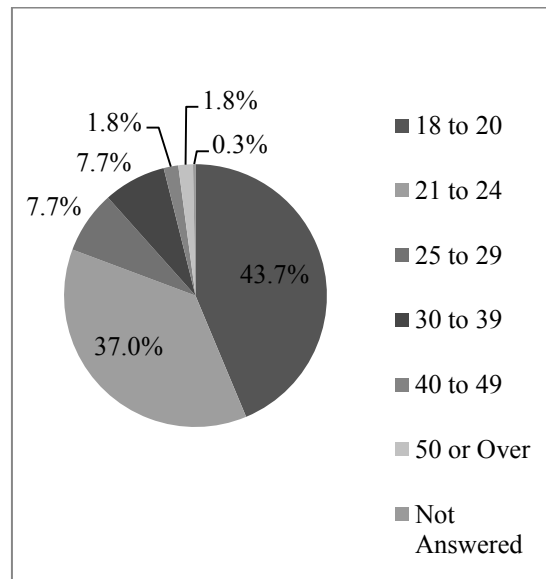
Figure 2: Respondents by age group

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[2] *Telephone Survey*, 4; "*The View from the Top*," 1; Levy and Robles, *The Image of Archivists*, 1.

Experience with Technology

As was expected, the majority of respondents were very comfortable with technology. 60.2% considered themselves "tech savvy" while only 12.7% did not (27.1% were neutral). Only 3% of respondents spent less than an hour a day online. Most (43.2%) spent three to four hours a day online, while 28.3% spent one to two hours online and 17.9% spent five to six hours online. Age was not a clear predictor of time spent online. As might be expected, those in the youngest group were least likely to spend less than one hour a day online while those in the oldest group were most likely to do so. But from there the pattern becomes less clear. For instance, the two age groups whose members were most likely to spend eight or more hours a day online were the thirty to thirty-nine and fifty or over groups, while the eighteen to twenty-one and forty to forty-nine groups were least likely to do so.[3] The age groups differed much more in how they spent their time online. Older respondents were more likely to use the Internet for homework and getting the news while younger respondents were more likely to spend their time online watching movies or TV, listening to music, and social networking.

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[3] The low number of respondents in some of the age groups may help to account for some of these inconsistencies. There were only seven respondents in both the forty to forty-nine and fifty or over age ranges. None in the forty to forty-nine group responded that they spent less than one hour or more than eight hours online per day, while two in the fifty or over group responded that they spent less than one hour a day online and one responded that he spent more than eight hours online. However, even with so few respondents in these groups, the responses suggest that time spent online is more than just a function of age.
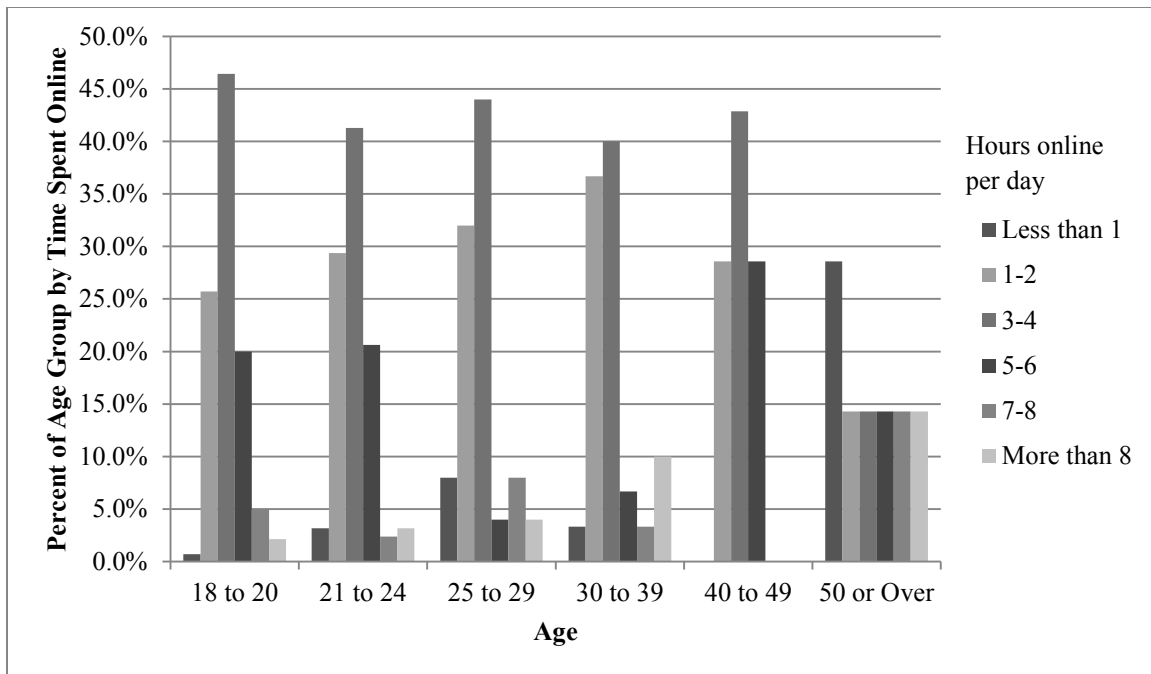
Figure 3: Time online by age group

People often assume that the younger generation, whose members have grown up using computers and the Internet and who cannot remember a time without either, will use both more often and better understand them. These "Digital Natives" are expected to spend more time using digital technologies, especially to express themselves and interact with one another and to access, use, and create information.[4] Conversely, those from older generations are thought to be less comfortable with these technologies and therefore less likely to use them. Based on the amount of time spent online, it seems that at least some members of this older group are catching up. However, the younger generation may still be more sophisticated in their use of digital technologies. Activities like listening to music, watching TV and social networking suggest they have moved much more of their lives to digital spaces, while those online activities carried out most often by the older generation are

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[4] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital*, 4.

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focused on simple information retrieval. People of all ages can be expected to be comfortable with information searching in online spaces.

Time spent online has increased people's exposure to the word "archive" if not to actual archives. 34.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they encountered the word "archive" more online than they did offline (as opposed to 27.5% who disagreed or strongly disagreed). However, when asked where they encountered the word "archive" most often, those who believed they encountered it while browsing the Internet came in a far second behind those who encountered it while conducting research. This is not surprising given the nature of the survey population and the fact that so many had visited an archives in person. The third largest group were those who could not remember where they encountered the word most often (9.8%) followed by those who encountered it in fiction, TV, or movies (9.3%). While most did not associate the word with online spaces, those who did represent a significant minority. Further, there is no knowing how many have seen the word online and simply did not take note of it. This seems especially likely for those who responded they could not remember where they encountered the word most often.

8.2% of respondents chose "other" when asked where they encounter the word "archive" most often. The responses in the other category are a reminder of the number of ways in which the term has been appropriated by the IT community. While a number wrote that they encountered the word at work or school, without specifying how it was used, others explained that they encountered it while checking their email when asked if they wanted to archive an email or move it out of the inbox, while "storing old information on my computer network," when compressing directories into single files, and in what may be a similar action

on a Nook e-reader which allows users "to 'archive' books to save on memory space."[5] All these usages seem to be generally related to the storage function of archives. In some cases this just means separating a file from those presumed to be more current. However, in some instances it also suggests that the file will be less accessible.

Despite encountering archives online, most respondents did not believe that their understanding of archives was largely influenced by online encounters. 47.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "My understanding of archives is derived largely from online encounters with the term," while only 22.6% agreed or strongly agreed. When analyzed by activities online, those who often used the Internet for getting the news and for browsing were most likely to agree or strongly agree that they encountered the word "archive" more often online, while those who used the Internet for banking and research were least likely to agree.[6] This makes sense as sites that provide news or general entertainment would both change frequently and host the sort of content which might be interesting to users even when it is not current, thus necessitating an "Older Content" or "Archive" portion of the website. Those who spent the most time online browsing and getting the news were also most likely to agree that their online encounters with the word influenced their understanding of it, while those who spent their time conducting research, banking and listening to music were least likely to agree.[7]

The use of "archive" by the IT community posits a certain amount of familiarity with the term on the part of users. Like the "digital libraries" studied by Borgman, the word is

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[5] Response 238; Response 23; Response 89; Response 31; Response 119; Response 80.
[6] See Appendix C, table 2.
[7] See Appendix C, table 3.

meant to serve as "a convenient and familiar shorthand" which explains the function to users succinctly by likening it to something they already know and understand.[8] This presumed prior knowledge may explain why so few believe their understanding of archives is derived from online encounters. They are not encountering a new word whose function is explained by its use in that instance, but reusing an old word that gives meaning to a new function. However, as with stereotypes, people may remain unaware of all the influences on their understanding. In reality, given the frequency of online versus offline encounters, it seems likely that these encounters are having an influence, if perhaps in more subtle ways.

Expectations of Archives

Much of what archivists have noted about people's expectations of finding information online appears to hold true. 43.5% of respondents agreed with the statement "I can find all the information I need online" and 15.4% strongly agreed with this statement, while only 18.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similarly, 32.5% of respondents agreed and 23.3% strongly agreed that all the information they need should be available online, while only 18.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Still, the majority of respondents (78.1%) would seek offline sources if they could not find the information they needed online.
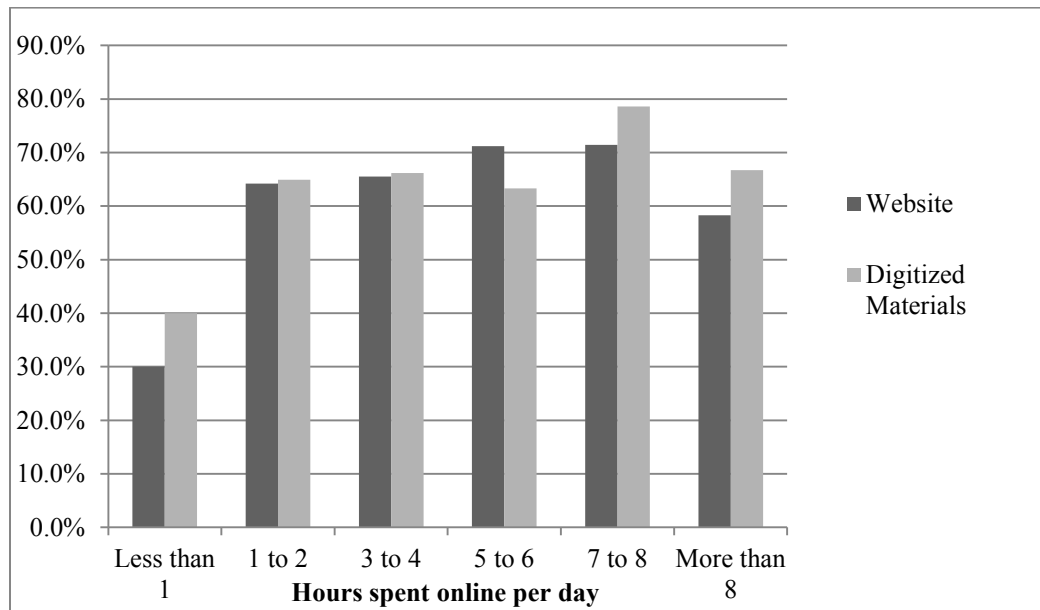
As far as these beliefs translating to expectations of archives, most respondents expected archives to have a website and to post digitized materials on that site, but few expected them to maintain a Facebook page, despite the fact that most organizations now

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[8] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 38.

have a social media presence.[9] 64.8% of respondents expected an archives to post a website as opposed to 5.3% who would not expect this of an archives, and 64.7% expected archives to post digitized materials from their holdings while only 18.9% said they would not expect this. Predictably, time spent online generally coincided with heightened expectations. Those who spent two or less hours a day online were less likely both to expect archives to have a web page and to expect them to post digitized materials on that site.

Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed they would expect an archives to post a website and digitized materials by time spent online

The comments for this section suggest people may have increased desires and expectations of archives but many are also at least somewhat aware of the difficulties associated with providing digital access to materials. One respondent noted that "a data storage system combining all archives would be convenient for quick reference."[10] It is unclear whether the respondent in this case meant archives contact information, finding aids,

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[9] As one respondent commented, "Who doesn't have a Facebook page?" Response 134.
[10] Response 316.

or actual materials, although the latter seems likely. Another respondent suggested that archives only scan some materials as a means to draw in more users, but added some would likely demand more digital materials.[11] Several tied electronic access with preservation. One wrote that archivists "should strive to scan as much material as possible to online sources to better preserve the quality of the content and also to make it available to more people more efficiently," though also noting the time consuming nature of such tasks.[12] Another reasoned "moving collections on line is critical to preventing loss, more copies means more likelihood of long term (1000 year +) survival."[13] Though well-meaning and reflective of a basic understanding of the goals of archives, this suggestion is based on a misconception of the nature of electronic records and reveals a lack of understanding of the challenges they pose to preservation.

Accessibility

Providing access to information or primary sources was one of the most important functions associated with archives. Many of the descriptions of the services provided by archives and tasks attributed to archivists focused on the ultimate goal of providing access to materials. Thus, respondents explained the role of archives and archivists in wording such as acquiring information, then finding "ways to organize this information so that it can be easily accessed by the public."[14] Many also noted that archives did not maintain materials just for use in the present. For instance, one respondent wrote of the role of archivists as "preserving

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[11] Response 50.
[12] Response 354.
[13] Response 156.
[14] Response 85.

the past and the present for access in the future."[15] This is not that different from how some archivists describe their role. William Maher writes, "It may seem old-fashioned, but I would emphasize that we presume that archivists preside over the past so that others may examine it."[16] Going even further, Elsie Freeman asserts that "like George Berkeley's tree falling in the forest, records do not exist until they are used."[17] If, as this suggests, connecting researchers with the primary sources in their care is the most important aspect of their job for archivists, then members of the public seem to agree.

However, when judging how accessible archives actually are, respondents were divided. 32.3% of respondents selected "accessible" as an adjective describing archives, while 11.7% thought of them as "inaccessible." Additionally, only 5.6% selected "friendly" and 4.7% selected "welcoming," while 23.8% selected "mysterious," 16.1% each selected "secretive" and "confusing," and 5% selected "forbidding." Those who encountered the word archive most when browsing online were actually less likely to view archives as "inaccessible," "secretive," "mysterious," or "confusing."[18] Those who encountered the word while conducting research, on the other hand, were more likely to view archives as "inaccessible" (15.1%, only out ranked by those who could not remember where they encountered the word most at 17.6%) or confusing (20.1%). However, this group was also more likely to view archives as "friendly," "welcoming," and "popular." This suggests that the need for materials contained within an archives and the experience of trying to acquire those materials has actually shown archives to be difficult to access and use, while

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[15] Response 107.
[16] Maher, "Archives, Archivists, and Society," 262.
[17] Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder,"118.
[18] See Appendix C, table 4.

experience with so-called archives online has shown this to be relatively easy. The differing nature of the two activities may also explain this. Researchers are much more likely to have a specific goal in their information search and to be disappointed and view information providers poorly when they do not meet this goal.

Expectations for online access to information had a strong effect on whether or not respondents viewed archives as "accessible." Those who believed that they could or should be able to find all the information they needed online were less likely to view archives as "accessible" than those who did not feel this way.[19] Thus, if respondents were accustomed to being able to locate all or most of the information they needed online, having to go to a physical archives for information would be more than a little inconvenient. Conversely, those who spent less time online were generally more likely to view archives as "accessible." They were less likely to agree that they should be able to find all the information they needed online, and may not have seen the need to visit a physical location to view materials as a barrier to access.
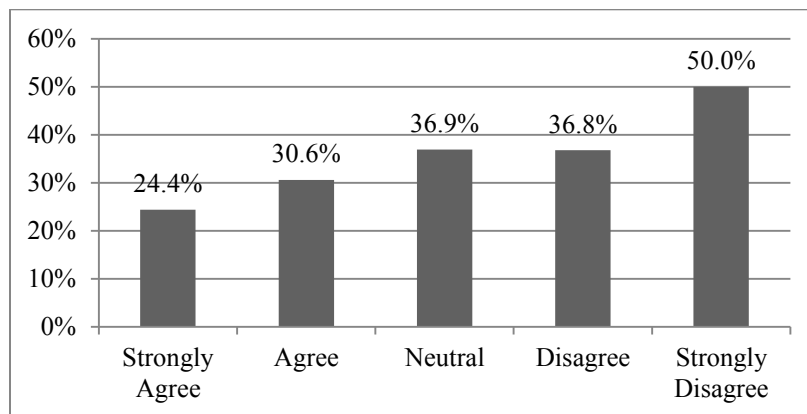
Figure 5: Percentage of those who agreed all information should be online who selected "Accessible" as an adjective describing archives

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[19] The division was less clear for those who selected "inaccessible" as an adjective describing archives. See Appendix C, table 6.

Those who had visited an archives in person seemed to have stronger views about the accessibility of archives than those who had not. They were 19.1% more likely than those who had not visited an archives to characterize archives as "accessible." However, members of this group were also 11.4% more likely to characterize archives as "inaccessible."[20] Thus, they made judgments about the accessibility of archives more often than those who had not visited an archives and had not formed a personal opinion on the matter. If people's expectations of accessibility are affected by the greater accessibility of materials online and in libraries, then when archives fail to meet these expectations, they may seem inaccessible in comparison. One of the respondents who had visited an archives and who selected inaccessible as an adjective, described archives as slow and noted that they are "useful but never as streamlined or efficient as I would like."[21]

Others may have had a less than stellar customer service experience with archives that led them to form a poor opinion of archives' accessibility. In response to the question on the role of the archivist, one respondent wrote, "What they do when they're not giving me dirty looks for touching their things, I'm not sure. I assume it's important, because I always seem to be keeping them from something they'd much rather be doing."[22] In a later comment, this respondent clarified, "I give em a hard time, but I've had archivists who've been great and very helpful. Like anything, the most vivid memories are the traumatic ones." Archives may be inaccessible not only because they are out of the way, but because they are difficult to use, either due to the process of using the archives itself or the actions of the archivist.

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[20] See Appendix C, table 6.
[21] Response 316.
[22] Response 228.

While archivists have little control over the prior expectations of those who arrive at their doors, it is important to remember that researchers' experiences while visiting an archives may strongly influence their impressions of archives in general, not just the one they happen to be visiting.

The Value of Archives

Overall, respondents had a positive view of the value of archives. After "historical" and "organized," which were the two most popular adjectives chosen to describe archives, the most highly selected adjectives had to do with value judgments of archives. 61.9% thought of archives as "valuable," 59.5% thought archives were "useful" and "important," 41.9% selected "interesting" and 27% selected "relevant." Only 1.5% of respondents thought archives were "useless" and 0.6% thought they were "unimportant" making these two of the least selected adjectives.[23] Many, in fact, referred to the value of the materials kept by archives as the reason for their preservation and use, writing for instance that archives contain "documents that are saved due to their importance."[24]

Not surprisingly, those who had visited an archives were more likely to view them as "valuable," "useful" and "important" than those who had not.[25] Those who encountered the word "archive" most while conducting research were most likely to view archives as "useful" and "interesting," however those who encountered it most in banking or other official

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[23] These numbers are quite a bit lower than they were in the 2001 study conducted in Australia, where 90% of respondents characterized archives as useful, 89% as valuable, and 72% as interesting. (Environmetrics, 10) However, this may be due to the difference in surveying methods – the Australian survey was conducted via telephone and respondents were read a list of adjectives and asked to decide whether each did or did not apply to government archives.

[24] Response 294.

[25] See Appendix C, table 6.

documents were more likely to view them as "important" and "valuable," and the two were

roughly tied for most likely to view archives as "relevant."[26] Those who encountered the

term while browsing online, on the other hand, were second least likely to view archives as

"relevant" (after those who chose "other") and "valuable" (after those who could not

remember where they encountered the word archive the most) and third least likely to view

them as "interesting" (after those who encountered the term in movies, TV, or fiction).[27]

While online encounters with "archives" may lead people to think of archives as more

accessible and comprehensible, they do not, it seems, lead them to value archives any more.

    The link between expectations for digital information and perceptions of the value of

archives was especially clear. Those who believed all information should be readily available

online were more likely to view archives as "boring," "unimportant," and "useless," and were

less likely to view them as "important," "interesting," "relevant," "useful," and "valuable," as

shown by the table below.

	Boring	Important	Interesting	Relevant	Unimportant	Useful	Useless	Valuable
Strongly Agree	20.5%	52.6%	26.9%	17.9%	2.6%	47.4%	5.1%	51.3%
Agree	13.0%	61.1%	41.7%	25.9%	0.0%	57.4%	0.9%	53.7%
Neutral	8.3%	59.5%	45.2%	29.8%	0.0%	65.5%	0.0%	65.5%
Disagree	3.5%	68.4%	56.1%	35.1%	0.0%	73.7%	0.0%	80.7%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	66.7%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%

**Figure 6: Percentages of those who agreed with the statement "All the information I need should be available online"
by the adjectives relating to value they selected to describe archives[28]**

    Though this pattern was mirrored in how much people believed they could find all the

information they need online, and to a certain extent in the amount of time spent online, it is

clearest here. Since the pattern was not as clearly evident among those who believed they

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[26] See Appendix C, table 4.
[27] None of those who encountered the term in the news thought archives were interesting, however, there were
only four respondents in this group, making it somewhat unreliable for comparison.
[28] The reason that those who strongly disagree do not always follow the pattern may be attributed to the fact that
there were only six respondents in this group.

could find all the information they needed online, this is likely not just a case of people believing that archives are unnecessary since all their contents are available online, a view that Borgman notes in regard to libraries, although it undoubtedly plays some part.[29] Rather, this suggests that for some, the value of information is linked directly to its accessibility. Since archives do not meet their expectations for the provision of information, they are viewed as less useful and valuable.

What is an archives?

As the word "archive" becomes appropriated by those outside the archival profession, it is increasingly likely that people will not think of archives in the traditional senses as laid out by archivists. To determine whether this was the case, or if their understanding of the term was being influenced in some other way, respondents were asked to choose which definition they most often associated with the term "archive." All of the traditional definitions received more responses than the technological ones. The overwhelming majority (262 or 67.4%) chose "Documents or materials preserved for future use because of their public or historical value." The next most associated definition was "The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections" with 31 responses (8%) followed by "An organization that collects the records of individuals, families or organizations" with 28 responses. "To store data offline" received 27 responses, "The portion of a website containing older content" received 19, and "A file that has been transferred off the computer into long-term storage" received 15. Seven respondents chose "other" and gave their own definitions. Of these, two

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[29] Borgman, *From Guttenberg*, 184.

could not choose just one definition, three referred to data storage or collection, either on or offline, one to a file type, and one to a professional collection on a specific subject.

Those who chose "other" for where they encountered the word archive most often were the group most likely to choose the building as the definition of the term "archive." Of the six who chose both, one explained that her friend worked in an archives, and four said they encountered the term at work, two specifying that they worked at Western. This may mean that they are in contact with the University Archives and that this is what has shaped their understanding of the term. Those who encountered the word in fiction, TV, or movies and those who encountered it in the news were the next most likely to identify with the definition of archive as a building, with 16.7% of both groups choosing this definition. This stands to reason since the media in general might be more likely to describe archives as a place. Most of the examples in fiction discussed by Schmuland focus on archives as a physical space rather than as documents or an organization. Even in the case of the molding piles of records in the basement of the East India House, the records function more as part of the building, helping the reader to form an image of the space, than as a focus in their own right.[30] Not surprisingly, those who encountered the term while browsing online were the group most likely to select the definition of archive as a portion of a website, with 17.3%, nearly three times the rate of the next closest group, choosing this definition. However, though a relatively high percentage of this group also chose other technology driven

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[30] Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction," 45-6.

definitions, they were not the group most likely to choose either the definition of archive as a verb or as a file stored offline.[31]

Of the three traditional definitions, that of archives as documents or records might be expected to resonate most with those who encounter the term online or in another information technology setting. In digital spaces, it is the materials themselves that stand out, rather than the space in which they are contained. The "archive" portion of a website is likely to contain a simple chronological list of postings with corresponding links. The structure of the page, the part that holds the materials, is unlikely to draw much attention or to bear much resemblance to the structure of physical archives that serve a similar function. In the digital world, not only does the content take center stage, but both in the way it is rendered on the computer screen and represented symbolically, it often bears a closer resemblance to information carriers in the physical world. The fact that such digital "archives" get their meaning from those in the physical world and not the other way around would also explain why the traditional definitions are more popular than the technological definitions. If the technological and traditional senses of the word "archive" are viewed as being members of the same category, the traditional definitions are still more central to that category.[32]

Although all this may account for some of the popularity of the definition of archives as materials, the fact those who encountered the term while conducting research and those who had actually been to an archives were most likely to choose this definition suggests that there are other factors contributing its popularity. For instance, it seems likely that for

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[31] Those who encountered the word in banking or other official documents chose the definition of a files stored offline at the highest rate while those who encountered the word most often in the news were most likely to choose the definition of archives as the action of storing data, followed by those encountered the word while browsing online. See Appendix C, table 7.

[32] Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 18.

researchers as for those online, it is the materials themselves, which they have made the trip to the archives to view, that are the focus and most memorable part of their experience rather than the place where they were viewed or the organization which collected them.

In terms of what archives and archivists do, there was a heavy focus on storage, preservation, organization and accessibility. Providing access was the service most commonly associated with archives, with 43.5% of respondents mentioning it in their descriptions of archival services. 25% described archival services in terms of storage, 10.1% in terms of organization of materials, and 9.1% in terms of preservation. Though respondents mentioned a few other services provided by archives, such as those relating to the cultural or evidential value of archives or the acquisition of materials, these mentions were negligible in comparison. There was a little more variation in the tasks ascribed to the archivist. When describing the role of the archivist, 55.3% did so in terms of the organization of materials or information, 19.9% in terms of the overall management of archives or the materials therein, 18.8% in terms of helping researchers to locate and understand materials, 18.1% in terms of providing general access to the contents of archives, 16% in terms of acquiring materials for the archives, 15.6% in terms of preservation, 7.4% in terms of appraisal, 7.4% in terms of storage of materials, and 7.1% in terms of description. A few mentioned other activities, such as outreach, gate keeping, or studying the materials in their care. 3.9% of respondents simply used archive as a verb to describe the activities of archivists. Such responses make it evident that technological uses of the term are having at least a superficial effect on the way people understand archives.

The association with libraries was still present. Twenty eight respondents described the role of archivists by likening them to related professions and of these eighteen related archivists to librarians. The other two professions with which archivists were commonly associated were curators and historians. Rather than simply classifying archivists as librarians, most wrote that the job of an archivist was akin to that of a librarian. One noted that the role of an archivist was "similar to a librarian, but possibly a little less fun, as they only have a non-fiction section to work with."[33] The same respondent believed an archives would "act mainly as a library, providing documents to people who wish to inquire into matters of history/public record," thus explaining the relationship through the similar functions of the two. Only one respondent wrote that he did not know the difference between an archivist and a librarian.[34] Those who encountered "archive" while browsing online were most likely to describe the role of archivists as similar to that of librarians, but overall, those who came in contact with the word while conducting research were most likely to explain the role of archivists by relating them to other professions (librarians, curators, and historians).

In describing the services provided by archives, those who identified "archive" as a building were most likely to describe archival services as including storage, while those who identified it as a verb were least likely to do so. Instead, those who selected the definition of "to store data offline" were the group most likely to describe archival services as including preservation and organization, tasks that involve active human intervention. However, this trait did not extend to the groups who selected the other technology based definitions. None of the respondents who identified "archive" as a file that had been stored offline described

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[33] Response 84.
[34] Response 367

the services archives provide as including preservation or organization, and only 7.7% of those who identified "archive" as a portion of a website described archival services in terms of preservation (the next lowest after those who identified archives as a building or a stored file) and none did so in terms of organization. Instead, those who associated the word "archive" with a portion of a website were second most likely to describe archival services as involving storage.

The failure to recognize the multitude of actions performed on archival materials to make them accessible is concerning. Digital encounters with "archives" contribute to such a lack of recognition, both because online maintenance of such collections tends to be less visible than for physical records and because the simple nature of some may suggest that little or no human intervention is necessary. Two of the responses exemplified the concerns about information technology making the role of archivists invisible. One respondent, who defined archive as "the portion of a website containing older content" and who encountered the word most often while browsing online, wrote "none" for the role of the archivist.[35] Another wrote "probably an automated script or piece of software" in response to the same question. He also encountered the word most often browsing online, but identified most with the definition of archive as "a file that has been transferred off the computer into long-term storage."[36] In both cases the archivist has been completely written out of the equation as being unnecessary. Of course, this sort of approach is not unique to those who encounter archives online. One of the respondents who chose the building as the definition of archives and who encountered archives most through her work at Western described the role of an

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[35] Response 317.
[36] Response 246.

archivist as "a building that saves records."[37] However, the nature of much digital content

outside the archival world and the ways in which many people interact with it makes such a

conception increasingly likely.

While respondents had a general understanding of the sorts of services provided by

archives and archivists, they were not always as accurate in their perceptions of the materials

kept by archives. 19.7% suggested that archives keep published sources such as books or

periodicals that would be more appropriately held by a library. However, most, 52.1% listed

the sorts of unique materials that archivists would consider within their province, either in

general terms such as records or documents, or specific types and content such as birth

certificates or records pertaining to lawsuits. Many listed both archival and non-archival

materials, for instance "old documents, articles, books."[38] Those who encountered archives

most while browsing online were most likely to include published materials, suggesting a

greater lack of understanding of the workings of archives on their part, and perhaps a

tendency to equate all physical information carriers. Those who encountered the term while

conducting research were most likely to include the sorts of original, unique materials

typically collected by archives.[39]

Though the majority of respondents, when they gave examples of the materials kept

by archives, listed traditional, paper-based materials such as documents, books or

photographs, some listed other sorts of media such as video, sound recordings, and even

electronic information and its container objects. The sorts of materials that some expected to

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[37] Response 399.
[38] Response 355.
[39] See Appendix C, table 8.

find in archives included descriptions such as "servers with data in them," paper documents and "computer disks also filled with the same materials only in a digital form," databases, software, "early computers/ video games," and "Old threads and broken links."[40] Those who spent more time online were especially likely to include technology related items or considerations in their descriptions of the contents of archives. Not only did these respondents not see a dichotomy between archives and computers, but the time spent online may have encouraged them to view computer related materials and the information they contain as worthy of preservation for posterity, a task they still believed fell to archives.

Respondents did not only refer to the contents of archives as physical materials. Many also described archives as containing information (32%) or data (12.7%) rather than or in addition to physical records. The term data was often used as a synonym for information, but was also used by some to denote either information in a rawer form (as in data sets and statistics) or in a digital form. Those who could not remember where they encountered the term archive most were the most likely to describe archival materials as data, followed by those who encountered the term while browsing online.[41] Those who had visited an archives in person were slightly more likely to describe their contents in terms of physical materials than those who had not and were 10.2% less likely to refer to them as information and 50.6% less likely to refer to them as data. The use of the term data to describe the contents of archives, may, like the use of "archive" as a verb, simply reflect a change in people's

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[40] Response 259; Response 235; Response 349; Response 337; Response 20; Response 23; Response 246.
[41] In general those who spent more time online were more likely to refer to archival contents as data, although there were a couple exceptions. Of those who answered both questions, 20% of those who spent less than one hour a day online described archives as containing data, 12% of those who spent one to two hours online did, 12.9% of those who spent three to four hours online did, 10% of those who spent five to six hours did, and 18.2% of those who spent seven to eight and more than eight hours online per day did. (Appendix)

vocabulary as terms like "data plan" become more commonplace. However, it is possible that it also reflects an expectation that information come in smaller, byte-sized pieces, rather than the often complex and context dependent collections provided by archives.

Several respondents wrote that archives contained lists or indexes, rather than focusing on the actual materials. For instance, one wrote "An index, and an alphabetical/categorical organization of the stored material" as his explanation of what archives contain.[42] It is possible that this reflects the effects of online encounters, where "archive" portions of websites often take the form of chronological listings of contents. Interestingly, many spoke of archival materials in terms of the needs of themselves or other researchers, writing descriptions such as "information i [*sic*] need" or "old information on some related topic to whatever you're looking into."[43] Those who encountered the word "archive" most while conducting research or browsing online were most likely to describe archives this way. This suggests a more personalized view of archives, though members of the two groups may hold this view for different reasons.

Archive Stereotypes

Many of the stereotypes noted by archivists were still evident among respondents, although they were not the main focus in most responses. While a significant number of respondents choose adjectives associated with archival stereotypes, these were not the most popular adjectives, trailing behind "historical" and "organized" and for the most part those adjectives having to do with the value of archives. Just over half of respondents characterized

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[42] Response 94.
[43] Response 116; Response 55.

archives as "old," 31.1% as "quiet," 23.8% as "mysterious," 16.1% as "secretive," 20.5% as "old fashioned," 21.4% as "dusty," 19.9% as "musty," and 8.8% as "dark." The fact that 20% of respondents to the Australian survey agreed that archives were old fashioned might suggest that there has been little change in at least certain perceptions of archives.[44] However, the difference in survey styles may mean that respondents to this survey were actually more likely to view archives as old fashioned than were respondents to the 2001 survey.[45] Though there are few other benchmarks against which to measure these results, this suggests that some stereotypes have become more prevalent.

Clearly the types of stereotypes noted in fiction by Schmuland and cited by Gracy and others as a cause for concern for archivists are still alive and well among at least some of the population. One respondent, in trying to explain the role of archivists, wrote "I don't know what they do in there honestly...be mysterious?"[46] Though only two respondents included dust in their descriptions of archival services and materials and archivists roles, a number included the age of archival materials in their explanations, describing them as "old data/records/stuff" or even "medieval texts."[47] One respondent wrote of the services provided by archives:

> I imagine an older person, sitting at a desk doing a crossword puzzle in the sub-sub basement of an old building most don't know the use for. When you approach the

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[44] *Telephone Survey*, 10.

[45] While respondents to this survey were only asked to pick the adjectives which they thought best described archives, those to the Environmetrics survey were asked to give an opinion on the appropriateness of each adjective presented to them, meaning that if pressed 20% would agree that archives are old fashioned as opposed to the 20.5% of respondents to this survey who agreed archives were old fashioned strongly enough to add it to their list of adjectives best describing archives.

[46] Response 218.

[47] Response 401; Response 126.

desk, they hand you a torch without looking up and say something like, '3 doors down, first on the left. Oh, and don't disturb the bats.'[48]

Though this may be the sort of imagery associated with fiction, this particular respondent encountered the word most often while conducting research. Another respondent imagined archives as similar to the warehouse pictured at the end of Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark, while yet another imagined "a big warehouse with many isles of alphabetized file cabinets."[49]

It seems that where people encounter archives has a significant impact on the stereotypes which they associate with them. Those who encountered archives in TV, movies, and fiction were most likely to view them as shrouded in dust and mystery. 50% of those in this group thought archives were "mysterious," 46.9% "quiet," 28.1% "secretive" and "dusty," 31.3% "musty," and 12.5% "dark." 53.1% characterized archives as "old," not much higher than the average, but 31.3% said they were "old fashioned," 60.9% more than other respondents. This group was also approximately tied for most likely to associate archives with history, 90.6% selecting "historical" as a descriptor for archives.[50] Though other groups selected these adjectives at a high rate, sometimes even higher than those who encountered the term in the entertainment media, none were so consistent.[51] Fiction, either written or televised, may also have had an effect on respondents' understandings without them being fully aware of it. One respondent, who could not remember where he encountered the term

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[48] Response 290.
[49] Response 151; Response 379.
[50] 90.7% of those who encountered the term while browsing the web did.
[51] It should be noted that in certain cases, this group chose the antonyms of adjectives associated with the traditional stereotypes, 18.8% describing archives as clean, the highest of any group other than those who encountered the term in the news.

most, wrote that the contents of archives are "mostly fantastic things, like obscure information that leads to solving a murder case or uncovering a villain's weakness."[52]

Those who encountered archives while doing research were less likely to view them as "dusty," "dark," "mysterious," or "secretive" but were second most likely to view them as "musty" and "quiet," after those who encountered the term in TV, movies, or fiction. They were most likely to view archives as "old," but not as "old fashioned." Relatively significant numbers of this group viewed archives as both "clean" and "bright." While this was the group most likely to view archives as "confusing," and second most likely to view them as "forbidding," they were also most likely to view them as "friendly" and "welcoming," reflecting how different experiences in archives can affect how people view them. The fact that some of these stereotypes persist in this group suggests that archivists themselves may be inadvertently helping to promote them. For instance, one respondent described a trip to an archives in which the reference room was "spacious" but the stacks were "super forboding [*sic*], dimly lit and extremely confusing."[53]

Though second most likely to view archives as "disorganized" and "forbidding," those who encountered "archive" most while browsing online were also least likely to view archives as "confusing," "mysterious," "secretive," and "inaccessible." They did not generally view archives as "current," were least likely to characterize them as "high tech" and though second least likely to describe archives as "old," were second most likely to describe them as "old fashioned" and most likely to describe them as "historical" by a small margin. However, relatively few in this group described archives as "dusty" or "musty."

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[52] Response 117.
[53] Response 302.

Neither of these traits would be applicable to an "archive" online, because it does not inhabit a physical space that can collect dust. If this is indeed representative of how online encounters influence perceptions of archives, it suggests that they downplay many of the old stereotypes linked to the age of archival materials and the mystique that has formed around archives. However, though online exposure may dispel many of these stereotypes, it does not suggest a conception of archives as fully modern organizations either.
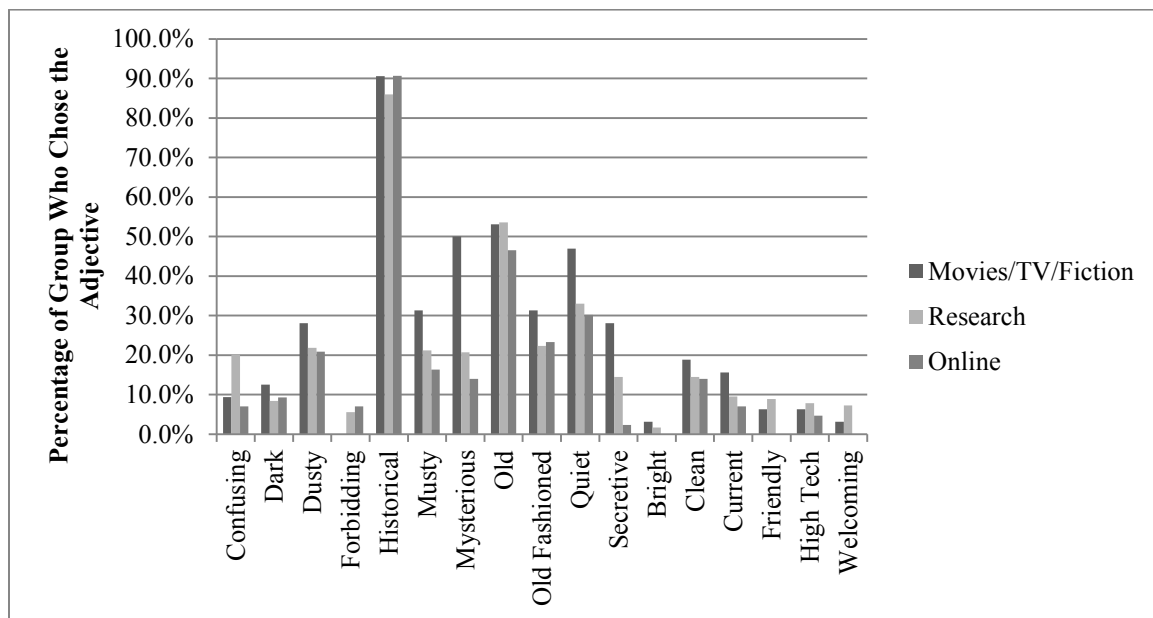
Figure 7: Stereotype adjectives chosen to describe archives by where respondents encountered the word "archive" most often

     Archivists fared better in terms of stereotyping than repositories. Like repositories, many of the stereotypes of archivists have remained the same, however, these stereotypes are much more likely to be positive. Overall, archivists were viewed as organized, detail oriented, intelligent, knowledgeable about the collections in their holdings, and efficient. Those who encountered the word "archive" most while conducting research were most likely to view archivists as intelligent and knowledgeable about their collections and second most

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likely to view them as efficient. They were also second most likely, behind those who encountered the word while browsing, to view archivists as detail oriented. Those who spent more time online were generally more likely to choose "organization skills" as a trait they would expect of archivists. Thus, time with information technology may highlight the importance of being able to order all the information that it presents.

63.1% believed archivists should possess computer skills while only 7.1% believed archivists possess a resistance to change, making it the lowest ranked trait. Those who spent more time online were especially likely to expect archivists to possess computer skills. This may be an indication that for some at least, computers have become such an integral part of daily life that everyone, archivists included, is expected to be familiar with them on some level. Given how few respondents believed archives were "high tech" it seems unlikely that many would view archivists as having exceptionally advanced computer skills. Still, this does mean that archivists have not been completely relegated to the past but are expected to take part in at least some of the changes affecting society as a whole.
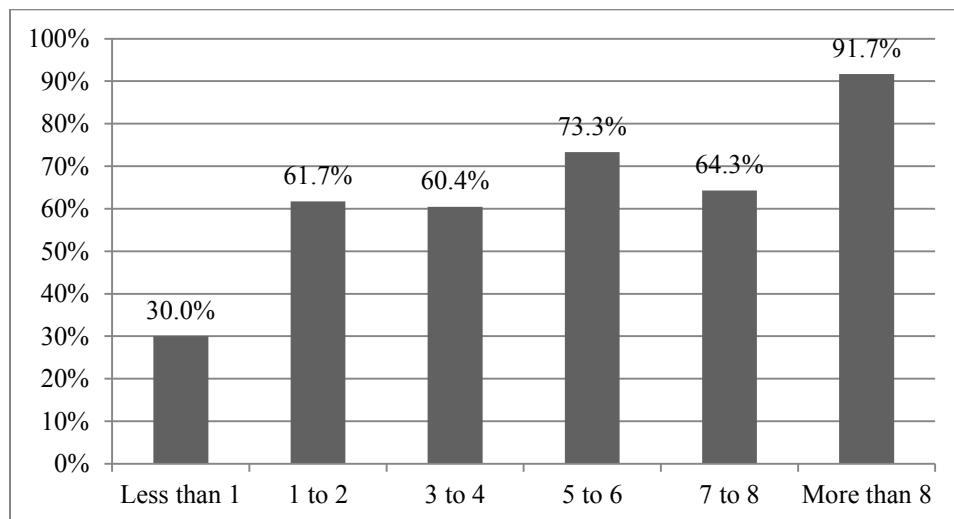
Figure 8: The percentage who believed archivists would possess computer skills by the hours spent online

The second and third least selected traits of archivists, respectively, were a sense of humor (12.1%) and social skills (20.9%). One respondent even included the lack of social interaction in his explanation of the role of the archivist, writing that the archivist is the "person in charge of keeping track of everything in the archive, organizing it, and being lonely."[54] Those who spent more time online actually tended to be more likely to view archivists as possessing these traits, however, those who said they encountered the word archive most while browsing were least likely to view archivists as possessing a sense of humor. A number of those who left comments noted that while they selected traits that they believed most archivists would possess or that would be helpful on the job, they knew that archivists would vary in personality and skills. One wrote that archivists could be "shy or outgoing depending on the person."[55] Like the resource allocators surveyed by Levy and Robles, respondents were often reluctant to classify archivists by what they knew to be stereotypes, though some ended up doing so anyway. Further, the fact that this respondent bothered to explain that such social skills would vary from person to person suggests that she is aware of the standard stereotypes associated with archivists and still thinks about them in terms of these stereotypes, if only to acknowledge that archivists do not always conform to them.

Conclusion

It seems safe to say that people's experiences with technology have affected how they think about archives and what they expect of them. This is inevitable to a certain extent, as

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[54] Response 259.
[55] Response 199.

technology makes the once impossible not only possible, but everyday. Expectations for access to digital information have followed a pattern very similar to that predicted by archivists, with increased expectations both for being able to find information in general, as well as information and materials from archives online. Given the high expectations among respondents for both general and archival resources online, archivists' concerns about expectations for digital materials are well-founded. Even more worrisome is the apparent link between expectations, perceived accessibility, and judgments of value. In this new information climate, perceived value may be directly linked to perceived accessibility, while accessibility is judged in comparison to other forms of information much more accessible than those in archives. Thus, when people expect all information to be online, archives, generally offline sources, are deemed inaccessible. Moreover, though archives generally seem to be viewed as valuable, those who expect to satisfy all their information needs online may be less likely to view them this way. While the vast majority of responses suggest that this is not yet the case, it is still very possible that true archives and archivists will be written off altogether in favor of digital "archives" that meet people's expectations for accessibility and do not even require archivists.

Not all the effects of information technology are so adverse. Online encounters with "archives" may help dispel the dusty mystique surrounding archives, creating an image of archives as more open and understandable, if not modern. In general, while not viewed as cutting-edge, archives and archivists are not seen as completely separated from the contemporary world, relegated to some dusty basement where time stands still. They are expected to participate in and adapt to the changes happening around them. This is reflected

in the expectations for the provision of materials via the Internet, the belief that archivists should possess computer skills, and the sorts of materials that some believe archives preserve in their holdings. Though technology may be affecting what people think archives are, they are still more likely to think of them in terms of the traditional definitions, most often as documents. Effects on the tasks and duties assigned to archives are more ambiguous. Though it has not led people to view archives as more accessible, it is possible that technology has prompted them to focus more on providing access to materials as a key responsibility of an information institution. Certainly, the focus on use and usefulness of materials as the driving force behind archives is encouraging. The apparent tendency of some technological uses to foster a view of archives as providing storage over more involved services is a little more worrisome.

Finally, it is clear that there are many other influences on people's perceptions of archives besides information technology. Fictional portrayals of archives, whether in books, on television, or in movies, continue to play a discernible role in shaping people's perceptions of archives, often perpetuating the stereotypes of dust and mystery. These traditional stereotypes as still prevalent. At least in the population surveyed, research is another likely avenue to contact with archives. Here, personal experiences with archives can play a powerful role in shaping how people view them. However, such interactions do not always work in archives' favor and archivists must work to ensure that the image they convey is the one they actually intend.

Conclusion

Archivists are by now well acquainted with the stereotypes commonly associated with their profession. Assuming they know what archives and archivists are at all, people see archivists as smart but passive and isolated, quiet, bespectacled people hiding in basements, and archives as dark, out-of-the-way places, seldom visited and filled with old, dusty papers. Such images have caused consternation among many archivists, especially in the face of changes in technology, which may make the differences between such archives and the rest of the world more readily apparent.

Advances in information technology, especially the Internet, have made information more quickly and easily available than ever before. They have allowed many everyday activities – from shopping and banking to socialization and entertainment – to move to online spaces. The Internet has suggested to many that information should be immediate, relevant to the situation at hand, interactive and shareable. Traditional archives, especially as they are believed to be imagined by the public, generally do not meet these expectations. There is a danger that people will see archives as old fashioned, inefficient and difficult to access, if they know about them at all, causing fewer and fewer members of the public to turn to archives to fill their information needs, leaving archives unused, underfunded and at risk of becoming extinct.

Though both the standard stereotypes of archives and the trends in expectations for information were apparent in the survey, the results suggest that neither is clear cut. In a general way, this study confirms many of the previous beliefs about the views of the public and the effects of Internet technology on archives. The stereotypes of dark and dust, age and

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history, and intelligence and dedication coupled with social isolation are still associated with archives by many. In fact, some archival stereotypes, such as archives as old fashioned, may be increasing in prevalence, suggesting that people have begun to compare archives to new technology to the detriment of the archival image.

Archivists seem to assume that the image of their profession, when not influenced by direct contact with archives, is relatively homogeneous across the population. The survey suggests this may not be the case. The link between where people encounter archives and the stereotypes they are likely to associate with them suggests that there may be multiple images of archives affected by multiple influences. Though they present interrelated images, each place that people come in contact with archives, whether it be through reading a novel, browsing the Internet, or conducting research in an actual archives, suggests a slightly different image of archives focused on different aspects of what they are and do.

David Gracy warned that the future was grim for the "molish, humped, retiring paper shufflers" that people imagined of archivists.[1] However, both the results of this study and earlier ones suggest that people are capable of more complex understandings of archives and archivists. Though they are not always aware of influences on their perceptions, people can often recognize when those perceptions take the form of stereotypes, even as they continue to apply them. Despite their continued use of old stereotypes, most cannot ignore the massive changes in society whose effects must also extend to archives, even when one image contradicts the other. Thus, archives may still be viewed as dusty or old fashioned, yet may also be expected to create web pages and digitize materials to post on them. Archival

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[1] Gracy, "Archives and Society," 8.

stereotypes, like stereotypes in general, are not necessarily fixed. They are context-based, shifting to fit the situation through accentuation or de-accentuation of their many traits.[2]

As archivists have feared, expectations for the provision of information may indeed result both in increased expectations of archives and a poorer view of them. Archives are still at risk of becoming "quaint anachronisms in a world of instant data communication, high technology, and rapid change."[3] Not only do those who expect to find all the information they need online view archives as less accessible, they view them as less valuable, confirming Jimerson's concern that the motto of the future might become "What is Past is Irrelevant" rather than the time honored "What is Past is Prologue."[4] Though archivists have long suspected this, however, they have not researched the exact ways that access to information online may be prompting the public to view archives poorly, or whether it is doing so at all. The results suggest not only that expectations for access to information online may lead people to view archives, assumed to be offline sources, as less accessible, but as less valuable in a number of ways. Archivists, it seems, have good reason to worry about the effects of technology on public understandings.

However, other results pointed toward a brighter future. Previous writings on the effects of information technology on archives have assumed that left to their own devices, the public will still view archives in the same terms that they always have. This posits a separation between archives and newer technologies, suggesting that while other organizations advance with the technology, archives remain mired in the past overseeing

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[2] McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears, *Stereotypes as Explanations*, 162-3, 184.
[3] Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," 333.
[4] Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," 333.

only archaic records kept on paper. While respondents still generally thought of archives as old, dusty, and concentrating mainly on paper-based materials, some recognized a role for archives in preserving digital materials as well. This requires a familiarity with and willingness to approach new technologies and a skill set that extends beyond that of the traditional archivist. Archivists are expected to be at least as comfortable with computers and forward looking as the rest of society. Images of dust and age have less meaning in online spaces and those who encounter archives online are less likely to think of them in these terms. The upside to the increased expectations of archives is that they suggest that people have not yet, in their minds, relegated archives to some dark, dusty, seldom visited basement corner.

There may also be changes in views on the tasks carried out in archives and the relative importance of these tasks that archivists have not considered. Survey results suggested a heavy focus on the role of archives in providing access to information. If the Internet has suggested that all information should be easily accessible, it may also suggest that providing access to their holdings is one of the key objectives of institutions like archives. The belief that one of the main duties of archivists is to help people find and understand information, may also reflect an expectation in the information age that information professionals help people navigate the sea of information now available. Though some see archives as mysterious and forbidding, the consensus seems to be that they should in fact be geared toward serving the public, not just preserving materials in some out of the way place that no one ever visits.

The population surveyed here was not altogether reflective of the general population of the U.S. The respondents were overwhelmingly young and educated. The majority were likely Digital Natives who grew up using computers and see them as commonplace. Because of this, they were more likely to have had their understandings influenced or formed online and might more strongly reflect the sorts of changes Internet technology is having and may continue to have on society. Their education probably influenced their contact with archives, making them more likely to have visited an archives at some point than members of the general public. This also made it easier to gauge the influence of actual archives on people's perceptions. The results of such contact, it seems, may not be as overwhelmingly positive as archivists had hoped or expected.

There are two main reasons that archivists have argued for the importance of the public image of archives. One is based on the belief that archives are kept to be used. If people see archives as intimidating or difficult to use, do not believe their contents are useful or valuable, or are unaware of their existence or pertinent materials within their holdings, they are unlikely to use archives. In this case, archives are not fulfilling their mission. Secondly, if archives are viewed poorly or go unused, they are unlikely to receive the funding they need to survive. Archivists largely depend on public support for their continued existence. If people dislike the profession as a whole or see it as unnecessary, they may choose to quit funding archives and thereby drive them into extinction. Richard Barry provides one example in which a private sector organization eliminated its archives program, citing not monetary issues but "the undesirable precedent of senior management appearing to

support programs and operations which are perceived by shareholders as unnecessary."[5] Though this is an extreme example, it is clear that a poor image can have serious consequences for archives.

Despite this, the fact that the archival profession has not fallen by the wayside, even with the persistence of negative stereotypes for decades, suggests that a seemingly poor image of archives and archivists will not, on its own, lead to the demise of the profession. The belief that archives are dusty or old fashioned has not kept everyone out of the archives. Some, it seems, continue to come back even after outright bad experiences. Perhaps the traditional image, though often maligned by archivists, is really not all bad. Though archivists may be unhappy about the stereotypes that go along with them, intelligence and dedication are positive traits. Some may see great value in old, dusty documents and the history they convey. While archives may not be reaching all the people who could potentially benefit from their services, they have reached some groups who appreciate what they do and come to use the archives, regardless of whether they subscribe to the standard stereotypes.

The study of public perceptions, though potentially interesting, is not useful in and of itself. Archivists have used anecdotes about their professional image to galvanize their colleagues into action to reach more users and better their image. Usually, they seem to suggest that archives and archivists are misunderstood. However, perhaps stereotypes deserve some deeper examination. Archivists must be careful not to get caught up in superficial aspects of their image. It may be true that not all archivists wear glasses or that archives are not dusty, but such imagery is not what is important. Rather, the underlying

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[5] Barry, "Report on the Society and Archives Survey," under "5. Concluding Comments."

associations with knowledge and history are the messages that glasses and dust are meant to convey. Glasses and dust just serve as an understandable shorthand. The public image can be used to understand the state of the profession as a whole, but it also may reveal something about the public archivists hope to serve. It reflects what is most important to people about archives and sets archivists apart from other professions, and may help archivists better understand what people want and how to meet their needs and reach out to new users. Certainly, if archivists still wish to have some role in the shaping of their image, a task made difficult both by the persistence of stereotypes and the many factors influencing people's perceptions of archives, they must first understand that image and the deeper messages it conveys.

Perceptions of archives are still in flux and the results of this survey suggest a number of possible outcomes. It is conceivable that the archival image will remain unchanged save for the addition of electronic materials to the paper ones archivists are thought to keep buried in their stacks. People may still imagine archivists as cloistered in some dark basement dedicated to sorting files, the only difference being that they spend their time in front of glowing computer screens instead of piles of paper. At the other extremes, archivists may either catapult themselves into a more active and prominent role in society or be supplanted by new fields and technologies and see their profession fade into obscurity.

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from these survey findings as archivists seek to expand their reach, better their image, and move into the future. The Internet may help get archives "out there" but archivists must take action to ensure the images being promulgated are the ones they want. Though a few respondents were uncertain

about what archives were and what they did, most seemed to have a general understanding. Thus, the battle for archivists is no longer to make sure that members of the public think of something when confronted with the word "archive." People for the most part understand that archives provide access to information in some form. If the ultimate goal of archives is use of the materials they hold, as many have argued, then potential users seem to agree. They may be less clear about the form that information comes in or the various ways in which archivists act on it. These are the areas to which archivists may want to shift their focus.

Archivists still have some room to explain what they do, highlighting for instance, the range of physical forms of the records they keep and what traits make these records candidates for retention. Rather than approaching the archival image as something that needs to be completely rewritten, it may be helpful to view it as a base from which archivists can elaborate and expand. This involves honestly recognizing both the places where the archival image does correspond to archival realities and those where a seemingly untrue surface aspect of the image corresponds to a deeper truth. For instance, archivists could acknowledge that much of their holdings are paper based because that is the form people chose for recording things they believed were important, while also pointing out that as people created records in other formats, archivists sought to acquire and preserve them as well.

With accessibility of information being so important, archivists must continue to do what they can to make archives accessible, both by making them available to the public for online and in-person visits and by making sure they are welcoming and useable. Researchers will not be able to access all the archival resources they may need online, but this does not mean they should not be able to find any. Archivists have already been in the process of

digitizing materials for years and it is important that they continue this task. By doing so, they can meet users halfway and help to assure them that providing access to materials in the best way possible is indeed a priority. An online presence may also give archivists the chance to highlight collections that are still offline and give a brief justification for why they are not available digitally. This could be as simple as posting finding aids or a message to visit the archives for even more materials.

In the meantime, archivists should try to ensure that visiting the archives and using the materials there is not an ordeal by providing a welcoming and productive environment for researchers. The fact that one respondent (and perhaps others who did not include such experiences in their responses) felt archivists were displeased that he was using the materials makes clear that archivists still need to be cognizant of how they approach researchers. They should be available to explain the rules or help with locating the right collection when needed without seeming disinterested, pressed for time, or even resentful of the researcher.

Archivists already know that they must show people how they can personally use archives to draw in users and gain support. John Grabowski argues that while members of the public may indeed be impressed by the old, rare, and valuable papers that once belonged to some person of note, to bring them into the archives people need to find a personal connection.[6] The fact that perceived value of archives was so closely related to expectations for access to information suggests that demonstrating that archives are valuable is not only more important than ever, but that archivists may need to take a new approach. They will need to demonstrate that the value of information is not based solely on ease of access.

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[6] Grabowski, "Keepers, Users, Funders," 466, 468.

Archival materials are valuable precisely because they are unique and as a consequence not widely available. As artifacts, physical records provide a connection to the past that instant information cannot. They help to assure the rights of the public and the accountability of their government and in many cases are still the only admissible versions in court of law. While online resources can change to fit current needs, archival documents remain relatively unchanged, offering glimpses of different beliefs and understandings from another time and place, not just the truth most convenient at the moment.

Lastly, archivists must know their users. The need for more frequent user studies is not new. By the mid-1980s Paul Conway could cite a bevy of authors calling for "a more systematic approach to understanding users."[7] To meet the information needs of their users, many argued, archivists needed to develop a better understanding of those users, what sorts of sources they were searching for and how they intended to use them. This survey suggests that there may be additional reasons to conduct such studies. The information contained in the records they consult is not the only thing researchers take away from archives. While there, researchers form impressions of the institution and the people staffing it, which they may extend to other, similar institutions. If archivists hope to dispel the negative stereotypes surrounding archives, the best place to do so is in the repository. However, the results make clear that this is not always what happens. Conducting user studies stands not only to help archivists better understand the needs of their users and whether they are currently meeting

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[7] Paul Conway, "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, edited by Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: The Society of America Archivists, 2000), 434.

those needs, but to make them aware of the image they are projecting and when it fails to align with the image they would like to project.

If archivists hope to bring more users into the archives, then they should work not just to understand current users, but potential users. While user studies may not be conducted with the frequency they should, studies of potential and indirect users are even rarer. However, they are just as important for learning about the communities that archives are not but could be serving. They may help archivists understand why people have not visited an archives, what they want or need from archives, and how archivists may best be able to reach them. In fact, the studies themselves may help to introduce people to and inform them about archives. One respondent commented, "in my own experience, I have always seen the 'archive' as a singular noun instead of 'archives'. Because of this survey, which I am clearly taking online, I now know it is 'an archives'. Thanks, survey!"[8] Though not a standard form of outreach, it is clear that such studies could also provide a route for informing and bringing people into the archives. This study may provide a glimpse of this population, but more frequent and extensive studies are necessary if archivists hope to form a thorough understanding of how the people they would like to serve view archives. Such an understanding is essential if archivists hope to meet user needs in the information age and promote a positive professional image.

In 1989, David Gracy argued that archivists are what people think they keep.[9] Recent technological advances have drastically changed the types of records kept by archivists. In the past, archival records were largely paper-based. They could and were expected to be

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[8] Response 33.
[9] Gracy, "Archivists, You Are."

decades or even centuries old, and could require quite a bit of storage space, often leading to their being stored in basements where space was not at a premium. Both as a symbol of age and disuse and as a result of being stored in such places the records had a tendency to accumulate dust in reality and in the minds of the public. Archivists, like their records, generally kept out of sight and away from the public, devoting themselves to their work, absorbing the knowledge contained in their collections, but remaining relatively powerless in society.

Digital records do not fit this mold. They come in bytes on an array of different carriers and are much more ephemeral. What might have been relatively new in the world of paper records may be incredibly old for those in a digital form. Electronic records tend to be much more dynamic than their paper counterparts, allowing viewers to interact with them. Ideally, this interactivity makes them more useful and efficient, for instance, allowing computer programs to scan files for relevant information rather than requiring researchers to do this in person. It is possible, if the archival profession manages to associate itself with these new records, it will also be seen as more dynamic and relevant. Failing to do so, on the other hand, may exacerbate old stereotypes and make archives seem ever more old fashioned and out of touch.

The association between archives and dust is now well over a century old.[10] Welcome or not, it is one of the most enduring symbols of the profession, conveying a sense of age, location, and quiet disuse. However, as information moves to digital formats it challenges both the profession and the stereotype. Digital spaces are active and fluid. They do not

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[10] Procter, "What's an 'Archivist'?" 22.

collect dust. The question is, if there is no dust in cyberspace, is it because there are no archivists there or because they have shed their musty mantle and become as active and dynamic as the electronic records they curate? Archivists cannot hope to stave the tide of technological changes. They must adapt to it if they hope not to fall by the wayside. Technology may indeed be the force which drives the creatures described by Gracy to extinction. However, it may also send them down a new evolutionary track. It is up to archivists to make sure that the new track leads to dynamic archives and archivists that can meet current information needs, and that they do not merely morph into molish, humped, retiring hard disk shufflers.

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Appendix A
The Survey

Part 1

Age
    18-20
    21-24
    25-29
    30-39
    40-49
    50 or Over
Gender
    Male
    Female

Affiliation with Western
    Undergraduate Student
    Graduate student
    Faculty
    Staff
    Alumni
    Other _____

Part 2

Which definition do you most often associate with the word "archive" (choose one)
    To store data offline
    The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections
    Documents or materials preserved for future use because of their public or historical
        value
    A file that has been transferred off the computer into long-term storage
    An organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or organizations
    The portion of a website containing older content
    Other _____

How confident are you in your understanding of this term?
    Very confident
    Somewhat confident
    Not very confident
    Not confident at all

Have you ever visited an archives in person?
    Yes
    No
    I can't remember

Have you ever visited an archives' website?
    Yes
    No
    I can't remember

Where do you encounter the word "archive" most often?
    Movies/TV/fiction
    The news
    Doing research
    Browsing online
    Banking information/official documents
    Don't remember
    Other _____

Comments _____

Part 3

Which adjectives best describe archives (chose all that apply)

Old	Useful	Old Fashioned	Important
Dusty	Popular	Clean	Disorganized
Secretive	Useless	Bright	Historical
Valuable	Confusing	Musty	Forbidding
Accessible	Dark	Organized	Boring
Current	Friendly	Welcoming	Mysterious
High Tech	Relevant	Quiet	Unimportant
Inaccessible	Interesting		Other _____

How would you describe what sort of services are provided by an archives?

_____
_____
_____

What would you expect to find in an archives?

_____
_____
_____

How would you describe the role of an archivist?

_____
_____
_____

What skills and traits would you expect an archivist to possess? (chose all that apply)

Dedication	Extensive knowledge of collections	Knowledge of current trends and events
Social skills	Customer service skills	Intelligence
Attention to detail	Desire to help others	Possessiveness of collections
Sense of humor	Resistance to change	Efficiency
Organization skills	High level of education	Curiosity
Patience	Management skills	Appreciation of culture
Focus	Computer skills	Other
		_____

Comments _____

Part 4

How many hours a day do you spend on the Internet?

    Less than 1 hour
    1-2 hours
    3-4 hours
    5-6 hours
    7-8 hours
    More than 8 hours

How do you usually use the Internet?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Homework/Research			
Watching movies/TV shows			
Listening to music			
Social networking			
Getting the news			
Browsing			
Banking			
Other _____			

How strongly do you agree with the following statements:

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
I consider myself very 'tech savvy"					
I can find all the information I need online					
All the information I need should be available online					
If I cannot find the information I need online, I will check off-line sources					
I would expect an archives to have a website					
I would expect an archives to post material from their holdings, such as scanned documents and photographs, online					
I would expect an archives to have a Facebook page					
I encounter the word "archive" more often online than off-line					
My understanding of archives is derived largely from online encounters with the term					

Comments _____

End of Survey

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

To take part in the raffle for the Amazon.com gift cards, please enter your email address below. Your email address will be used only to deliver the gift card should you win. It will not be associated with your answers, be published or shared in any way, or be used to contact you for any purpose besides delivering the gift card should you win.

_____

en

Appendix B
Survey Responses

1. Age

388 responses

18 to 20	170	43.8%
21 to 24	144	37.1%
25 to 29	30	7.7%
30 to 39	30	7.7%
40 to 49	7	1.8%
50 or over	7	1.8%

2. Gender

384 responses

Male	124	32.3%
Female	260	67.7%

3. Affiliation with Western

386 responses

Undergraduate student	344	89.1%
Graduate student	33	8.5%
Faculty	1	0.3%
Staff	1	0.3%
Alumni	3	0.8%
Other	4	1.0%

4. Which definition do you most often associate with the word "archive" (choose one)

389 responses

To store data offline	27	6.9%
The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections	31	8.0%
Documents or materials preserved for future use because of their public or historical value	262	67.4%
A file that has been transferred off the computer into long-term storage	15	3.9%
An organization that collects the records of individuals, families or organizations	28	7.2%
The portion of a website containing older content	19	4.9%
Other	7	1.8%

5. How confident are you in your understanding of this term?

389 responses

Very confident	100	25.7%
Somewhat confident	222	57.1%
Not very confident	59	15.2%
Not confident at all	8	2.1%

6. Have you ever visited an archives in person

387 responses

Yes	158	40.8%
No	182	47.0%
I can't remember	47	12.1%

7. Have you ever visited an archives' website

387 responses

Yes	207	53.5%
No	130	33.6%
I can't remember	50	12.9%

8. Where do you encounter the word "archive" most often?

389 responses

Movies/TV/fiction	36	9.3%
The news	6	1.5%
Doing research	201	51.7%
Browsing online	52	13.4%
Banking information/official documents	24	6.2%
Don't remember	38	9.8%
Other	32	8.2%

9. Which adjectives best describe archives? (choose all that apply)
341 responses

Accessible	110	32.3%
Boring	39	11.4%
Bright	4	1.2%
Clean	45	13.2%
Confusing	55	16.1%
Current	31	9.1%
Dark	30	8.8%
Disorganized	18	5.3%
Dusty	73	21.4%
Forbidding	17	5.0%
Friendly	19	5.6%
High Tech	25	7.3%
Historical	289	84.8%
Important	203	59.5%
Inaccessible	40	11.7%
Interesting	143	41.9%
Musty	68	19.9%
Mysterious	81	23.8%
Old	175	51.3%
Old Fashioned	70	20.5%
Organized	227	66.6%
Popular	11	3.2%
Quiet	106	31.1%
Relevant	92	27.0%
Secretive	55	16.1%
Unimportant	2	0.6%
Useful	203	59.5%
Useless	5	1.5%
Valuable	211	61.9%
Welcoming	16	4.7%
Other	7	2.1%

10. How would you describe the sort of services provided by archives?

276 responses

Described archival services in terms of acquisition of materials	9	3.3%
Described archival services in terms of description	5	1.8%
Described archival services in terms of discovery of materials or information	2	0.7%
Described archival services in terms of management of archives and materials	1	0.4%
Described archival services in terms of organization of materials	28	10.1%
Described archival services in terms preservation of materials	25	9.1%
Described archival services in terms of providing access to materials	120	43.5%
Described archival services in terms of providing assistance	15	5.4%
Described archival services in terms of storage of materials	69	25.0%
Described archival services in terms of study of materials	1	0.4%
Related archival services to of their needs as a researcher	1	0.4%
Related archives to another profession (other than libraries)	1	0.4%
Related archives to libraries	4	1.4%
Described archival holdings in terms of data	26	9.4%
Described archival holdings in terms of information	104	37.7%
Described archival holdings in terms of physical materials	80	29.0%
Described archival services in terms of intangible objects (i.e. knowledge, window to the past)	14	5.1%
Referred to age when describing archival holdings	35	12.7%
Referred to the duration for which archival materials were kept	1	0.4%
Referred to the evidentiary nature of archival holdings	3	1.1%
Referred to specific uses for archival materials in their description	19	6.9%
Referred to specific user groups in their description	7	2.5%
Referred to history in their descriptions	49	17.8%
Included computer technology in their description of archival services	12	4.3%
Referred to archives as a physical location	9	3.3%
Included a value judgment of archives	72	26.1%
Included anecdotes/personal experiences/other commentary in their description	21	7.6%
Used "archive" as a verb	1	0.4%
Were unsure of the services provided by archives	13	4.7%

11. What would you expect to find in an archives?

284 responses

Described archival holdings as data	36	12.7%
Described archival holdings as information	91	32.0%
Described archival holdings as physical materials	150	52.8%
Described archival holdings in terms of intangible objects (i.e. knowledge, window to the past)	9	3.2%
Gave examples of original, unpublished works in their description	148	52.1%
Gave examples of published works in their description	56	19.7%
Gave specific examples of types of records kept by archives	52	18.3%
Included computer technology in their description of archival materials	22	7.7%
Noted the types of records kept by archives could vary	35	12.3%
Described archival records as no longer in use	11	3.9%
Described the types of information contained in archival records	29	10.2%
Described materials in terms of their age	57	20.1%
Referred to specific uses for archival materials in their description	3	1.1%
Referred to the duration for which archival materials were kept	1	0.4%
Referred to the evidentiary nature of archival holdings	2	0.7%
Referred to history in their descriptions	52	18.3%
Referred to the quantity of materials held by archives	25	8.8%
Referred to the fact materials were kept by archives as a defining characteristic	17	6.0%
Referred to the physical location of archives	7	2.5%
Included a value judgment of archives	23	8.1%
Related archival materials to their needs as a researcher	11	3.9%
Included anecdotes/personal experiences/other commentary in their description	11	3.9%
Were unsure of the type of materials kept by archives	5	1.8%

12. How would you describe the role of an archivist?

282 responses

Described archivists role in terms of acquisition	45	16.0%
Described archivists role in terms of appraisal	21	7.4%
Described archivists role in terms of description of holdings	20	7.1%
Described archivists role in terms of discovering materials or information	16	5.7%
Described archivists role in terms of gate keeping	13	4.6%
Described archivists role in terms of management	56	19.9%
Described archivists role in terms of organization of holdings	156	55.3%
Described archivists role in terms of outreach	4	1.4%
Described archivists role in terms of preservation	44	15.6%
Described archivists role in terms of providing access to materials	51	18.1%
Described archivists role in terms of providing assistance	53	18.8%
Described archivists role in terms of soliciting donations	2	0.7%
Described archivists role in terms of storage	21	7.4%
Described archivists role in terms of studying holdings	10	3.5%
Described the role of the archivist in terms of their needs as a researcher	1	0.4%
Referred to the specialized knowledge of the archivist	27	9.6%
Related archivists to librarians	17	6.0%
Related archivists to another profession	28	9.9%
Described the personality of the archivist	10	3.5%
Described what the archivist acts on as the archives	49	17.4%
Described what the archivist acts on as data	23	8.2%
Described what the archivist acts on as information	67	23.8%
Described what the archivist acts on as physical materials	94	33.3%
Described what the archivist acts on in terms of intangible objects (i.e. knowledge, window to the past)	13	4.6%
Referred to the age of the holdings	68	24.1%
Included computer technology in their description	13	4.6%
Used archive as a verb	11	3.9%
Included a value judgment of archives/archivists	15	5.3%
Included anecdotes/personal experiences/other commentary in their description	11	3.9%
Were unsure of the role an archivist	11	3.9%

13. Which skills and traits would you expect an archivist to possess? (choose all that apply)
339 responses

Appreciation of culture	208	61.4%
Attention to detail	280	82.6%
Computer skills	214	63.1%
Curiosity	146	43.1%
Customer service skills	122	36.0%
Dedication	210	61.9%
Desire to help others	147	43.4%
Efficiency	236	69.6%
Extensive knowledge of collections	267	78.5%
Focus	192	56.6%
High level of education	137	40.4%
Intelligence	242	71.4%
Knowledge of current trends and events	133	39.2%
Management skills	162	47.8%
Organization skills	315	92.9%
Patience	218	64.3%
Possessiveness of collections	78	23.0%
Resistance to change	24	7.1%
Sense of humor	41	12.1%
Social skills	71	20.9%
Other	4	1.2%

14. How many hours a day do you spend on the Internet?
336 responses

Less than 1 hour	10	3.0%
1 to 2 hours	95	28.3%
3 to 4 hours	145	43.2%
5 to 6 hours	60	17.9%
7 to 8 hours	14	4.2%
More than 8 hours	12	3.6%

15. How do you usually use the Internet?

	Responses	Often		Sometimes		Never	
Homework/research	336	263	78.3%	72	21.4%	1	0.3%
Watching movies/TV shows	328	135	41.2%	141	43.0%	52	15.9%
Listening to music	331	157	47.4%	146	44.1%	28	8.5%
Social networking	333	184	55.3%	125	37.5%	24	7.2%
Getting the news	327	113	34.6%	185	56.6%	29	8.9%
Browsing	333	154	46.2%	163	48.9%	16	4.8%
Banking	325	81	24.9%	200	61.5%	44	16.5%

16. How strongly do you agree with the following statements:

	Responses	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
I consider myself very 'tech savvy"	339	61	18.0%	143	42.2%	92	27.1%	35	10.3%	8	2.4%
I can find all the information I need online	338	52	15.4%	147	43.5%	76	22.5%	56	16.6%	7	2.1%
All the information I need should be available online	335	78	23.3%	109	32.5%	85	25.4%	57	17.0%	6	1.8%
If I cannot find the information I need online, I will check off-line sources	338	102	30.2%	162	47.9%	48	14.2%	20	5.9%	6	1.8%
I would expect an archives to have a website	338	81	24.0%	138	40.8%	101	29.9%	17	5.0%	1	0.3%
I would expect an archives to post material from their holdings online	337	69	20.5%	149	44.2%	86	25.5%	31	9.2%	2	0.6%
I would expect an archives to have a Facebook page	338	5	1.5%	20	5.9%	104	30.8%	124	36.7%	85	25.1%
I encounter the word "archive" more often online than off-line	338	29	8.6%	87	25.7%	129	38.2%	74	21.9%	19	5.6%
My understanding of archives is derived largely from online encounters with the term	337	15	4.5%	61	18.1%	101	30.0%	116	34.4%	44	13.1%

Appendix C
Selected Cross-Tables of Results

1. How do you usually use the Internet? by Age

		Age										
		18-20		21-24		25-29		30-39		40-49		50 or over
Homework/ Research	Often	101	72.1%	101	80.2%	22	88.0%	25	83.3%	7	100%	6	85.7%
	Sometimes	39	27.9%	25	19.8%	2	8.0%	5	16.7%	0	0%	1	14.3%
	Never	0	0%	0	0%	1	4.0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Watching movies/TV	Often	63	45.7%	54	43.9%	10	41.7%	8	27.6%	0	0%	0	0%
	Sometimes	60	43.5%	57	46.3%	10	41.7%	7	24.1%	4	66.7%	2	28.6%
	Never	15	10.9%	12	9.8%	4	16.7%	14	48.3%	2	33.3%	5	71.4%
Listening to Music	Often	75	54.3%	59	47.2%	7	28.0%	13	44.8%	2	33.3%	0	0%
	Sometimes	61	44.2%	57	45.6%	12	48.0%	10	34.5%	3	50.0%	3	42.9%
	Never	2	1.4%	9	7.2%	6	24.0%	6	20.7%	1	16.7%	4	57.1%
Social Networking	Often	75	54.3%	59	47.2%	7	28.0%	13	44.8%	2	33.3%	0	0%
	Sometimes	61	44.2%	57	45.6%	12	48.0%	10	34.5%	3	50.0%	3	42.9%
	Never	2	1.4%	9	7.2%	6	24.0%	6	20.7%	1	16.7%	4	57.1%
Getting the news	Often	34	24.8%	48	38.7%	11	45.8%	12	42.9%	4	66.7%	3	42.9%
	Sometimes	89	65.0%	66	53.2%	10	41.7%	14	50.0%	2	33.3%	4	57.1%
	Never	14	10.2%	10	8.1%	3	12.5%	2	7.1%	0	0%	0	0%
Browsing	Often	65	47.1%	63	49.6%	7	29.2%	12	40.0%	4	66.7%	2	28.6%
	Sometimes	67	48.6%	61	48.0%	12	50.0%	16	53.3%	2	33.3%	5	71.4%
	Never	6	4.3%	3	2.4%	5	20.8%	2	6.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Banking	Often	22	16.8%	35	28.0%	7	28.0%	10	34.5%	4	57.1%	2	28.6%
	Sometimes	82	62.6%	80	64.0%	17	68.0%	16	55.2%	3	42.9%	2	28.6%
	Never	27	20.6%	10	8.0%	1	4.0%	3	10.3%	0	0%	3	42.9%

2. How strongly do you agree with the statement "I encounter the word 'archive' more often online than offline" by How do you usually use the Internet?

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Homework/ Research	Often	22	8.4%	63	24.0%	105	40.1%	56	21.4%	16	6.1%
	Sometimes	6	8.3%	22	30.6%	23	31.9%	18	25.0%	3	4.2%
	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Watching movies/TV	Often	12	9.0%	34	25.4%	56	41.8%	25	18.7%	7	5.2%
	Sometimes	13	9.2%	34	24.1%	51	36.2%	34	24.1%	9	6.4%
	Never	3	5.8%	14	26.9%	20	38.5%	12	23.1%	3	5.8%
Listening to Music	Often	14	9.0%	36	23.1%	65	41.7%	30	19.2%	11	7.1%
	Sometimes	11	7.5%	41	28.1%	53	36.3%	33	22.6%	8	5.5%
	Never	3	10.7%	7	25.0%	10	35.7%	8	28.6%	0	0.0%
Social Networking	Often	16	8.7%	49	26.8%	66	36.1%	42	23.0%	10	5.5%
	Sometimes	11	8.8%	28	22.4%	56	44.8%	23	18.4%	7	5.6%
	Never	1	4.2%	7	29.2%	6	25.0%	8	33.3%	2	8.3%
Getting the news	Often	15	13.4%	32	28.6%	40	35.7%	22	19.6%	3	2.7%
	Sometimes	13	7.0%	42	22.7%	78	42.2%	41	22.2%	11	5.9%
	Never	0	0.0%	10	34.5%	8	27.6%	6	20.7%	5	17.2%
Browsing	Often	17	11.1%	39	25.5%	54	35.3%	32	20.9%	11	7.2%
	Sometimes	11	6.7%	45	27.6%	64	39.3%	36	22.1%	7	4.3%
	Never	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	9	56.3%	4	25.0%	1	6.3%
Banking	Often	9	11.3%	16	20.0%	33	41.3%	17	21.3%	5	6.3%
	Sometimes	16	8.0%	52	26.0%	78	39.0%	43	21.5%	11	5.5%
	Never	3	6.8%	12	27.3%	17	38.6%	9	20.5%	3	6.8%

3. How strongly do you agree with the statement "My understanding of archives is derived largely from online encounters with the term" by How do you usually use the Internet?

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Homework/ Research	Often	9	3.4%	40	15.3%	80	30.7%	97	37.2%	35	13.4%
	Sometimes	6	8.3%	20	27.8%	21	29.2%	17	23.6%	8	11.1%
	Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
Watching movies/TV	Often	7	5.2%	24	17.9%	41	30.6%	44	32.8%	18	13.4%
	Sometimes	6	4.3%	25	17.9%	42	30.0%	55	39.3%	12	8.6%
	Never	2	3.8%	9	17.3%	15	28.8%	14	26.9%	12	23.1%
Listening to Music	Often	9	5.7%	27	17.2%	47	29.9%	53	33.8%	21	13.4%
	Sometimes	5	3.5%	29	20.1%	44	30.6%	50	34.7%	16	11.1%
	Never	1	3.6%	5	17.9%	7	25.0%	9	32.1%	6	21.4%
Social Networking	Often	10	5.4%	34	18.5%	64	34.8%	60	32.6%	16	8.7%
	Sometimes	5	4.1%	23	18.7%	31	25.2%	45	36.6%	19	15.4%
	Never	0	0.0%	3	12.5%	4	16.7%	9	37.5%	8	33.3%
Getting the news	Often	7	6.2%	21	18.6%	30	26.5%	38	33.6%	17	15.0%
	Sometimes	7	3.8%	32	17.4%	61	33.2%	65	35.3%	19	10.3%
	Never	1	3.4%	6	20.7%	8	27.6%	9	31.0%	5	17.2%
Browsing	Often	10	6.5%	29	18.8%	53	34.4%	39	25.3%	23	14.9%
	Sometimes	5	3.1%	30	18.6%	43	26.7%	67	41.6%	16	9.9%
	Never	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	4	25.0%	7	43.8%	3	18.8%
Banking	Often	5	6.2%	13	16.0%	27	33.3%	19	23.5%	17	21.0%
	Sometimes	9	4.5%	41	20.7%	60	30.3%	74	37.4%	14	7.1%
	Never	1	2.3%	4	9.1%	10	22.7%	19	43.2%	10	22.7%

4. Which adjectives best describe archives? (choose all that apply) by Where do you encounter the word "archive" most often?

	Movies/ TV/Fiction		the News		Research		Browsing online		Banking		Don't remember		Other	
Accessible	10	31.3%	60	33.5%	2	50.0%	14	32.6%	8	18.6%	9	26.5%	7	25.0%
Boring	3	9.4%	19	10.6%	0	0.0%	6	14.0%	3	7.0%	6	17.6%	2	7.1%
Bright	1	3.1%	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Clean	6	18.8%	26	14.5%	1	25.0%	6	14.0%	2	4.7%	0	0.0%	4	14.3%
Confusing	3	9.4%	36	20.1%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%	3	7.0%	6	17.6%	4	14.3%
Current	5	15.6%	17	9.5%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%	3	7.0%	2	5.9%	1	3.6%
Dark	4	12.5%	15	8.4%	0	0.0%	4	9.3%	2	4.7%	4	11.8%	1	3.6%
Disorganized	2	6.3%	8	4.5%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.9%	3	10.7%
Dusty	9	28.1%	39	21.8%	1	25.0%	9	20.9%	6	14.0%	5	14.7%	4	14.3%
Forbidding	0	0.0%	10	5.6%	0	0.0%	3	7.0%	1	2.3%	1	2.9%	2	7.1%
Friendly	2	6.3%	16	8.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
High Tech	2	6.3%	14	7.8%	1	25.0%	2	4.7%	2	4.7%	4	11.8%	0	0.0%
Historical	29	90.6%	154	86.0%	3	75.0%	39	90.7%	16	37.2%	27	79.4%	21	75.0%
Important	20	62.5%	110	61.5%	2	50.0%	23	53.5%	18	41.9%	15	44.1%	15	53.6%
Inaccessible	1	3.1%	27	15.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.3%	2	4.7%	6	17.6%	3	10.7%
Interesting	11	34.4%	84	46.9%	0	0.0%	15	34.9%	9	20.9%	13	38.2%	11	39.3%
Musty	10	31.3%	38	21.2%	0	0.0%	7	16.3%	4	9.3%	5	14.7%	4	14.3%
Mysterious	16	50.0%	37	20.7%	1	25.0%	6	14.0%	7	16.3%	10	29.4%	4	14.3%
Old	17	53.1%	96	53.6%	0	0.0%	20	46.5%	11	25.6%	16	47.1%	15	53.6%
Old Fashioned	10	31.3%	40	22.3%	0	0.0%	10	23.3%	2	4.7%	5	14.7%	3	10.7%
Organized	23	71.9%	121	67.6%	1	25.0%	30	69.8%	19	44.2%	17	50.0%	16	57.1%
Popular	0	0.0%	8	4.5%	1	25.0%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	1	2.9%	0	0.0%
Quiet	15	46.9%	59	33.0%	1	25.0%	13	30.2%	4	9.3%	10	29.4%	4	14.3%
Relevant	8	25.0%	59	33.0%	0	0.0%	7	16.3%	7	16.3%	8	23.5%	3	10.7%
Secretive	9	28.1%	26	14.5%	1	25.0%	1	2.3%	7	16.3%	7	20.6%	4	14.3%
Unimportant	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.6%
Useful	18	56.3%	115	64.2%	2	50.0%	25	58.1%	11	25.6%	16	47.1%	16	57.1%
Useless	0	0.0%	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	7.1%
Valuable	19	59.4%	119	66.5%	3	75.0%	23	53.5%	15	34.9%	14	41.2%	18	64.3%
Welcoming	1	3.1%	13	7.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.3%	1	2.9%	0	0.0%

5. Which adjectives best describe archives? (choose all that apply) by How strongly do you agree with the statement "All the information I need should be available online"

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Accessible	19	24.4%	33	30.6%	31	36.9%	21	36.8%	3	50.0%
Boring	16	20.5%	14	13.0%	7	8.3%	2	3.5%	0	0.0%
Bright	0	0.0%	2	1.9%	2	2.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Clean	10	12.8%	14	13.0%	12	14.3%	7	12.3%	1	16.7%
Confusing	15	19.2%	15	13.9%	12	14.3%	8	14.0%	3	50.0%
Current	6	7.7%	9	8.3%	8	9.5%	6	10.5%	0	0.0%
Dark	5	6.4%	12	11.1%	7	8.3%	3	5.3%	2	33.3%
Disorganized	6	7.7%	5	4.6%	4	4.8%	3	5.3%	0	0.0%
Dusty	20	25.6%	24	22.2%	15	17.9%	12	21.1%	1	16.7%
Forbidding	3	3.8%	4	3.7%	4	4.8%	3	5.3%	2	33.3%
Friendly	4	5.1%	7	6.5%	6	7.1%	2	3.5%	0	0.0%
High Tech	7	9.0%	5	4.6%	7	8.3%	6	10.5%	0	0.0%
Historical	64	82.1%	91	84.3%	72	85.7%	51	89.5%	5	83.3%
Important	41	52.6%	66	61.1%	50	59.5%	39	68.4%	4	66.7%
Inaccessible	11	14.1%	14	13.0%	7	8.3%	7	12.3%	1	16.7%
Interesting	21	26.9%	45	41.7%	38	45.2%	32	56.1%	4	66.7%
Musty	19	24.4%	22	20.4%	15	17.9%	9	15.8%	1	16.7%
Mysterious	16	20.5%	23	21.3%	21	25.0%	18	31.6%	0	0.0%
Old	42	53.8%	53	49.1%	41	48.8%	31	54.4%	3	50.0%
Old Fashioned	17	21.8%	25	23.1%	14	16.7%	13	22.8%	1	16.7%
Organized	52	66.7%	72	66.7%	59	70.2%	34	59.6%	4	66.7%
Popular	1	1.3%	5	4.6%	1	1.2%	4	7.0%	0	0.0%
Quiet	23	29.5%	31	28.7%	31	36.9%	16	28.1%	3	50.0%
Relevant	14	17.9%	28	25.9%	25	29.8%	20	35.1%	2	33.3%
Secretive	19	24.4%	14	13.0%	13	15.5%	7	12.3%	1	16.7%
Unimportant	2	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Useful	37	47.4%	62	57.4%	55	65.5%	42	73.7%	2	33.3%
Useless	4	5.1%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Valuable	40	51.3%	58	53.7%	55	65.5%	46	80.7%	6	100.0%
Welcoming	4	5.1%	3	2.8%	6	7.1%	3	5.3%	0	0.0%

6. Which adjectives best describe archives? (choose all that apply) by Have you ever visited an archives in person? and Have you ever visited an archives' website?

	Physical Archives						Archives' Website					
	Yes		No		Don't Remember		Yes		No		Don't remember	
Accessible	47	29.7%	44	24.2%	17	36.2%	70	33.8%	27	20.8%	13	26.0%
Boring	14	8.9%	24	13.2%	1	2.1%	21	10.1%	15	11.5%	3	6.0%
Bright	3	1.9%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	3	1.4%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
Clean	28	17.7%	13	7.1%	4	8.5%	29	14.0%	9	6.9%	7	14.0%
Confusing	26	16.5%	20	11.0%	9	19.1%	28	13.5%	19	14.6%	8	16.0%
Current	13	8.2%	16	8.8%	2	4.3%	19	9.2%	11	8.5%	1	2.0%
Dark	15	9.5%	11	6.0%	4	8.5%	16	7.7%	11	8.5%	3	6.0%
Disorganized	11	7.0%	6	3.3%	1	2.1%	13	6.3%	5	3.8%	0	0.0%
Dusty	31	19.6%	34	18.7%	8	17.0%	36	17.4%	31	23.8%	6	12.0%
Forbidding	10	6.3%	5	2.7%	2	4.3%	10	4.8%	7	5.4%	0	0.0%
Friendly	15	9.5%	3	1.6%	1	2.1%	16	7.7%	3	2.3%	0	0.0%
High Tech	13	8.2%	10	5.5%	2	4.3%	15	7.2%	6	4.6%	4	8.0%
Historical	126	79.7%	128	70.3%	33	70.2%	158	76.3%	96	73.8%	35	70.0%
Important	88	55.7%	89	48.9%	26	55.3%	111	53.6%	69	53.1%	23	46.0%
Inaccessible	18	11.4%	18	9.9%	4	8.5%	21	10.1%	16	12.3%	3	6.0%
Interesting	77	48.7%	49	26.9%	17	36.2%	89	43.0%	40	30.8%	14	28.0%
Musty	29	18.4%	34	18.7%	5	10.6%	30	14.5%	30	23.1%	8	16.0%
Mysterious	39	24.7%	31	17.0%	10	21.3%	35	16.9%	36	27.7%	10	20.0%
Old	71	44.9%	82	45.1%	21	44.7%	93	44.9%	65	50.0%	17	34.0%
Old Fashioned	31	19.6%	35	19.2%	4	8.5%	42	20.3%	23	17.7%	5	10.0%
Organized	101	63.9%	98	53.8%	26	55.3%	126	60.9%	70	53.8%	31	62.0%
Popular	3	1.9%	7	3.8%	1	2.1%	8	3.9%	3	2.3%	0	0.0%
Quiet	54	34.2%	40	22.0%	11	23.4%	65	31.4%	31	23.8%	10	20.0%
Relevant	44	27.8%	41	22.5%	7	14.9%	55	26.6%	28	21.5%	9	18.0%
Secretive	23	14.6%	27	14.8%	5	10.6%	23	11.1%	27	20.8%	5	10.0%
Unimportant	1	0.6%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
Useful	97	61.4%	83	45.6%	22	46.8%	119	57.5%	58	44.6%	26	52.0%
Useless	2	1.3%	3	1.6%	0	0.0%	4	1.9%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
Valuable	91	57.6%	92	50.5%	26	55.3%	115	55.6%	66	50.8%	30	60.0%
Welcoming	11	7.0%	3	1.6%	2	4.3%	13	6.3%	1	0.8%	2	4.0%

7. Which definition do you most often associate with the word "archive" (choose one) by Where do you encounter the word "archive" most often?

	Building		Materials		Organization		Verb (storing data)		File stored offline		Part of Website	
Movies/TV/Fiction	6	16.7%	22	61.1%	5	13.9%	1	2.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Doing Research	10	5.0%	149	74.1%	15	7.5%	15	7.5%	4	2.0%	6	3.0%
The News	1	16.7%	3	50.0%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Browsing online	3	5.8%	31	59.6%	0	0.0%	5	9.6%	3	5.8%	9	17.3%
Banking/official docs.	2	8.3%	14	58.3%	4	16.7%	1	4.2%	3	12.5%	0	0.0%
Don't remember	3	7.9%	26	68.4%	2	5.3%	3	7.9%	2	5.3%	2	5.3%
Other	6	18.8%	17	53.1%	1	3.1%	1	3.1%	3	9.4%	2	6.3%

8. What would you expect to find in an archives? by Where do you encounter the word "archive" most often?

	Movies/ TV/Fiction		the News		Research		Browsing online		Banking		Don't remember		Other	
Data	3	8.3%	0	0.0%	20	10.0%	6	11.5%	0	0.0%	5	13.2%	2	6.3%
Information	9	25.0%	0	0.0%	44	21.9%	9	17.3%	7	29.2%	14	36.8%	8	25.0%
Physical materials	18	50.0%	2	33.3%	86	42.8%	14	26.9%	10	41.7%	6	15.8%	14	43.8%
Published works	8	22.2%	1	16.7%	31	15.4%	11	21.2%	2	8.3%	1	2.6%	2	6.3%
Original materials	13	36.1%	1	16.7%	90	44.8%	17	32.7%	8	33.3%	3	7.9%	16	50.0%
Gave specific examples	2	5.6%	0	0.0%	34	16.9%	7	13.5%	3	12.5%	1	2.6%	5	15.6%
Included technology	3	8.3%	0	0.0%	6	3.0%	4	7.7%	3	12.5%	0	0.0%	6	18.8%
Didn't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	1	4.2%	2	5.3%	1	3.1%
Described materials in terms of:														
Age	5	13.9%	1	16.7%	30	14.9%	7	13.5%	3	12.5%	5	13.2%	6	18.8%
Value	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	7.0%	2	3.8%	3	12.5%	2	5.3%	2	6.3%
Quantity	1	2.8%	1	16.7%	13	6.5%	1	1.9%	3	12.5%	3	7.9%	3	9.4%
Their needs	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	4.0%	2	3.8%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%
Relation to history	9	25.0%	1	16.7%	27	13.4%	3	5.8%	2	8.3%	4	10.5%	6	18.8%