ICA ROMA 2022

September 19th-23rd, Italy

ICA New Professionals Cohort 2020/2021
WHO ARE WE?

Francesca Mackenzie, UK
Digital Archivist/ PRONOM Product Owner.
● Key interests: archival accessibility; digital preservation; inclusivity; crowdsourcing.

Elisabeth Klindworth, Germany
Archivist and Information Scientist.
● Key interests: digital preservation; archival accessibility.
Zoe Dickinson, US-UK
Archives/Records Officer
- Key interests:
  inclusivity, archives of international organisations, audiovisual material

Luz María Narbona, Chile
Archivist and historian
- Key interests: archives and political expression; archives and their relationship to science

Makutla Mojapelo, South Africa
Archivist/Lecturer
- Key interests: freedom of information; open data; advocacy.
GOAL AND AGENDA

Goal
To build on the previous work our cohort did in identifying areas of issue and gaps within the archival sector, by talking to experts in various fields in an attempt to provide practical guidance to counteract these problems.

Agenda

01 Previous Insights
- Introduction and Case Studies
- Recap on 2021 Digitisation Survey and Previous Work

02 Discussion

03 Summary and Next Steps
- Summary of what we have covered
- How we hope to continue the work
WE INVITE YOU TO ASK QUESTIONS

Use this link or the QR code to ask questions during the presentation. We will come back to the questions in the Q&A session.

INTRODUCTION

- A historian, Howard Zinn questioned the neutrality of archival profession by arguing that the biasness is characterised by the fact that “we learn most about the rich, not the poor; the successful, not failures; the old, not the young; the politically active, not the politically alienated; men, not women; white, not black; free people, rather than prisoners; civilians, rather than soldiers; officers, rather than enlisted men”

- Digitisation of archival material shape how we view history (Williams 2019)

- Archival institutions have a role to ensure that there is ‘digital equity’ to ensure that everyone benefits from the archival collection.

- The importance of archival institutions should be understood under the following key roles: national memory; national identity; public access; heritage

- Based on the aforementioned roles, one can therefore conclude that all segments of society needs to be represented
CASE STUDIES (SOUTH AFRICA)

South Africa: Harris (2002) shares how apartheid government in South Africa deliberately destroyed records of all sorts of the state’s dirty work between 1990 and 1994 (transition period). This brought about what Harries (2002) termed ‘archival silver’ where he meant that what we see in the archival custody is the silver of what has actually survived the destruction. This highlight a picture of how archivists dictate what people should know. 28 years into democracy, the records of marginalised communities are still not represented in archives (Ngoepe 2019). Given this silence on preservation of records of marginalised communities, projects such as GALA Queer Archive (GALA) produce, preserve and disseminate information about history, culture and contemporary experience of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) (GALA 2022).
CASE STUDIES (USA)

- USA: South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), is a community based online archive that collects and preserves the South Asian American experiences in the United States. Founders decided to have the records under community control as opposed to an institutional repository where they could easily be undervalued or misinterpreted (Caswell & Mallick 2014). In 2013, SAADA launched “First Day Project” that seeks to collect videos, audios and written narratives about the arrival experiences of South Asian immigrants in the US.

- USA: After George Floyd's death in 2020, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and other archival institutions became more interested in engaging in debates around racial inequality. On 22 October 2020 the Archivist Task Force on Racism was formed to engage in these issues and recommend possible solutions. One recommendation was to address the gaps, silence, erasure and distortions of marginalised people. It was also recommended for marginalised communities to be involved when making decisions regarding digitization (NARA 2020). On the other hand, Mastley (2020) argued that some repositories such as Billups-Garth Archive (BGA) have made a strong attempt to combat lack of representation of black history in archives by crafting inclusive statements and collection policies.
CASE STUDIES (AUSTRALIA AND UK)

- UK: Scholars believe that women are underrepresented in the archives. As a result, numerous projects were established to document the experiences of women in the country (Sadler & Cox 2018).

- Australia: Missions Connect: Virtual Reality and Aboriginal Heritage project at Curtin University in Australia. The project seeks to preserve the views and experiences of the Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their parents and placed them in State or church-run institutions of missions (Tiwari, Stephens & Hooper 2019; UNESCO 2021). This technological tool (Virtual Reality) captures the lived experience of stolen generation survivors at Missions. The Virtual Learning tool provides Aboriginal communities with innovative digital strategy for managing their cultural heritage assets.
SURVEY ON DIGITIZATION STRATEGY 2021

Recap
● Ran from 8 June to 27 July 2021
● Anonymous
● Freely accessible to everyone via the ICA website
● Total responses: 280
● Valid responses: 176

Survey Goals
● Exploration
DOES YOUR INSTITUTION DIGITISE ARCHIVAL RECORDS?

- Yes: 82%
- No: 15%
- Not specified: 3%
WHAT IS THE MAIN WAY YOUR ORGANISATION FINANCES DIGITIZATION PROJECTS?

- Community
- Business
- Inter Org
- Local Govt
- Museums
- National
- Religious
- Special Col
- Academic

- Public Funds
- Private Contributions
- Other
- Blanks
- Permanent contributions from your institutions legal and financial holder
WHAT IS THE MAIN FACTOR THAT INFLUENCES YOUR ORGANISATION'S DECISION ON WHAT MATERIAL IS SELECTED FOR DIGITISATION?
DO YOU CONSCIOUSLY DIGITISE RECORDS RELATING TO MARGINALISED GROUPS/MINORITIES/PEOPLE WHO AREN’T TYPICALLY REPRESENTED IN THE ARCHIVES?
CONSIDERATION OF MARGINALISED GROUPS IN DIGITISATION DECISIONS

Have any of the following groups influenced what you chose to digitise?

- Indigenous
- LGBTQ+
- Black Lives Matter
- Feminism
- Decolonisation
- Disability
- Immigration
- None of these

Percentage of participants
% of organisations that have been influenced to digitise based on social groups or societal movements.

- Community: 75%
- Business: 67%
- Inter Org: 68%
- Local Govt: 46%
- Museum: 50%
- National: 28%
- Religious: 67%
- Special Col: 100%
- Academic: 38%
“THE CONVERSATION IS BEGINNING NOW”

“We are aware that many marginalised groups are not currently well represented in our records. Making the archives a welcoming space to all and removing barriers to access are our current priorities.”

“We currently don’t have explicit priorities or plans related to digitizing records relating to marginalized or underrepresented groups. However, we should! We have had lots of conversations about ethics, particularly around access and not endangering or violating the privacy of already marginalized people. So, such plans need to include discussions that ensure the safety of the people documented and to engage them what they want digitized and how those digitized should be made accessible.”

“The archives was established in order to preserve and make available archives related to the indigenous Norwegian Sámi people. On this occasion, we introduced a special program where we are offering to digitize any collection related to the Sámi cultural heritage. We have especially focused on audio material, as this is especially important for the Sámi culture, because their culture is not so well documented in written documents.”
CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 2021 SURVEY

● Digitisation of archival materials is very common in many archive institutions while others have not enough resources for digitisation.
● The archives are looking into this issue. Our survey showed how many institutions that do not have a digitisation strategy are working on it or do not have one because they have resource constraints.
● User-Centric. We can see how user requests are often the main reason for institutions to digitise some of their documents. The question then might be: Are marginalised groups visiting the archives to review their own documentation?
● A further question is: How can archives best involve social groups in their work?
FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON THE 2021 SURVEY GO TO...

- Recording of event “Whose Stories Do We Tell A New Professionals Picnic Blanket on Digitisation Strategy” during International Archives Week 2021:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNZCvwy_0zY

- May Issue of Flash Magazine published by the ICA “Whose stories do we not tell: Perspective from the ICA New Professionals”:
  https://www.ica.org/en/flash-0
DIGITISATION SURVEY 2022

Photo by Hadija Saidi on Unsplash
OUR QUESTIONS

1. What is your organisation currently doing to raise awareness for diversity and support for marginalised groups?
2. How did you build trust between archivists and marginalised groups? Could you talk about the relationship process between your institution and the communities, and some of the challenges that you faced?
3. Is any of this formalised within the institution (e.g. written into the archival policies/strategy/manual/procedures) if not are there any plans for this in the future? Does this include digitisation?
4. What challenges have you had in the process of digitising the records of marginalised groups? What would you have done differently if you were to do this again?
5. How can marginalised groups be involved in the archival processes of their cultural heritage? Do you have any examples specific to digitisation and description?
6. What concrete practical action can we as archivists take to make digitization in our institution more transparent and fair?
7. What have you learned from marginalised groups about how their records have been kept? Have you had to modify any of your traditional practices to support this?
8. What advice would you give to other archivists, if they were starting from scratch with this work? What went well? What didn’t?

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 2022 SURVEY SO FAR...

- We are part of a warm, supportive and welcoming community- willing to share their experiences for the improvement of the sector as a whole.
- There are many archives that are concerned about these issues, either by their own initiative or by user demand.
- There are several ways in which the archives are engaging marginalised groups in their processes: Outreach programs, recording them for oral history projects, encouraging them to tell their story, etc. But there is still much to be done.
- Not all archives have formalised these reflections into policies within the institutions.
- There is mention of lack of resources, equipment and qualified personnel to carry out the digitization processes. This problem does not impact all archives in the same way.
- Diversifying voices within archives is not only about digitizing, but also about including communities in decision-making.
- We need to generate broader reflections on these issues as a community of archivists.
- Context is key and it is important to remember there is not one size fits all solution.
WHO ARE OUR GUESTS?

Laura Millar

- International consultant, scholar and author.
- Recent projects include developing a records management roadmap for the World Bank and overseeing a strategic assessment of recordkeeping for the United Nations Secretariat.
- Received the Emmett Leahy Award for contributions to records and information management in 2021.
- Experience working directly with remote communities and indigenous societies in Canada’s northern territories. She has provided advice and guidance on all aspects of records and archives care, from storage and preservation of documents, the creation and use of oral histories and the digitization and dissemination of all types of evidence, documentary and otherwise.
Juliette Desplat

- Head of the Modern Collections at The National Archives (UK).
- PhD from the University of Paris 3 Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Masters degrees in Egyptology, Strategic Studies and Defence Policies.
- Responsible for records from 1782 to the present day, specialises in 19th & 20th century Middle Eastern history, the development of national identities, international boundaries, comparison of French and British colonial ideologies & practices in the region and the interaction between politics intelligence & archaeology.
- Lecturer in the history of the British legal, judicial, political institutions at universities in both France & Egypt.
- Extensive experience in advising & training students in the administrative history & content of modern british government records.
Claudio Ogass

- Activist archivist from Chile who has significant and vast experience working with diverse communities and marginalised groups in his country to build community-focused archives by creating participatory activities to organise, describe and plan the digitisation of their records.
- PhD student in Archives and Records Management at the University of Liverpool,
- Diploma in Human Rights, Gender, and Diversity Archives from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona).
- Member of the Section on Archives and Human Rights of the International Council on Archives (SAHR-ICA), the Latin American Archival History Group of Study (GEHAAL), and the Assembly of Archivists of Chile (ASARCH).
DISCUSSION

What practical actions can we take towards an inclusive digitization strategy?

Photo by Mihai Surdu on Unsplash
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We invite you to share your thoughts!

Use this link or the QR code to participate in our live poll:


Join at

slido.com

#4274 868
NEXT STEPS

- Advertise and collect more survey results to combine.
- Dependent on the volume of the response create a positive and practical leaflet of guidance and first steps to take by collating the shared knowledge of the community we receive.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

Any Questions? Contact us!

Email: newprofessionalsprogramme@gmail.com
Website: www.ica.org/en/new-professionals
Facebook: @ICANPs
Twitter: @ICAArchiv_NP
Instagram: @icanewprofessionals
REFERENCES

REFERENCES CONTINUED