

Archive Futures

Manuscripts, Materiality, Method

archive
catalogue
fonds data
visualisation
collection
finding aid
digital letter
papers records
manuscript
born-digital
file reader
heritage
research
humanities
materiality
preservation
culture
software
reader's ticket
library
description
matter access
holdings
evidence
archivist
searching
methods

A New Research Network

Welcome to the first event of the ARCHIVE FUTURES RESEARCH NETWORK.

We are embarking on building an international network to generate imaginative and transformative research exchange around the new questions that are shaping archives and archiving into the future, a future intimately connected to – and likely to be increasingly defined by – digital media.

By tackling the status of the material in the era of digitization, the ARCHIVE FUTURES RESEARCH NETWORK productively joins emerg-

ing debates across the humanities regarding the character of materiality and matter to debates in the digital humanities concerning emergent modes of research.

The questions we want to ask about the theoretical, methodological, epistemological and ontological shifts we are witnessing are not incidental: they are field-defining ones in that they promise to extend our understanding of what happens when our archived cultural heritage is brought together with the promise of the digital.

In this respect, our questions are not a supplement to current scholarship and/or archival practice

but are key to the production and transfer of new knowledges being generated in this moment of ‘rethinking the archive’.

The Knowledge Synthesis *Lasting Change: Sustaining Digital Scholarship and Culture in Canada* (2010) observed that a “sustainable digital environment” is one that encourages “the pushing of the boundaries of academic disciplines by cultivating strategic partnerships both across disciplines and beyond the academy” (19).

The ARCHIVE FUTURES RESEARCH NETWORK is specifically configured to enhance exchange of knowledge across national domains and – most im-

portantly – to promote partnerships across the professional boundaries that frequently separate scholars and archivists.

Our first meeting is intended as a catalyst event with the primary aim of laying the foundations for a substantial new framework for international research collaboration. Plans are already in place for a major meeting in 2015 at the National Library of Australia in Canberra and between now and then we want to consolidate research collaboration among members in the form of further exploratory workshops, joint publications, and grant applications.

While we have a full programme for the day, we want to ensure that we also use our time to identify common areas of inquiry, shared questions, and ways of collectively promoting speculative and theoretically informed considerations of ‘archive futures’. Importantly, we see our roles as convenors as facilitating rather than defining the shape of those considerations and we look forward to an exciting and productive start to the ARCHIVE FUTURES RESEARCH NETWORK.

**Maryanne Dever and
Linda Morra, Network
Convenors**



Outside the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2012. Photo: M. Dever

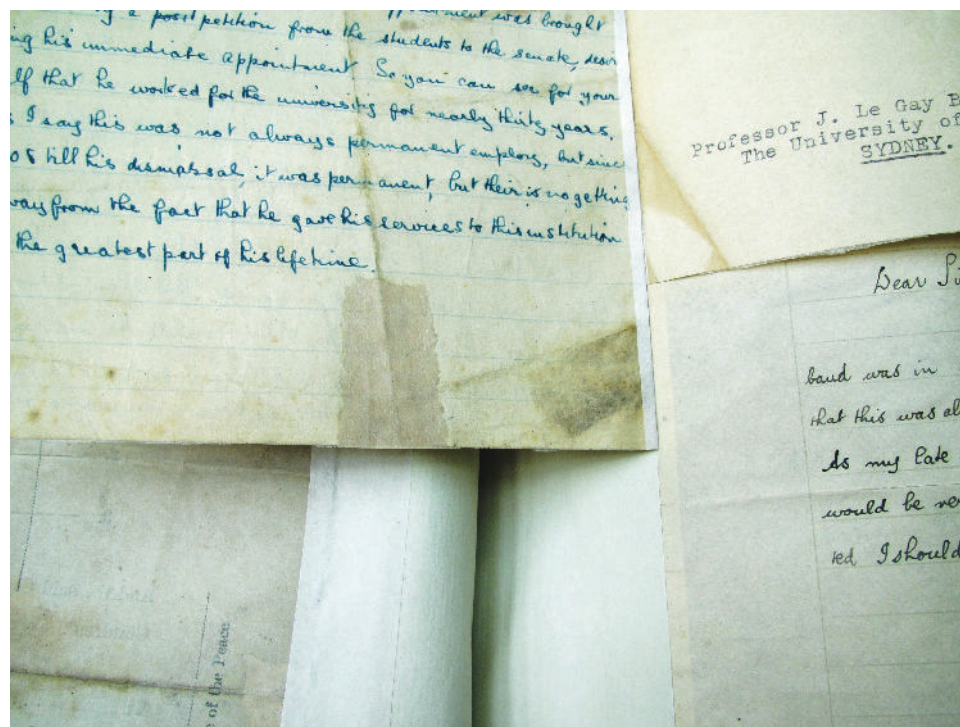
Future thinking

"Matter is never a settled matter. It is always already radically open". Karen Barad.

New theories and practices of the archive operate as critical points of intersection between disciplines. Whether we are located within literary studies, media studies, information studies or archival science we share an understanding that we have entered a new cultural economy that requires us to think anew about what archival collections have meant and what they will mean into the future.

As Jerome McGann observed, "In the coming decades – the process has already begun – the entirety of our cultural inheritance will be transformed and re-edited in digital forms". This process has been accompanied by rapidly developing critical debate over the ways in which digital tools such as text-mining, data visualization, geographic information systems, computer modelling, as well as newly available digital formats are changing forever the conceptual and practical dimensions of both archive-driven humanities scholarship and the work of building and maintaining archives. Mike Featherstone, for example, highlights the ways in which the digital archive "presents new conceptual problems about the identi-

ty, distinctiveness and boundaries of the datum and the document", while Marlene Manoff argues that "the electronic environment introduces a whole new set of questions about the material aspects



of library collections".

What is significant for our purposes, however, is the developing recognition that – despite initial suggestions to the contrary – the digital has not forever cancelled out or superseded paper formats and in fact has thrown into relief the histories of material embodiment associated with traditional archival collections.

Indeed, as anyone who has every printed a born-digital document knows, a culture of co-existence has emerged. This provides a unique opportunity or vantage point from which to tackle questions of matter and materiality that

were never fully explored or successfully resolved in relation to traditional analogue sources and which persist in relation to digital forms and formats. In the words of Derrida, "by carrying us beyond paper, the adventures of technology grant us a sort of future anterior; they liberate our reading for a retrospective exploration of the past re-

papers and other literary and cultural artefacts?

How does this differ from pre-digital collections?

What happens to paper documents – and our engagements with them – once digital surrogates are available? How does the availability of the latter transform the conditions of scholarly engagement?

For example, how do relations of matter and meaning shift as a given text shifts from one medium to another? Do different modes of material embodiment produce different objects of study? And do these objects demand different (and possibly new) methods?

Can we think of paper objects as doing things the digitized or born-digital can't and vice versa?

How does the new materiality of the digital environment trouble familiar distinctions between fragile and enduring records and the once taken for granted relations between access and preservation?

What can the digital offer to the complex material states associated with difficult manuscripts and damaged or altered physical documents?

And can such documents in turn help us to uncover and examine our assumptions about digital archives and the affordances of new processes of digitization?

sources of paper".

The issue then is how we can use this opportunity or vantage point for tackling the status of the material in the era of digitization and how through our own work we can advance, reconfigure and/or profitably disrupt prevailing conversations around materiality and method in the context of the digitally mediated future of archives, archiving and archive-based humanities research.

Among the questions that necessarily arise are:

How are we to understand the material in the realm of digitized and born-digital collections of personal

If material literacy has remained largely under-developed in terms of engagements with analogue sources, can the complexities of materiality and matter in the digital environment now help to refine and strengthen these approaches?

What is the future ontological status of fonds for which there are no funds and no plans for digitization? How does this speak to a new political economy of archives and archiving?

How will the affordances of "socially amplified" digital archival spaces that explicitly provide for social reading, social writing and annotation challenge more static understandings of the archive and of the document? Will such affordances begin to blur existing (hierarchical) distinctions between categories of users? Will users through their contributions become part of what formally constitutes an archive or a document?

How does the digital archival environment challenge what we have known about the space

and time of the archive? How can we talk about new and emerging spatio-temporal coordinates of archival accumulation?

As these questions demonstrate, familiar distinctions have been emptied out, boundaries are dissolving, and we are witnessing a convergence of the "what" and the "how" of our engagements with archived and archivable materials. Researchers and archivists are thus confronting not only radical transformations to the very 'stuff' we study or otherwise work with but equally radical revisions to familiar knowledge-making practices.

All of this can be challenging for anyone whose intellectual and professional identity has been forged through their passionate commitments to paper and to print and to the institutions, cultures and practices they sponsored. To take up Susan Brown's metaphor, we can be left feeling as though we are negotiating the gap between what we know or have known and "a moving vehicle".



It is important then that we remember how futures – and radically uncertain ones at that – have been central historically to the formation, management and use of archives. After all, the preservation of cultural heritage has always been premised on its as yet undetermined future potential. As Derrida reminds us, "if we want to know what [the archive] will have meant, we will only know in times to come".

Our 'future thinking' then will inevitably take us forward (or is it back?) to a set of questions that look like this: "What are archives and what can they do?" "What can we do in and with archives?"

Maryanne Dever, June 2013.

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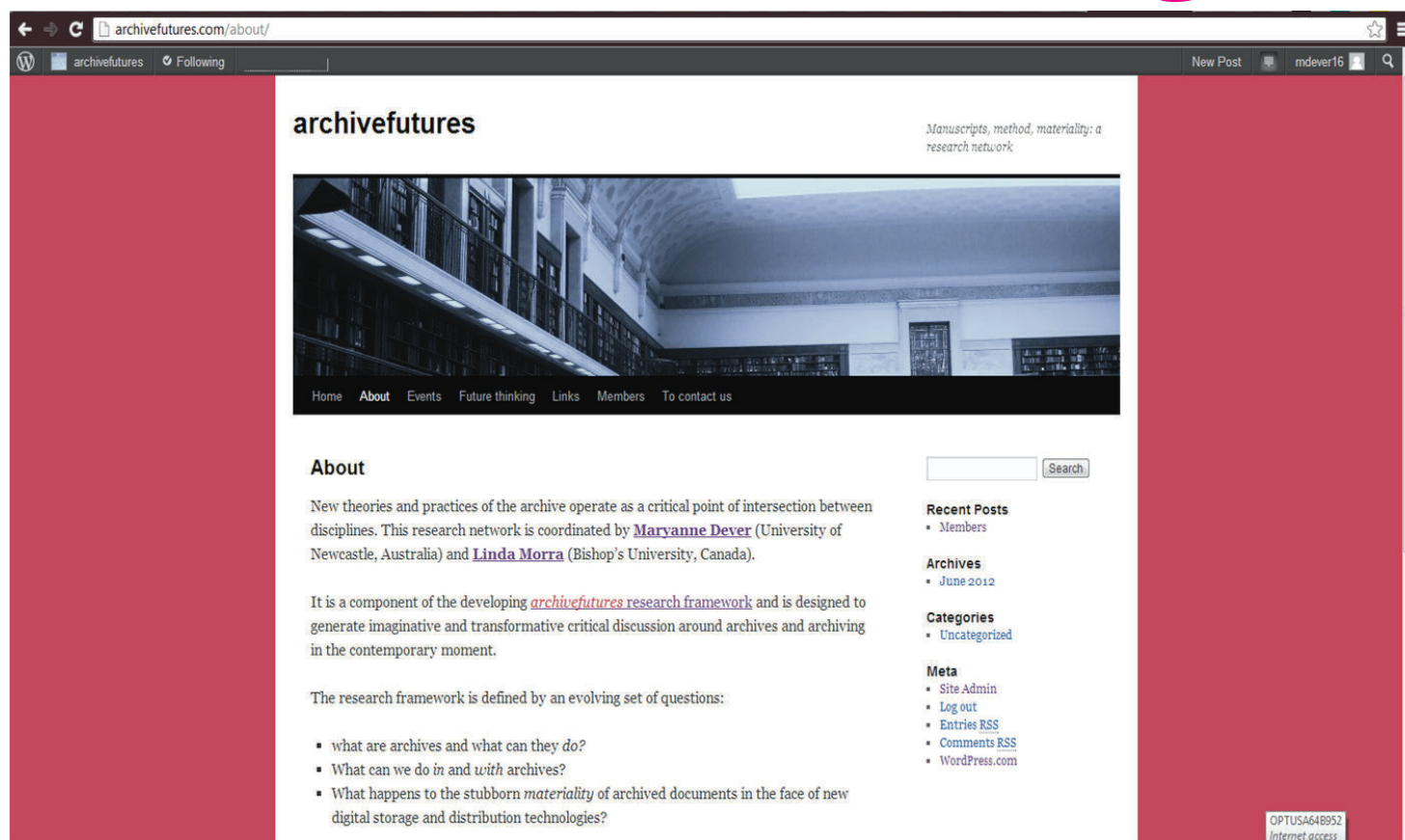
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archivefutures: the blogsite



The network is launching its own dedicated blogsite which can be found at www.archivefutures.com

Network members will receive an invitation to sign up to the site and we encourage you to do this.

The blog site will be a key tool to facilitate exchange among members and also to promote the ARCHIVE FUTURES RESEARCH NETWORK to a wider public. For this reason, there will be both public and members only spaces available.

The **archivefutures** blogsite will include static pages about the network and accounts of its activities, as well as links to a variety of relevant organisations and institutions internationally. We plan in the future to incorporate useful bibliographies of

relevant scholarship.

There will be space for members and their professional activities to be profiled and you will be able to add to this space as we go forward. We also recognise that many of you already have professional and/or project-focused blogsites of your own and we are keen to link up to these too.

The site will also provide a mechanism for expanding the network as potential members are contacted and invited to sign up.

Importantly, the **archivefutures** blogsite will also have a rolling blog where members can share information on new publications, forthcoming activities, calls for papers, funding opportunities, and general observations on matters of relevance to the network.

Did you catch these?

Some interesting recent journal special issues on archives:

NoMorePotlucks No. 25 **Archive** (jan/feb 2013). Co-edited by Mél Hogan and M-C MacPhee. It's beautiful and the contents include a new essay by Ann Cvetkovich. Paper lovers should remember that NMP is also available in a print-on-demand format. Check it out here: <http://nomorepotlucks.org/site/category/archive>

The South African Historical Journal has published an Archive Special Issue 65.1 (2013).

The International Journal of Social Research

Methodology had a special issue 15.4 (2012) on perspectives on working with archived textual and visual material in social research. It contains an article by Louise Corti, an associate director of the UK Data Archive, 'Recent developments in archiving social research', in which she discusses four challenges facing social science data archives: methods for archiving qualitative data; providing safe access to disclosive data; institutional data archiving initiatives; dealing with the emergence of 'new' data types.

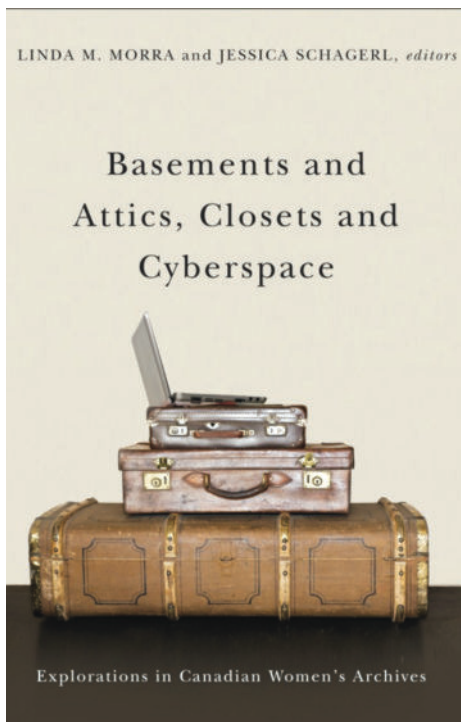
The journal **RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage** had a special issue 13.2 (2012) on assessment in special collections and archives.

The journal **Comparative Critical Studies** had a special issue 8. 2-3 (2011) all about archives based on the 2010 British Comparative Literature society conference on the same theme.

The **Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature** (JASAL) published issue 11.1.(2011) on the theme of 'Archive Madness'.

The journal **Photographies** had a special issue 3.2 (2010) on the theme of **Photography, Archive, Memory** with essays by Geoffrey Batchen and others.

Recent and Forthcoming Publications



New from network members

Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace: Explorations in Canadian Women's Archives

Linda M. Morra and Jessica Schagerl, eds.
Wilfred Laurier University Press. \$85.00
Hardcover, 348 pp.

This collection showcases the range of critical debates that animate thinking about women's archives in Canada. The essays in *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace* consider a series of central questions: What are the challenges that affect archival work about women in Canada today? What are some of the ethical dilemmas that arise over the course of archival research? How do researchers read and make

sense of the materials available to them? How does one approach the shifting, unstable forms of new technologies? What principles inform the decisions not only to research the lives of women but to create archival deposits?

From questions of acquisition, deposition, and preservation to challenges in the interpretation of material, the contributors track at various stages how fonds are created (or sidestepped) in response to national and other imperatives and to feminist commitments; how archival material is organized, restricted, accessed, and interpreted; how alternative and immediate archives might be conceived and approached; and how exchanges might be read when there are peculiar lacunae—missing or fragmented documents, or gaps in communication—that then require imaginative leaps on the part of the researcher.

Contributors include: Catherine Hobbs, Hannah McGregor, Karis Shearer, Daphne Marlatt, Karina Vernon and Julia Creet.

The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order. Kate Eichhorn. **Temple University Press.**

Forthcoming August 2013
In the 1990s, Riot Grrrls plotted a revolution. These

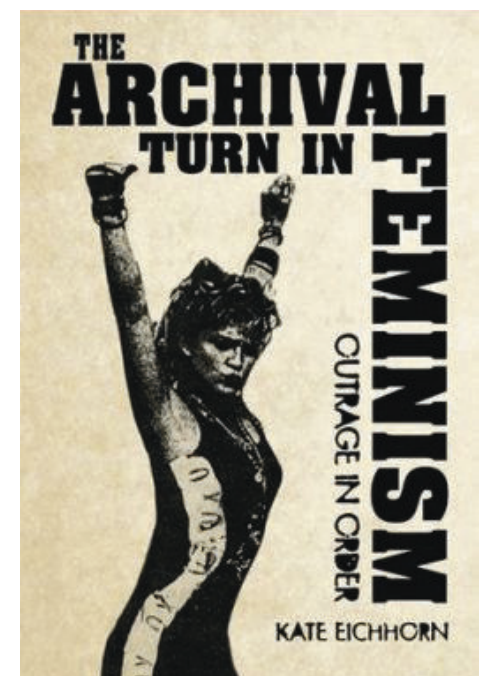
angry young feminists funneled their outrage and energy into creating zines—mini-manifestos of original writing and cut-up images and graphics that were hastily compiled, photocopied and self-circulated. By 2000, these zines that had been collecting in basements and elsewhere were archived in universities and community centers, establishing sites of storytelling and political activism across the country.

The Archival Turn in Feminism chronicles these important cultural artifacts and their collection, cataloging, preservation, and distribution. Cultural studies scholar Kate Eichhorn examines institutions such as the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture, The Riot Grrrl Collection, and the Barnard Zine Library as well as the archivists who have assembled and preserved these significant feminist zine collections. She shows why young feminist activists, cultural producers, and scholars embraced the archive, and how they subsequently used it to stage surprising political alliances across eras and generations.

"*The Archival Turn in Feminism* is original, theoretically sophisticated, and compelling in its implications. Kate Eichhorn effectively situates the recent archival investment in

Riot Grrrl and other supposed 'Third Wave' forms of feminism in the longer history of feminist efforts to narrate the movement's past. She argues with admirable clarity that archives should not simply be treated as spaces of preservation but rather as active responses to the complex demands of particular historical conditions. Eichhorn's book is well informed about the recent history of practices of librarianship and archiving and the kind of rethinking that the work of Foucault and Derrida has provoked among professionals charged with selecting, organizing, and preserving historical records for the future. Her book is a welcome achievement."

—Janice Radway, Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, and co-editor of *American Studies: An Anthology*.



The Sunday Paper: The circulation of magazine, cinema and radio features in North America, 1888-1922. Sandra Gabriele and Paul S. Moore. Univ. of Illinois Press. Forthcoming Fall 2014.

Gabriele and Moore explore the untold history of the weekend leisure paper. While the idea of leisurely sitting down with a paper over coffee seems almost antiquated by now, weekend papers (Saturdays in Canada, Sundays in the US) were key to expanding circulation, increasing and expanding readerships, and they were essential in establishing the newspaper as a key participant in modernity and popular culture.

Exhibition: A Cabinet of Curiosity: The Library's Dead Time.

A co-authored article on the exhibition, "A Cabinet of Curiosity: the Library's Dead Time," is forthcoming in the fall issue of *Art Documentation*. In the article, Bonnie Mak and Julia Pollack describe how they deployed a series of sculptures to illustrate the ways that the physical manifestation of information -- whether in analogue or digital format -- influences the processes of meaning-making.

By showcasing the materiality of the codex, PDF, on-line catalogue, and librarian, their exhibition fabricated an archive of the "dead time" of research



"A Cabinet of Curiosity: The Library's Dead Time," by Julia Pollack & Bonnie Mak (Champaign, Illinois; February 2012).

in the humanities, and thus made visible for analysis some of the oft-overlooked practices around the production of knowledge.

An interview featuring Bonnie Mak will be published this summer in *Ploughshares Literary Magazine*, as part of the series, "People of the Book," curated by Gretchen Henderson.

Mak is currently revising an article called, "Archaeology of a Digitization," which analyzes the social history of the well-known e-resource, *Early English Books Online*, and considers the implications of the use of such databases upon the shaping of cultural heritage.

Also for noting

The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation. Carrie Smith and Lisa Stead, eds. Ashgate.

This new collection includes both literary scholars and archivists addressing the study of modern literary archives. Interrogating literary and archival methodology and foregrounding new forms of textual scholarship, the collection includes essays addressing the full complexity of the study of modern literary archives.

The authors examine the increasing prominence of archives and their importance to the interdisci-

plinary study of textual history in the 21st century, exploring both emerging and established areas of literary history. The book is marked by its attention to four distinct core threads that allow the authors to traverse a range of historical periods and literary figures: archival theory and textual production, authorial legacies and digital cultures, gender issues in the archive, and the practical concerns of archival research and curatorship. The volume seeks to encourage interplay between scholars working in different fields around similar essential questions of methodology, whilst presenting a rich account of archives worldwide.

Forthcoming Sept 2013.

Calls for Papers

Journal special issue: Archives and Manuscripts. Theme: 'Literary archives, materiality and the digital'.

Special issue contact editors: Maryanne Dever and Linda Morra

Archives and Manuscripts is the journal of the Australian Society of Archivists. We are inviting submissions for the above proposed journal special issue which is broadly aligned with the theme for our Montreal network meeting. Papers that take a more speculative conceptual and theoretical approach are particularly welcome. Case studies need not be confined to digital archives but may reflect on analogue sources in ways that are consistent with the theme. Submissions should be no longer than 5,000 words. A detailed call for papers will be circulated after the workshop. **Deadline for submission of abstracts: 1 November 2013**

Symposium: Reading historical sources in the digital age, 5–6 December 2013, Luxembourg.

This third edition of Digital Humanities Luxembourg will focus on the various ways in which this

material is used by humanities researchers, particularly contemporary historians and more specifically specialists in European integration. The Symposium will be structured around the following research clusters, but may also include other related approaches:

Distant/close reading — This cluster will cover various themes, including: (big) data, text mining and semantic analysis, quantitative data approaches, network analysis, data visualisation (including GIS), and more generally the links between distant and close readings.

Community reading Several online digital thematic collections, and more generally many online services available for research, offer users the possibility of registering, and sometimes of working together with other researchers, either directly or indirectly. This can lead to a collaborative and interactive reading of historical sources. Moreover, given the proliferation of these collections, what challenges and opportunities exist for cooperation and interoperability between communities? What consequences will this have on the way we currently conduct research in the humanities?

Writing history & Assessing scholarship This cluster will include practical papers (e.g. on how to cite digital resources) as well as more theoretical ones. It



will also embrace issues relating to the validity and quality of data and research outputs based on digital thematic collections, as well as the evaluation of those collections as a new kind of online scholarly publication.

We welcome papers focusing on digital humanities and social sciences from researchers and scholars at all stages of their careers. Papers examining cases related to European integration studies (EIS) are especially encouraged. Abstracts (max. 500 words), submitted together with a short CV (max. 250 words) and a list of publications, can be written in English or French and should be sent to the following contact email address, which can also be used for any enquiries: frederic.clavert@cvce.eu. **Deadline for proposals: 20 August 2013**

Journal special issue: Australian Feminist Law Journal. Volume 40 (June 2014). Theme: Evidence and the Archive: Ethics, Aesthetics and Emotion.

The archive facilitates our material confrontation

with history, historicity, order, linearity, time and bureaucracy. For lawyers, artists, journalists, publishers, curators and scholars, the document in the archive has the attributes of authenticity, contemporaneity, and the unique tangibility of a real moment captured in material form. This special issue explores the stakes, risks and opportunities invoked in opening and exploring law's archive and re-examining law's evidence. It draws together papers exploring how evidence is used or mis-used during the legal process, and re-used after the law's work has concluded. More info: www.griffith.edu.au/criminology-law/australian-feminist-law-journal/special-issue-submissions/evidence-and-archive. **Special Issue Editors: Katherine Biber and Trish Luker** **Deadline for proposals: 14 January 2014.**

Journal special issue: Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies. 21.1 (2015) Theme: Digital Archives & Open Archival Practices.

The editors invite contributions that focus on the

widest range of digital archives (film, dance, sound, oral history etc), that consider national and international collections, which might focus on archival strategies, policy, copyright and education, and which consider technological aspects of digital archiving including the semantic web, analytics, meta-data, tagging and time-based meta-data. The editors are particularly interested in encouraging submissions from a range of contexts, originating from academic research, policy making and from the archival professions. The special issue will follow the **Digital Echoes Symposium at Coventry University in January 2014**. A call for papers for the Symposium will be issued shortly and confirmation of participation will be in November 2013. Presenters at the Symposium will be invited to consider contributing developed papers for the special issue of the Journal. **Submission of full papers: 28 February 2014.**

Cataloguing Creativity: Symposium on Literary Archives.

15 November 2013 at the British Library.

To mark the publication of its updated *Guidelines for Cataloguing Literary Archives and Manuscripts*, Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts UK (GLAM) is holding a one-day Symposium on is-



sues related to cataloguing literary archives and manuscripts. GLAM's definition of 'literary' encompasses creative writing in all genres, whether or not intended for publication, including: poetry; the novel; other forms of fiction; essays and letters by or relating to 'literary' figures; writing for drama, the theatre, or radio, television and film; life writing; the writing of criticism relating to creative writing; and the process of publishing or otherwise supporting the production and dissemination of literature.

Submit brief abstracts for 20 min papers to fran.baker@manchester.ac.uk. Deadline for submissions: **28 June 2013**. More information: <http://glam-archives.org.uk/?p=1481>

Coming Events

The Digital. Humanities @ Oxford Summer School.

DHOxSS is an annual event for anyone working in the Digital Humanities.

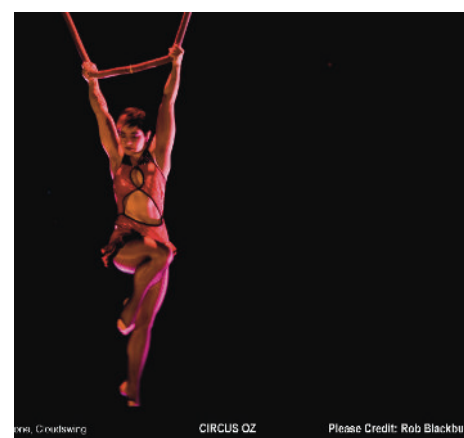
This year's Summer School will be held on **8 - 12 July**

2013, at the University of Oxford. Visit <http://digital.humanities.ox.ac.uk/dhoxss/2013/> for more information.

Symposium: Digital Acrobatics: Performing the Circus Oz Living Archive.

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, 4-5 July 2013.

This symposium discusses questions emerging as attempts are made to re-think and redefine contemporary practices of cultural heritage using digital technologies. In particular, the symposium focuses on the context of the performing arts and its documentation on video, through the lens of an interdisciplinary research project underway since 2010, the Circus Oz Living Archive. Key questions include: What can/might/does happen to the archive conceived as a digital entity? What are the ontology and affordances of digital video? How is the making of a 'living archive' performed? How can a living archive live in the world? More information: <http://www.circusarchive.net/blog/digital-acrobatics->



symposium **Tom Phillips' A Humument : Birkbeck Material Texts Network One-Day Conference, 13 July 2013.**

Keynes Library, 43 Gordon Square, London.

Reflections on *A Humument* from different periods and disciplines, including papers and discussion by Luisa Calè, Dennis Duncan, Holly Pester, Gill Partington, James Kidd, Zara Dinnen, Adam Smyth, Antonio Venezia, Carol Watts, Alex Latter and -- most importantly -- Tom Phillips himself. Details from adam.smyth@bbk.ac.uk. For more on *A Humument*, go to <http://humument.com/>



Decoding the Digital: Technology, New Media and a Culture Consumed. **University of Rochester, 12-14 September 2013.**

How—and indeed should—we regulate access to information? Should everything be transcoded into digital formats? Are the ways we think our fundamental identities, through such characteristics as race and gender, adversely affected by pervasive digital

representations?

This three-day conference will examine digital technologies across our culture, exploring the exciting new possibilities such technologies can bring and the consequences—sometimes unexpected—that can accompany them.

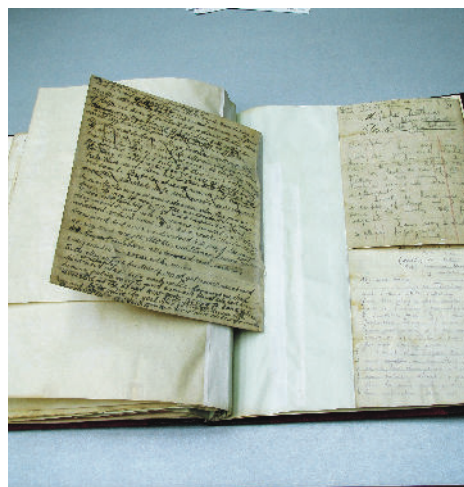
More information: <http://rochester.edu/college/decoding-the-digital/>

The Wayne State University Symposium on Scholarly Editing and Archival Research. 26 September 2013.

Keynotes: Peter Quartermain and Martha Nell Smith.

In what ways do opportunities made possible by digital environments inform editorial choices for both screen and page? How has archival research been affected by digital tools? What new literary, hermeneutic, and scholarly projects are now possible? To what degree do new approaches and methods of editing texts challenge existing narratives of criticism and literary history?

This is an interdisciplinary conference inviting new perspectives on current practices in the editing and presentation of literary texts in all media. More information: www.wsuscholarlyediting.org/ or contact: caroline.maun@wayne.edu



Archives - The Future. Annual Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists. Canberra, 15-18 October 2013.

The theme aims to complement both the significance of Canberra's centenary in 2013 and the current attention within the record keeping community on reinventing archival methods to meet the demands of the digital age. More information: www.archivists.org.au/page/Learning_and_Publications/Conference/2013_Conference/



Sourcing the Archive: New Approaches to Materialising Textile History. Goldsmiths, University of London, 7-8 November 2013.

Keynotes: Professor Carolyn Steedman, University

of Warwick and Dr Solveigh Goett, Textile Artist and Researcher.

Textiles attract through their sensory appeal – their texture and weight, smell, malleability, sound, retention of owners' and makers' bodily traces – factors only fully appreciable through physical engagement with them. Yet many, especially modern, historians have relied – often of necessity – on documentary or visual sources to research textile history.

This conference will explore how tacit knowledge of material and affective relationships can be traced through the words we think with with a view to asking: how can our engagement with textile sources extend our knowledge of the past? What can textiles communicate that other sources cannot? Building on a range of recent events which encourage engagement with the materiality of textiles, textile archives and/or the relationship between textiles and other historical sources. More information: www.gold.ac.uk/history/research/pasoldconference/

Resurrecting the Book, Library of Birmingham, England, 15-17 November 2013.

To celebrate the re-opening of the largest public library in Europe and its outstanding special collections, The Library of

Birmingham, Newman University College, the Typographic Hub at Birmingham City University and The Library of Lost Books have united to host a three-day conference on the theme of Resurrecting the Book.

With e-book downloads outstripping the purchase of hard copies, with libraries closing and discarding books and with the value of the book as physical object being increasingly questioned, this interdisciplinary conference will bring together academics, librarians, publishers, artists, creators, designers, and users of books to explore a wide variety of issues pertaining to the creation, design, construction, publication, use, reuse, preservation, loss, and recovery of the material book, electronic and digitized books, and of collections and libraries.

The conference themes include, but are not limited to: books as material objects and the materiality of book creation, construction, use, and destruction; manuscripts and printed books; collections and libraries; the artist's book; altered books; e-books; and publishing. More information: <http://resurrectingthebook.org/>





BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ARCHIVES NATIONALES DU QUÉBEC

MONTRÉAL

21 JUNE 2013

CONVENORS:

MARYANNE DEVER (University of Newcastle) and LINDA MORRA (Bishop's University).