

to apply the book's recommendations. Furthermore, Roe states herself that the majority of the advocacy efforts used as examples are reactive. By neglecting proactive efforts, Roe fails to highlight those that can be initiated at any time and that may be more approachable initial advocacy endeavors. Bearing solo archivists in mind, it is interesting that an introductory manual would not provide examples that represent more varied scales, and types, of advocacy.

These critiques do not diminish the value of *Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists*. The topic is a much-needed addition to the Archival Fundamentals Series and acknowledges that advocacy is equally as valuable, and as complex, as many of the more technical competencies of archival administration. The volume reduces complex topics into digestible messages and provides a toolkit that can, and should, be reached for on the bookshelf when beginning to craft any advocacy effort.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations*, Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2018, <https://www.performance.gov/GovReform/Reform-and-Reorg-Plan-Final.pdf>, captured at <https://perma.cc/S5JV-G29F>.
- <sup>2</sup> *Memorandum M-19-21*, Executive Office of the President of the United States: Office of Management and Budget, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/M-19-21.pdf>, captured at <https://perma.cc/H7QA-TDUB>.

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## Participatory Archives: Theory and Practice

Edited by Edward Benoit III and Alexandra Eveleigh. London: Facet Publishing, 2019. 208 pp. Softcover and EPUB. \$80.99US, £64.95UK.

Softcover ISBN 978-1-78330-356-4; EPUB ISBN 978-1-78330-358-8.

In the face of developing networked societies, heritage institutions (libraries, archives, and museums) must rethink the ways they conduct cultural activities. Multiple documentary resources are nowadays easily accessible on the Web for the public. Thanks to the potential of Web 2.0 technologies, diverse modes of interaction and participation have emerged, minimizing institutional boundaries between cultural agents and users. In the archives world, users are invited to interact more actively with their cultural institutions and participate in the management and the description of archives. This illustrates a paradigm shift in archival science, called *participatory archives*.

The concept of participatory archives is rooted in postmodernism, which values the role of the user as a social agent participating in the creation and the management of collective archival memory.<sup>1</sup> The book *Participatory Archives: Theory and Practice* follows the same perspective. It is edited by Alexandra Eveleigh and Edward Benoit, respectively a collection manager at Wellcome Collection in London and a professor at the School of Library and Information Science at Louisiana State University. As a compilation of essays written by contributors from different backgrounds, this work highlights the epistemological foundations of participatory archives and provides case studies in various cultural contexts.

The book comprises four main sections, which include social tagging and commenting, transcription, crowdfunding, outreach, and engaging activist communities. The contributors present a comprehensive view of various aspects of participatory archives and to what extent it can be applied in practice. Social tagging and commenting include annotating archival materials using tags. Seen as examples of user-generated content, tags are subjective and do not obey control measures imposed by archivists. Thanks to the commitment of user communities, social tagging achieves several goals, including recognition of cultural groups. Two case studies, an initiative from Library and Archives Canada and one from Stockholm, illustrate such a practice, highlighting the intrinsic properties of photographic collections. In “Project Naming: Reconnecting Indigenous Communities with Their Histories through Archival Photographs,” Beth Greenhorn presents a project launched by Library and Archives Canada consisting of 500 digitized photographs related to Nunavut communities, which the public is invited to annotate and describe. Bente Jensen, Elizabeth Boogh, Kajsa Hartig, and Anni Wallenius highlight in “(Hash)tagging with the Users: Participatory Collection of Digital Social Photography in Museums and Archives,” the importance of the public tagging and sharing social media photography with cultural heritage institutions in a coparticipative way. They focus mainly on collecting contemporary visual documentation about traditional celebrations and tragic moments.

Transcription is distinguished from social tagging by its structured nature. It serves a curatorial function that aims to assess archival description outputs (e.g., metadata, digitization quality, transcription of manuscripts, grammatical mistakes, etc.). However, archival transcription is not without its challenges. The difficulties arising from transcription relate to users’ digital and archival skills, and physical properties such as readability of manuscripts. It is also a matter of power sharing between users, archival institutions, and archivists: it is difficult for institutions to define the extent to which users can participate in archival description. Such issues can be easily understood through the American Archive of Public Broadcasting’s (AAPB) project and that of Copenhagen and Amsterdam,

which focus, respectively, on the transcription of audiovisual archives, photographs, and police records. In the first case, Casey Davis Kaufman and Karen Cariani provide an overview of the transcription project related to AAPB archival audiovisual materials. The project's main goal is to generate transcripts and engage the public in the correction of those transcripts via the platform called FIX IT. The second case is presented by Nelleke van Zeeland and Signe Trolle Gronemann in a chapter entitled "Participatory Transcription in Amsterdam and Copenhagen." The two authors describe participatory transcription activities at two institutions: Amsterdam City Archives and Copenhagen City Archives. They emphasize the importance of designing user-friendly platforms to engage users in participatory transcription initiatives, chiefly in image selection and tagging, as well as georeferencing.

Crowdfunding practices aim to fill a financial deficit from which the majority of cultural institutions suffer. These funds are often used for digitization, arrangement and description, and dissemination of archival materials. Two case studies are detailed to portray crowdfunding projects. Laura Alagna, in "Acquiring Equipment for Obsolete Media through Crowdsourcing," describes the #UndeadTech initiative at Northwestern University, which aims at acquiring through donations technical materials such as outdated media that might be useful for the long-term preservation of archives. The author provides a great example of how crowdsourcing can be used as an opportunity to obtain necessary equipment for extracting content from mobile devices and to raise awareness about the archival issues with regard to the obsolete nature of digital media. Karl Magee, in the chapter "Thinking Outside the Box: Crowdfunding the Peter Mackay Archive," discusses a crowdfunding campaign using social media and a platform called Crowdfunder UK to support the digitization of the Peter Mackay Archive in collaboration with students and researchers at the University of Stirling. The author shows the importance of choosing the appropriate platform (based on its popularity and user friendliness) and the suitable outreach strategy (according to the scope of the campaign) to promote crowdfunding initiatives.

Activist communities play a major role in participatory archives: they commemorate significant events in community life. Both the Baltimore Uprising Archive Project and the Ahmed Project reflect the importance of communities in the enrichment of collections with their own photographs to document local events. When activist communities share photographs and documents, they participate in enriching their own cultural heritage. Such activities add value to traditional models of archival acquisition; thanks to the engagement of activist communities, it is possible to develop collections through in-house projects and ongoing community partnerships. Jessica Douglas emphasizes in her chapter, "Documenting a Social Movement in Real Time: The Preserve the Baltimore

Uprising 2015 Archive Project,” the active role of communities in participatory archives. The Baltimore Uprising Archive Project, led by the University of Maryland–Baltimore County, finds power in archives that document tragic social events and collective voice for social justice. The participants collected photographs as well as video and audio recordings documenting the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old man who suffered from acts of violence when he was arrested. In the same vein, Hannah Niblett and Jennifer Vickers describe in “Community Partnerships and Collection Development in the Legacy of Ahmed Project” another example of the role of activist communities in valuing and documenting their experiences. The project piloted by the University of Manchester focuses on transcribing oral testimony and collecting photographs from the families involved in the tragic events related to Ahmed’s murder and their impact on Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. These two projects not only address affect, but also the ethical dimensions surrounding the identity of the people in the photographic archives.

Notwithstanding the merits of participatory archives, a range of challenges emerges in regard to collaboration, trust, skills, user engagement, and the user-friendliness of participatory platforms. In the long term, it is important for archivists to think about how participation should be integrated into current archival practices. Attention should be given to strategies for long-term commitment to the user community. Finally, archivists must be aware of ethical issues and power sharing between archives and communities involved in participatory activities. Those aspects may be resolved through mediation by cultural institutions in concert with archivists.

The authors’ contributions cut across archival science, museology, and related disciplines like computing and library science. These essays place users—producers and consumers—at the heart of an archival mindset. The authors also highlight the importance of social media and digital technologies in promoting easy access to archival materials and redefining the relationship between users and archival institutions. Thanks to this paradigm shift, users are able to participate not only in the creation and the management of archives, but also in their promotion and outreach. The authors agree on one point: the importance of seeking new strategies to balance power and authority between archivists and users. As Elizabeth Yakel has pointed out, the participatory approach is a matter of fundamental change in the relationship between users and archivists.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the roles of archivists should be revisited. Archivists should call into question the importance of their place in the participatory realm. They should go beyond their traditional role as passive memory guardians to be more involved with users, in terms of understanding their archival needs and cultural perceptions. Archivists should also find ways to help users develop their digital abilities to enhance their performance. Indeed, participatory practices give

priority to “super users” who already have the qualifications to participate in describing, transcribing, and managing archives. This may lead to a digital divide, however, excluding some users from the participatory context because they lack necessary abilities and resources.

The contributors to *Participatory Archives* come from different countries with diverse cultures, which influences their theoretical and practical perceptions of participatory archives. Many of the case studies mainly relate to Canadian, American, Danish, English, and Australian contexts. Each country has its own archival tradition and its own “way of doing things.” This diversity is, therefore, one of the strengths of this book and provides the reader with a melting pot of archival perspectives and their applications. However, the authors focus more on their participatory projects, with only brief descriptions of significant historical and social events in each country. As such, it is difficult to compare the archival tradition of each country, especially the institutional and the legal contexts. Those contexts play an important role in describing the archival practice at the international level and influence the way the participatory projects are conducted. Therefore, adding more details about those contexts in the case studies would have strengthened this book.

This volume offers an overview of the literature and theory of participatory archives, followed by concrete examples in practice. Those examples are illustrated with images identifying people involved either in interviews about tragic social moments, or in documenting significant social and cultural events in their communities and countries. The documentation of those events through photographs serves as proof of public engagement and contributes a live aspect to the facets described, because they are captured in real time. Each chapter includes a rich bibliography guiding the reader to the broader literature related to different aspects of participatory archives. A certain redundancy exists, however, in the chapters’ contents, particularly relating to discussions about theoretical foundations. The chapters are also written in silos, without a real connection between them. Nevertheless, these criticisms do not detract from the originality of *Participatory Archives*, which contributes significantly to the archival literature, especially in the current context of digital transformations focusing on openness, participation, and collaboration.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Terry Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts,” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 14, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02435636>.

- <sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Yakel, "Balancing Archival Authority with Encouraging Authentic Voices to Engage with Records," in *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections between Archives and Our Users*, ed. Kate Theimer (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 90–95.

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## Viral Networks: Connecting Digital Humanities and Medical History

Edited by E. Thomas Ewing and Katherine Randall. Foreword by Jeffrey S. Reznick. Blacksburg, VA: VT Publishing, 2018. 284 pp. Softcover, Open Access EPUB, and PDF. Softcover, \$34.32. Softcover (color) ISBN 978-1-949373-00-4; Softcover (black and white) ISBN 978-1-949373-06-6; EPUB ISBN 978-1-949373-01-1; PDF ISBN 978-1-949373-02-8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21061/viral-networks>.

*Viral Networks: Connecting Digital Humanities and Medical History* is a compilation of nine scholarly essays on the history of medicine, one chapter on network analysis techniques, and a brief glossary of network terminology. The book's title refers to its origination in a digital humanities workshop in 2017, hosted and funded jointly by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Virginia Tech.<sup>1</sup> Participants explored the challenge of applying network analysis techniques to research using archival and rare materials.

The essays may be read independently of the foreword and introduction, but background on the workshop is integral to the publication. In the foreword, Jeffrey S. Reznick, chief of the History of Medicine Division of the US National Library of Medicine of the NIH, relates the workshop's origins to an NEH-NIH collaboration (2012–present). The two federal funding agencies set out to foster a series of projects involving humanities scholars, librarians and archivists, and health-care professionals in a joint effort to expand humanities research based on records in the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine (NLM). Underwriting four projects since 2012, the collaboration lends high-profile support for scholars' use of the NLM's considerable holdings.<sup>2</sup> Reznick's own scholarship on twentieth-century health and medicine positions World War I as a transitional time for material and social culture, with concomitant shifts in humanitarian and memorial practices (p. 261). The turn toward data-driven research practices parallels transitions in material and social culture one century later.

Coeditors Dr. E. Thomas Ewing and Katherine Randall discuss the themes of scholarly networks and network analysis in the book's introduction. Citing the use and misuse of network analysis in the early days of the AIDS crisis,<sup>3</sup>