

From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives

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In 1881, Douglas Brymner, the first Dominion Archivist, began to articulate a “noble dream” of Canadian archives. Stressing the importance of documenting all aspects of Canadian society, Brymner envisioned the Public Archives of Canada as a storehouse of national history, containing documents (and copies of documents located in foreign repositories) from both the private and public spheres. Under his stewardship and that of his successor, Sir Arthur Doughty, the main mission of the Archives was that of acquiring and organizing archival records of national historical significance. In these early years, activities now known as outreach or public programming were limited to the preparation of research guides and assistance to historians as they performed their research.¹ This view dominated the management of archives for most of the twentieth century.

Since Doughty’s time, and perhaps to some degree as a result of his perspective, an intimate relationship between archivists and the records entrusted to their care has developed. This relationship is reflected in archival scholarship and theory, the bulk of which has attempted to establish objective, and even scientific, principles and methods of dealing with documents. In the preoccupation with the assumed objectivity of the record, few archivists have been prepared to regard the seemingly subjective realm of the user as an important area of archival inquiry.

It was not until the 1980s that archivists began seriously to reconsider public service and examine their obligation to make holdings and related services accessible to the public. Recently, the role of public programmes in archives and archivists’ commitment to public service have been the object of intense debate.² Nevertheless, the archival profession has remained somewhat reluctant to accept the place of public programming in the day-to-day operations of archival institutions and in the body of archival theory. Although a certain amount of this activity now is judged to be necessary, public programming in general continues to be viewed primarily as a luxury.

This article challenges the traditional view. It argues for a more inclusive definition of public programming, commonly perceived as only reference and outreach, and for an understanding of the necessity of larger, more broadly based public programmes in the realization of archives’ mission and function in society. To rescue the notion of public programming from the periphery of the archival tradition, we propose the integration of

public programmes into what have been regarded as core archival functions, and call for a greater appreciation on the part of archivists for the necessity of refining past practices and developing new approaches in the daily interaction with their various publics. At the heart of this new understanding of public programming are four key concepts, which will be discussed in greater detail below: image, awareness, education and use.

The purpose of archives conventionally has been defined as the identification, acquisition, description, preservation and provision of access to records of permanent value. The achievement of this mission, conferred upon archivists by society, is subject to the constant challenges presented by the gradual evolution of record-keeping practices, the medium of the record, the nature and number of record creators, and the changing information needs of society generally. The history of the archival profession therefore has been one of constant re-evaluation, adaptation and adjustment. The most recent and obvious example of this evolution is the effect electronic records have had on how archivists and their sponsors manage information. The physical fragility of this medium has forced the archival and information management professions into a more active role in identifying and preserving records. Electronic records have necessitated the development of information management policies that, while substantially adding to the range of archivists' responsibilities, have dramatically increased the immediacy of their work. In this area, archivists now work directly with creators of information to ensure the survival of historically important information.

Within the contemporary context, it is increasingly clear that archivists, as keepers and communicators of information, must interact with all of the many groups that make up their constituency, whether they be creators or users. In addition to simply enabling history to be written, the archival record has become a valuable tool in the decision-making process of governments and other organizations, in formal and popular education programmes, and in bringing to life our cultural heritage. While interaction with the public has been a long-standing tradition in archives, it never has been as diversified as it is now. The public service function in Doughty's time was limited, perhaps out of necessity, to the advancement of historical study through the publication of reference and general guides, and the provision of access to records.³ The occasional exhibition complemented this narrow range of outreach activities. This vision remained static for more than fifty years, as archives continued to be the domain of academic historians. The pre-eminent role of this user group in archives and in the affairs of archivists continued well into the 1960s.

Since then, there has been a marked increase in popular interest in archives and in cultural activities in general. Due to the demands of a more educated and prosperous population, a democratization of culture has occurred. This phenomenon was encouraged by the policies of the federal government, which, leading up to and following the Centenary celebration in 1967, sought to make the national heritage accessible to all Canadians, wherever they lived. Mechanisms such as the discovery caravans, the Museums Assistance Program, and the national and historic park systems were used to promote national optimism in the face of the perceived threats of separatism and American cultural influence. As a result of heightened interest in culture and in the affairs of cultural institutions, not only did the public become aware of the increasing availability of information and cultural services, but also it began to insist on its right to the efficient delivery of these services.⁴ It is interesting to note the accompanying shift in the focus of scholarly research, as more and more historians, for example, began in the

early 1970s to explore topics in social history and to use previously neglected sources documenting the experiences of everyday Canadians.⁵

The 1980s witnessed a parallel trend toward what may be called a commercialization of culture, which was partly driven by interest, actively encouraged by governments, in greater popular participation in and responsibility for government-sponsored activities. Within this context, and in light of concurrent decreases in government funding and increased competition for it, cultural agencies, archives included, have had to turn to the general public to justify the financial support of their sponsors. The cultural manager of the eighties has become a marketing executive, providing cultural products to a heterogeneous audience.

In sum, the relationship between archivists and their constituency has become more symbiotic. Archives attempt to shape the services they provide to the specific needs and expectations of their users; not only to fulfil information needs but also to guarantee public support. In assuming a more assertive stance they also are beginning to try to focus, and to some extent, mould user needs. The public, meanwhile, is becoming increasingly knowledgeable and demanding.⁶ The emergence of a "user-centred," as opposed to a "materials-centred," approach to archives is in some ways the result of such pressures. Concern with the use of archives has given rise to a debate in the profession about the relative importance of use and the need to integrate considerations of use into other core archival functions. Archivists are examining the extent to which questions of use must be considered in addressing issues of acquisition, appraisal and arrangement and description, as well as public programming.⁷

All of the above factors point to a new recognition of the importance of archivists' responsibilities with respect to the public and to the necessity of clearly defining our obligations and goals in this area. As a first step, we propose a comprehensive definition of public programming as those activities that result in direct interaction with the public to guarantee the participation and support necessary to achieve an archival repository's mission and fulfil its mandate.⁸ In this context public programming has four components. It supports the activities of the institution by creating an image of archives, promoting awareness and appreciation of archives, ensuring the education of users and the general public about the value and potential use of archives, and enabling use of the archival record.

The nature and scope of public programmes in an archival institution are determined by the mandate of the institution. Above all, archivists have the responsibility of serving the people who sponsor their activities. This service, however, should be more than merely passive; that is, responding to requests for the use of archival records. Whether as members of large or small organizations, archives can promote the activities of their sponsors and increase appreciation for the work these organizations perform, thereby helping them achieve their goals.⁹

Public archives are faced with the greatest challenge in providing public programmes. As government repositories, they must ensure visibility and accessibility vis-à-vis the government's constituency.¹⁰ While it may be acceptable for a private repository such as the Cambridge University Library to decide that "use . . . is determined either by membership of the University or by producing evidence of an applicant's scholarly need and academic integrity,"¹¹ public archives cannot be discriminating or selective in delivering public programmes. Rather, public institutions must ensure, indeed encourage, equal access to facilities and services, whoever the client may be.¹²

If we accept the premise that archives play a public role in modern society, we must consider the perceptions people have of archives and of the people who work in them. Judging from recent debates in the archival community about image and about how we, as archivists, are perceived by the public, this increasingly is an issue of concern to the profession. The proliferation of articles on this subject in journals such as *Archivaria* and *The American Archivist* attest to archivists' continuing struggle to define their professional identity.¹³ Archivists traditionally have been hesitant and uncomfortable with the image issue, preferring instead to concentrate on what have been viewed as the core functions of acquisition, appraisal and arrangement and description. The time has come to discard this outdated attitude and recognize the harm it has done both to archivists and to the people we serve.

There can be no doubt that the public perception of archivists directly reflects the image that we consciously or unconsciously project. This holds true for archival institutions as well as for archivists, and has serious implications in our era of retrenchment and scarcity of resources. As David Gracy noted in his address to the annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1986, the question of image is closely tied to the securing of resources — the way in which our resource allocators view us can have a profound effect on our collective future.¹⁴ That perception, as it currently exists, should be of great concern to us. A Society of American Archivists survey of resource allocators, undertaken by the Society's Task Force on Archives and Society, found that we "are well liked for our passivity; we are respected for our service, but service is by implication reward enough; we are admired for our curatorial ability, meaning we are quiet, pleasant, and powerless."¹⁵ As noted in a recent article on the subject, "even our positive qualities actually become liabilities."¹⁶ The image issue, therefore, should not be neglected. On the contrary, at the corporate level, institutional image is a vital part of ensuring that we have sufficient resources to do the job we have been mandated to do. In a business setting, no one would question the importance of image and the obvious negative effects of a poor one; the time and money spent by private industry on public relations attest to this fact. For cultural institutions, this concern has become just as important; without public involvement and interest, fostered in part through effective public relations, these institutions will become irrelevant — in effect, bankrupt. Viewed in this light, the necessity of engaging the cultural marketplace must be regarded as a central concern of any archival institution.

Furthermore, it follows that archivists individually must reassess their public programming skills and consider the image they may unconsciously project. The impact that an individual archivist can have on the image of the institution for which he or she works should not be ignored, whether it be in the context of acquisition negotiations, reference interviews or meetings with sponsors. Archivists must work at ensuring that the popular impression of archivists, a caricature with which all archivists are familiar, is not confirmed. In general, then, public programming strategies must promote an image of archives as dynamic and vibrant organizations worthy of support and able to fulfil the current and future informational and cultural needs of both their sponsors and the general public.

Obviously, archives and archivists must do more than cultivate an image or guarantee visibility. In moving beyond image, which deals solely with the impression people have of archives, we need to promote awareness of archives; that is, knowledge of our function and mission and some basic familiarity with the material we hold. Publication

and exhibition activities, for example, fall under the rubric of awareness. In this sphere, archivists create as much as respond to needs. The goal of awareness programmes, therefore, is to do more than garner support for archival work. Through awareness-building activities, archives encourage the participation of individuals and other organizations in their endeavours. This participation is fostered by actively exploiting the richness of archival holdings and by enhancing programmes in order that they touch all sectors of our constituency.

The development of such awareness endeavours must take into consideration the greater social context of archives. In reaching out to the general public, archives enter a competitive environment and must behave accordingly. This may mean borrowing from proven marketing techniques, becoming less conventional in some cases, or even “flaunting” our records.¹⁷ We must not assume that others share our esteem for the archival record. While heritage may be valued in a general way, too few people understand the role of archives in enhancing that heritage. Fewer still understand other functions and uses of archives; for example, their legal, fiscal and administrative value. This, in part, is the result of our continuing failure to explain our profession and the significance of the records in our custody. Even in the area of exhibitions, the awareness activity with which we have had the most experience, we have not been as successful as we might be. As noted by Nigel Yates in a 1988 article in the *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, “most archive exhibitions are effectively designed, subconsciously I am sure, to appeal to other archivists rather than the general public.”¹⁸

Some of the most ambitious and innovative ventures in the area of awareness have been within the framework of the public school system. The programmes developed by the Region of Peel Archives and the Saskatchewan Archives Board are good examples of projects undertaken in this context.¹⁹ These programmes have attempted to develop an appreciation for archives through the teaching of history. The relevance and, indeed, existence of the archival record is demonstrated, using, for example, local history topics. The emphasis here is on archival records as basic building blocks, as opposed to illustrative accessories.

A common argument against awareness activities has been that they take away from the basic functions of archives, both in resources and in prestige. Effective programmes aimed at heightening awareness, however, should result in the opposite. For example, they enable the participation of those individuals who may be interested in archives but not necessarily in archival research; that is, they provide the infrastructure necessary to satisfy curiosity about our holdings while expending, in the long run, a minimum of effort and resources. Furthermore, they can help to build an appreciation for the importance of other archival functions, such as appraisal, selection and arrangement and description.

Through awareness, then, people learn of the usefulness of archives. The support that can be garnered in illustrating this usefulness should not be ignored, nor should we underestimate the associated potential to encourage actual use of documents. Whereas awareness, however, relies on the intervention of archivists and public programming specialists (in essence, the manipulation of archival records to develop projects to heighten awareness), use connotes a much more independent activity. In conducting their research, whatever its nature, users themselves build research products rather than absorb the results of the work of archival professionals. It is the user who pronounces the

final judgement concerning the importance of archival documents, blending the information contained therein into a coherent pattern of understanding. In awareness activities, it is the representative of the institution who chooses relevant material and interprets its significance for the public.

Before they effectively can utilise our services, however, many would-be users of archives require more than a basic familiarity with our operations. It is not enough to know that there may be pertinent or interesting information in archives; a user must learn how to retrieve that information. We therefore have a responsibility to provide a systematic education that teaches, at least in a basic way, the central principles upon which archival science is based — that is, provenance and original order — and in so doing, provide researchers with the intellectual tools with which to attack their research problems. Such an education thereby will be more directly geared to fostering the participation of all those individuals whom we are required, by our mandate, to assist. It is in bridging the gap from awareness to use that education has a vital role to play.

Unfortunately, relatively little attention has been devoted to this area, and for this reason the field of education is perhaps the most difficult public programming challenge for archives. In dealing with user needs, much of our effort has been in reaction to the pressing demands of client groups which we have tended to perceive as somewhat of a nuisance. Our genealogical clientele is the most obvious example of this — archivists traditionally have been somewhat overwhelmed when dealing with these client groups. Conversely, we have overlooked educational needs and opportunities concerning academic and professional researchers, relying instead on a system of one-to-one service. The essentially elitist attitude that this represents not only highlights some of our misconceptions concerning users, but also typifies our attitude toward education in general and demonstrates our failure to understand or appreciate our role as educators. In that we have been content to be reactive in dealing with certain groups while disregarding the educational needs of others, we have, in effect, missed the educational boat.

A striking example of this failure was the inability to anticipate the influx of individuals pursuing aboriginal studies at the National Archives, whether as representatives of native organizations or merely as concerned individuals. In the past, archivists were accustomed to dealing with professional researchers working on behalf of native organizations or for the federal government. Archives were able to respond well, given the more traditional nature of these forms of research. Archivists were caught unprepared, however, when the composition of this user group and their associated information needs changed, while cultural and educational barriers between archival professionals and these researchers proved to be difficult to overcome. The lack of a carefully planned programme of education placed archivists in a situation in which they were forced to react to, rather than manage, a crisis, thus considerably increasing their workload.

Archival education programmes support our central purpose as institutions of research, and thus are an area that is crucial and should prove rewarding in the coming years. The chief objective of these programmes is the instruction of actual and prospective users in research strategies and techniques. They can include introductory sessions on archives and special “how to do archival research” seminars for advanced university students, to name just two, or may involve explanation of other archival

functions, such as appraisal and conservation. As such, archival education touches on all areas and demands the commitment of the entire institution.

One of the first tasks of archivists or archives in designing effective education programmes is clearly to identify relevant client groups that may require specific guidance or instruction in the use of archives. While this may be obvious, it seems fitting to underline again the necessity of engaging in activities not traditionally considered appropriate in an archival or cultural setting, such as market analysis, that will assist in giving a focus to our efforts in this sphere.²⁰ In-depth studies of our users can be extremely useful in identifying both client groups and their various needs.²¹ Similarly, we should not hesitate to consult with professional educators, who can provide advice on user needs and on ways in which we can implement programmes.

A unique example of an archival education initiative is "l'Archibobus," sponsored by the Archives départementales de l'Orne and of the Bouches-du-Rhône in France. Through this programme, students of all levels were given the opportunity to "use" archival material in accordance with specific instructions outlined in the school curriculum.²² In 1982, a bus was purchased and equipped to deliver archival education programmes to rural communities. The programme aimed to familiarize students with archival documents and encourage archival research; to demonstrate the multiplicity and relevance of archival documents and their relationship to secondary sources; and to help students relate to their local environments.²³ Unlike the awareness activities organized through the public school system in Saskatchewan (*supra*, note 20), the emphasis here was on archives in themselves, as opposed to historical/methodological instruction.

In conducting appropriate education programmes, therefore, we should encourage greater use of archives and give our users the tools with which to exploit our holdings. In so doing, we would help to achieve a fundamental goal: to "increase significant research use of . . . holdings and to make known the message of the significance of that use."²⁴

In discussing the research use of archival documents, it may be constructive to recognize at the outset that use provides the ultimate justification for archives. In simple language, what indeed is the point of archives if the "collective memory" that they embody (to use Sir Arthur Doughty's expression) is not vigorously exploited by a wide range of users? Put another way, the essential utility and value of the information housed in archives is expressed through research use. The communication both of this mission and of information in general, therefore, is pivotal in the management of archives. Archivists are only now, through user studies and the like, attempting really to understand this process.

Conventional reference and researcher services are the most obvious ways in which archival institutions can facilitate use of their holdings. Traditional reference service has relied on the expertise of specialist archivists to provide researchers with personalized advice and assistance in gaining access to pertinent documents held by the repository. Supplementing the "omniscient archivist" have been numerous finding aids and descriptive tools of varying usefulness.²⁵ Unlike libraries our reference services have been more or less *ad hoc*, and we lag behind in the development of specific reference strategies and techniques.²⁶ The inefficiency of this approach is becoming increasingly evident. First and most obviously, this is not an effective use of human resources. This problem has reached critical proportions in recent years when, faced with growing numbers of

clients, public service in many repositories has absorbed resources that previously were devoted to other activities. Paradoxically, in many cases it has been our very success with outreach work that has contributed to this public service crisis. Increased client demands, however, have not been answered by greater human and financial resources.²⁷

Secondly, the emphasis on individualized service has diverted the attention of archivists to some degree away from the production of finding aids that are capable of standing alone; that is, reference tools which respond to the needs of users rather than the administrative requirements of archivists, and which will lessen user dependence on archivists. We have learned from the few user studies which have been conducted that many of our finding aids and descriptive tools are so complex and "user-unfriendly" that they are next to impossible to use without the mediation of the specialist archivist.²⁸ As many finding aids were conceived primarily as control or reference tools for archivists, with little regard for the needs of users, these results can hardly be considered surprising. The amount of time required to provide the personalized service made necessary by this neglect again has significant resource implications.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing findings of recent user studies undertaken in the United States is the degree to which scholars depend on what we might call the "academic grapevine" in conducting their research.²⁹ A significant proportion of scholarly work is done altogether without consulting primary sources, while other scholars tend to rely on holdings information obtained informally from colleagues or from secondary sources. The finding aids and union lists painstakingly prepared by archivists rank low on the list of reference tools regarded by scholars as useful.³⁰ Complicating these problems has been the bias of historically-trained archivists in the preparation of research tools. In the absence of descriptive standards or of recognized theoretical principles of description, these tools have taken numerous forms and formats. Judgements concerning the informational value of the records are equally various and necessarily subjective. In this context, research interests of less traditional users, such as sociologists and industrial archaeologists, are overlooked.

Finally, our reliance on informal and unstructured reference service has not allowed us to assess users and use in any systematic fashion. The absence of careful planning and delivery of archival information services (modern reference work) has taken away valuable opportunities to obtain the user response that is essential if we are to ensure that the information needs of our clients are met.

An effective reference programme must be based on a solid understanding of two things: users and use. Unfortunately, few of us really know our researching public, nor do we understand how the public uses or might be able to use the archival record. Our public statements about the changing make-up of our researchers, for example, are supported by few hard facts. At the National Archives, we have only started systematically to record and assess the occupational background and research purposes of our users. While in some cases the information gathered has been comforting, in others, the results obtained have been both unexpected and disquieting. We have learned, for example, that our genealogical clientele is stable at approximately 45 per cent of the total number of researchers. What may be surprising to some, however, is that the percentage of our registered users who identify themselves as professional historians is consistently low. These figures echo similar findings of user studies conducted in the United States. Most disturbing, perhaps, is the large proportion of our

clients whose background or research purposes cannot be easily identified.³¹ This nebulous group of researchers, moreover, continues to grow. Not only does this illustrate the changing composition of our clientele, but it also directly indicates, through our very failure adequately to categorize this group of researchers, our inability to comprehend a substantial proportion of users or the reasons for which they come to the archives. Without this basic knowledge, we plainly cannot begin to fulfil the information needs of these individuals.

In addition to embarking on a more precise evaluation of users and user groups, we must begin to reassess patterns of use and how individuals actually use archival documents. Measuring and evaluating use will be even more difficult than analysing user groups, as different analytical methods may be required for each particular client group. For example, in that academic research usually leads to publication of results, whether it be as a dissertation, monograph or scholarly article, citation analysis can be an extremely worthwhile method of evaluating use by scholars.³² Even in the area of academic research, however (in which we perhaps have been the most comfortable), we often have been extremely slow to react to changing scholarship and trends.³³ The explosion of research in social history, for instance, in large part caught archives by surprise. These new areas of inquiry have posed new questions and occasioned a rethinking of archival appraisal, both of potential acquisitions and existing material. This provides dramatic evidence of how questions of use impinge on acquisition and appraisal decisions.³⁴ We are facing similar problems with scientific and technical records and the expertise required in dealing with them, and with the increased interest in regional history, to name just two.

Academic archival research evidently involves lengthy searching and analysis of documents. Other forms of research by other client groups, however, are much more immediate and pose different problems. Whereas it may appear much simpler to respond to an immediate and relatively limited request concerning certain specific records, analysis of this type of archival use can often be much more difficult, because research benefits or products are next to impossible to quantify. Nor can we be sure that actual as opposed to stated information needs of these users have been satisfied. In this respect, David Bearman's 1989 study of "user presentation language" at eighteen American archival repositories is a novel user study in that it focuses directly on the questions asked in an archival setting, rather than on the individual posing them.³⁵ More work needs to be done in this area. As an alternative to citation analysis, circulation statistics combined with registration information may also help us to identify specific uses of archival documents, and thereby assist in formulating effective reference strategies.

A greater understanding of users and use would inform and focus all public programming activities and could be the core of a new, more synergetic relationship between the archival functions of acquisition, appraisal, selection, arrangement and description and public programming. It would, in addition, increase researcher involvement and participation in our activities. In the context of our service-oriented society, in which information and access thereto is a fundamental concern, sensitivity to use of the archival record must become a key ingredient in the management of archival institutions, institutions that will become the domain of users, rather than the preserve of archivists.

To conclude, the future of archival institutions and of the profession is in large part dependent upon the degree to which we recognize that archives operate in a fluid environment, in which resource allocators, donors, supporters and various user groups play an increasingly prominent role. The four concepts outlined above (image, awareness, education and use) offer a framework for understanding how our interaction with these groups can proceed. The continued development of public programming as an integral archival function is an essential ingredient in the evolution of our profession; it is, moreover, necessary for its survival.

Several fundamental issues must therefore be confronted. First, archivists must develop a new understanding of archives and of their work, one that recognizes that we do not operate in a vacuum and that we cannot afford to behave as if we do. Secondly, archival education programmes must prepare archivists for this reality, and provide them with the skills and knowledge to enable them to perform in these circumstances. Finally, we must forge links with the public, encouraging more immediate ties between it and the archival record; we should provide the opportunity for the public to comprehend and value archives. If we can meet the challenges of a fluid environment with a positive approach to public programming, we will be better able to secure the participation and support which we need to achieve our purpose.

Notes

- * The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the National Archives of Canada.
- 1 Ian E. Wilson, "A Noble Dream: The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada," *Archivaria* 15, (Winter 1982-83), pp. 21-25.
- 2 See among others, Randall C. Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity: Meeting User Needs in the Information Society," *American Archivist* 54 (Summer 1989), pp. 332-340 and Elsie Freeman, "Buying Quarter Inch Holes: Public Support Through Results," *Midwestern Archivist* 10 (1985), pp. 89-97. Response to these ideas has been more informal than written. The article by T. Cook in this current issue is a recent rebuttal of this new view of archives.
- 3 National Archives of Canada, *Annual Report 1904*, pp. xi-xii; *Annual Report 1905*, p. vii.
- 4 The increasing interest in archives on the part of the general public is illustrated by the changing profile of our research clientele. This shift has been documented by user statistics at the National Archives of Canada. In 1973-74, for example, 42 per cent of inquiries were of an historical nature; the percentage had decreased to 27 by 1976-77; by 1982-83, it had fallen to 20 (National Archives of Canada, *Annual Report 1982/1983*, p. 23). Researcher registration statistics for 1989-90 revealed that only 12.8 per cent of registered researchers were historians (National Archives of Canada, Reference and Researcher Services Division, *Annual Statistics, 1989-90*).
- 5 For a discussion on the impact of social history on archives in general, see *Archivaria* 14 (Summer 1982), which was devoted to this issue and, in particular, T. Nesmith, "Archives From the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship," *Archivaria* 14 (Summer 1982), pp. 5-26.
- 6 Public interest in the management of cultural institutions currently is notable. Examples are the controversies over the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Bronwyn Drainie, "Public pays the price for museum's flawed vision," *Globe and Mail*, 1989) and debates concerning exhibition policies (Rachel Rafelmon, "Are museum conservators leaving us in the dark?" *Globe and Mail*, 3 March 1990, p. C1-3). Roy C. Turnbaugh addresses the question of "reference imbalance" in "Archival Mission and User Studies," *The Midwestern Archivist*, XI, 1 (1986), p. 30.
- 7 For more on what Elsie Freeman has called the "materials-centred" approach and the "client-centred" approach, see her article, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View," *American Archivist* 47 (Spring 1984), pp. 111-123.
- 8 This definition is more inclusive than that provided by Ann E. Pederson and Gail Farr Casterline in *Archives and Manuscripts: Public Programming* (Society of American Archivists Basic Manual Series, Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1982). In this publication, Pederson and Casterline defined public programmes in archives as "any activity that contributes to a greater awareness of archives and what they do." (p. 7)

- 9 A good example of this is the work that has been done by the Archives of the Royal Bank of Canada. Archivists prepare archival documentation for bank managers' visits to local schools (we would like to thank Gordon Rabchuk, Archivist of the Royal Bank of Canada, for this information). See also Alison Turton, *Marketing the past: the publicity uses of business archives*. Record Aid series #5 (London: Business Archives Council, [1986]).
- 10 For the purposes of this paper, we have defined public archives as those created by a particular level of government. This concurs with the definitions provided by the *Guide du chercheur en histoire canadienne* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1986), in which "archives publiques" are defined as "[des] documents produits ou reçus par des organismes publics" (p. 157) and the *Manuel d'archivistique* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1970), which states "pour 'archives publiques' on entend normalement en France les dépôts d'archives, dont la propriété et la gestion appartiennent à l'État, aux départements, aux communes, aux services et établissements publics" (p. 24).
- 11 F.W. Ratcliffe, "The Past in the Present: Reference in a British University Archival Collection," in *Reference Services in Archives*, Lucille Whalen, ed. (New York-London: The Haworth Press, 1986), p. 43.
- 12 Equality of access should not be confused with equality of service. Clearly, genealogists, scholars, journalists, etc. do not (and should not) receive identical treatment. Archivists must work at tailoring reference and related services to particular client groups in order that their needs are most effectively met. On the other hand, we cannot allow certain client groups to be permitted favoured treatment on the basis of our judgement concerning the ultimate value of their research products. Equal accessibility by all must be guaranteed. The debate concerning public accessibility and scholarly research is not limited to archives. For a brief discussion of accessibility by the public to collections housed in museums and galleries, see Neil MacGregor, "All heirs to a great tradition," *Guardian Weekly* (28 October 1990), p. 26.
- 13 Among many others, see David Gracy, "What's Your Totem? Archival images in the public mind," *Midwestern Archivist* 10, no. 1 (1985), pp. 17-23. See also George Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), pp. 5-25.
- 14 Gracy, "Is There a Future in the Use of Archives?," *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987), pp. 3-9.
- 15 Society of American Archivists, Task Force on Archives and Society, "Archivists' Resource Allocators: The Next Step," unpublished report (9 December 1985), p. 4. Quoted in Randall C. Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity: Meeting User Needs in the Information Society," p. 334. The authors were struck when, during a post-ICA symposium, a speaker described archivists as "resourceful ferrets." Presentation given by Don Page, Department of External Affairs, to participants attending "Current Records, Future Use: The Public Role of National Archival Institutions," National Archives of Canada, 23-26 May 1989.
- 16 Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," p. 334.
- 17 Other cultural organizations have succeeded in transforming their promotional work. A radical example is the Canadian Museum of Civilization under George McDonald's leadership. McDonald has described his institution as a "high-performance communication machine" (Charlotte Gray, "Museum Pieces," *Saturday Night Magazine*, September 1988, pp. 11-14). The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, to give another example, has sophisticated marketing techniques to increase attendance (Bronwyn Drainie, "Bums in Seats," *Report on Business Magazine*, October 1988, pp. 83-95). Sharon I. arade of the Region of Peel Archives first coined the expression "flaunting records" at a meeting of the Reference Roundtable in Toronto, March 1989.
- 18 Nigel Yates, "Marketing the record office: new directions in archival public relations," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 9 (2), April 1988, p. 70.
- 19 Ann ten Cate, "Outreach in a Small Archives: A Case Study," *Archivaria* 28 (Summer 1989), pp. 28-35; Saskatchewan Archives Board, *Archécole* (Regina: Regina Motion Picture Video and Sound Studios, 1989). Awareness events held across Ontario are further examples of these activities. See "Paper chase of the highest order," Woodstock *Sentinel-Review*, 9 May 1990. Much has been written in the international archival community about archival awareness programmes, most of it in connection with the teaching of history. See, for example, Ron Chepesiuk, "Archives and the Child: Educational Services in Great Britain and Ireland," *Provenance* (Fall 1983), pp. 45-58 and Michael G. Cook, "Teaching With Archives," *International Journal of Archives*, volume 1, no. 1 (1980), pp. 25-36.
- 20 David Gracy, "What's Your Totem? Archival Images in the public mind," pp. 20-21.
- 21 The extent of academic reliance on informal information channels would seem to indicate our essential failure to educate and inform users (even this, our most informed client group). Along with education, we need to develop and actively publicize "user-friendly" research tools that will reduce this reliance. Finally, we should recognize that casual information exchange will continue to be an important way for scholars to learn of archival source material. As such, we need to discover ways to tap into these information channels and use them to our advantage. For more on the "scholarly grapevine" and user studies, see below, pp. 14ff.

- 22 The French programme has been the subject of numerous articles. See for example, Louis Côté, "Un projet d'action éducative et culturelle en milieu rural : 'L'archivobus,'" *Archives*, pp. 3-13; Élisabeth Gautier-Desvaux, "Services éducatifs et enseignement élémentaire. La solution 'Archivobus' aux Archives de l'Orne," *La Gazette des Archives* (juin 1984), pp. 46-58; and Madeleine Villard, "L'archivobus, Un nouveau moyen de diffusion culturelle: le cas des Archives des Bouches-du-Rhône," *La Gazette des Archives* (novembre 1985), pp. 133-141. We would like to thank Raymonde Litalien of the National Archives of Canada, Paris Office, for providing additional information regarding l'Archivobus.
- 23 Gautier-Desvaux, "Services éducatifs et enseignement élémentaire. La solution 'Archivobus' aux Archives de l'Orne," p. 51.
- 24 Bruce Dearstyne, "What is the Use of Archives: A Challenge for the Profession," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987), p. 85.
- 25 For more on the "omniscient archivist," see Mary Jo Pugh, "The Illusion of Omniscience: Subject Access and the Reference Archivist," *American Archivist* 45 (Winter 1982), pp. 33-44.
- 26 While most work in this area has been done by librarians, there is some recent work that pertains specifically to archives. See for example, Linda J. Long, "Question Negotiation in the Archival Setting: The Use of Interpersonal Communication Techniques in the Reference Interview," *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989), pp. 40-52 and Robert W. Tissing, Jr., "The Orientation Interview in Archival Research," *American Archivist* 47 (Spring 1984), pp. 173-178.
- 27 The number of archivists working at the National Archives of Canada, for example, has not substantially increased for several years. In 1986, 96 individuals in the "Historical Research" category (which comprises archivists) were permanently employed by the institution. This figure has not changed significantly since then: 1987 — 95; 1988 — 99; 1989 — 96; 1990 — 108 (the rise in 1990 is offset by a corresponding decrease of 12 in the number of term archivists employed in the institution). We would like to thank Bert Elder of the Management Services Branch, National Archives of Canada for this information. In the United States, NARA has experienced major resource difficulties. See Page Putnam Miller, *Developing a Premier National Institution: A Report from the User Community to the National Archives*, The National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, 1989.
- 28 The low use of certain finding aids, notably the Union List of Manuscripts in Canada and the National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections in the United States, has been demonstrated by various studies. See for example, *The Detailed Findings of the Researcher Assistance and Public Service Program Evaluation Study*, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, January 1985, in particular p. 32. See also, Michael E. Stevens, "The Historian and Archival Finding Aids," *Georgia Archive* 5 (1977), pp. 64-74 and William J. Maher, "The Use of User Studies," *Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986), pp. 15-26.
- 29 See Paul Conway, "Research in Presidential Libraries: A User Survey," *Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986), p. 46.
- 30 Elsie T. Freeman discusses these findings in "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View," pp. 114-116. For discussions of the relative importance of primary sources in scholarly work see Clyde Jones, Michael Chapman, and Pamela Carr Woods, "The Characteristics of the Literature Used by Historians," *Journal of Librarianship* 4 (1972), pp. 137-56; Mary Ellen Soper, "The Relationship between Personal Collections and the Selection of Cited References," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1972); and Margaret F. Stieg, "The Information Needs of Historians," *College and Research Libraries* 42 (1981), pp. 549-60.
- 31 Registered researcher statistics for 1989-1990 indicate that 18.5 per cent of researchers visiting the National Archives placed themselves in the category of "other" researchers (that is, other than professional historian, postgraduate student, undergraduate student, genealogist, federal government researcher, mass media researcher, or staff researcher). In January and February 1990, for example, 74 individuals used this category in describing themselves. Of these, 30 were conducting work-related research (provincial or local government, land claims research, work for an embassy, and professional research). The remaining individuals identified either personal interest or hobby as their reason for visiting the National Archives. We would like to thank Diane Duguay of the National Archives for preparing this statistical analysis.
- 32 For an interesting example of the use of citation analysis in the area of women's history, see Diane Beattie, "An Archival User Study: The Informational Needs of Historians Researching Women," *Archivaria* 29 (Winter 1989-90), pp. 33-50.
- 33 Representatives of the National Archives of Canada's researching community interviewed by an independent consultant in 1985 felt that the institution was not "particularly current with research behaviour and trends." *The Detailed Findings of the Researcher Assistance and Public Service Program Evaluation Study*, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, January 1985, p. 69. On the changing nature of academic research, see Michael Roper, "The Academic Use of Archives," *Proceedings of the 9th*

- International Congress on Archives* (London, 15-19 September 1980), K-G-Saur Munchen-New York-London-Paris: 1982, pp. 27-45; Marianne McLean, "Report on Findings from the Survey of Selected Researchers," National Archives of Canada, Policy Branch, October 1987; and Jean Favier, "Les Archives et les nouvelles tendances de l'histoire," *International Journal of Archives*, 1 (1980), 1, pp. 7-11.
- 34 The inventive and highly productive uses of both existing archival collections and previously unknown sources in the writing of women's history is an excellent example of this. The use of oral history, to give another example, has also proved to be an appraisal and processing challenge for archival institutions. For a discussion of the lack of archival sources pertaining to women's history and the use of alternative materials, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Raising Clío's Consciousness: Women's History and Archives in Canada," *Archivaria* 6 (Summer 1978), pp. 70-82. At the National Archives of Canada, appraisal guidelines are being finalized that emphasize the importance of consulting with users. This is judged to be particularly important with those records for which archivists may not have gained a great deal of expertise (certain types of electronic, scientific, and technological records, for example). We would like to thank Harold Naugler of the National Archives of Canada for providing this information. For a discussion of the relationship between appraisal and use, see Fredric Miller, "Use, Appraisal, and Research: A Case Study of Social History," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986), pp. 371-392.
- 35 David Bearman, "User Presentation Language in Archives," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 3 (Winter 1989-90), pp. 3-7.