

the regular recording and analysis of data, because it provides the basis for informed decision making. Perhaps more thinking about these issues will provide some useful documentation strategies for the future.

It nothing else, this book has underlined the importance of the contextual approach in archives. What Yates has done is to show the context of creation of many of the types of records that archivists come across for this time period. Systematic management and its enablers of the changing communication technology and genres of communication also cross lines and fonds. This book points to the idea that the technological innovations that have resulted in new types of records cannot be understood alone. They too must be seen and studied in light of the other changes that have enabled and required these innovations. After all, the context is everything!

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**Keeping Archives.** JUDITH ELLIS, ed. Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: D.W. Thorpe (in association with the Australian Society of Archivists), 2nd ed., 1993. 491 p. ISBN 1-875589-15-5.

The Australian Society of Archivists has published a second edition of its 1987 international success *Keeping Archives*. Like the 1987 edition, the new book is intended as a basic manual for both those who are new to archival administration and experienced members of the archival profession. The few differences between the two editions are significant. The 1987 edition, which is full of valuable practical information about archival administration, provides a very useful reference text, which anyone in the archival field can benefit from by having it close at hand. It summarizes well a wide range of often elusive literature. Those who do not have the 1987 edition can obtain this information in the 1993 version. There are three new chapters in the 1993 edition: by Ross Harvey on preservation, Helen Smith on legal aspects of archival administration, and David Roberts on managing records in special formats. (It should be noted, however, that the 1987 edition also had a chapter on preservation.) In addition there is a new introductory chapter by Sue McKemmish in the 1993 edition.

The most notable feature of the new edition is the emphasis placed in much of its new material on the importance across the board in archival administration of knowledge of the context of the creation of archival materials. McKemmish articulates this welcome emphasis especially well in her chapter. She urges archivists "to picture records in the centre of an ever-widening series of circles, representing their systems environment, organizational setting, and social context" (11). She notes with justifiable satisfaction that this perspective builds on the Australian archival tradition, which is manifest in the Australian Archives's pioneering work in provenance-based arrangement and description. She says that this work, spearheaded by Peter Scott in the 1960s, "represented a substantial achievement in this area, in particular because of its capacity to capture rich contextual information and complex relationships—of records to their creators, between records creators, and

between the records themselves—through time” (12). Barbara Reed picks up this theme in her chapter on appraisal and disposal. (She has significantly reworked her 1987 chapter on this subject in order to incorporate the ideas of David Bearman, Terry Cook, and Helen Samuels on the necessity of appraising on the basis of contextual information such as the functions of records creators.) Reed says that in appraisal the importance of provenance and contextual information about records creation “cannot be overemphasized” and “is increasingly of relevance...” (192-93). Helen Smith points out that at the centre of key legal issues facing archivists is their need to know more about the “administrative or historic context” of document creation (127). She suggests that this need to show the interrelationships between records in various administrative transactions ought to cause archivists to appraise them in a more “holistic” way than before, a perspective that supports Reed’s recommendation for a more broadly-based contextual approach to appraisal. Paul Brunton and Tim Robinson, moreover, while leaving much of their 1987 chapter on arrangement and description unchanged, conclude that with computerization, standardization, “and expanded concepts of provenance, the arrangement and description process seems poised to enter a new phase” (246).

By raising these issues and prospects more explicitly than in the 1987 edition, the 1993 version of *Keeping Archives* foreshadows a new type of textbook. It may well be that we have come to the end of the line with the traditional “manual” of archival administration that attempts to sum up the basic and settled concepts, functions, and procedures in the field. Conventional archival practices have been well described in many publications. The first edition of *Keeping Archives* is perhaps the best of many fine examples of that work. The thinking which has gone on in the archival world in the last decade has, however, raised fundamental questions about how archives are to be administered. To its credit, the 1993 version of *Keeping Archives* acknowledges these issues and explores some of them, even if still often tentatively. (By comparison, the 1987 version presents a survey of what appears to be a fundamentally unproblematic archival landscape.) It is hardly fair to expect a book published in 1993 to provide a highly developed reorientation of archival practice, reflecting the changing thinking. Yet that is surely the direction in which such texts and other archival publications need to go. It is the direction in which Reed moves, for example, while exploring the pros and cons of appraisal in accordance with function-based disposal schedules. The main strength of the second edition of *Keeping Archives* is that it recognizes the new role of provenance information. It acknowledges that more information about provenance is needed by archivists to cope with the challenges of modern archives. The archival textbook has almost by definition been considered a book of basic, practical information. The books that have done this well will still be needed; the most “practical” texts in the future, however, will have to go beyond that in order to flesh out the nature of provenance and contextual information about archival documentation and the implications for all aspects of archival administration of making this information the intellectual foundation of our work.

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