

I hope there will always be a need for a printed book by someone, somewhere, and there are problems in becoming too dependent on sophisticated technology – what happens, for example, if the automated systems break down, as they do from time to time? However, there are certainly many advantages to online access for researchers across the country and around the world, and archivists (like everyone else) need to consider other publication options as costs continue to rise.

At present, the University of Calgary's individual databases are not accessible online, but bibliographical information on each published inventory is available through the University library's online catalogue. You can reach the university's home page at <<http://www.ucalgary.ca>> and from there follow the links to the library catalogue, or go through Telnet to library.ucalgary.ca and select terminal type vt100.

Deidre Simmons also discusses the possibilities of Internet access in her review of the guide to York University's holdings in this issue of *Archivaria*. Already, a number of archival institutions are turning to the Internet to reach patrons further afield. The University of Calgary's published inventories are an excellent step in that direction. An online database would also facilitate access to the widely-dispersed Elizabeth Bishop papers, but it is hard to say how far off that may be. In any case, the University of Calgary archival inventories have set an excellent example for other institutions to follow.

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Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts. LAURA B. COHEN, ed. New York/London: The Haworth Press, 1997. 215 p. Index. ISBN 0-7890-0042-3 (alk. paper). ISBN 0-7890-004802 (pbk.)

Volkogonov was an experienced politician, a general, and a respected historian. None of this extensive background prepared him for the ethical problems of archival reference service. (Elena Danielson, "Ethics and Reference Services," p. 108)

What does it take to provide good reference service, not to mention excellent, ethical reference service with all the information-age bells and whistles? As Elena Danielson points out, this work involves special skills and ethical issues which are hard for people outside the archival profession to comprehend. Dmitri Volkogonov, director of the Russian government's intelligence archives, came to appreciate this when public controversy arose over his 1992 reference letter asserting that a certain American civil servant had never served as a Soviet agent. (The dispersed nature of the records and the fact they were not made accessible to other scholars for corroborative purposes made his

assertion suspect). Librarians, the intended audience of this volume (originally published as number 56 of the journal *The Reference Librarian*), have the opportunity to avoid such pitfalls by reading this informative, well-written, and sometimes provocative collection of essays, ably edited by Laura B. Cohen. The book should prove similarly useful for novice archivists, and even experienced archivists will find plenty of nourishing fare, although they will want to skip the fundamentals course and add a few grains of salt to the American recipes for theory and practice; most of the authors are American, although two Canadians (Terry Eastwood and Diane Beattie) and one Australian (Greg O'Shea) appear.

Three main themes are apparent in this volume: archival theory and practice, the impact of the information age, and archives in a consumer society. The fundamentals of archival theory and practice as related to reference service are well outlined by James Cross in "Archival Reference: State of the Art," Le Roy Barnett in "Sitting in the Hot Seat: Some Thoughts from the Reference Chair," and Frederic Miller in "Archival Description." Barnett is my pick for the ideal reference archivist, although I for one am overwhelmed at the thought of living up to his vision of reference work as a life-consuming calling. Elena Danielson covers both traditional and new concerns of archival ethics in "Ethics and Reference Service," and suggests that the debate leading to the development and revision of codes of ethics is more important than the codes themselves. Richard Strassberg presents an expert analysis of security requirements for archives in "The Final Barrier: Security Consideration in Restricted Access Reading Rooms." The familiar issue of preserving context is given a new twist by Terry Eastwood in "Public Services Education for Archivists," where he argues that reference service as Jenkinson's "secondary duty" is best learned in the context of a masters-level archival education programme, and best approached by an archival institution in the context of broader communications and marketing goals.

The contradictory needs to present archives to researchers in the context of provenance-based finding aids, and to provide access on the basis of research subjects are explored in several articles which challenge the tradition of archivists as "pointers" or guides. In "Archival Reference and Outreach: Toward a New Paradigm," Bruce Dearstyne addresses the fact that significant historical records are often overlooked in relevant research projects, and argues that outreach should be closely linked with reference service in order to overcome this problem. Danielson portrays archives as cultural property owned jointly by all citizens, with archivists as custodians ethically bound to give the best possible access, even to obscure documents. In "Retrieving the Irretrievable: Providing Access to 'Hidden Groups' in Archives," Diane Beattie proposes that because archivists are not omniscient and archival records are not always logically organized, we need controlled vocabulary access points by occupation, function, and type of material. David Gracy argues that reference

archivists need to shift from being “pointers” to become marketers in his “Reference No Longer is a ‘P’ Word: the Reference Archivist as Marketer.”

In the information age, when more and more archival documents can be found via keyword searches of electronic databases and the Internet, it is ever easier to connect researchers with records; the main challenge is to ensure that they see and interpret these records in their archival context, rather than as isolated facts or images. This problem is addressed but never quite solved by several of the authors here; well, there are no easy answers. Thomas Ruller gives a useful overview of establishing an archival web site in “Open All Night: Using the Internet to Improve Access to Archives: A Case Study of the New York State Archives and Records Administration.” Frank Burke recounts the history of one of the world’s leading union catalogues, which has moved from hard-copy (the old NUCMC) to CD ROM in “The National Inventory of Documentary Sources in the United States (NIDS-US).” Next stop, the Internet! Theodore Hull of the National Archives and Records Administration sees the Internet as the natural place to provide access to electronic records in “Reference Services for Electronic Records in Archives,” and takes up a strong position in favour of archival custody for electronic records, for the sake of intellectual control, access, and preservation. Greg O’Shea favours distributed custody in “Grasping the Nettle: the Evolution of Australian Archives Electronic Records Policy,” so long as schedules and standards are accepted by the creators. But how is an archival repository to achieve the resources or authority to succeed at either of these approaches?

The discussions of archives in the consumer society are refreshingly stimulating. Dearstyne presents a diverting image of the archives as a shopping mall – groan if you like, but isn’t the mall the modern Mecca? I was also fascinated to learn that archives, as victims of international art thefts, are caught up in a criminal enterprise even more profitable than drug trafficking. Perhaps a good place to market archives would be on “Crimestoppers”? For more serious treatments of marketing issues I recommend reading Cross, Dearstyne, and especially Gracy, who posits that reference archivists should take the opportunity to market archives to our “customers” and in exchange for satisfying their information needs, garner their support for archives as being vital to society and to themselves as individuals. The marketing theme runs through much of the writing in this volume, and I came away convinced that the way we present archives and archivists in finding aids, on the Internet, and in the reference room always has reverberations in the way we are perceived by our communities, and that we have much more power to manipulate this image than we are currently exercising.

The diversity of work and worldview in the archival profession is to some extent represented in this volume, although I would have liked to see some examples of the perspectives of archivists working in small community archives and corporate archives. It would also have been interesting to have a

final article which built on the preceding articles to present a comprehensive new paradigm for archival reference service, but evidently Dearstyne was not given the opportunity to read his colleagues' work, so this was not possible. Despite these (perhaps inevitable) limitations, this volume is a good source of ideas for building better, more exciting, and truly relevant reference services.

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Debates and Discourses: Selected Australian Writings on Archival Theory, 1951-1990. PETER BISKUP, KATHRYN DAN, COLLEEN McEWEN, GREG O'SHEA, and GRAEME POWELL, eds. Canberra: Australian Society of Archivists, Inc., 1995. viii, 230 p. ISBN 0-947219-08-0.

The purpose of republishing the sixteen papers contained between the covers of this volume, Robert Sharman makes clear in his introduction, is to "inform both Australian and overseas readers of the problems and issues that have troubled Australian archivists over the last fifty years and of the contributions they have made to archival theory" (p. 12). While no problem exists with the first part of that promise, as to Sharman's claim about archival theory, which is also boldly declared in the book's subtitle, there is but a minor issue. Apart from Australian archival icon Ian Maclean's pair of interpretive expositions on the work of Sir Hilary Jenkinson and others (1959, 1962), little in this collection actually theorizes about the nature and analysis of archival material – that is, about *what* archives are per se. On the contrary, *Debates and Discourses* is primarily concerned with archival methods and practice – about *how* archivists preserve and communicate the *what* – and in this regard, Sharman's promise indeed bears out, which is not to diminish the efforts of the editors in producing this book. Thoughts about the treatment of archives and the application of this thinking in particular instances are the meat-and-potatoes of archival science, which underscores the importance and usefulness of compilations like these: to introduce or reintroduce archivists to the seminal writings of a discipline that, as all others, matures through well-informed debate.

And debate the Australians do. That they do not have a monolithic archival culture is best represented by the five articles that follow the reproduction of Peter Scott's first published explanation of his "series system" method, which originally appeared in 1966. Included in the book are two pieces – one by K.A. Green (1967) and another by Colin Smith (1986) – that support Scott's approach, and two others – one by Kenneth Polden (1968) and the other by Gerald Fischer (1973) – that prefer more traditional methods. Scott's 1974 response to Fischer also appears among these pages, but excluded is the more detailed, five-part *Archives and Manuscripts* article on the topic published by Scott and co-authors in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which, being quite lengthy, is perhaps deserving of its own monograph.