A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users. KATE THEIMER, ed. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. xvii, 369 p. ISBN 1-931666-39-3.

ArchivesNext blogger Kate Theimer is back on the book-publishing scene with a new edited collection of essays. In 2010, her *Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections* received accolades for its clear and practical walk-through of "all the major Web 2.0 services – blogs, podcasts, image-sharing sites, video-sharing sites, microblogging, wikis, and social networking."[1] *A Different Kind of Web: New Connections Between Archives and Our Users* extends her examination of how archives employ Web 2.0 and proposes that we are now in the age of Archives 2.0, characterized by a focus on users and utilization of technologies for a wide array of activities, including outreach and archival management.

In her preface, Theimer outlines the aim of the book: "These essays discuss how social media are changing how archivists conduct outreach, how the concept of authority is adapting and evolving, and the opportunities social media present for enhancing and streamlining traditional archival processes" (pp. xi–xii). She hopes that "readers will come away with an understanding of how archives today are using the Web to reach new and exciting users as well as to serve their own management needs" (p. xvi). The book lives up to these ambitious expectations. Short case studies explaining a variety of social media implementation projects are well balanced by framing essays that explore some of the overarching theoretical implications and issues raised by the new tools at our disposal. Another important component of the book is the inclusion of the voices of archives' users themselves – teachers, historians, genealo-

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1   Kate Theimer, *Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2010): xi.

gists, family historians, as well as companies that digitize archival documents and make them commercially available.

The book begins with a section on the uses of Web 2.0 tools for outreach. Joy Palmer and Jane Stevenson examine how traditional concepts of outreach fit (or not) within the new context. Particularly important here are questions about who the users are, what possibilities social media offer in expanding an archives' audience, and how the archives–audience interaction changes as a result. With social tagging and more involvement of users in providing descriptive information, how is the perception of archives as authoritative and trusted providers of content altered? The authors suggest that "As we move to this new way of working, rendering our processes transparent, and making archives (and ourselves as archivists) visible, we simultaneously move from a notion of interaction characterized by white gloves and whispers, to one of dialogue, mutual learning, and respect" (p. 16). Each of the case studies considers lessons learned, from using blogs to educate the public about how processing is done and from using YouTube, Second Life, Facebook, and Twitter to engage in outreach and generate excitement about collections.

The second section confronts head-on the thorny issues of archival authority, authenticity, and trust amid increasing practices of democratizing description by allowing users to contribute content. Elizabeth Yakel hopes her essay "will foster deeper discussion rather than ... solve the core questions surrounding how archivists can best navigate through the social web while balancing the core archival issue of authority with the mantra of the wisdom of crowds" (p. 78). She rather scarily (and astutely) concludes that archival authority is being challenged on two sides: one being the democratization of archives and the "push toward more open access and Archives 2.0 features," and the other being the rise of commercial companies such as Ancestry.ca and Footnote.com, which provide "value-added" access to archival materials for a fee. The case studies in the section illustrate the ways that some institutions have used Flickr, Tumblr, and wikis to reach out and engage with wider audiences in a more interactive way than is normally the case in "traditional" archives. As the case study authors point out, the move to open up the descriptive tools to "outside" comment and contributions has not been uncontroversial. The UK's National Archives, for instance, reports some "negative responses, related mostly to trust and reliability of the information and the appropriateness of a national archives allowing user contributions [through a wiki] to enhance the catalogue" (p. 123). The National Archives of Australia, on the other hand, offers insight into the relationship of archives and user trust and also the great "power of the mashup" (p. 136), specifically the combination of "Tumblr and Google Maps and their associated APIs" (p. 137). The Australian archivists found that "by taking the risk, we have not only gained valuable publicity and user support, we have opened up the realm of possibilities for future development" (p. 136).

The third section's introductory essay by James Gerencser makes the point that "in the pre-digital world archival work processes were largely invisible to the general public" (p. 167); however, with the advent of blogs and other means of instant communication techniques and tools, archivists are increasingly informing their publics about activities that once took place (and still do in reality) behind closed doors, though they are being described and discussed more today. "Catablogs" (roughly a fusion of a catalogue and blog), such as the UMarmot tool at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst, reference wikis, and reference blogs all have the potential to enhance staff workflows by repurposing administrative metadata for a number of different functions (accessioning, description, reference, etc.), a practice that decreases the number of times staff must re-create or dig for the same information. Many an archivist wishes for a system "where the functionalities required at each stage of archival work are integrated into the same tool, or where information is at least easily distributed and communicated among different tools" (p. 176). While *A Different Kind of Web* does not offer up any magic solutions, the case studies and essays do present inspiring practical applications of available tools that could be expanded on or might serve as a foundational concept for completely new tools.

The volume's fourth section focuses not so much on specific implementations of Web 2.0 but on archives' new and growing communities of users: teachers and students, as well as companies who are offering outsourcing services to archives to help digitize content. Tobi Voigt's essay presents the results of a nationwide survey of teachers and students on the use of the Internet in the US's National History program. Of course, the essay must be read in its entirety to capture the nuances of responses, but one point that Voigt does note is that respondents consider the Internet and Web 2.0 primarily useful for finding resources, not for sharing information unless it is monitored by trusted institutions: "Archives interested in courting the History Day audience must focus on using Web 2.0 tools to make access to their collections and primary sources easier" (p. 241). However, "Creative use of Web 2.0 tools, like those by the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution, can provide the framework needed to alleviate authorship concerns and minimize hurdles to reaching a K–12 audience" (p. 241).

The remaining essays in the volume stand alone (without accompanying case studies) and deal with questions pertaining to diversity and accessibility of archives and the Web. Terry Baxter, for instance, notes a shift over the past decades in the meaning of diversity, from being "related to the gradual coalescence of a variety of identity politics groups" to "a conceptual framework that seeks to assert individuals' needs for respect, acceptance, and equal and fair treatment" (p. 276). He recommends that archives professionals take a long, hard look at the profession as a whole: How are new archivists recruited? How do we define "archives professional"? Are graduate degrees really necessary

for entry-level positions and, indeed, may they be "an impediment" (p. 298) to diversity? Ultimately, he argues, it is not the tools themselves that will open up archives to more diversity of professional practitioners and users, but rather the attitudes of those currently in the profession and a willingness to reach out, using whatever means are at their disposal to encourage diversity.

An apt complement to Baxter's essay on diversity is Randall Jimerson's reminder to us all not to become besotted with the shiny new technologies: Web 2.0 "is a tool, not a goal" (p. 305). Of course, Web 2.0 technologies have much to offer, as the other essays in the book compellingly demonstrate. However, we must balance this knowledge with an awareness to "remain vigilant to prevent such technology from further separating the information haves from the have-nots" (p. 316). Archivists must also seriously consider the nature of their role: are they gatekeepers or mediators? As researchers demand, and sometimes simply assert, more power over archival materials to enhance descriptions and provide indexing services or even content, archivists may perceive this as a diminishment of their "power" (as if there were a finite amount of power to be divided up). As a result of this trend, Jimerson contends, "*How* archivists perform their responsibilities will change to meet the demands of the digital age, but *why* they do it will remain the same.... With a wary eye on the future and a firm grounding in principles based on past experience, archivists can and should embrace Web 2.0 technologies as one part of a reorientation toward an approach to archival practice that is open, transparent, user-centered, and flexible" (p. 329).

In the collection's conclusion, Theimer argues that the "premise of defining Archives 2.0 as more than just 'Archives + Web 2.0' is that it promotes discussion of the broader, deeper, interrelated changes that are affecting the profession as a whole" (p. 344). Although I completely agree with Theimer that we in the archival profession can benefit from critically examining our roles and the nature of our work with a view to self-improvement, I do not believe that this self-interrogation began with social media. If we really want to find the origins or the roots of "Archives 2.0" (an endeavour that will prove either elusive or infinitely regressive), we should look to archival practitioner-theorists such as Terry Cook, Verne Harris, and Brien Brothman, who at least two decades ago advocated the notion of a "postmodern turn" in archival thinking. The more open, self-critical attitude engendered by such thinking, I contend, helped pave the way for archives to embrace social media.

Despite the rapidity of changes in social media trends and tools, I believe *A Different Kind of Web* will be an essential reference for many years to come for two primary reasons. First, the wide array of voices in this collection leaves one feeling enriched and energized by archivists' enthusiasm for communicating with researchers and reaching out to new communities. Second, the authors focus not so much on the details of how specific tools work, but on the possibilities they present for delivering content and creating dialogues. In other

words, the particular tools themselves appear almost as metaphors for how we would like to engage with our audiences and the services we would like to provide. On the whole, this is a must-read for those who are just beginning to think about social media in archives, as well as a thought-provoking study for those who are already engaged in the use of such tools.

Kathryn Harvey
Archival and Special Collections
University of Guelph

From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition. GIOVANNA FOSSATI. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009. 320 p. ISBN 978-90-8964-139-7.

From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition is an in-depth examination of the analog-to-digital transition as it is currently playing out in the related fields of film production, distribution, and exhibition. The book covers the subject from a number of perspectives, beginning with the slow adoption of digital technology and tools by commercial film production. It explores the impact on film archivists and conservators in areas such as the acquisition and preservation of digital cinema and the preservation of "soon-to-be legacy" photochemical films. Finally, it examines the introduction of new production practices in the restoration activities of film archives, cinematheques, film institutes, Hollywood studios, film laboratories and post-production facilities, all of which play a role in the preservation of the world's film heritage.

The author brings both an academic background and extensive practical experience to the subject. Fossati earned a PhD in Media and Culture Studies from Utrecht University in the Netherlands and works as curator at the Nederlands Filmmuseum, where she has been involved in all aspects of archival film work, including a number of film restoration projects using both analog and digital technology. But Fossati's primary interest in writing the book was not to provide a historical overview of this technological transition, much of which is already available in the numerous sources listed in the bibliography. Instead, she writes:

I propose a new theorization of archival practice. I aim to demonstrate that practice is in a constant state of transition, characterized by a growing hybridization between analog and digital technology, and that an appropriate theorization of archival practice is not only relevant and necessary, but urgent for such a transitional practice, producing ever changing film (archival) artifacts (p. 26).

One caveat is that the book was published in 2009, with a significant amount of research conducted in 2008. As a result, its description of digital technology