

**The Archivist's New Clothes;
or, the Naked Truth about Evidence, Transactions, and Recordness**

Mark A. Greene, Frank Boles, Bruce Bruemmer, Todd J. Daniels-Howell

ABSTRACT: The electronic records projects at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) have been promoted as competing visions of the archival future. This article, the work of several authors with experience as both manuscript curators and institutional archivists, challenges the perception that the UBC and Pitt models are fundamentally different from one another, and argues that they share a similar and deeply flawed conception of the meaning of archives and the mission of the archival profession. Rather than accept the premises upon which both UBC and Pitt build their models, archivists should re-assert the broader and more practical theory of archives that has dominated much of U.S. archival history.

**The Archivist's New Clothes;
or, the Naked Truth about Evidence, Transactions, and Recordness¹**

Once upon a time there lived a vain emperor whose only worry in life was to dress in elegant clothes. He changed clothes almost every hour and loved to show them off to his people. ... Two scoundrels who had heard of the Emperor's vanity decided to take advantage of it. They introduced themselves at the gates of the palace with a scheme in mind. "We are two very good tailors and after many years of research we have invented an extraordinary method to weave a cloth so light and fine that it looks invisible. As a matter of fact it is invisible to anyone who is too stupid and incompetent to appreciate its quality." ...

"Besides being invisible, your Highness, this cloth will be woven in colors and patterns created especially for you." The emperor gave the two men a bag of gold coins in exchange for their promise to begin working on the fabric immediately.... The Emperor thought he had spent his money quite well; in addition to getting a new extraordinary suit, he would discover which of his subjects were ignorant and incompetent....

"Your Highness, you'll have to take off your clothes to try on your new ones." The two scoundrels draped the new clothes on him and then held up a mirror. The Emperor was embarrassed but since none of his bystanders were, he felt relieved. "Yes, this is a beautiful suit and it looks very good on me," the Emperor said trying to look comfortable. "You've done a fine job."

"Your Majesty," the prime minister said, "we have a request for you. The people have found out about this extraordinary fabric and they are anxious to see you in your new suit." The Emperor was doubtful about showing himself naked to the people, but then he abandoned his fears. After all, no one would know about it except the ignorant and the incompetent....

Everyone wanted to know how stupid or incompetent his or her neighbor was but, as the Emperor passed, a strange murmur rose from the crowd. Everyone said, loud enough for the others to hear: "Look at the Emperor's new clothes. They're beautiful!"...

They all tried to conceal their disappointment at not being able to see the clothes, and since nobody was willing to admit his own stupidity and incompetence, they all behaved as the two scoundrels had predicted.

A child, however, who had no important job and could only see things as his eyes showed them to him, went up to the carriage.

"The Emperor is naked," he said.²

The archival profession is being sold a new suit of clothes. Not by scoundrels. Those doing the "tailoring" truly believe they are weaving a fine fabric that will enhance the archival profession into the 21st century. But this is an illusion that, like the Emperor's expensive haberdashery, will leave us socially and culturally impoverished and intellectually naked.

The archivists' new clothes are being sold to us as workwear for digital technology and global networks. Instead of using gold thread and airy fabric, the archival tailors are fashioning a "new paradigm" of intellectual wear out of assertions that archives are only "records" that provide "evidence of transactions," preserved for administrative purposes, and having little if any difference from active records. To put on this new outfit, archivists will have to strip off the fabric of cultural legitimacy and social utility that have served them well, and turn their back on the decades-long trend of melding the archives and manuscripts traditions into a coherent whole. In their claim to adapt archival method and practice to the new era of electronic records, the tailors have divorced archives from manuscripts, records from documentation, accountability from culture—they hope to outfit archivists for a respected and prosperous future.

These new fashions are sold to us in numerous articles, conference presentations, national grant projects, listservs, and—in their most far-reaching form—the course content of several graduate archival education programs. The volume of writings and presentations about the new clothes, as well as the professional stature of those who wove them, may have given the impression that there was universal acknowledgment and acceptance of the archivist's new clothes. In addition, some who appreciate the new clothes have, unfortunately, been called ignorant or worse. Most of us *want* to see a solution to the complex and daunting challenges of the electronic age, and none of us relish the risk of appearing stupid to our professional colleagues. Even so, a few souls are beginning to say "the Emperor is naked."³

We believe that the tailors are wrong in most of what they claim about archives, about records, and about the meaning of the computer revolution for our profession and work. This is not the first time that members of the archival profession have wrangled over the scope, content, and evolution of their profession, and it will not be the last. But there seems to be a particular danger that this discussion will be one-sided. Not only are the tailors publishing and presenting their views in great quantity and too often demeaning those who do not agree; in addition there is an

undeniable reticence on the part of many to rush into debates that seem increasingly technological, when our expertise is more humanistic. But in the end this is not a debate about technology, it is about archives.

The tailors of the fable pretended to weave a fabric out of air. The archival tailors have ideas of substance, but the clothes they weave are insubstantial because their intellectual threads represent only half of what is needed to create a fabric. To weave requires skeins running in perpendicular directions, a warp and a woof on a loom. The tailors insist that their new archival wardrobe can be fashioned with threads running in only one direction. They seem bent on crafting a professional identity that is uni-dimensional and exclusive. We see a profession that is and ought to be multi-dimensional and broadly inclusive—comprising a complex melange of archivists, curators, records, documents, information, management, history, accountability, culture, context, content, custody and continuum.

It is our intention in this essay to do two things. First, to challenge much of what the tailors have written about records, about archives, and about the influence of computer technology on records and archives. Second, we would like to rally the archival profession around a vision of professional “clothes” that is classic in design broadly inclusive, and updated to meet the challenge of transition from paper files to computer files.

“After many years of research we have invented an extraordinary method”

In the real world there are competing sets of archivists arguing that they have found the best method for the profession to advance into the digital age. One set is headquartered at the University of Pittsburgh. The University of British Columbia hosts another group. In addition to these two sets of archivists, there are others in Australia and New Zealand (generally allied with the Pittsburgh school). There are also several intellectual progenitors.⁴ The archival tailors do not present a single fashion statement and therefore often argue amongst themselves. What members of both the UBC and the Pitt camps have in common, however, is the conviction that archives are records (nothing more, and nothing less), that records are evidence of actions or of transactions (nothing more, and nothing less), and that only those working within the creating agency can rightfully lay claim to the mantel of archivist. We are convinced that the commonalties among the UBC and Pitt camps are much more important than their differences. Others concur that “From an archival perspective, there is little to choose between the Pittsburgh and Duranti models.”⁵ Both camps are offering the same “extraordinary method”—the fairy tale analogy, we think, is with two sets of tailors hawking invisible fabric, one set offering pockets, the other not. Together they form a recognizable school of thought.

In the fable the tailors did not have to convince a vain and foppish emperor that his current clothes needed replacing. Archivists may not be so narcissistic, but we are in many ways an insecure profession. Long before “functional requirements” were heard of in the land, long before the resurgence of the cult of “records,” archivists have bemoaned our status and debated our purpose. The UBC-Pitt school of thought argues that by accepting their definition of archival purpose, archival status will be enhanced. On the other hand, the scholars of the UBC and Pitt schools blame our current status on our old methods and mind set, averring that those ways were paper-bound and thus completely inadequate.⁶

Here, in summary, are the new intellectual and methodological “clothes” offered by the archival “tailors.”

The Universal Nature of Records and Archives.

The theoretical argument of the UBC-Pitt school of thought begins with the assertion that they have discovered the objective “nature” of records and of archives, and from it they have divined the immutable and incontrovertible “theory” of archives.

Archival theory is constituted by both the ideas that we hold about the nature of archival material and the analysis of those ideas (what they mean, what they amount to). It includes the concept of archival document, or record, and that of archives; the characteristics and properties of archival documents and of various types of aggregations of documents; the type of relationships that archival documents or records have with the persons participating in their creation, with the facts, actions, and transactions they participate into, with the functions and competences they represent, and with the procedures and processes generating them; and so on and so forth. Archival methodology is also constituted of ideas and of their analysis. However, those ideas, rather than being about the archival material itself, are about HOW to treat such material on the basis of its nature.⁷

Their theory for managing records and archives are, the UBC-Pitt theoreticians claim, equally objective and immutable. The scholars at UBC and Pitt have criticized one another for having identified different, and possibly “irreconcilable,” notions of what this universal nature of archives and records is.⁸ But we believe they are cutting clothes from the same cloth, even if the patterns differ slightly. This cloth has the following attributes (with Pitt terms placed in parentheses next to their comparable UBC terms): 1) it is the nature of business activities to create records; 2) records are by nature only evidence of activities and actions (transactions); 3) records must be demonstrably authentic (inviolable), reliable (authorized/auditable), and complete; 4) archives are records, and only records, not simply created but maintained for the purposes of the creator/parent unit. Their theory, they insist, being based on the “nature” of the things being theorized about, is therefore true.

Properly Defining “Records”. Despite their minor differences over the nature of archives, the UBC-Pitt scholars are united in dismay at the fact that until they came along, American archivists took a generally broad and therefore inaccurate view of what a record was. They quote disapprovingly, for example, one of the common and widely accepted definitions of “records”:

... any type of recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, created, received, or maintained by a person, institution, or organization.... Records are extensions of the human memory, purposefully created to record information, document transactions, communicate thoughts, substantiate claims, advance explanations, offer justifications, and provide lasting evidence of events. Their creation results from a fundamental human need to create and store information, to retrieve and transmit it, and to establish tangible connections with the past.⁹

According to the Pitt scholars, 74 of the 77 words in that definition are wrong. “Records...document transactions” is all there is to the definition, they aver. Just as important as what records are, is what they are not: information, data, documents, or most non-textual material (most maps are not transactions, nor most photos). Also excluded is anything that was not intended to be communicated to another person or organization (for example, diaries)—a transaction by definition requires more than one entity. But communication alone does not create a record, and most non-business correspondence (and much business correspondence, too) is not a record: “If two people in an organization are communicating,... and the communication does not affect a person’s right and it could not give rise to a cause of action, the communication is not a transaction,” notes one Pitt project member.¹⁰

The UBC scholars’ parallel definition for a record is not as succinct, but amounts to roughly the same thing: facts or information, saved on a medium, in intelligible form, by/for an author, a writer or originator, an addressee, and a creator (at least one of whom must be a *juridical* person), directly connected with some action, created with the intent and capacity to be communicated, and part of the whole of the documents made or received in the course of the activities of its creator.¹¹ There are some differences in the British Columbia and Pittsburgh definitions—not insignificant, though of more moment to them than to the rest of the archival community.¹²

SuperProvenance and the Inviolability of Context. Not only, says the UBC-Pitt school of thought, have archivists mistaken the true essence of a record, we have misunderstood both provenance and context. Early attempts to move from traditional concepts of provenance centered on shifting archival sights from record groups as the de facto reflections of the origins of a fonds, to the series. Part of the argument was that series were more likely to survive intact during institutional reorganizations than were administrative units (the usual delimiters of record groups).¹³

But in spinning archival approaches for the electronic age, the UBC-Pitt school of thought argues that series, too, are irrelevant. Provenance relates only to “the recordkeeping system.” The UBC-Pitt school of thought insists that it is the system—not any organizational units, not any subsets of records in the system, and certainly not any non-record documents or information that might exist in or be byproducts of the system—that defines provenance. What is a recordkeeping system? According to the Pittsburgh group,

Recordkeeping systems are information systems which are distinguished by the fact that the information they contain is linked to transactions which they document. Records may be consulted for documentation of those transactions or because they contain information that is useful for some completely separate purpose, but recordkeeping systems do not just contain data to be reused. Recordkeeping systems capture, maintain and access evidence of transactions over time as required by the jurisdiction in which they are implemented and in accordance with common organizational practices.... Recordkeeping systems support functions of the organizations, and these functions require records of transactions in order to continue daily operations, satisfy administrative and legal requirements, and maintain accountability.¹⁴

The crucial distinction between an “information” system and a “recordkeeping” system, writes another Pitt author, is that “Information systems are generally designed to hold timely, non-redundant and manipulable information, while recordkeeping systems store timebound, inviolable and redundant records.”¹⁵ The UBC theorists offer a similar perspective. By their definition a record does not exist except as part of a recordkeeping system—a record must be “part of the whole of the documents made or received in the course of the activities of its creator.”¹⁶ The UBC-Pitt school of thought is agreed that records cannot exist as records outside the context of their recordkeeping systems—and if the records are electronic, they cannot exist as records in any form except electronic.

Re-discovering the “True” Archival Mission. Based on this conception of the nature of archives and the definition of records and recordkeeping systems, the UBC-Pitt school has rediscovered the true mission of archives. Not very long ago, the mission of archives, as understood in the United States, was to identify, acquire, organize, describe, preserve, and make accessible a broad range of recorded documentation—documentation that explicitly included records and documents, material generated by parent organizations and collected by the repository, material with evidential and informational value.

It may be said...that archives are the official or organized records of governments, public and private institutions and organizations, groups of people and individuals, whatever their date, form, and material appearance, which are no longer needed to conduct current business, but are preserved, either as evidence of origins, structures, functions, and activities or because of the value of the information they contain, whether or not they have been transferred to an archival institution.¹⁷

This archival mission, combining administrative and cultural purposes, dates in the United States to the very origins of both public and private archives, and was first clearly enunciated by Theodore Schellenberg and his colleagues at the National Archives.¹⁸ The UBC-Pitt school of thought, however, says that this is *not* the archival mission, and never has been.

The writers in British Columbia insist that the mission of archives is to protect “reliable evidence of action and decision” through the preservation of “authentic documents embodying complete transactions.” At Pitt this is “the re-discovery of the fundamental mission of the archival profession to maintain evidence.”¹⁹

‘Records are created to serve an administrative purpose, usually to document a transaction or decision. Their value is directly related to their availability to those requiring them.’ And, on the other side,...’records are not created to serve the interests of some future archivist or historian, or even to document for posterity some significant decision or operation. They are created and managed to serve immediate operational needs.’²⁰

Because records are created and managed to serve operational needs, and because these records constitute archives, both camps argue that the cultural utility of archives is completely incidental to the true mission of archives. The Pitt theorists credit their Functional Requirements for Evidence in Recordkeeping project with “the re-discovery of the fundamental mission of the

archival profession to maintain evidence. American archivists have operated, for far too long, as if their mission was only a cultural mission, when in fact the real mission should be to ensure that the essential evidence of organizations will be maintained, in whatever form is necessary – including electronic.”²¹ Similarly, the British Columbia scholars write that “archival material is impartial evidence of actions and transactions,” not information, and its relevant users are “records creators, . . . related to administration and accountability.”²²

Where the UBC and Pitt Camps Fundamentally Diverge—Life Cycle, Appraisal, and Custody.

While we believe that most of the disagreements between UBC and Pitt are minor, there is one substantive issue on which they disagree. The Pittsburgh (and generally the Australian/New Zealand) camp promotes a concept of archives in which the traditional life cycle of records is replaced by a continuum. It was, they argue, thanks to electronic records that we now know that all records exist in a “continuum, one that really gets to the heart of the mission of both archivists and records managers. The continuum -- creation, classification, scheduling, and maintenance and use -- would have archivists and records managers involved at every stage.”²³ This proper understanding of records and recordkeeping “annihilates the distinction between current/noncurrent records and the concept that archives programs are concerned with ‘records of enduring value’ (= archives, not!).”²⁴ If there is no fundamental distinction between current and non-current records, neither is there then any reason to require “custody” of non-current records by archives. The outmoded transfer of custody accomplishes nothing except removing records from their original recordkeeping systems and the proper context for interpreting them.²⁵

If current and non-current records are functionally indistinguishable, and archival custody is passe, it follows logically for the folks at Pitt that differences between records managers and archivists must disappear. This merging of archivists and records managers seems to have reached its zenith in Australian thought.²⁶ But the Pittsburgh writers have embraced this concatenation as well. Electronic records, says one, “force archivists to return to their real business of managing records.”²⁷ Another posits that “In this model, the archivist becomes something of an information auditor, examining plans for systems before their development or acquisition and testing regularly to assure that management requirements, including archival requirements, are being met in the implementation.”²⁸ These scholars have de facto created a new professional title—“archivistsandrecordsmanagers.”²⁹

It also follows, for the Pitt camp, that appraisal does not happen after records become inactive. Indeed, archivists must no longer do traditional appraisal. According to one writer, “We should not be encouraging agencies to go on offering us records for evaluation prior to destruction. The decision to create a record reflects a decision about the need for it (the need to document a process) and this decision embodies all the key elements of an appraisal process.” The archivists’ appraisal role becomes one of helping the record creator decide whether or not to create the record in the first place.³⁰ Anyone familiar with farming (or at least with advertisements for farm herbicides) will recognize this as pre-emergent appraisal.

The UBC camp begs to differ in some important details. For them, the traditional life-cycle concept of records remains valid, and thus so does the concept of archival custody and a distinction between archivists and records managers. But while archivists (as such) and archives would remain a part of the UBC fashion statement, appraisal as an archival function would not.

The UBC theorists insist that there is a conceptual and physical threshold that distinguishes non-archival records from archival records. Their argument comes down, essentially, to the insistence that there is no reason for the creators to maintain records in a verifiably authentic manner. To maintain their validity as impartial and authentic evidence of bureaucratic action—their true “recordness”—for the long term, the records must be transferred to an institutional archive and protected by archivists.³¹ On the other hand, the British Columbia scholars view appraisal, whether it happens at the time records are created or at the time records are received into archival custody, as unacceptable exactly because such action would undermine provenance and risk imposing external values on the impartiality of the records.³²

Despite these differences, the two wings of the UBC-Pitt school of thought remain in fundamental agreement about the fact that archivists should be concerned only with records, that records are evidence of actions or transactions, and that records are not simply created, but *maintained*, solely for operational needs. Archives are no longer a specific subset of records (*and* documents) maintained principally or entirely for what Theodore Schellenberg referred to as “secondary value.” There is only, so far as archivists are supposed to be concerned, primary value. This is not to say that such records cannot (or should not) be used for secondary purposes, but that the decision to create, capture, or preserve them should be made only on the basis of the records’ value to the organization.

“Invisible to anyone who is too stupid and incompetent to appreciate its quality”

In the fable, the tailors explain that, “As a matter of fact [the new cloth] is invisible to anyone who is too stupid and incompetent to appreciate its quality.” This is basically what archivists are being told about their new clothes. For over 15 years members of the UBC-Pitt school have been chiding the archives profession for its failure to adapt to the modern world. In 1986, the author of *Archival Methods* told archivists that our methods were inadequate to our avowed purpose, and by 1995 he had concluded that because no one had bothered to prove him wrong he was, ipso facto, right. But most archivists still weren’t paying attention. From this one of his followers concluded that slow-witted archivists can best be compared to “a recalcitrant mule” that needed to be cracked over the head with a two-by-four.³³ A writer in Australia compared the state of professional competence and basic intelligence of archivists to those who believe babies appear in cabbage patches.³⁴ The most prolific writer at Pitt has been berating archivists for everything from their research skills and dedication to their profession, to their persistent allegiance to content over context, to their generally sloppy definition of “records” for at least the past decade.³⁵

In a review essay discussing collecting, this same scholar reports with approval Werner Muensterberger’s opinion that collecting “is an exercise intended to overcome certain personality disorders.” “I wonder,” he muses, “whether many of the characteristics he [Muensterberger] identifies are not also applicable to archives, historical manuscripts repositories, and special collections whose leaders have expressed unbridled enthusiasm for collecting,....” “That is to say,” he explains further on, “archivists may also become *obsessed* with the collecting of archives as artifacts while losing sight of their primary values, such as evidence and accountability.”³⁶

Some proponents of the UBC-Pitt school of thought go a step farther, and insist that it is not their new thinking, but our old thinking, that has left archivists conceptually naked and professionally vulnerable. The UBC writers have been outspoken that U.S. archival tradition, in following Theodore Schellenberg's pragmatism, has "betray[ed] archival accountability."³⁷ Schellenberg was not alone in stripping archivists of our proper role. Pitt theorists finger two other culprits.

In the United States, the archival profession has long been influenced by historians and manuscripts curators and there has been an emphasis on the acquisition of older records for research purposes primarily. This is not a new problem. Jenkinson worried about this many years ago in England when he wrote that "Archives are not drawn up in the interest or for the information of posterity." But in the United States many individuals working as archivists seem predisposed to acquiring records as historical information to serve specific research clienteles, and this has made them prey for abandoning basic archival principles or for losing sight of their primary objectives as archivists. Some of this has carried over to institutional archives located in corporations and other institutions, where the archivist often seems pre-disposed to acquire bits and pieces of interesting historical artifacts.³⁸

We should not simply be ashamed of our nakedness, we should be afraid. If archivists resist new approaches "we might soon be out of a job;" we face "professional obsolescence;" and our efforts are "futile and professionally suicidal."³⁹

But if we don the new intellectual raiments offered by UBC-Pitt, we will prosper in ways now only dreamed of. A UBC scholar avows that "In those countries where the authenticating function of archival institutions is recognized, they receive the bulk of the money the state dedicates to the care of its records. Only in countries where archives are primarily seen as performing cultural functions do you have chronic underfunding and dependence on agencies' goodwill."⁴⁰ A Pitt writer has argued that if archivists would just leave off worrying about memory, culture, and history and don the mantel of preservers of evidence of transactions, they would finally become valued and even essential members of corporate management teams.⁴¹

"The Emperor is Naked"

For all the claims of the archival tailors at Pitt and UBC, both about the excellence of their new fabric and the ignorance of those who cannot see that excellence, the new fabric does not provide the intellectual, functional, legal, or social cover claimed for it. The new clothes lack credibility because they lack practical substance. Beyond that, the tailors have not discovered or rediscovered any fundamental or objective truths about archives and records, and they have misapprehended not only the utility that the broad definition of records and archives have within organizational contexts but also the most basic American legal concepts of records and evidence. And rather than providing clothing that will bring honor and power to archivists, it is their tailoring that threatens to leave archives and the archival profession intellectually and socially embarrassed.

Of Rubbish and Design Concepts

It appears that the tailors have prevailed on very few archivists or institutions to don their new clothes. The UBC project has worked primarily with the U.S. Department of Defense, not only

an organization whose size and complexity (not to mention its budget) make it an exceptional rather than typical “juridical entity,” but also an organization whose rigid top-down hierarchy is equaled by no other unit of government or private agency.⁴² There have been three attempts to date, all grant funded, to implement the Pittsburgh functional requirements. These projects have succeeded in demonstrating only that the design cannot be implemented as conceived, though with a lot of altering the clothes can fit.

Why have there been so few attempts to date to implement the new method promulgated by the UBC-Pitt school of thought, and why have those few attempts failed? It is obvious to us that the “problem” is the sheer impracticality, the stunning cost, and the dubious rewards of the offerings.⁴³ As the report for one project noted, “Implementation of the full Pittsburgh model would impose significant implementation costs, and many of the features were very specific to particular views of records and record keeping.”⁴⁴ Studies of innovation diffusion are clear that acceptance of innovation requires the new technology or system not being overly complex, not ignoring extant professional or cultural norms, and demonstrating clear advantages.⁴⁵ The UBC-Pitt school instead, has created clothing for archivists that ignores existing practices and beliefs, revels in complexity, and is based on “utility” that accrues only if one accepts that auditing evidence is more useful than preserving and making accessible content. But the proponents of the UBC-Pitt school of thought believe that their theories and methods are not undermined or controverted by not being practical, functional, or implementable. According to one writer, “implementation problems are there to be overcome, not used to rubbish the design concept.”⁴⁶ One might object—and indeed we do—that this is dogma, not theory.⁴⁷

The Universal Nature of Archives Is Neither Universal nor Natural

The whole notion of archival truths and the “nature” of archives and records is itself a fundamental weakness in the UBC-Pitt scholars’ formulation. If one is religious, ethics and morality may still be universal and immutable (for example, the Ten Commandments define right and wrong immutably and objectively, for believers). But we can no longer even talk about the “nature” of electrons, for example, or the “nature” of light as if they are immutable and absolutely objective. Darwin, Freud, and Einstein blew apart the ability of most of Western society to accept such absolutes about the physical and psychological realms of our existence. Even less do human made things such as houses and cars have “natures”—they are what we say they are. Their characteristics and functions and forms change over time and from society to society. We might suppose that records and archives, also being purely human constructs are fairly plastic and pragmatic things—concepts that help accomplish some larger goal and that can be changed and modified to help achieve that larger goal.

Slightly kinder critics might give the UBC-Pitt proponents some benefit of doubt and note that the theoretical basis for their arguments come down simply to first principles. If archives are objectively identifiable solely as evidence of business transactions, and if an archivist’s first duty is to identify and preserve the probative purity of this objective “record,” then it is hard to dispute the folks at UBC and Pitt. There is, however, at least one alternative conception—a different set of first postulates. This is to accept that “archives are social creations for social purposes,” and that “they be appraised on the basis of an analysis of the use to which they are put by the society that created them.”⁴⁸ Which conception of archives is right is not demonstrable in any objective or empirical way, which is the inherent quality of first principles.

The UBC-Pitt school of thought proclaims as true something that is not susceptible to proof—it may or may not be true, but no amount of scholarship, assertion, or *ad hominem* arguments have any bearing on whether it is true. In the medieval world there was a school of philosophy called scholasticism, that tried to prove by reason what was already apprehended by faith. To do this they engaged in disputations that sought to define even the most indefinite things, and parsed scriptural sentences to the nth degree.⁴⁹ This seems to be exactly what the scholars at UBC and Pitt have attempted. The exhaustive degree to which they wish to define records, to specify requirements, and to dispute the meaning of the archival canon seem to be a perfect example of what one commentator has denoted “the dangers of over specification.”⁵⁰ This over analysis of recordness has distracted the UBC-Pitt theorists from understanding how their notions might (or might not) apply to the real world.

What Is a Record? The Tailors Fight the Law (and the Law Wins).

While first principles are not susceptible to proof, it can be demonstrated that the UBC-Pitt claim to have discovered the immutable nature of records flies in the face of the formal definitions of law in the U.S. U.S. law steadfastly ignores the careful distinctions between records and non-records that the writers at UBC and Pitt insist are the bedrock of accountability. The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws embraces a definition of “record” that mirrors the old, general definition that so horrifies the UBC-Pitt camp. Both the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act and the Uniform Commercial Code define record as *information* (not actions or transactions) on a tangible medium.

(7) "Electronic record" means a record created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.

(15) "Record" means information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in perceivable form.⁵¹

The Commissioners also reject the notion that a paper print-out of a record originally in electronic form is ipso-facto not authentic or trustworthy evidence. “If data are stored in a computer or similar device, any printout or other output readable by sight, shown to reflect the data accurately, is an ‘original.’”⁵²

As for the notion that the burden of proof for the authenticity of a record (or other document) depends on strict definitions of records or on proving recordkeeping bonds or on implementing functional requirements or on comprehensive audit trails demonstrating “continuity of management,”⁵³ the Commissioners aver that the only thing necessary is that records and documents be created in the “regular practice” of business and that there be *no overt reason to suspect the trustworthiness of the record*:

Record of regularly conducted business activity. "Business," as used in this paragraph, includes business, institution, association, profession, occupation, and calling of every kind, whether or not conducted for profit. A record, of acts, events, conditions, opinions, or diagnoses, made at or near the time by, or from information transmitted by, a person with knowledge, *if kept in the course of a regularly conducted business activity, and if it was the regular practice of that business activity to make the record*, all as shown by the

testimony of the custodian or other qualified witness, or by certification that complies with Rule 902(11) or (12), or with a statute providing for certification, *unless the sources of information or the method or circumstances of preparation indicate lack of trustworthiness*. A public record inadmissible under paragraph (8) is inadmissible under this exception.⁵⁴

Most state laws already conform to these same rules of evidence.⁵⁵ There is little basis in law to follow UBC-Pitt into a narrow definition of record. Nor is there reason to believe that government, business, or organizations will embrace their theoretical archival conception of records. As one effort to create an electronic records management approach for a provincial government noted, “Theoretical archival science contains a number of formal definitions of ‘electronic records’. From a practical perspective, the project cannot influence what agencies preserve as records. A record, to an agency, is simply whatever information they need to preserve.”⁵⁶ It will be ever thus, and there is no reason to require it to be any different.

Mistaking the Self-Sufficiency of Records in Business, Law, and Culture

The UBC-Pitt peculiar ideas about the fabric of records and recordness goes far beyond matters of basic definition. It is a foundation of their conception of archives that records are not simply the center, but the entirety of the archival universe. The folks at UBC-Pitt have defined “record” in such a way as to exclude large amounts of the most important documents and data used by researchers—from personal diaries and family photo albums to data warehouses and oral histories.⁵⁷ Records provide, the UBC-Pitt writers say, authentic evidence and therefore ensure accountability. Records, they conclude, are both necessary and sufficient for the conduct and audit of business, for the administration of civil and criminal justice, and the documentation and understanding of culture.

In the realm of business, the UBC-Pitt theorists acknowledge the existence of, but exclude from the archivist’s purview or concern, non-record material such as “information systems,” databases, non-transactional communications, and all non-business transactions. The record is all.

Justinian, in his code, defined archives as the place where evidence of actions is preserved uncorrupted. In the past physical custody of the documents was sufficient to fulfill such responsibility. No more. We have to be on the forefront, with the knowledge that we only have to guide those who create and maintain contemporary records. We should explain to those who create observational and experimental databases for example where the records are. We should help those who design workflow rules [and] databases how to assign responsibility for accountability purposes, how to segregate duties for audit purposes, how to distinguish the phases of a records generating procedure, and we should explain [to] historians and writers who are now working in computer environments how to deal with their electronic output, *and probably we should go to primary schools to explain [to] the kids that... use computers when they create a record and when they do not*.⁵⁸

Besides the odd vision of archivists trying to teach grammar school kids what records are and why they should care, this fixation on records as the sum total of archival concern flies in the

face of substantial evidence that even within business and government it is non-record material at least as much as records that are relied upon by the creators for conducting business.

Consider just two examples. When business archivists queried each other about their companies' use of archives material to support decision-making, one of the few examples that could be cited was "when the company decided to take a close look at growing the business through acquisition versus growing the business through new product development. To support this study, we conducted an extensive investigation into Kraft's history of growth strategies. In that case, our best resource turned out to be our oral history collection...."⁵⁹ Unfortunately, according to the scholars at UBC, oral history interviews "are no evidence.... Their place is not in archives, and it is not part of the responsibility of archivists to conduct such an activity." Further, "the result of such activity is not archival and cannot be used as evidence of its content by any researcher, no matter how sloppy such researcher is."⁶⁰ By the same token, databases and data warehouses are by the Pitt writers' explicit definition non-record and therefore non-archival. Yet state government agencies and corporations of all sizes are pouring more and more resources into data warehouses because sharing data for re-use and re-analysis is often more important to the efficient and effective functioning of an enterprise than elaborate audit trails for routine records.⁶¹

At UBC theorists vigorously reject the assumption "that culture needs evidence less reliable than law does," and insist that historians, genealogists, and other researchers not only need but demand "records" with full evidential authenticity.⁶² Yet much that the UBC camp would exclude as records because they are not authentically evidential, would in fact be accepted evidence in most U.S. courts. Both because they were never intended to be communicated, and because they were removed from their full recordkeeping context, the Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination, the Nixon tapes, and Bob Packwood's diaries would not be "records" by the UBC definition—but all of them would be admitted into evidence in a court of law.⁶³ More broadly, it is a fact that the legal profession makes no distinctions between "records" and "data" when advising clients about legal liability and "minimizing corporate exposure in the computer age."⁶⁴ The claim that culture requires evidence as reliable as the law does is probably true, but only because the law admits evidence far less reliable than the UBC-Pitt school of thought insists it should.

The UBC-Pitt school's belief in the sufficiency of records extends beyond a dramatic over-estimation of the importance of records in the conduct of business and judicial affairs. "*The preservation of the evidence will provide more than is necessary for historians and others to conduct their research, and this focus on evidence...is much more manageable and crucial to the archival mission,*" say the Pitt scholars.⁶⁵ Historians beg to differ: "Current records managers and archivists must not allow the limits of their imagination to constrain the kinds of information they preserve because historians may wish to tap a wide range of possible sources.... We need to preserve the past for the future in as great a variety as possible."⁶⁶ "Records" may be necessary, but they are *not sufficient* for administration, law, or culture to be sustained.

Where once archives, in the U.S. at least, were repositories both for "records" of accountability and for a much broader documentary heritage, the UBC-Pitt school of thought strips away everything from the archival purview except their specialized definition of records. Ironically,

their vision of the record responsibility of archivists is at once too expansive and too narrow to provide decent cover for the profession.

We Had to Destroy Archives in Order to Save Them.

Of course, for the folks at Pitt there is no longer anything appropriately called an archives (either in terms of a collection or in terms of a physical space), so providing any functional intellectual and methodological clothing for archivists may be beside the point. Since there is no longer any difference between active, inactive, and archival records then for all practical purposes any previously valid distinction between archivists and records managers has been abolished. Ultimately the UBC-Pitt school has succeeded not simply in rendering invisible the traditional methods and practices of archivists—they make archivists and archives disappear.⁶⁷ How this transformation improves the status or power of archivists is a question left begging. Records managers are hardly over-paid power brokers, and auditors are paid and respected even less than lawyers.

The UBC writers stand apart from those at Pitt (and some in Australia) in insisting that there is a conceptual and physical threshold that distinguishes non-archival records from archival records. In this argument the “distributed custody” scholars have by far the stronger case. If the only purpose of archival custody is to somehow insure long-term the same “authenticity” and accountability of records that they enjoyed during their active life, what’s so special about an archives?⁶⁸ Of course, if archives have a broader meaning than just auditors of authentic evidence of business transactions, then the rhetorical victory of the distributed custodialists is moot.

So, “What’s the Matter With the Clothes I’m Wearing?”⁶⁹

It seems to us, then, that the “functional requirements” proposed by the UBC-Pitt school of thought for trustworthy and authentic recordkeeping systems are neither functional nor required. If the Archivist’s new clothes are not the answer, are our old clothes still serviceable, dignified, even fashionable? Are no changes or improvements necessary? Archivists and the archival enterprise *must* evolve, to be sure. But the changes we face are at once more expansive than electronic records, and less dramatic than claimed by our archival tailors.

The Warp And Woof: The Fabric of a Sound Archival Enterprise

In the United States, for many decades the archival enterprise has been conceived as encompassing both the “archival” and curatorial roles. Though distinctions between the two roles were acknowledged, the commonalities were emphasized. Institutional archivists were assumed to have a professional responsibility to preserve and make accessible material for “historical” purposes (even if only within their creating agencies) and not simply for “accountability” purposes. Collecting curators were assumed to have professional responsibility for managing their collections as an archivist would—respecting provenance and original order, organizing large collections into series, etc.⁷⁰ In Canada, too, there has been a strong trend toward accepting a broader rather than narrower definition of the archival enterprise: the Canadians refined the concept through the definition of Total Archives. Total Archives eschews separation of archives from “manuscripts” (ie, public records from private records), records from documents (and other formats).⁷¹

As we have seen, the UBC-Pitt school of thought takes a much more bifurcated view of the archival world. They embrace a view expressed most recognizably by Hilary Jenkinson in the 1920s, in which the terms “archives” and “archivist” have a very narrow meaning. Archives, for Jenkinson and for the theorists at UBC and Pitt, consist solely of material generated and/or accumulated by organizations in the course of business, and retained by that organization. “Real” archives in their view are completely separate from curatorial or historical concerns. As one proponent of the UBC-Pitt school put it quite bluntly,

I do not accept the view that it is the role of an archivist is "to preserve history," as Rob Spindler puts it. This may be the mission of manuscript libraries, but then I don't think they are archives in the true sense anyway. They may use archival techniques, but that does not make an archives.... The role of archives is the ensuring the creation and continuing preservation of evidence for the purpose of accountability.⁷²

This distinction weakens rather than strengthens the archival enterprise, and deserves to be countered aggressively.

Content and Context.

The folks at UBC and Pitt are adamant that context—which they define as the complete recordkeeping system in which any given record is embedded—is the Holy Grail of archival endeavor. When Scott Armstrong sought to use National Security Council e-mails as records of illegal acts by the Reagan administration, this was according to the UBC-Pitt school a perfect example of the essence of “archivesandrecordsmanagement” principles—evidence of transactions preserved in their original context, and used for accountability. When a historian uses the content of a Thomas Jefferson letter to understand the President’s views on slavery, despite the fact that the letter is now completely out of context in the hands of a private collector, this to the tailors is illegitimate, or at any rate not “archival”.⁷³

The proponents of the UBC-Pitt school of thought are largely wrong about both ends of the spectrum. On the one hand, the “recordness” of the PROFS e-mail was important not principally because it established the authenticity of the information but because it determined whether the e-mail fell under laws governing records destruction; private diaries (non-records) kept by Oliver North and/or President Reagan attesting to the same actions would also have served as legal and historical evidence. On the other hand, despite the assertions of the UBC-Pitt scholars that “When a researcher goes to an archives, s/he expects to find material inherently reliable because of its circumstances of creation,”⁷⁴ most researchers (and apparently most Federal judges) most of the time expect to find material inherently reliable because there is no reason *not* to consider it reliable—regardless of whether it is found in an “archives,” in a manuscript repository, in a private collection, or in a landfill. If in doubt ask any genealogist pouring over alienated courthouse records in a university special collection, or any scholar searching for every last Lincoln or Hemingway letter in scattered collections across the globe.

The pure and complete context that the UBC-Pitt theorists value so highly is, in fact, of *primary* value to almost nobody. A substantive individual letter from Thomas Jefferson preserved in the Minnesota Historical Society remains a useful source about Jefferson despite being alienated from all context. A good scholar would place it in the context of other Jefferson material at other

institutions, and this would enhance, but not create, its informational value. Similarly, a chunk of alienated naturalization records in a county historical society are completely out of context of the rest of those records in the state archives, but those alienated records still contain information about naturalizations that many people will and do use. Conversely, any university archivist who tried to answer the development officer's query for "information on the origins of our program in China" would be quickly unemployed if she answered with "well, to really understand that you'll have to have the complete context, so you'll have to read three boxes of records from the President's Office, the Board of Trustees, and the Director of the China program." Context can overwhelm information as much as it can support information.⁷⁵

Considering the importance they place on context, the UBC-Pitt scholars do not seem to understand the context in which records and documents are actually used in the U.S. One of these scholars has asserted that "Electronic recordkeeping systems will make it difficult to acquire electronic records unless we have substantial support from the records creators or unless we want to become the equivalent of pothunters spoiling archaeological sites by taking bits and pieces of the recordkeeping systems through paper printouts and other snapshots. Who wants this stuff?"⁷⁶ To equate the preservation of paper printouts with the unethical and immoral looting of archaeological sites is simply untenable, as well as offensive. Archivists have always taken "bits and pieces of the recordkeeping system" whenever they have done any appraisal at all—appraisal by definition is selection from the whole (or such of the whole as remains to be selected from). Archivists seek to understand recordkeeping systems expressly so as to identify those portions that most effectively document an organization, business, or event. The analogy is also incorrect about the value of records selected through appraisal. Not only do researchers value recordkeeping systems when appropriate to their work, people also want "bits and pieces" of recordkeeping systems, when those bits and pieces have information they want and can use.

In the final analysis, context is a means to an end, not the end in itself. The end is not context but rather useful, accessible, and reliable information. Some degree of context is necessary for achieving that end. But context is not so fragile and system-bound as the UBC-Pitt folks (building on Jenkinson) perceive. The alienated naturalization records *have* context, even if their original fonds is 500 miles away. And a printed e-mail (with the proper embedded date and address fields) can be accurately interpreted even if it is alienated from the e-mail system that generated or received it—there is no better (or more just) example than the printouts of individual e-mail messages submitted as evidence by both parties to *United States v Microsoft*.⁷⁷

Documents and Records

The "old" and sturdy clothes of archivists are further strengthened by the warp and woof of documents and records. Archives do and should comprise much more than records as narrowly defined by the tailors. Why? Because non-records *matter*. As we have already indicated, virtually any institutional archivist or collections curator (or trial lawyer or judge) knows from countless experience that non-records—whether oral histories or non-transmitted documents or compilations of data—are demanded and used for operational, historical, and legal purposes. As one commentator put it, our professional identity "must show how you take care of things that matter to people."⁷⁸ UNESCO, in mapping a strategy for preserving the world's heritage, was simply stating what used to be self evident:

It recommended, at its first meeting that the concept of documentary heritage be extended to include, besides manuscripts and other rare and valuable documents in libraries and archives, documents in any medium: in particular, audiovisual documents, computerized recordings and oral traditions, the importance of which varies from region to region. In all these fields there is a need for protection, sometimes as a matter of urgency if we are to prevent collective amnesia and set up world cultural exchange.⁷⁹

Thus the United Nations, on behalf of the global community, sees the archival mission as preventing collective amnesia, not auditing narrowly defined records. Terry Cook, who has done as much as any archivist to improve the selection of government records, is adamant that a records only

approach privileges the powerful in society, those who can own (or can afford to implement) record-keeping systems. If everything but a transactional “record” is outside the purview of archives, then archival holdings will by definition only be drawn from that formal record-keeping universe. Such holdings will therefore exclude—more than they already do -- the marginalized and weaker members of society, leaving the citizens silenced and governments emboldened. How then can archives be society’s memory or indeed serve as “arm’s length” agents for public and social, let alone historical, accountability? Our past is truncated by our self-imposed operational definitions!⁸⁰

Peoples whose cultures have been suppressed by European and American colonial regimes and for whom UNESCO speaks perhaps understand Cook’s meaning better than most of us in North America.

Non-records, as well as records, are important not solely in the realm of scholarship and culture, but for governments as well. When Australia, for example, developed a new standard (AS4390) that applies the principles of quality management to record keeping, a summary of the standard declared matter-of-factly that “The major implications of quality management for record keeping fall into two categories: a pro-active approach to the management of *information* that leads to better customer service and greater administrative efficiency, and the need for accurate *records* of business activities to meet audit requirements.”⁸¹ The law, too, requires non-records as well as records for evidence. The draft “Code of Practice for Electronic Documents as Legally Admissible Evidence,”⁸² like the Uniform Commercial Code, also rejects the narrow definition of “records” that the UBC-Pitt school of thought promotes.

Culture and Accountability

The purview of archives includes both culture and accountability. This is a perfectly natural outgrowth of the twin currents of U.S. archival tradition, public records and historical manuscripts.⁸³ But accountability in a legal sense is *usually* a relatively fleeting quality of archives—legal accountability attenuates after there is no one left alive to hold accountable or be accountable to. So it is the cultural property of archives and manuscripts that concerns not only UNESCO in its fight to prevent collective amnesia, but all of us when we mourn the loss of any archival material older than 100 years. Whether it is the ancient library of Alexandria or a thousand years of archives and manuscripts in Bosnia, it is the historical and cultural property of records we lose. This historical value of records and documents is as important, in the grand

scheme of things, perhaps more important, than the use of records to hold the Reagan White House “accountable” for selling arms to Iran.

Were the archival profession to implement the UBC-Pitt school of thought approach to archival appraisal and management, with its emphasis on evidential value as defined by records creators, the result would be preservation of records documenting the sterile functioning of institutions about which virtually no researchers, academic or amateur, fact seeking or analytical, have any interest.⁸⁴ To imagine the cultural poverty of such an archival world is to imagine a world in which the federal census was destroyed because it was unnecessary in order to document the actions of the census bureau, or -- after completion of the next census -- to hold the records creators accountable for having conducted a fair and accurate census of population. Those who would have us return to a Jenkinsonian tradition ignore the cultural context of records creation and destruction. The basic interests and goals of the archivist are inherently different from those of an agency or records creator. For most records creators, records no longer relevant to daily affairs are no longer important. The archivist is concerned with more enduring values.

Although direct concern for archival evidence of actions and for the interests of the records creator may have merit in an institutional archives setting, the UBC-Pitt theorists’ narrowing of legitimate archival work to such a setting willfully ignores the fact that there is nothing incompatible between the administrative responsibility of a institutional archives and its cultural mission. Those of us who have worked as institutional archivists know that both missions can—must—be undertaken.⁸⁵

Anyone who works as a keeper of stuff in a corporate environment cannot afford to worry too much about the fine distinctions between Record Manager, Librarian, Archivist and Document Control Manager. The key is to keep what the corporation needs. Need is difficult to define, but people in corporations know when you have something, or have organized something, in a way they find useful for the task at hand. If you keep stuff no one needs, it is quite likely your collection will be trashed, given away or simple die from lack of use.⁸⁶

The cultural side of archives has another important aspect. Though the question of our stature in societal terms is open to much discussion, in practical terms it is our cultural role at least as much as our role in accountability that gives archivists the organizational and social status and stability that we have. The UBC-Pitt writers assert that the arguments for archives as preservers of transactional authenticity “have been less frequent and often lost beneath the other argument that archives are primarily cultural resources, akin to museum objects benefiting the education of the public and other resources to be used for the study of specialized scholars. While these latter roles are real and beneficial, *they are less socially relevant than the value of archival records for accountability and evidence.*”⁸⁷ We are asked to take this assertion at face value. In fact it is simply wrong. Any review of the nature of use of historical records demonstrates that society and, more importantly, our employers value information contained in records at least as much as they value evidence of transactions.

It is difficult to measure social relevance, but we can look at public dollars being spent (or not spent) on facilities and programs as one measure. Between 1985 and 1999, at least 12 publicly

funded state repositories built new buildings in the U.S.⁸⁸ Of these, only four are responsible solely for government records. One repository (Indiana Historical Society) is purely a collecting and educational institution, while the other seven manage a library and manuscript repository in addition to a government archives—and most of those seven also undertake oral histories, and administer museums, publication programs, and education programs. In short, by this measure of social utility, culture trumps accountability. But it should be no surprise that those archival repositories with popular and successful cultural identities and programs fared as well or better in the U.S. than those with more purely “recordkeeping” programs. The popular perception and validation of archives is as preservers and guardians of history not as auditors of “records.” In a thesis studying the view of archivists in modern fiction, Arlene B. Schmuland notes that “As well as the physical definitions of archives, authors include descriptions of what archives represent. Archives, whether records collections or the repository, are history.”⁸⁹ Alas for the UBC-Pitt scholars, the American public seems to be as resistant as most archivists to our “true” mission.

In sum, the attempt to separate accountability from culture may make for a more comprehensible and structured universe, but it violates the very foundation of the archival enterprise.

The electronic records management approach may provide a cleaner, and more administratively persuasive framework within which the fuzzy universe of digital materials can be examined.... It is, at best, however, limiting from a true archival perspective, and at worst, actually precludes the identification, preservation, and use of those materials that the archivist often finds to be the richest in historical terms, those that are integral to the process of *uberlieferung* or the handing down of culture to future generations.⁹⁰

Curators and Archivists, Not Archivists and records managers

The UBC-Pitt school has merged records managers and archivists into one profession. “What we have called archives administration or management has been regarded as a subset of appropriate records management in some quarters for a long while. The distinction between the formal labels placed upon such activities do not matter much, but the consequences of adopting such a model do matter....”⁹¹ The consequences certainly do matter, and we think the consequences would be appalling. The simple and largely complete response to the suggestion that “archivists and records managers” is the proper professional paradigm for the 21st century is: archivists are not records managers because records managers are records managers.

The core difference is that archivists are concerned with the secondary utility of records and documents. Records managers are concerned with the efficient management and scheduling of records during their administrative life. Archivists are responsible for determining which records should be preserved permanently, whether for evidential or informational reasons, and regardless of whether the appraisal occurs at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the life cycle. *Somebody* has to decide, even if prior to the creation of a record or a document, were that really possible, whether the thing in question should be maintained beyond all legal and administrative (juridical, if you will) requirements. That is what *archivists* do.⁹²

Some observers have come to the conclusion that archivists are in the same knowledge/culture business as librarians and museum curators, and that this affinity is being made stronger rather than weaker in the computer age.

Libraries, archives and museums are agencies that represent institutionalised organisational practices that the different professional cultures have evolved and sanctioned. The key element around which the cultural differences have crystallised has been the different kinds of artifacts for which historically the different professional groups have assumed responsibility.... To the extent that they are [increasingly] dealing with the same kinds of ‘thing’—electronic records—we must begin to explore the idea of functional integration between the agencies—libraries, archives and museums—that are responsible for collecting and managing the public’s access to them.⁹³

Being described in the same breath with librarians and museum curators is nothing new (or unsettling) for “manuscripts curators,” but it may be for “archivists.” Yet it is exactly this close bond—indeed almost an interchangeability—that defines how the public sees us already. “With few exceptions, archives represent papers, and archives represent history. As such, archivists are the curators of papers and in some small way the representatives of history as well.”⁹⁴ It is “archivistsandcurators” that should be our compound name, if anything should.

Terry Cook has summed up well the tight connection between archivists and manuscripts curators based on a shared cultural mission. “A ‘total archives’ such as ours, which is really a microcosm of the archival profession at large and as a WHOLE, includes strong programmes in both the private and government sectors (and in all media), as well as a focus on preserving government records themselves for cultural and historical purposes long after any vestige of primary administrative use has vanished.”⁹⁵ Archivists and curators as part of the cultural community is exactly what we conceive, though we think that despite the increasingly common responsibility for dealing with cultural documentation in electronic form, archivists can and should remain a distinct identity. We agree strongly that

electronic records offers a chance to bring the public archives and historical manuscripts traditions closer together within a united world archivy focused on a revitalized contextuality. That chance needs to be seized by making our approaches to electronic records more inclusive for other segments of the archival profession and more relevant to long-term archival memory and societal needs as well as to facilitating contemporary institutional record-keeping requirements.⁹⁶

Such reconciliation is possible only if we as a profession begin with a renewed commitment to archives as cultural heritage rather than as bureaucratic evidence.

Change, Modern Technology, and the Archival Wardrobe

One Pitt writer has accused archivists of being “anchoretic,” “stagnant,” even “Jurassic” in our adherence to humanist and paper-based conceptions of and approaches to the new science of electronic records management.⁹⁷ The question for archivists is how to respond to change, and more importantly, how to decide upon the specific responses to specific changes. We should not

bury our head in the sand and pretend that the world is not changing. But neither should we accept the tailors' new clothes for the sake of change.

The Electronic Records Shibboleth

In general, proponents of the UBC-Pitt school have insisted that their "position (right or wrong) applies to all records and stands or falls regardless of format."⁹⁸ This is one of the few assertions made by the tailors that has merit. And their positions fall whether by applying their prescriptions for electronic records backwards to paper records, or by asking why the traditional approaches to papers records will not work (with some relatively modest modifications) for electronic records.

In this vein, let us examine some of the stabilities in record and document creation and keeping. Are contemporary electronic records/documents/systems fundamentally different in any way from their paper counterparts or from earlier machine-readable material?

Are electronic records more necessary? The University of Pittsburgh's functional requirements for a recordkeeping system states that such a system be "Comprehensive" and demands that "records must be created for all business transactions." A specification of this requirement states "communication in the conduct of business between two people, between a person and a store of information available to others, and between a source of information and a person, generates a record."⁹⁹ EVERY business transaction—that is, EVERY communication in the conduct of business—is supposed to generate a record.

It would be unobjectionable if the Pitt theorists were merely pointing out that it is important for electronic systems to document significant transactions, and that currently such systems often fall short. But the demand from Pitt is that "A functional requirement of corporate accountability is: (1) that *any* such business transaction *must* create a record...."¹⁰⁰ While creating and storing all those records would be possible in a purely electronic environment (it would be effectively impossible in a paper or mixed environment), would the records be any more a) necessary, b) useful, c) worthwhile? The only real answer to the question of "why do we need/want all these records" ever given by the folks at Pitt is, to preserve evidence. Why preserve all that evidence? Because you might get sued. "This interpretation of a transaction is consistent with the legal definition of the term [evidence] if the communication could give rise to a cause of action."¹⁰¹ While the UBC-Pitt school tells us that the electronic environment has forced us to rediscover the essential truths of records and archives that we tended to forget in the last half-century or so, it seems rather that the electronic environment has permitted the UBC-Pitt scholars to create a records fantasy that the paper environment never allowed.

- ◆ **Do archivists have to be creators of electronic recordkeeping systems?** The UBC-Pitt school would have us believe that without archivists-as-systems-analysts/auditors important electronic records will not be a) created, or b) functional when created. Only if archivists put on the tailors' new clothes will institutions and society have any reputable, authentic, accessible electronic records, they tell us. Neither common sense nor direct experience supports such a lofty notion of the irreplaceable and irreducible role of archivists. Electronic recordkeeping systems, just like paper systems before them, will evolve to be as "functional"

as the internal demands of daily business and the external requirements of regulation, legislation, and legal precedent dictate.

Archivists did not demand (or need) a seat at the table when paper recordkeeping systems were being created. We did not create the structure of the system, did not define the forms or the audit trails, did not dictate the durability of the media. Will recordkeeping go to hell without archivists at the front-end, in an electronic environment? No. There are other professionals whose jobs it is to worry about these things. Managers, lawyers, accountants, auditors, and IT staff, design and define electronic recordkeeping requirements. There are both managerial needs and government requirements for having certain records preserved and accessible for 10-30 years—just as there have been for paper records. Important systems are not going to be allowed to disintegrate after five years.¹⁰²

By the same token, it is well to note that best practice for records management and archives has always required active participation by archivists in records retention decisions. The role of the records manager is the creation and maintenance of efficient and effective recordkeeping systems. The role of the archivist is to determine what records warrant permanent preservation. The archivist should be involved in the records management process at whatever point such involvement makes the most sense. In many institutions it is common procedure for the archivist to meet with the records manager as soon as a records schedule was completed in order to identify those materials that should be scheduled for transfer to the archives. In an institution with an active records management program, this often means that the archivist is already identifying records for preservation not as detritus, but as part of an entire system and well before the records were scheduled for transfer.

And after their active life is over, then what? When it came to paper and film and tape-based audio-visual materials, it has not been archivists but conservators who have provided the technical expertise to properly store, repair, and migrate fragile, damaged, or obsolete materials. It has been an evolving and not always perfect relationship, but the two professions have worked with and learned from each other without losing their individual identities. If archivists are willing to maintain their professional identity in the electronic world, there is no reason why the same relationship cannot exist between them and IT professionals—at the front-end of system design if that seems sensible and possible, at the end of the life-cycle if necessary.¹⁰³

- ◆ **Are electronic records alone in having their full validity, meaning, and utility bound in their original format?** There are always those who argue that original format is essential, regardless of what that format is. It may be historians arguing that microfilm of the Nazi SS archives makes impossible the matching up of staple holes.¹⁰⁴ It is sometimes literary scholars who debate whether the printed version (which edition?) or the author's corrected proof is the "real" version of a novel. However, it is not self-evident that a paper print-out of an e-mail message is less authentic than the electronic version. The infamous PROFS case (properly *Armstrong v. Executive Office of the President*) did not decide that paper printouts were ipso facto less valid than the electronic "original," only that a) in the particular instance a printout would not include certain vital pieces of information¹⁰⁵ and, b) that in general paper printouts could not be *presumed* to be complete representations of the electronic

original. As noted above, the Conference of Commissioners for Uniform State Laws, as well as the Federal judiciary (to date) accept that paper printouts can accurately reflect electronic originals.¹⁰⁶

- ◆ **Are electronic records more dependent than other materials on the scrupulous preservation of their context within a complete recordkeeping system?** To ask this question is almost to answer it. While some archivists have argued that in a paper system appraisal at the series level or weeding at the folder or document level is pernicious and unarchival,¹⁰⁷ most archivists in the U.S. have accepted for several generations that context was a plastic and relative concept rather than a rigid absolute.

American archivists have long shared with Jenkinson the belief that interrelationships, as expressed through the ideas of provenance and original order, matter. The difference, however is that where Jenkinson seems to envision complex documentary inter-relationships of such fragility that the removal of a single document may create havoc, American archivists see inter-relationships as a concept of great vigor and vitality, which can be improved, not damaged, by judicious pruning.¹⁰⁸

By the same token, depending upon the records, the system, and the type and level of metadata for both record and system, there is no inherent reason why, in an electronic environment, the inter-relationship of records is any more or less sacred than that in a paper filing system.¹⁰⁹

- ◆ **Are electronic records easier to falsify?** The issue of whether electronic records are of more concern than paper records from an authenticity standpoint has been raised so often that it has become almost a given. But where is the beef? Even David Bearman has noted that if archivists "will be satisfied with the degree of evidential historicity they were able to achieve in paper based record systems, ...there are very few barriers to implementing successful electronic based archival environments." Or as Bruno Delmas has asserted even more directly: "Any technic [sic] or media for reproducing information can be falsified: paper as well as photographic or electronic records. Washing a check might not have any more of a trace than modifying an electronic file. It seems that electronic records must profit from the same presumed authenticity as other archival documents, as long as they are produced and kept in the offices with the same precautions...."¹¹⁰ To take only a single example, the impetus in Canada to amend the Access to Information Act in 1999—making it a crime for public officials to alter or destroy records for the purpose of "thwarting the right of access"—were several instances of tampering with *hard copy* documents.¹¹¹

Records creators have for decades made do with highly haphazard systems for creating, filing, authenticating, and preserving documents and records. In the pre-computer age record and document systems that provided guarantees of authenticity and perfect audit trails never existed. The courts long ago accepted this fact by enshrining "normal course of business" as an acceptable explanation for why particular records were or were not created, tracked, or preserved. For perfectly sound business and operational reasons, the normal course of business for handling purchase orders in a manufacturing plant would not be appropriate or acceptable for handling the codes for launching nuclear missiles. The former would have minimal or non-existent security procedures, while the latter would have intricate and

overlapping security procedures. In the electronic environment, being able to preserve and migrate—accurately and authentically—the history of who had access when to the nuclear codes is of no small importance, but not the basis upon which to build the “functional requirements” for all recordkeeping systems or the foundation of archival method and practice.¹¹²

- ◆ **Are electronic records more complex (version control, relational databases, virtual views)?** Much has been made of the fact that relational databases, imbedded objects, and hypertext links have (or will shortly) obliterate the traditional (paper-based) concept of a singular, static, record or document.

Is my record version one of my memorandum drafted for initial review, the second version sent to its intended audience, or the third version which has been modified by the recipient as it included the memorandum into a report? Or, are all three records? Is my record the spreadsheet of financial figures and sales trends retrieved at 9:31 AM or the spreadsheet called up three hours later when the figures have been modified? Or, are both legitimate records? Can we possess a record that is largely composed of text, images, and statistics loaded in from online bibliographic systems or transferred from documents created by other organizational staff?¹¹³

Here, as in many other instances, the UBC-Pitt school (in this case the Pitt camp) has confused the changing form of modern technology with the much more stable substance of “business” reality.

As Linda Henry has aptly and succinctly noted about the question of version control, “Why this is a problem with electronic records is unclear, since archivists have been appraising drafts of paper records for years.”¹¹⁴ Similarly, the question of which “view” of a dynamic spreadsheet is a “record” is viewing the world upside down. Not even in the world of records management has anyone in the paper world been so foolish as to expect (much less demand) that every time a bureaucrat or manager looked at a daily financial record this transaction be recorded for accountability’s sake. So with “virtual” documents. Every time a worker or a manager made a decision or had an idea based on a combination of sources (think of the material spread across your own desk right now) he or she was constructing a combination of information that was not recorded *as a combination*. The fact that such “records” are not captured as such by most computer systems should elicit a “so what’s new and so what” from archivists and from organizations. We should not be pushed by the scholars at UBC and Pitt into suddenly worrying whether the electronic manifestations of the documentary universe are being captured as auditable “records”; as archivists we should be focused on defining the documents, records, and/or information that should or must be preserved long-term, and working with IT staff and others to ensure it’s preservation.¹¹⁵

- ◆ **Does the continuum concept make more sense applied to electronic records than to paper ones?** The Pittsburgh and Australian camps are wrong, we believe, about the inapplicability of the records life-cycle to both paper and electronic records. As we have seen, the logic of some continuum writers is that preserving records for one second and for a thousand years are one and the same from an archival perspective, that creation equals

appraisal, and that there is no distinction between current and non-current records: “‘records of enduring value’ is no longer a helpful idea in distinguishing some records [from] others - all kept records have enduring value (but it doesn't endure forever).”¹¹⁶ This conclusion obliterates any useful or defensible identity for archivists, archival administration, or archives.

Why? Because the difference between current and archival records/documents—or in Schellenberg’s terms primary and secondary value—is the *fundamental* (perhaps the only) difference between archivists and records managers or a host of other professionals (lawyers, auditors, accountants, information resource managers) concerned with managing records only so long as they are administratively or legally current.

Records are not retained for their own sake, they are retained initially because they are administratively and legally essential to their creators. A smaller proportion of these records are [sic] retained beyond the period for which they are administratively and legally useful, because they are of socio-historical value. If records never get used they are clearly of no socio-historical value.¹¹⁷

This “socio-historical” value is not confined solely to outside researchers; it can exist for users within the originating institution. But if records have no value (whether measured by use or some other criteria) after their administrative and legal lifespan, *they are not archival*.

The advent of electronic recordkeeping systems has in no degree altered the fact that the vast majority of records, documents, and data are created to legitimately serve a business function but have no reason to be preserved more than a day, week, month, year, or decade after their creation.¹¹⁸ The tailors’ discovery of a record continuum places an electronic invoice on exactly the same plane as a strategic planning report.

- ◆ **Are electronic records more apt to be properly, usefully, and indefinitely preserved through non-custodial (or distributed custody) means?** The non- or distributed- custody argument for records, paper or electronic, is logically compelling if one accepts the premise of a records continuum and/or of records being solely evidence of business transactions. However, if one accepts the premise that archives are, by definition, kept for secondary users and for informational as well as evidential value, then logic leads toward a custodial approach—for the simple reason that records creators have little or no reason to preserve records or documents beyond the limits of legal, fiscal, and administrative requirements. Those who advocate distributed archives seem to be living in a parallel universe in which one expects records creators to value obsolete records so much that they will allocate resources to the permanent preservation of those records. As one senior records manager put it kindly, “Records creators have a difficult time understanding why it is necessary to preserve a record of the limited functionality of an old information system when they migrate to a new one.”¹¹⁹ Although there are reasonable scenarios in which electronic records may be housed and maintained by the creating agency or an independent vendor, the distributed archives concept cannot be extended to conventional records. Even in the case of electronic records, it remains the responsibility of archivists and archives to provide researchers with

information about records and access to those records, regardless of the precise location in which they are housed.

The assertions made by the distributed custody theorists that electronic records even more than paper records cannot be preserved and made accessible by archives--because archives lack the resources and technical expertise, and because electronic records cannot be separated from their active recordkeeping systems and retain any utility—simply does not hold water. Archives are already successfully taking custody of electronic material, though not as prescribed by the UBC-Pitt school or limited to their definition of “records”.¹²⁰ Eastwood is right (though not entirely for the right reasons) when he states that “there is no new role in wait for archivists in the electronic age, just the same old role with a few new twists, which, important and challenging as they are, do not call for wholesale or even piecemeal abandonment of custody.”¹²¹

As an Information Services manager for British Telecom sensibly noted: “It is important to distinguish clearly between the features of the paper based life cycle which were a product of the limitations of the media and can now be joyfully abandoned, and the methods which have an ongoing role when re-interpreted into the electronic life-cycle. . . . Electronic record keeping presents many new challenges, but these often require a reinterpretation of principles and methods rather than an abandonment of professional expertise gained to date.”¹²² This discussion, as the scholars at UBC and Pitt preach but do not seem to practice, is not about electronic records, it is about the over-riding vision of archives—how do we define archives, what is the role of archives within institutions and within society, and what is our best strategy for improving the perceived value of archives by creators, resource allocators, and users.

Another View of Archives in the Computer Age

The tactics and methods that form the grist of the mills at Pittsburgh and UBC are not *purely* shadow. Electronic records—and other forms of digital documentation—are part of the substance with which archivists and curators must grapple. We should be vigorously discussing how the new world of electronic records can and should change archival thought and practice. As part of that discussion, many of the issues and arguments raised by the UBC-Pitt school of thought must be addressed and some of their work will prove useful and valuable if kept in proper context. While the tailors have failed to construct a functional fabric for archivists, some of the threads they have identified, and aspects of the method they have crafted, can be usefully incorporated into the archival enterprise. The theorists at UBC and Pitt are serious and even gifted professionals; while we believe their work misapprehends the core identity and goals of *archival* work, the frequent overlap between archival and records management functions ensures that the tailors concerns for documenting recordkeeping systems must be apprehended by archivists as well as records managers.

Although we should not abandon our traditional mission and methods, we should recognize that some of the changes required or made possible by modern technology can expand and assist the archival enterprise. No one has put this better than Anne Gilliland-Swetland: “While . . . proactive approaches [such as those called for by David Bearman and others] are indubitably necessary to assist in the legal management of the digital communications record, they do not come close to covering the wider professional and cultural considerations of managing the

“human record’ in the evolving and expanding world of digital communications....” Archivists and curators, she correctly notes, can and should bring their unique perspective to understanding “the uses and documentary natures of digital communications (especially what it is that they might reveal of changes in organizational, professional, and individual communication, and even changes in society and culture), exploiting digital capabilities to track and harvest certain types of electronic interactions, and capitalizing upon these technologies for the ongoing dissemination, preservation, and use of archival materials.”¹²³

Archivists need to understand the broad applications of databases, networks, document management, e-mail, intranets, the web, and the like for the same reasons they have always needed to understand the basic communication and authority flows in any business or organization we sought to document. Knowing how information, documents, and records are used and inter-related is necessary to make educated decisions about what should be preserved for archival purposes. Understanding the context of e-mail is not essentially different than understanding the changing context and content of hardcopy corporate minutes. As management consultant Chauncy Bell writes: “In response to the new opportunities for communication that the computer and network technologies are opening up, people are inventing new ways of taking care of old concerns, and inventing new concerns. The computers and networks offer a new kind of capacity to speak, listen, read and write, comment, request, purchase, promise, and at the same time to automatically make inscriptions recording any speech act that happens across the network.”¹²⁴

Exploiting digital capabilities to track and harvest certain types of electronic interactions is one of the most exciting areas of archival endeavor. Whether it is considering the possibilities of e-mail for capturing communication formerly spoken, chat rooms and discussion lists for documenting interpersonal interaction that would have been essentially impossible without the internet, or the intriguing documentary possibilities of web sites, archivists should not miss the forest of documentation for the trees of transactional records.¹²⁵ Massive data stores that might have been nearly impossible for archives to preserve, much less for researchers to use, in paper form, also provide new documentary opportunities in a digital environment, so long as we do not dismiss them as being “non-records.” By the same token, however, archivists should not become overly impressed by the new forms of documentation; we must still apply rigorous appraisal standards to documentation of whatever format or medium: “It is now time for archivists to re-focus their attention away from its awe of the actual communications technologies and systems and onto the documentary values of the materials they create, and appraisal is the key to this process.”¹²⁶

Finally, technology can assist powerfully with the dissemination, preservation, and use of archival materials. Technology can enhance context for physically separated items, through the creation of “virtual” collections (possible before using microfilm, but possibly much less costly in a digital environment so long as preservation concerns are not paramount). Archival material can be made dramatically more accessible, whether via CD-ROM or the Web.¹²⁷ Archivists should involve themselves, however, not simply with making appropriate use of technology to improve access to documentation, but also with the problem of a growing gap between the technology haves and have-nots; preservation and dissemination of material via CD and the Web

should not have the effect of making current or potential users who do not have computers (still about 50% of the U.S. population in 1999) *less* able to find and use archival material.

Status, Purpose, and the New Millennium

Behind the specific details of the archivist's new clothes lies a set of fundamental assumptions about the status and purpose of archives. The writers at UBC and Pitt argue, ultimately, that by accepting their definition of archival purpose, archival status will be enhanced. These archival tailors blame our current status on our old clothes, averring not only that those habiliments were paper-bound (and thus unfit for the new millennium) but completely inadequate even then. In these as in many other things, we suggest that the UBC-Pitt school is incorrect: 1) our "old" ways are not bankrupt; 2) our "old" status is worth celebrating rather than bemoaning; 3) we can improve our methods and practices without changing our purpose; 4) improved status lies along a path perpendicular to that being trod by the tailors.

Whether it is a theorist connected to Pitt dismissing archival practice in *Archival Methods* or a scholar at UBC referring to the last 30 years of U.S. archival practice as a "betrayal," there is little doubt that the UBC-Pitt school wants us to believe that our old ways are bankrupt. We cannot be surprised at this, because archivists of all stripes have been all too willing to engage in self-criticism—based partly on the profession's supposed lowly status and partly on what seem at first blush to be incontrovertible failures. Of the latter, the area of greatest concern and most frequent comment is appraisal. It was F. Gerald Ham who, a quarter-century ago, crystallized the perception that archivists were doing appraisal of modern records "badly".¹²⁸ His assessment seemed unquestionable, and a long line of appraisal methods and theories were developed to address the problem: the "Black Box," Documentation Strategy, Functional Analysis, Macro Appraisal, and others. Certainly, if the rest of us did not think there was a problem with archival appraisal, we would not have spent so much energy trying to "fix" it.¹²⁹

What has been lost in recent discussions is the important distinction between doing appraisal for socio-cultural-historical purposes better on the one hand, and abandoning appraisal altogether in favor of preserving all evidence of actions or transactions. There is no denying that appraisal practices at many archives have suffered from the "unconscious assumptions of the age of scarcity which still distort our thinking. Most of our current acquisition policies are too broadly conceived to be realistic in the Information Age.... Archivists need to take a more realistic view of what we can actually hope to preserve."¹³⁰ In addition, we would point out that most micro appraisal is also hampered by the once-adequate approaches of the past—appraising at the folder and even item level when the size of fonds have made such detail impractical and the dilution of evidential and informational value has made such detail unnecessary.

Do these problems mean that traditional archival documentation and appraisal goals should be abandoned? Since 1980 the archival profession has dramatically altered the way in which collecting is undertaken. Archival writers who presented new methodologies such as "documentation strategies,"¹³¹ the "black box," and the "Minnesota Method," have dramatically altered the way in which archivists approach collecting. Macro appraisal is only the best example of the ongoing shift of archival perception from the trees to the forest. Working within the framework of collecting policies and an understanding of the documentary universe, archivists today collect within a clear understanding of institutional mission and scope that can

no longer be characterized as "unbridled enthusiasm for collecting" or conversely as "utterly inadequate" in the face of too much material.¹³²

Just as it is time (long past time, perhaps) for archivists and curators to clearly identify and defend without embarrassment the core principles, services, and commitments that make us who we are as a profession, it is time to count our blessings for a change rather than enumerate our supposed status woes. Certainly, put up against the dreams of some that archivists' rightful places are as "deputy ministers, confidants of monarchs, [and] advisers sitting at the right hand of the pharaohs,"¹³³ our current social standing is pretty depressing. But is this a realistic vision to begin with? Figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics make evident that, by the one measurement of average annual salary, archivists are valued by society comparably to fire fighters, social workers, clergy, librarians, school teachers, and public relations professionals.¹³⁴ Is this really so awful? Would we embrace fantastically higher salaries in exchange for the public loathing of lawyers? "We are fooling ourselves if we think that archivists will ever hold center stage in society's understanding of the past. But we should neither chastise ourselves for being on the margins, nor accept the perception that what we do is marginal."¹³⁵

A Final Thought

In many respects, the UBC-Pitt school of thought's new conception of archives is a surrender, an easy way out. One electronic records consultant directly involved with both the UBC-Pitt school and the implementation of electronic recordkeeping has suggested that the problems of implementation are due to the theorists at UBC and Pitt being more concerned with abstract concepts than with practical work: "Having been personally involved in the World Bank, Pittsburgh and other projects, I believe that we tend to 'let the best become the enemy of the good'.... It is easier, and maybe less threatening, to thrash out functional requirements and even technical requirements than it is to make something happen in a real world environment."¹³⁶ By narrowing the archival purview to transactional records and the archival responsibility to auditor of authenticity, they have dramatically limited the scope and challenges of the archival enterprise. Becoming definers and managers of "records" may be a comprehensible and achievable end; but we should not settle for that simply because it is neat and tidy relative to our much looser and messier traditional goals.

It is those traditional goals that hold the best promise for us to maintain and enhance our status. "Don't rely purely on the evidentiary value of records.... Embrace the informational value of records as well and provide services accordingly."¹³⁷ This is, after all, what sets archivists apart from auditors and records managers. That, and one other thing. Jean-Pierre Wallot has remarked: "That is the main value-added of archivists: to maintain the evidential and informational value of the records that nourish our present culture and provide the foundation for our identities."¹³⁸ We would agree, and go one step farther. The value that archivists add is not simply in maintaining material of value, but in helping people find that value. Our concept of post-custodialism encompasses a strong commitment to being active mediators, helpers, even interpreters of the material in our care. It is not enough, after all, that the stacks (or network drives) are full, but that somebody—ideally lots of somebodies—find utility (whether that be evidence or information) in what we have saved.

I urge you not to surrender your opportunity to define how all of us will interpret your discipline to the shallow stories offered by information technology.... [Your discipline] is about appraising and keeping records of history-making events and the acts spoken by history-makers, and doing that in a way that allows you to be effective *partners* for those history-makers in their re-remembering of the past.¹³⁹

If we look in the mirror held up for us here, we would see that we do not need the tailors' new clothes. Our professional wardrobe is neither shabby nor inadequate. It is effective, respected, and even admired. So beware the archivist's new clothes. "Naked people have little or no influence in society."¹⁴⁰

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Mark Greene is currently Head of Research Center Programs at Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, after 10 years as curator of manuscripts at the Minnesota Historical Society, and four years as archivist for Carleton College. He has published a dozen articles in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. Frank Boles is Director of the Clarke Historical Library, at Central Michigan University. Formerly he served at the University of Michigan, as associate university archivist at the Bentley Historical Library and an instructor in the archives administration graduate program. He is the author of *Archival Appraisal* and numerous articles. He is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. Bruce Bruemmer recently became Corporate Archivist & Knowledge Management Specialist for Cargill. Previously he was Digital Collections Coordinator at the University of Minnesota Libraries, and prior to that was Curator of the Charles Babbage Institute on the History of Computing. He is the author of *The High Technology Company* and several articles. He is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. Todd J. Daniels Howell is Head of Special Collections and Archives at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Formerly he served as associate curator of manuscripts at the Minnesota Historical Society, and archivist for the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He has published several articles.

ENDNOTES

¹ The authors have benefited tremendously from thoughtful and sometimes extensive discussions and critiques offered by (in alphabetical order): Terry Cook, Bob Horton, Tom Hyry, Kathy Marquis, Tom Nesmith, Rachel Onuf, Christine Weideman, and Joel Wurl. We are deeply grateful to all of these colleagues for their interest and constructive criticism. This article is much better because of them. However, the authors alone are responsible for the end result.

² Hans Christian Andersen, “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” web version, ed. Gérard Martin, <<http://www.geocities.com/athens/2424/clothes.html>>.

³ The first public cries of discontent came from Terry Cook and Linda Henry. Cook, while praising the work of tailor David Bearman for providing new means, strongly criticized the evolution of means into ends—particularly the tailors’ rejection of an historical/cultural warrant for archives: “Who Will Do It if We Don’t: The Cultural Mission of Archives vis a vis Electronic Records,” presented at the 1997 Society of American Archivists (SAA) meeting, and “The Impact of David Bearman on Modern Archival Thinking: An Essay of Personal Reflection and Critique,” *Archives and Museum Informatics* 11:1 (1997), 15-37. In a paper also delivered at the 1997 SAA meeting, Henry presented a sharp critique of what she called David Bearman’s “cohort” of archival writers on electronic records issues. A revised version of that paper was published as “Schellenberg in Cyberspace” *American Archivist* 16:2 (Fall 1998), 309-327. Two of the authors of the present article, Frank Boles and Mark Greene, have critiqued the resurrection of the theories of Hilary Jenkinson—theories which form the basic pattern used by the tailors for their new clothes: “Et tu, Schellenberg? Thoughts on the Dagger of American Appraisal Theory,” *American Archivist* 56 (Summer 1996), 176-88.

⁴ One critique of an earlier version of this paper questioned our tactic of not identifying in the body of the article the individuals we quote, and instead identifying them only in the footnotes. It is a practice that begins here, with our overall assessment of who generally comprises the UBC-Pitt school of thought. It is our intention, in identifying individuals only in the footnotes, to somewhat depersonalize the arguments—to focus on what is being said rather than who is saying it. There is a danger in this approach, to be sure, of blurring the differences in opinion or argument among different individuals. We believe, however, that our attempt to meticulously cite our sources will permit anyone who chooses to explore those differences.

The individuals most closely associated with the Pittsburgh part of the UBC-Pitt school of thought are Richard Cox, David Bearman, and Wendy Duff, all major contributors to the Functional Requirements for Evidence in Recordkeeping project. Henry, “Schellenberg in Cyberspace,” p. 313, note 7, identifies a different, though overlapping “cohort” around the Pitt project. In particular, in contrast to Henry it is our assessment that neither Terry Cook nor Margaret Hedstrom—though both have at times praised and worked with the folks at Pittsburgh—can accurately be counted among them.

There is a strong intellectual and personal link between the Pitt group (Bearman in particular) and the Australian/New Zealand archival community. Among the most prolific and pointed of

the trans-Pacific group are Chris Hurley, Ann Pederson, and Greg O'Shea. For a good summary of these trans-Pacific links (personal and intellectual), see Adrian Cunningham, "Ensuring Essential Evidence - Changing Archival and Records Management Practices in the Electronic Recordkeeping Era" *Provenance the Web Magazine* Vol.2 No.2 (Spring 1997) at <<http://www.netpac.com/provenance/vol2no2/features/evidence.htm>>.

The University of British Columbia side of the equation is most closely identified with Luciana Duranti and Heather MacNeil (both Terry Eastwood and Charles Dollar are also connected to the project, but have not been its principle spokespeople).

Intellectual progenitors of one or both groups include Hilary Jenkinson, certainly, probably Margaret Cross Norton, and Australia's Ian Maclean (who first conceived the "continuum" concept—see below).

⁵ Public Records Office Victoria, "Victorian Electronic Records Strategy Final Report" (1998), p. 14, at <<http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/vers/final.pdf>>.

⁶ The most vocal critic of traditional (paper-based) archival practices has been David Bearman, though he is hardly alone. David Bearman, *Archival Methods: Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report*, 9 (1991); this edition is a reprint of the original 1989 publication which was, itself, based on essays originally written in 1986. This was followed by David Bearman, "Archival Strategies," *American Archivist* 58 (Fall 1995), 380-413—not to mention innumerable essays in his own journal.

⁷ Luciana Duranti, posting to Archives and Archivists Listserv, <<http://listserv.muohio.edu/archives/archives.html>>, 6 October 1993. **Hereafter, all citations to the Archives and Archivists Listserv will be to A&A List.** See also Duranti's "The Record, Where Archival Universality Resides," *Archival Issues* 19:2 (1994), 83-94, and Luciana Duranti and Heather MacNeil, "The Protection of the Integrity of Electronic Records: An Overview of the UBC-MAS Research Project," *Archivaria* 42: 47, 62-63.

Richard Cox has implied that he rejects the notion of a universal archival theory ("The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), 12), but he seems to believe that records, at least, have an objective nature—at any rate he believes that the Pittsburgh project has identified a "concept of the record...that transcends time, place, and technology." "The Record, Is it Evolving?" *The Records and Retrieval Report* 10:3 (March 1994) 4; this article also appears as "The Record: Is It Evolving? A Study in the Importance of the Long-View for Records Managers and Archivists," at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Information Sciences, Functional Requirements for Evidence in Recordkeeping website, at <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/Pub15.html>>. **Hereafter this website will be cited as "Functional Requirements website."**

⁸ Duranti and MacNeil, "The Protection of the Integrity of Electronic Records," 63. For important, though not at all times convincing, comparisons and contrasts of the UBC and Pitt

models, see Paul Marsden, “When is the Future? Comparative Notes on the Electronic Record-Keeping Projects of the University of Pittsburgh and the University of British Columbia” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), 158-73, and Philip C. Bantin, “Strategies for Managing Electronic Records: A New Archival Paradigm? An Affirmation of Our Archival Traditions?” *Archival Issues* 23:1 (1988), 17-34.

⁹ Cox, “The Record, Is it Evolving?” p. 2. The quote is from Bruce W. Dearstyne, *The Archival Enterprise: Modern Archival Principles, Practices, and Techniques* (Chicago, 1993), p. 1.

¹⁰ Duff, “Defining Transactions.” See also David Bearman, “Virtual Archives,” September 1996, at the Functional Requirements website, <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/prog6.html>>.

¹¹ This definition is a precis from the UBC project glossary at “The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records” website, <<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/tem5.htm>>. The definition of a record presented on that page is 736 words long.

¹² The theorists at Pitt insist that communication must take place, while those at UBC only demand that communication be intended and possible; for UBC a “transaction” is a particular type of a broader set of “acts”, whereas for Pitt it is the single type of act that defines a record; the UBC scholars allow that “documents” can become de facto records if assembled to support and linked to records of action (see Marsden, “When is the Future?” 160-66). Though the UBC writers suggest they embrace a much broader conception of “record” than the folks at Pitt, other evidence suggests that the UBC definition of “reliable evidence”—the sine qua non of a “record” for UBC—yields in practice an outcome roughly similar to the Pitt definition (Duranti and MacNeil, “The Protection of the Integrity of Electronic Records,” 52-53).

¹³ The move to series as the basic provenancial unit was launched in Australia and has only relatively recently begun to attract serious consideration in North America. Colin Smith, “A Case for Abandonment of ‘Respect,’” *Archives and Manuscripts* 14 (November 1986), 154-86 and 15 (May 1987), 20-28, as reprinted in *Debates and Discourses: Selected Writings on Archival Theory, 1951-1990*, Peter Biskup, et. al, eds. (Canberra, 1995), 180-203, summarizes the literature up to that point; David Bearman and Richard Lytle, “The Power of the Principle of Provenance,” *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86), 14-27, especially p. 22.

¹⁴ Richard J. Cox, “The Record: Is It Evolving?” 12-13.

Also, this definition by Wendy Duff:

As offices move from a manual paper based world to an electronic workplace, the evidence of prior activities and transactions evaporate as they once did in a pre-literate society. A dynamic information system often does not create records, realizing efficiencies through the elimination of redundant data. To ensure that organizations create evidence of their transactions, record managers must demonstrate the advantages accrued from the development and utilization of record-keeping systems instead of information systems. The business case that establishes the need for recordkeeping

systems must have as its locus the importance of maintaining evidence of transactions to support the ongoing operation of business processes.

“Defining Transactions: To Identify Records and Assess Risk,” December 6, 1994, at the Functional Requirements website, at <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/prog5.html>>.

¹⁵ Bearman, “Virtual Archives.”

¹⁶ See “The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records” website, <<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/tem5.htm>>.

¹⁷ James Gregroy Bradsher, “An Introduction to Archives,” *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*, ed James Gregory Bradsher (Chicago, 1989), 3. Similarly, see James M. O’Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, 1990), 22-25.

¹⁸ Theodore Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago, 1956), 7-10.

¹⁹ Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” *American Archivist* 57:2 (Spring 1994), 333, 336. Cox, “Re-Discovering the Archival Mission: The Recordkeeping Functional Requirements Project at the University of at the Pittsburgh; A Progress Report,” September 1994, at the Functional Requirements website, <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/Pub1.html>>. To be sure, the argument that archives have a purely evidential mission had a strong progenitor in the U.S. in Margaret Holmes Norton, who (like Duranti) drew heavily on the work of Hilary Jenkinson in England.

²⁰ Richard J. Cox, “What's In a Name? Archives as a Multi-faceted Term In the Information Professions,” November 1994, at the Functional Requirements website, <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/prog4.html>>.

²¹ Cox, “Re-Discovering the Archival Mission.”

²² Luciana Duranti, “Commentary,” *American Archivist* 57:1 (Winter 1994), 36-37. Duranti is here rebutting NeXT Computer executive Ronald Weissman’s assertion that “archival institutions are ‘information repositories’” whose most important users are outside researchers building knowledge.

²³ Richard J. Cox, “What's In a Name?”

²⁴ Chris Hurley, posting to the Aus-Archivists List <<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/asa/aus-archivists/maillist.htm>>, 9 November 1996.

²⁵ See, for example, David Bearman, “An Indefensible Bastion: Archives as Repositories in the Electronic Age,” *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report 13* (1991), 14-24; Frank Upward, “Structuring the Records Continuum: Part One, Post-custodial Principles and

Properties,” *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol 24, No. 2 (November 1996), 268-85; Greg O’Shea, posting to the A&A List, 14 February 1996.

²⁶ “A key element of this [Australian] system was a rejection of the traditional North American division between the work of records managers (who work with current records) and archivists (who work with non-current or historical records). Intrinsic to the Australian system is the philosophy that if archivists are to have historical records to preserve they first of all have to ensure that the current records are properly created and maintained.” Adrian Cunningham, “Ensuring Essential Evidence - Changing Archival and Records Management Practices in the Electronic Recordkeeping Era,” *Provenance the Web Magazine* Vol.2 No.2 Spring 1997, <<http://www.netpac.com/provenance/vol2no2/features/evidence.htm>>.

²⁷ Richard J. Cox, “Blown to Bits: Electronic Records, Archivists, and the Corporation,” James M. O’Toole, ed. *The Records of American Business* (Chicago, 1997), 234.

²⁸ Bearman, “New Models for Management of Electronic Records,” *Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organizations* (Pittsburgh, 1994), 286.

²⁹ Cox uses the phrase, for example, 43 times in “The Record, Is it Evolving?” and “What’s In a Name?” The next step, presumably, is to get archivists and records managers, as well as information resource managers, used to the more snappy “information professional” which Cox uses about a dozen times in the same two essays—for example, and tellingly, “Agreeing on the definition of record is related to trying to emphasize the commonalities of the missions between the various segments of the information management professions” (“What’s In a Name?”). We cannot resist here quoting Internet pioneer-turned-self-styled “computer contrarian” Clifford Stoll: “the best way to gut our libraries is to ship the books off to distant warehouses, supplant librarians with generic information specialists, and replace bookshelves with gleaming computer workstations.” The same applies to archives and archivists. Clifford Stoll, *High Tech Heretic* (New York, 1999), 163-64.

³⁰ Chris Hurley, posting to the Aus-Archivists List, 10 January 1997. Marsden has suggested that “UBC advocates a far less intrusive role for archivists in the design of systems and the creation of records” (Marsden, 172, note 14). However, the need to ensure that authentic and reliable records come into the archives requires decisions at the point of creation about which records and systems fit the “archival framework”—even at UBC, archival intervention is necessary prior to the creation of a record. See “Design a recordkeeping and record-preservation system” at <<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/rules1.htm>>.

³¹ Luciana Duranti, “Archives as a Place,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 24:2 (1996), 242-55; Terry Eastwood, “Should Creating Agencies Keep Electronic Records Indefinitely?” *Archives and Manuscripts* 24:2 (1996), 256-67. In his article, while Eastwood acknowledges and even emphasizes a cultural and secondary utility to archives, this utility is based entirely on the preservation of “records” and the guarantee of their trustworthiness and authenticity. As we will argue further below, an acknowledgment of secondary value in records and documents is necessary to sustain an argument for archival custody, but archives cannot guarantee the

authenticity or trustworthiness of records because there was no guarantee made when the archives received the records. See Boles and Greene, “Et Tu, Schellenberg,” 304-05.

Adding to both the vehemence and confusion of this disagreement among the two camps of the UBC-Pitt school of thought over “custody” is a degree of terminological confusion that ought to be addressed before we construct a complete tower of Babel. Hurley, Cox, Bearman and others reject physical custody as necessary for archival function. They sometimes refer to themselves as “post-custodialists,” a term coined by F. Gerald Ham but endowed by him with a very different meaning. Ham meant that archivists had to think beyond passively acquiring material and then tending it quietly—we should be aggressive in seeking material and go out of our way to publicize and make it accessible. Ham believed in custody, he just believed that it could no longer be practiced passively. At other times these self-proclaimed post-custodialists prefer the term “distributed custody,” arguing with good justification that just because archivists don’t have custody doesn’t mean nobody has custody. Duranti, and Linda Henry (who both, from very different perspectives, believe that it is meaningless to speak of archives without also speaking of archival custody), want to use the terms “non-custody” or “pre-custody” as labels for what Hurley, Bearman, et al have in mind.

³² See, most importantly, Luciana Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” *American Archivist* 57:2 (Spring 1994), 328-345. Also, see Duranti and MacNeil, “The Protection of the Integrity of Electronic Records,” 60-62.

³³ Ann Pederson, “Empowering Archival Effectiveness: Archival Strategies As Innovation,” *American Archivist* 58 (Fall 1995): 434. Henry, “Schellenberg in Cyberspace,” 325, singled out Pedersen and Bearman for using language that “frightens and insults archivists.”

³⁴ See Chris Hurley’s 10 January 1997 posting to the Aus-Archivists List, in which he has this to say about traditional (i.e, pre-1995 or thereabouts) archival thinking: “Records appear before the appraisal archivist like babies in cabbage patches.”

³⁵ One example of each. On poor research skills--Richard J. Cox, “An Analysis of Archival Research, 1970-92, and the Role and Function of the American Archivist,” *American Archivist* 57 (Spring 1994), 286: “the nature of research methodologies reveal the weaknesses of the archival profession’s commitment to and activities in research.” On lack of proper dedication to the profession--Richard Cox, posting to the A&A List), 29 November, 1993 (see also his many postings of 6 January 1994): “let me add it is perplexing to some of us that we will discuss the pros and cons of old bread recipes with more fervor and interest than issues such as the ProfNotes case, Swartzkopf’s plundering of federal records, and other matters with far-ranging implications for the work of the archivist. Is it any wonder why we must consider why archivists can’t be taken seriously in the public policy forum?” On stubborn refusal to give context primacy over content—Cox, “Blown to Bits” (233): archivists have “often risked the integrity of the archival records because of the desire to acquire information for researchers’ uses rather than evidence needed to support the corporation or for documenting its evolution and work.” On inadequate definition of records--Cox, “Putting the Puzzle Together: The Recordkeeping Functional Requirements Project at the University of Pittsburgh; A Second Progress Report,”

March 1995, at the Functional Requirements website, <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/tab.html>>: “In general, there remains a tendency to define a record in a very fuzzy and unsatisfactory manner, as recorded information. There is also a tendency to include a very broad definition of electronic records, from word processing files to the most sophisticated multi-media system. Finally, there also continues to be wide support in the archives and records management communities to manage many electronic recordkeeping systems by maintaining paper printouts or snapshots of the system, an approach that is more a confession of failure than it is viable administrative option.” (footnote 10).

In fixed media, at least, Duranti and Eastwood have been less overtly insulting to those who disagree with them—at least those who are still alive (both have made mocking Theodore Schellenberg into a high art). We perceive a frequently condescending tone in much of their writings (and a great deal of sarcasm in some of Eastwood’s), but we freely admit that tone is much more difficult to interpret accurately.

³⁶ Richard J. Cox, “The Archivist and Collecting: A Review Essay,” *American Archivist*, 59 (Fall 1996): 500, 512 (emphasis added). This is not Cox’s first foray into practicing psychoanalysis on his intellectual opponents. In a 1994 article he dismisses John Roberts’ critique of archival theory (including Cox, et. al’s documentation strategy), as resulting from Roberts’ “personal frustration...about the profession.” Cox, “The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective,” *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), 32, footnote 10. Nor is Cox alone in passing judgment on the psychological health of those whom he criticizes. Pederson, “Empowering Archival Effectiveness,” 431-34, stated that, by not unhesitatingly embracing recommendations for remaking archives, archivists suffer from “denial and self-delusion,” and have a “victim mentality which fostered professional irresponsibility”

³⁷ Luciana Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” 342. Duranti also thinks Schellenberg was intellectually sloppy and didn’t have a single good idea that he didn’t steal from somebody else. See her posting to the A&A List, 6 September 1996 (2:14pm).

³⁸ Richard Cox, “The Record, Is It Evolving?” 11. Cox is hardly alone in blaming historians, at least, for many archival failures. The pages of *Archivaria* have been witness to two memorable rounds of “counterpoint” on the proper role of the discipline or perspective of history in archival theory, method, and practice. The first exchange, with major protagonists George Boletenko (arguing in favor of archivists with “a disposition’ towards historical-evolutionary comprehension grounded upon the exercise of reason in search of truth”) and Carl Spandoni (arguing for “a new professionalism” with stronger ties to library science, records management, and information technology), took place between the 16th (Summer 1983) and 21st (Winter 1985-86) issues. A more nuanced and useful stream of this torrent was a back-and-forth among Richard Kesner (new professionalism) and Terry Cook and Tom Nesmith (defending the “historical shunt”) in issues 19 and 20. The second major intellectual confrontation, a duel between Terry Eastwood (“in the theoretical terms of archival science, archives are not historical sources”) and Terry Cook (“archival functions ‘rely heavily’ on historical theory and methodology”), took place in volumes 34 (Summer 1992), 35 (Spring 1993), 37 (Spring 1994).

³⁹ Pederson, "Empowering Archival Effectiveness," 431-34, 439.

⁴⁰ Luciana Duranti, posting to the A&A List, 14 February 1996, (4:13pm).

⁴¹ Cox, "Blown To Bits," 232, 242-43.

⁴² For information on the UBC collaboration with DOD, see <<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/intro.htm#COLLABORATION>>.

⁴³ On the contrary, the UBC-Pitt school of thought insists, any failures are due to archivists' stubborn resistance to change. "We know that others even resist accepting electronic records as records unless they are in paper form and can be filed manually into traditional systems. For these archivists, there is a resistance to change, as well as a resistance to accepting any new authority for working in ERM." Richard J. Cox, "Searching for Authority: Archivists and Electronic Records in the New World at the Fin de Siecle," *First Monday* Vol. 5 No. 1 (January 3rd 2000), <http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_1/cox/#note2>. ERM is Electronic Records Management.

⁴⁴ Public Records Office Victoria, "Victorian Electronic Records Strategy Final Report" p. 15. The three attempts to implement the Pitt model to date have come at Indiana University, the Delaware Public Archives, and the city of Philadelphia. See Philip C. Bantin, "The Indiana University Electronics [sic] Records Project Revisited," *American Archivist* 62:1 (Spring 1999), 153-63; Public Systems Incorporated, *Management of Electronic Records: Delaware Public Archives* (May 1998); reports and presentations related to the NHPRC funded implementation project for Philadelphia city records at <<http://www.phila.gov/departments/records/>> and follow links to Records Management Department. The pilot project for Philadelphia *rejected 63 of the Pittsburgh model's 75 functional requirements*. Marsden, "When Is the Future," 166-70, comments specifically on the Philadelphia experiment with the functional requirements, but also discusses more broadly the problems of practical implementation of both the UBC and Pitt models.

⁴⁵ For an introduction to innovation diffusion theory, see Jill Tatem, "EAD: Obstacles to Implementation, Opportunities for Understanding," *Archival Issues* 24:2 (1998): 155-69. As Tatem notes, "diffusion studies have examined acceptance of innovations as diverse as rap music, VCRs, hybrid seedcorn, automobile seat belts, cellular phones, and many computer systems" (157).

⁴⁶ Chris Hurley, posting to the Aus-Archivists List, 9 November 1996. Also see Luciana Duranti, "The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory," *American Archivist* 57:2 (Spring 1994), 344.

⁴⁷ *American Archivist* 16:2 (Fall 1998), included a short but biting critique of the British Columbia camp's confusion of archival theory and archival philosophy—L. Dale Paterson, "Letter to the Editor," 245-46. See also Boles and Greene, "Et tu, Schellenberg?" 307-10.

⁴⁸ Terry Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal," Barbara L. Craig ed. *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honor of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 78, 83. Eastwood presents a different version of the same argument in "How Goes it with Appraisal?" *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993): 111-121.

⁴⁹ In the 17th century, or thereabouts, scholasticists began to be mocked, probably unfairly, as a group of pompous intellectuals who had nothing better to do than argue about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. For a brief discussion of the origins of the angels-on-pins debates, see <<http://geneva.rutgers.edu/src/faq/angels-dancing.txt>> (the "soc.religion.christian" newsgroup at Rutgers).

⁵⁰ Barry, "Electronic Records Management."

⁵¹ Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, as approved July 1999, <<http://www.law.upenn.edu/library/ulc/uecicta/uetast84.htm>>. The Reporter's notes from the pre-approval draft note, further, that "An electronic record is a subset of the broader defined term "record." Unlike the term "electronic message" used in UCITA, *the definition is not limited to records intended for communication*, but extends to any information contained or transferred in an electronic medium. Even the UBC-Pitt school's insistence that communication (or intent to communicate) is necessary to define a record has been rejected by the Commissioners. (<<http://www.law.upenn.edu/library/ulc/uecicta/etaam99.htm>>). See also, Uniform Commercial Code, November 1999 draft version, <<http://www.law.upenn.edu/library/ulc/ucc1/ucc1ALI9.htm>>. For a more detailed and extensive analysis of US rules of evidence applied to electronic documents, see Anne J. Gilliland Swetland, "Maintaining and Providing Access to Electronic Evidence: The US Experience," *The Irish Archivist* (forthcoming, Autumn 2000).

⁵² "Historical Notes," Section 111, of the pre-approval draft (July 1999) of the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Among other things, this would suggest that the true lesson of the oft-cited *Armstrong v. Executive Office of the President* (known as the PROFS case) is not that e-mail must always be kept in its original form to retain its "record" and evidential status, but that the particular system in question could not create a printout that reflected the electronic data accurately (specifically, it could not do what most major commercial e-mail programs can do—print out who sent the message, when, and to whom).

⁵³ David Bearman asserts at one point that for electronic records, "the criterion which ultimately determines admissibility is continuity of management." David Bearman, "Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records, *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol. 21 No. 1 (May 1993), 20.

⁵⁴ Uniform Rules of Evidence, as approved, July 1999, (emphasis added).

⁵⁵ So, apparently, does British law. See Ian Walden, "Electronic Documentation and the Law," Seamus Ross and Edward Higgs, ed., *Electronic Information Resources and Historians: European Perspectives* (St. Katharinen, 1993), 121-25.

⁵⁶ Public Records Office Victoria, “Victorian Electronic Records Strategy Final Report” p. 13.

⁵⁷ Not to mention all artifactual evidence (in the broadest sense) from funerary objects to the built environment.

⁵⁸ Luciana Duranti, posting to A&A List, 3 October 1993. Emphasis added.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Adkins posting to the Business Archives List, <busarch@gla.ac.uk>, 11 June 1998. For an affirmation of the importance of oral history/tradition in modern business, see Thomas A. Stewart, “The Leading Edge; The Cunning Plots of Leadership” *Fortune* 138:5 (7 September 1998), 165ff.

⁶⁰ Luciana Duranti, postings to the A&A List, 22 May 1993 and 24 May 1993.

⁶¹ For a primer on data warehousing, see Lawrence Fisher, “Along the Infobahn: Data Warehouses,” <<http://www.strategy-business.com/technology/96308>>: “To optimize performance in such applications, data warehouses structure the data, rather than the query, with various indexing schemes, so that the system can respond rapidly to unforeseeable queries. Data warehouses can be optimized for analytical tasks precisely because they are not called upon to process transactions, and need not maintain the absolute accuracy at any moment in time that O.L.T.P. [on-line transaction processing] systems must.” For an extended list of on-line articles on data warehousing, look to <http://pwp.starnetinc.com/larryg/articles/html>. For an archival program that explicitly recognizes both the administrative and archival value of data warehouses, see the Minnesota State Archives’ “Trustworthy Information Systems Handbook,” <<http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/tis/tis.html>>.

⁶² Luciana Duranti, posting to the A&A List, 24 May 1993.

⁶³ Relevant to consideration of the status of the Zapruder film in the minds of the tailors is this response given by Luciana Duranti to a question about the recordness of a photograph, from the A&A List, 5 September 1996:

Q: One other scenario: Prime Minister Howard receives an official visit from the American President. After their 'amicable discussion' they pose for a photograph. Is the resulting photograph a record of the meeting, or a record of the actual posing for the photograph? Am I right in suggesting that, since taking pictures at such events are an established custom, the photograph is a record of the meeting?

A: It depends on what is the purpose of taking the photograph and what is done with it. If it is sent to a new[s]paper for publication and becomes part of its files it is a record of the material used by the newspaper for publication. If it is included in the file of the Prime Minister Office which deals with the visit of the American president, it is a record of the environment in which the discussion took place...The photograph is a record of the action in which it takes part and acquires the meaning given to it by its documentary

context: thus, if the Prime Minister sends it to its taylor [sic] so that he can copy the style of the suit of the President, then it is a record of what kind of suit the Minister would like to wear for his next engagement! The point is that, while one can look at every document (be it text, image or graphic)--records included--as a source of information for almost anything (depending on the question the person who looks has in mind), one can only look at a record as reliable evidence of the action in which it took part, and what such action is can only be revealed by the documentary context of the record (in whose fonds it belongs, which series, which file, which action).

Thus we can conclude that the Zapruder film is technically part of the record of the Warren Commission (because it was reviewed by the Commission), but not “reliable evidence” of the assassination of President Kennedy because it was a home movie taken for personal pleasure.

⁶⁴ For example, see Michelle Maniccial, “Minimizing Corporate Exposure in the Computer Age: A Proposal for Record Retention and Discovery with a Posture for Litigation,” 1996, <<http://wings/buffalo.edu/law/Complaw/CompLawPapers/maniccia.html>>, and Mary L. Murphy and Laurence H. Reece III, “Be Careful What You Ask for: Rules and Recent Cases Regarding the Discovery of Electronic Evidence” 1998, <<http://www.lgu.com/lit1.htm>>.

⁶⁵ Richard Cox, “Putting the Puzzle Together.” Emphasis added. For further critique of the Pittsburgh conception of record, see Henry, “Schellenberg in Cyberspace,” 314-16.

⁶⁶ Seamus Ross, “Historians, Machine-Readable Information, and the Past’s Future,” Seamus Ross and Edward Higgs, ed., *Electronic Information Resources and Historians: European Perspectives* (St. Katharinen, 1993), p. 17. Nor is it only historians who see the need for more documentation than narrowly defined records. Records manager Michael L. Miller has argued exactly the same thing in the paper he presented to the “Documenting the Digital Age” conference in 1997, “Assessing the Need: What Information And Activities Should We Preserve?” <<http://www.dtda.com/presenta/miller01.htm>>.

⁶⁷ We are in full agreement, here, with Henry, “Schellenberg in Cyberspace,” 321.

⁶⁸ See the exchange between Greg O’Shea and Luciana Duranti on the A&A List, 14-16, 20 February 1996, and among Luciana Duranti, Chris Hurley, and others on the Aus-Archivists List, 6-9, 15, 18-20, 22 November 1996. The lists exchanges are more enlightening (it may be the first and only time) than the one published exchange, in *Archives and Manuscripts* 24:2 (1996).

⁶⁹ With apologies to Billy Joel, “It’s Still Rock n Roll to Me,” *Glass Houses* (July 7, 1987) Sony Music; ASIN: B0000025I4

⁷⁰ For example, see Lester J. Cappon, “Historical Manuscripts as Archives: Some Definitions and their Application” *American Archivist* 19 (April 1956), 110; James Gregory Bradsher, “An Introduction to Archives,” *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*, James Gregory Bradsher ed (Chicago, 1988), p. 6; Fredric M. Miller, *Arranging and Describing Archives and*

Manuscripts (Chicago, 1990), 22. Indeed, the entire SAA Archival Fundamentals Series is testament to the U.S. tradition of archives and manuscripts being treated as two sides of the same coin.

⁷¹ For a good overview of Total Archives, see Laura Millar, “Discharging our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada,” *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998), 103-46.

⁷² Tim Robinson (University of Sydney) posting to the A&A List, 21 July 1995.

⁷³ In her 24 May 1993 posting to the A&A List, Duranti tries to make a curious distinction between a source providing “clues” to facts and providing “evidence” of facts (the latter being made possible only by “records” in full and proper context). See also Richard Cox, “The Archivist and Collecting,” 503, 511.

⁷⁴ Duranti, A&A List, 24 May 1993.

⁷⁵ Of course, too much information can itself be a problem, as implementers of data warehouses have discovered: “The warehouses also run the risk of overwhelming their target audiences with information, becoming part of the noise of modern corporate life. Sometimes, less can be more. ‘Most companies really need not warehouses, but data deli’s, data convenience stores,’ said Mr. Davenport, the University of Texas professor, who has studied the sociology of computer systems.” Fisher, “Data Warehouses.”

⁷⁶ Richard Cox, “Blown to Bits,” 243.

⁷⁷ Trial testimony and evidence are reproduced at “Business Week Online/Court TV Online: Microsoft on Trial,” <<http://www.courtstv.com/trials/microsoft/legaldocs/>>. After looking at laws and law books, Gilliland-Swetland, “Maintaining and Providing Access to Electronic Evidence,” concludes: “Ironically, however, while archivists have been striving, through research projects such as the Pittsburgh Project...and the current InterPARES Project, to develop the specifications that would allow for electronic recordkeeping systems to be designed and managed in the most effective ways to...meet the Best Evidence requirements...,US courts in many cases seem to have been much less stringent and systematic in deciding what electronic materials they are prepared to admit as evidence, admitting even snatches of recovered data supposedly deleted from organizational and personal hard drives and back-up tapes.”

⁷⁸ Bell, “Re-membering the Future.”

⁷⁹ Abdelaziz Abid (UNESCO), “Memory of the World -Preserving Our Documentary Heritage” Abstracts Of The Papers And Demonstrations Given At The 1996 IATUL[International Association Of Technological University Libraries]Conference,University of California, Irvine, California, USA, 24th - 28th June, 1996, <<http://educate.lib.chalmers.se/IATUL/proceedcontents/paperirvine/abid.html>>.

⁸⁰ Terry Cook, "Who Will Do It if We Don't?: The Cultural Mission of Archives vis-a-vis Electronic Records," paper presented at the 1997 Society of American Archivists Conference.

⁸¹ David Moldrich "Australian Standards for Records Management," <<http://www.digital.com/info/osstr/tr0499.htm#A1>>. Emphasis added. Also, Minnesota State Archives' "Trustworthy Information Systems Handbook."

⁸² Currently under development by a joint working group of AIIM, ABA, ARMA and ALA.

⁸³ For a recent summary of these traditions, see O'Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*, 30-32.

⁸⁴ On this point Henry, "Schellenberg in Cyberspace," 315, aptly quotes Michael Fox on the emptiness of documenting only the "footprints of bureaucrats."

⁸⁵ The uses to which institutional archives are put by both internal and external clients are also reflected, to some extent, in the responses business archivists gave to a survey asking which types of material were used most frequently and by whom. See Mark A. Greene, "'The Surest Proof': The Use of Business Records and Implications for Appraisal," *Archivaria* 45 (Spring 1998), 127-69.

⁸⁶ Bill Proudfoot to Business Archives List, 1 July 1998. The business archivists on this list also seem fairly united in the belief that the "stuff" of archives is and must be a combination of records, library material, and other "historical" material—just so long as it is "needed" by the company in some way (see the other postings on 1 and 2 July 1998). Additional testimony to the importance and utility of "non-record" information and data will be found in most of the essays comprising *Electronic Information Resources and Historians: European Perspectives*, Seamus Ross and Edward Higgs, eds. (St. Katherinen, 1993).

⁸⁷ Cox, "Putting the Puzzle Together" (emphasis added). Greg O'Shea has said the same thing in almost the same words, in "Grasping the Nettle: The Evolution of the Australian Archives Electronic Records Policy," *Reference Service for Archives and Manuscripts*, Laura B. Cohen ed. (New York, 1997), 144.

⁸⁸ These were: California 1995, Indiana 1999, Iowa 1987, Kansas 1996, Maryland 1986, Massachusetts 1986, Michigan 1989, Minnesota 1992, Missouri 1991, Nevada 1992, Oregon 1991, South Dakota 1989. See Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (NHPRC), *Maintaining State Records in an Era of Change: A National Challenge. A Report on State Archives and Records Management Programs 1996*, <<http://www.nara.gov/nara/nhprc/council.html#maintaining>>.

⁸⁹ Arlene B. Schmuland, "The Image of Archives and Archivists Fictional Perspectives." MA Thesis, Western Washington University (August 1997), p. 5. An article based on the thesis has been published as "The Archival Image in Fiction: An Analysis and Annotated Bibliography," *American Archivist* 62:1 (Spring 1999), 24-73; a slightly different version of the quote cited here

appears on p. 29 of the article. Additional evidence is provided by a recent study of newspaper articles about archives and archivists, which noted that “the single most common reason archives were newsworthy was because they played a role in creating cultural products currently being offered for public consumption. Such products included books, music, films, plays, exhibitions, festivals, and museums....” Sally J. Jacobs, “How and When We Make the News: Local Newspaper Coverage of Archives in Two Wisconsin Cities,” *Archival Issues* 22:1 (1997), 50.

⁹⁰ Anne Gilliland-Swetland, “Digital Communications: Documentary Opportunities Not to Be Missed,” *Archival Issues* 20:1 (1995), 47.

⁹¹ Barbara Reed, “Electronic Records Management in Transition,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 22:1 (May 1994), 168.

⁹² Records management concerns do not have (nor should they have) anything to do with archival—that is secondary—value. But few records or documents have legal retention periods that are indefinite (for the life of the organization, say), and fewer still have legal retention periods that are “forever” (or as close to forever as human beings can contrive to manage). If archives and records management become one, the only records (or anything else) that anyone will have a professional warrant to preserve “for posterity” will be such things as markers for and maps of nuclear waste sites. See Kenneth E. Foote, “To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture,” *American Archivist* 53:3 (Summer 1990), 380-84, for an interesting summary of approaches to marking nuclear waste sites. The Web site for the Department of Energy’s Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) contains a brief description of these issues, as well, <<http://www.nsc.org/ehc/guidebks/wippfutu.htm#post>>.

⁹³ W. Boyd Rayward, “Electronic Information and the Functional Integration of Libraries, Museums and Archives,” Seamus Ross and Edward Higgs, ed., *Electronic Information Resources and Historians: European Perspectives* (St. Katharinen, 1993), 241. Rayward is here using “electronic records” in the broadest possible sense, of course, to mean almost anything created in computer format. See also Margaret Hedstrom and Sheon Montgomery, “Digital Preservation Needs and Requirements in RLG Member Institutions” (December 1998), <<http://www.thames.rlg.org/preserv/digpres.html>>, and Neil Beagrie and Daniel Greenstein, “A Strategic Policy Framework for Creating and Preserving Digital Collections” Arts and Humanities Data Service, <<http://ahds.ac.uk/manage/framework.htm>> for two examples of current attempts to cross those institutional divides for a wide range of electronic documentation. Without reference to computers, Foote, “To Remember and Forget,” somewhat earlier noted that “Each particular institution [museums, archives, libraries] may sustain a *representation* of the past quite specific to its institutional mandate, but these representations can be interrelated. The value of such a point is that it guards against assuming that collective memory is invested in any single type of human institution, such as the archives” (p. 380; emphasis in original).

⁹⁴ Schmuland, “The Image of Archives and Archivists Fictional Perspectives,” p 9.

⁹⁵ Cook, “Who Will Do It if We Don’t.”

⁹⁶ Cook, “Who Will Do It if We Don’t.”

⁹⁷ Anchoritic—someone who retreats from the world for religious reasons—is another of Richard Cox’s derisive terms for those in our profession who choose not to accept his view of archives: Cox, “Archival Anchorites: Building Public Memory in the Era of the Culture Wars,” *MultiCultural Review* (June 1998) 52-60. The equally derisive terms “stagnant” and “Jurassic” come from Richard Cox, “American Archivists, Cyberculture, and Stasis: Cyber, Hyper Or Resolutely Jurassic? Archivists and the Millennium,” Proceedings of an international symposium marking twenty-five years of professional archival training in Ireland, held at University College Dublin, 2-3 October 1998, <<http://www.ucd.ie/~archives/coxart.html>>.

A more widely known encapsulation of this same charge is Terry Cook’s “Electronic Records, Paper Minds,” from his article of the same title. In that article, Cook argued that because of “the fundamental revolution affecting the very nature of society’s collective memory caused by the widespread use of the computer,” “archivists caring even for collections that exist almost exclusively in paper form will still need to develop new thinking and new approaches for the electronic records they will receive tomorrow if not today” (301). Terry Cook, “Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The revolution in information management and archives in the post-custodial and post-modernist age,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 22:2 (1994), 300-28. Two things must be said about Cook’s conception of a “revolution”—he called for change without demeaning or ignoring traditional archival concepts and practices, and he later apologized for having been lured too far toward the context over content, records management over cultural resource end of the electronic records debate. See Cook, “Who Will Do It if We Don’t.”

⁹⁸ Hurley, Aus-Archivists List, 9 November 1996.

⁹⁹ “Functional Requirements for Evidence in Recordkeeping,” at the Functional Requirments website, <<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/prog1.html#5>>.

¹⁰⁰ David Bearman, “Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records, 18: (emphasis added). The UBC camp is, to do them credit, rather more conservative about what kind of human-computer interactions constitute a record (<<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/tem5.htm>>):

if an individual queries a database and retrieves an "answer," both query and answer (which obviously have been transmitted) can be considered record(s) only if their content is saved by that individual to a medium, in a readable and intelligible form, and connected by an archival bond (that is, by saving them to the proper file, or assigning them a classification or registration code) to the specific activity that they were meant to support. In this example, the action is entirely carried out by the person who sends the query and retrieves the answer, who would therefore be the author, writer, addressee and creator of the record(s) in question. This act (retrieving information) cannot be considered a transaction because it is not aimed to change, maintain, extinguish or create relationships or situations among two or more persons, as only one person is involved.

The principal difference between UBC and Pitt on this point—while not fundamental, of some practical importance—is that UBC implies a willingness to leave in the hands of the human

actors the decision about whether to create a record (by recording and linking a database query to the activity it was meant to support).

¹⁰¹ Ibid. See also David Bearman, “Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records,” 18. Having gone to the trouble of creating records for every business transaction, Bearman concedes only that it is the records manager’s or archivist’s role to help the organization figure the costs and benefits of retaining the records.

¹⁰² See, for example, Elana Varon, “Records management goes commercial,” *Federal Computer Weekly* 5/18/98 (cited on the A&A List in “Records and Archives in the News,” 22 May 1998): “Seven months after a federal judge spurred agencies to start accounting for their electronic records, records management solutions are hitting the software mainstream. Here [Sacramento] at the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) '98 trade show last week, vendors began showcasing newly upgraded or integrated products that they are developing with federal government customers in mind. These products are being designed -- many for the first time -- for the front office as well as the file room. Whether from traditional records management software vendors, new players in the field or corporate alliances between the two, these solutions aim to quell the clamor for products that link the creation of documents to their ultimate fate. In doing so, vendors are trying to bridge a divide between records officers, who have used software mostly to help them track paper records, and information technology managers.”

¹⁰³ It is entirely possible that the Conservation profession will instead expand its vision and expertise to the preservation of electronic records. See Abby Smith, “Preservation in the Future Tense,” *The Abbey Newsletter* 22:2 (1998), 17-18:

Preservation is, as yet, a small but capacious profession that encompasses experts in a bewildering variety of media, which carry an increasingly diverse load of information. The challenge of the future tense for preservation professionals is to continue to look beyond the object to the medium, and beyond the medium to the creator and the user, and embrace responsibility for long-term custody of all forms of recorded information to ensure continued access to them.[p. 18]

¹⁰⁴ Gerald Posner, "Secrets of the files," *New Yorker*, 14 March 1994, pp. 43-47.

¹⁰⁵ Specifically, the court was concerned about the fact that in the PROFS system, the distribution list for an outgoing message, and the date/time stamp of opening for an incoming message, were maintained and had to be printed separately from the messages themselves. See Jean Samuel, “Electronic Mail—Information Exchange or Information Loss?” 64.

¹⁰⁶ It may also be worth mentioning in passing that the Collaborative Electronic Notebook Systems Association (CENSA) issued a “Call to Action” to address what they see as the looming “shipwreck” of electronic records. Their solution, in essence, is to create electronic records as Adobe Acrobat files, the closest thing the electronic world has to paper. Rich Lysankowski and Zahava Leibowitz, “Titanic 2020—A Call to Action,” <www.censa.org/html/Press-Releases/Titanic2020.htm>.

¹⁰⁷ Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory,” passim.

¹⁰⁸ Boles and Greene, “Et tu, Schellenberg?” 306.

¹⁰⁹ Miller, “Assessing the Need,” argues that cost of maintaining the full ‘recordkeeping functionality’ once a record has served its business function is not worth the benefit.

¹¹⁰ Bearman, “Archival Principles and the Electronic Office,” *Information Handling in Offices and Archives*, Angelika Menne-Haritz, ed (New York, 1993), p. 192; Delmas, “Archival Science and Information Technologies,” *Information Handling in Offices and Archives*, p. 169.

¹¹¹ See “Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology” Issue 29—Evidence, March 10, 1999, <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/soci-e/29evb-e.htm>>.

¹¹² An outside review of the Delaware Public Archives “Model Guidelines for Electronic Records”—guidelines based on the Pittsburgh functional requirements—had this to say about whether the state’s Family and Child Tracking System was completely “auditable”: “While it is true that not all actions made to all data are logged in this system, there are certain structures in place to preserve integrity. The workflow of events for specific functions keeps the order intact. Certain fields such as event and completion dates cannot be changed ensuring data reliability. To comply with this guideline would be prohibitively expensive. Instead, logging of data defined as crucial would be recommended.” Public Systems Incorporated, *Management of Electronic Records: Delaware Public Archives* (May 1998), 8. Also, see Marsden, “When is the Future?” 169-70, for similar conclusions during the Philadelphia trial of the Pitt model.

¹¹³ Cox, “The Record, Is it Evolving?”

¹¹⁴ Henry, “Schellenberg in Cyberspace,” 324-25.

¹¹⁵ For an example of a realistic and practical approach, see Rick Barry, “Making the Distinctions Between Information Management and Records Management,” <<http://www.rbarry.com/IMT-ARM1/IMT-ARM1.html>>: “One of the policy issues facing modern organizations is: which, if any, of our data bases should we regard as ‘records’ and how will such dynamic records be managed? The answer, of course, depends on the nature of the organization, the business process that the data base serves, the implied necessity of an audit trail or not, and the practical aspects of how to record individual changes to the data as part of a record audit trail.”

¹¹⁶ Hurley, Aus-Archivists List, 9 November 1996.

¹¹⁷ Adrian Cunningham, “The Mysterious Outside Reader” (Review Article), *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 24, no. 1, May 1996), footnote 8.

¹¹⁸ See Theodore J. Hull, "Reference Services for Electronic Records in Archives," *Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*, Laura B. Cohen ed (New York, 1997), 147-60, for specific instances, in the US Federal government, of the successful application of the life-cycle and "archival threshold" to electronic records.

¹¹⁹ Miller, "Assessing the Need."

¹²⁰ Kenneth Thibodeau, "To Be or Not to Be: Archives for Electronic Records," *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report* 13 (1991), 1-13; Michael L. Miller, "Is the Past Prologue? Appraisal and the New Technologies," *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report* 13 (1991), 38-49; Margaret Hedstrom and Sheon Montgomery, "Digital Preservation Needs and Requirements in RLG Member Institutions." On the question of distributed custody, see also Henry, "Schellenberg in Cyberspace," 320, especially note 26, which contains a good list of citations.

¹²¹ Eastwood, "Should Creating Agencies," 261.

¹²² Helen Simpson, "The Management of Electronic Information Resources in a Corporate Environment," Seamus Ross and Edward Higgs, ed., *Electronic Information Resources and Historians: European Perspectives* (St. Katharinen, 1993), 33, 35.

¹²³ Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "Digital Communications: Documentary Opportunities Not to Be Missed," 39, 40.

¹²⁴ Bell, "Re-membering the Future."

¹²⁵ For tentative investigations of web-sites as archival sources, see Mark Greene, "Floods, Flashsite, and Fond Delusions: Archiving the Web," *Spectra, the Journal of the Museum Computer Network* 25:3 (Spring 1998), 10-14. Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland and Greg Kinney, "Uses of Electronic Communications to Document an Academic Community: A Research Report," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), 79-96, analyzes the prospects for using electronic conferencing to document course-related discussions. Gilliland-Swetland and Kinney ask, appropriately, "Even if the genre were transient or non-record, to what extent would that devalue its documentary potential in the college and university environment with its multiple documentary mission?" (93).

¹²⁶ Gilliland-Swetland, "Digital Communications," 47.

¹²⁷ Prof. Kenneth E Goodpaster, of the Business School at the University of St. Thomas, recently noted in conversation the increasing use of CD-ROM "document packets" being used in MBA courses as supplements to traditional case studies. One of the best examples of using the Web to make archival collections (as opposed to single documents) accessible for information and research is "The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War," <<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/>>.

¹²⁸ F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," *American Archivist* (January 1975), 5.

¹²⁹ "We," in this case, applies very particularly to the authors of this essay, all of whom have published or implemented "new" approaches to appraisal over the last 15 years.

¹³⁰ Timothy L. Ericson, "At the 'rim of creative dissatisfaction': Archivists and Acquisition Development," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92), 72.

¹³¹ It is a matter of considerable irony, we think, that Richard Cox, who did as much as anyone to popularize the concept—and even demand the application—of documentation strategy, has apparently turned against the very culturally oriented goals of that approach. See most recently Richard J. Cox, "The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994): 11-36.

¹³² Cox, "The Archivist and Collecting," 500; Bearman, *Archival Methods*, 15. There are other things that the archival profession has not done as well as it should, though many of these, too, are changing (even if not fast enough to satisfy those in the UBC-Pitt camp). We have unprocessed backlogs that are too large, but this is as much a matter of the unrealistically high standards we have set for what constitutes a "processed" collection as it is any basic failure of theory or objective—a willingness to view Oliver Holmes' "five levels of arrangement" as a set of options rather than inclusive requirements would be a start, and again many repositories have begun just this sort of processing triage. Archivists are still reluctant and sometimes ill-trained to promote their holdings and their programs, but this too is changing, and so is the tendency for archivists to ignore or marginalize anyone but "serious" scholars. Archival education programs have improved and must continue to improve. By these measures, most archives have enjoyed success over the last 20 years (some have enjoyed more success than they could comfortably handle, in fact). Can we do more? Of course. Continual improvement is difficult enough for any profession to achieve, and we should not be frustrated or distracted by those who insist we must define and reach an artificial standard or else abandon the enterprise altogether. While we cannot rest on our laurels, we should not simply take comfort in, but relish the fact that we are stimulating more interest in research, making more documentation accessible, and serving a growing and more diverse set of users.

¹³³ Terry Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds," 304. See also, Luciana Duranti, "The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory," 338-41; Richard J. Cox, "The Record in the Manuscript Collection," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24:1 (May 1996), 46-61; David Bearman, "Archival Strategies," *American Archivist* 58:4 (Fall 1995), 380-413.

¹³⁴ Clergy	30,480
Reporters and correspondents	29,660
Social workers, medical and psychiatric	32,910
Fire fighters	31,570
Curators, archivists, museum technicians, and conservators	33,130

Librarians, professional	38,400
Teachers, elementary school	37,310
Public relations specialists and publicity writers	36,260
Accountants and auditors	40,550

The salary for “archivists” may be higher than represented here, since the category includes “museum technicians.” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Table A-1. National employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey by occupation, 1997,” <<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.t01.htm>>. Those who complain that archivists are viewed as nothing more than “file clerks” might note that in fact file clerks make half the annual income of archivists--File clerks \$17,350.

¹³⁵ William Maher, “Archives, Archivists, and Society,” *American Archivist*, 61:2 (Fall 1998), 263.

¹³⁶ Richard E. Barry, “Electronic Records Management...The Way We Were...The Way We Are: One Man's Opinion,” <<http://208.192.202.31/rbarry/ukrmj-7.html>>.

¹³⁷ Richard E. Barry, “Keeping Records for Changing Organizations: who's minding the store?” unpublished paper presented at the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) annual conference, 1997, <<http://208.192.202.31/rbarry/rb-nag1.html>>.

¹³⁸ Jean Pierre-Wallot, “A Look at Archival Practices” XXXIIIrd International Conference of The Round Table On Archives, (Citra) Stockholm, 09-12/09/1998, <<http://www.ra.se/citra/wallot.htm>>.

¹³⁹ The quote is from Chauncey Bell, “Re-membling the Future” (emphasis added). See also this evocative assessment of human indexers and catalogers (and compare it to the automatic generation of metadata envisioned by theorists of recordkeeping systems): “She interprets. Looks for meaning. Provides context, cross-references, weaves diverse threads into easily searched entries. She digs out concepts....” Stoll, *High Tech Heretic*, 191-92.

¹⁴⁰ Attributed to Mark Twain. John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, Justin Kaplan ed., Sixteenth edition (Boston, 1992), 528.