

Pluralising the Archives in the Multiverse: A Report on Work in Progress

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon recent research and educational initiatives by the Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), this paper will raise issues relating to the archival multiverse, with particular reference to the role of education and research, as well as archives and archivists in promoting pluralistic approaches in situations of complex and emergent national and community identities in the broader context of a globalised society. It will reference research and education agendas relating to how multi-faceted frameworks informed by continuum, postcustodial, postcolonial and post-conflict thinking, and diverse ways of knowing can support the formation and transformation of archives to meet the needs of contemporary society, as well as social justice, human rights, and social inclusion agendas.

Pluralizzare gli archivi nel multiverso: relazione sul lavoro in corso

SINTESI

Nel delineare le recenti ricerche ed iniziative formative dell'AERI (Archival Education and Research Institute), questo articolo solleverà questioni legate al multiverso archivistico, con particolare riguardo al ruolo della formazione e della ricerca, come pure agli archivi ed agli archivisti alle prese con la promozione di approcci pluralistici in situazioni di identità nazionali e comuni complesse ed emergenti nel più ampio contesto di una società globalizzata. Si farà pure riferimento ai piani di ricerca ed educazionali relativi a come la struttura multi sfaccettata permeata di pensiero continuo, post coloniale e post conflitto, e le diverse modalità di sapere possano supportare la formazione e la trasformazione degli archivi per venire incontro ai bisogni della società contemporanea, così come della giustizia sociale, dei diritti umani e dei piani di integrazione sociale.

Pluralizacija arhivov: poročilo o napredku projekta

IZVLEČEK

Na osnovi orisa nedavne raziskovalne in izobraževalne iniciative, ki jo je podal Archival Education and Research Institute (Arhivski izobraževalni in raziskovalni inštitut), bo prispevek obravnaval problematiko s poudarkom na izobraževalni in raziskovalni vlogi arhivov, ter vlogo arhivov in arhivistov pri spodbujanju pluralističnih pristopov v primerih kompleksnih in porajajočih nacionalnih in skupnih identitet v širšem okviru globalizirane družbe. Opozoril bo na raziskovalno in izobraževalno delo in različne izkušnje, ki lahko pomagajo pri oblikovanju in preoblikovanju arhivov, da bodo le-ti ustrezali potrebam sodobne družbe, kakor tudi zagotavljanju socialnih in človekovih pravic.

Introduction

Originally coined in 1895 by American philosopher and psychologist William James, the term “multiverse” is widely used today to refer to the hypothetical set of multiple possible universes¹. It has been explored in the context of many different disciplines, including cosmology, physics, astronomy, psychology, cultural studies, and literature, but not as yet in archival studies². In this paper we use the term *archival multiverse* “to encompass the pluralism of evidentiary texts (records in multiple forms and cultural contexts), memory-keeping practices and institutions, bureaucratic and personal motivations, community perspectives and needs, and cultural and legal constructs”³. It is our thesis that the notion of the archival multiverse should permeate research and education agendas and indeed all activities of archives and archivists in supporting emergent nations and post-conflict societies with multiple ethnic communities; building strong, sustainable communities; and supporting social justice, human rights, and social inclusion agendas⁴. Moreover, we contend that digital archival technologies as well as more traditional archival activities need to be situated within frameworks informed by continuum, postcustodial, postcolonial, and post-conflict thinking, as well as the diverse ways of knowing of the many different populations and communities that make up our nations today, if we are going to facilitate the formation and transformation of archives to meet contemporary local community and global needs as well as at those at the state and national level⁵.

This paper, therefore, reports on recent wide-ranging reflection on and discussion of the ways in which archival education and research, in relation to archival theory, recordkeeping and archival functionality, archival structures, strategies and tactics, can engage with the archival multiverse. Our focus is on how we can address the challenges associated with plurality and complexity, globally and locally, particularly in a digital world and with reference to emergent national and community identities⁶. We question:

whether archival ideas and practices developed over centuries in response to the needs and modalities of large and powerful bureaucracies and scholarly repositories are relevant or effective when applied in other cultural and organisational contexts, for example those that are grass roots, Indigenous, transnational, or emergent ...⁷

and,

how ... we move from an archival universe dominated by one cultural paradigm to an Archival Multiverse; from a world constructed in terms of “the one” and “the other” to a world of multiple ways of knowing and practicing, of multiple narratives co-existing in one space ...⁸

1. www.oed.com

2. See, for example, Rajni KOTHARI, D. L. SHETH, Ashis NANDY, eds., *The multiverse of democracy: Essays in honour of Rajni Kothari*, Thousand Oaks, CA 1996; Ananta KUMAR GIRI, *Cosmopolitanism and beyond: Towards a multiverse of transformations*, “Development and Change” 37(2006), n. 6, pp. 1277-1292; and Helge KRAGH, *Contemporary history of cosmology and the controversy over the multiverse*, “Annals of Science” 66(2009), n. 4, pp. 529-551.

3. *Pluralising the Archival Curriculum Group*, *Educating for the archival multiverse*, “American Archivist” 2011, Spring, p. 73. See also Anne GILLILAND, *Neutrality, social justice and the obligations of archival educators and ducation in the twenty-first century*, “Archival Science” (in press) and Kelvin WHITE and Anne GILLILAND, *Promoting reflexivity and inclusivity in archival education, research and practice*, “Library Quarterly” 80(2010), n. 3, pp. 231-248.

4. See, for example, Anne GILLILAND and Kelvin WHITE, *Digital recordkeeping in support of social inclusion in an eSociety*, In *Proceedings of the IADIS International Conference e-Society 2009, Barcelona, Spain, 25-28 February, 2009*, IADIS Press 2009; Sue MCKEMMISH, Shannon FAULKHEAD and Lynette RUSSELL, *Distrust in the archive: Reconciling records*, “Archival Science” (in press).

5. Frank UPWARD, Sue MCKEMMISH and Barbara REED, *Archivists and changing social and information spaces: a continuum approach to recordkeeping and archiving in online cultures*, “Archivaria”, 72 (in press).

6. Some of the impetus for this work arose from a prior research project, *Pluralising the Archival Paradigm in the Pacific Rim*. See Anne J. GILLILAND, Sue MCKEMMISH, Zhang BIN, Kelvin WHITE, Yang LU and Andrew LAU, *Pluralising the archival paradigm: Can archival education in Pacific Rim communities address the challenge?*, “American Archivist”, 2008 n. Spring/Summer, pp. 84-114; and Anne J. GILLILAND, Andrew LAU, Yang LU, Sue MCKEMMISH, Shilpa RELE and Kelvin WHITE, *Pluralising the archival paradigm: Critical discussions around the Pacific Rim*, “Archives & Manuscripts”, 35(2007), n. 2, pp. 10-39. See also Sue MCKEMMISH, Anne GILLILAND and Eric KETELAAR, *Communities of memory: Pluralising archival research and education agendas*, *Archives and Manuscripts*, 33(2005), n. 1, pp. 146-175.

7. *Pluralising the Archival Curriculum Group*, op. cit., p. 70.

8. *Pluralising the Archival Curriculum Group*, ibid, p. 73.

The Archival Education and Research Institutes (AERI), where much of this discussion has been taking place, are working to develop a transformational agenda for inclusive archival education and research that addresses these critical questions. AERI aims to help to position the archival studies discipline and archival practice to meet the needs of contemporary society at a global and local level, to play their part in supporting emergent national and community identities in the broader context of a globalised society. It also aims to build capacity and infrastructure to support this education and research agenda.

Building the Future of Archival Education and Research

AERI has been established as part of the Building the Future of Archival Education and Research initiative, Phases I and II (<http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/index.htm>) directed by Anne Gilliland (University of California, Los Angeles - UCLA), Elizabeth Yakel (University of Michigan), and Kelvin White (University of Oklahoma). AERI is sponsored by a consortium of eight United States universities that offer a doctoral specialisation in archival studies (UCLA; University of Michigan; University of Pittsburgh; University of Maryland; University of Texas at Austin; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; University of Wisconsin, Madison; and Simmons College), and is supported by international senior faculty from Monash University in Australia, the University of Toronto in Canada, University College London in the UK, the University of Zadar in Croatia, the University of mid-Sweden, and the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The Building the Future of Archival Education and Research initiative, which has been funded by two grants from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) totalling approximately U.S. \$1.6 million, seeks to stimulate the growth of a new generation of academics in archival education who are versed in contemporary issues and knowledgeable of the work being conducted by colleagues. It nurtures and promotes state-of-the-art archival studies scholarship, broadly conceived, as well as encouraging curricular and pedagogical innovation in archival education across the United States and worldwide.

The initiative has several components, including full funding of five 4-year doctoral fellowships for students attending one of the participating universities, and a program to encourage the recruitment of students from under-represented, diverse groups into doctoral programs in archival studies. The largest component of this initiative, however, is the series of annual week-long summer institutes, or AERIs (Archival Education and Research Institutes), which are open to all doctoral students and faculty in archival studies anywhere, and have been hosted since 2009 by one of the consortium of 8 United States universities. Providing intensive, collegial collaborative environments, and also full scholarships for attendance by students and junior faculty in American universities, AERI 2009, 2010 and 2011 have brought together incoming and continuing doctoral students, recent doctoral graduates, and faculty from across the United States and around the world. AERI's goals include:

1. Creating a dynamic community of researchers, teachers, and students to help mentor doctoral students and faculty in areas such as thesis writing, grant writing, publishing, and career development.
2. Advancing curriculum development in archival studies.
3. Furthering current research development and critique through presentations, posters, and workshop activities.
4. Fostering interest in future collaborations among participants both nationally and internationally.
5. Working to build capacity and develop the necessary infrastructure to support archival education and research worldwide.

The need for an international forum such as AERI where academics in archival studies can meet, learn, collaborate and strategise is perhaps indicated by its rapid growth, breadth of participation, and the outcomes that have begun to be generated by its work. Participation in AERI has risen from 71 (29 faculty, 42 students) in 2009 at UCLA, to 83 (29 faculty, 51 students, and 3 U.S. Federal funding agency officers) in 2010 at the University of Michigan, to 102 (36 faculty, 65 students, and 1 U.S. Federal funding agency officer) in 2011 at Simmons College. Participants have come from 39 universities in 12 countries on 5 continents (U.S.A., Canada, Brazil, Australia, China, Korea, Iceland, Wales, England, the Netherlands, Sweden and Croatia).

The next sections of this paper identify several of the major research themes emerging from

AERI, as well as discuss some of the specific areas of infrastructure-building that are currently underway and that relate to pluralising archival education and research, enhancing pedagogy in archival education, and the development of a globally meaningful archival research agenda.

Major Emergent Research Themes

By analysing the themes of the presentations from the past three AERIs, an interesting picture of areas of current research concentration among the participants emerges. These include archival description and recordkeeping metadata more broadly; archival implications of new and social media; globalisation and other global concerns; personal digital archives; community recordkeeping practices, community-based archives and community-centric archival policy; social justice, human rights, truth and reconciliation commissions, and the role of archives and recordkeeping; archives and postcoloniality; scientific recordkeeping and data archives; memory and identity studies; archival education and training; digitisation and associated policy concerns such as copyright; moving image archives; and the history of archives and archival practices⁹.

Many of these themes reflect recent shifts that have been identified by scholars who have been analysing change in the archival field. For example, plenary speaker Laura Helton at the recent AERI 2011 identified three distinct areas of change, all of which have been compounded and complexified by massive and ever-accelerating technological change:

1. documentary shifts (for example, the expanded scope of the notion of the record in different cultural contexts, as well as which genres are represented in the archive);
2. demographic shifts (for example, groups that might have been previously marginalised or subsumed in the archive have been enfranchised through democratisation of political and governance processes, or given voice by social media; recognition of the documentary and recordkeeping implications of diaspora, migrations, and other examples of communities in flux) and the demands that these will place on archives; and
3. intellectual shifts (in particular, the so-called *archival turn* in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, literature, gender and ethnic studies, and media studies) and the ways in which these have fed back into scholarship within archival studies itself.

These themes also speak to the complexity and the changing boundaries of the world in which archives and archival activities are now situated. The approaches they employ range from social justice activism, humanistic contemplation, and social scientific analysis, to hardcore systems design. At the same time, however, there is an increasing realisation among the scholars represented that only trans-disciplinary and trans-institutional collaborations can usefully address the multiple facets of some of the research problems that have been identified. This acknowledgment of the complexity, scale and immediacy of problems confronting archives has also raised the complexity, scale and immediacy of human problems more generally, and resulted in discussions about the ways in which archival research can contribute to those concerns as well.

The remainder of this paper will discuss three specific initiative areas within AERI and contemplate the ways in which each is relevant to emergent nations and communities, not only in terms of the archival implications of such developments, but also in terms of archival contributions to larger societal needs and well-being.

9. Recent publications emanating out of this work include: Joel A. BLANCO-RIVERA, *Truth commissions and the construction of collective memory: The Chile experience*, In Ben ALEXANDER and Jeannette BASTIAN, eds. *Community archives: The shaping of memory*, London 2009; Michelle CASWELL, *Khmer Rouge archives: accountability, truth, and memory in Cambodia*, "Archival Science", 11(2011), and 'Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back': *Cultural property and the fight over the Iraqi Baath Party records*, "American Archivist", 74(2011), n. 1, pp. 211-240; Sinn DONGHEE, *Room for archives? Use of archival materials* In *No Gun Ri research*, "Archival Science", 10(2010), n. 2; Shannon FAULKHEAD and Jim BERG, *Power and the passion: Our ancestors return home*, Melbourne 2001; Anne GILLILAND, *Reflections on the value of metadata archaeology for recordkeeping in a global, digital world*, Journal of the Society of Archivists 32(2011), n. 1, pp. 97-112; Sue MCKEMMISH, *Evidence of me in a digital world*, in C. A. LEE (ed.), *I, Digital: Personal collections in the digital era*, Chicago 2011 (in press); Sue MCKEMMISH, Livia IACOVINO, Eric KETELAAR, Melissa CASTAN, and Lynette RUSSELL, *Resetting relationships: Archives and Indigenous human rights in Australia*, "Archives and Manuscripts" 39(2011), n. 1; Sue MCKEMMISH, Melissa CASTAN, Livia IACOVINO, and Lynette RUSSELL, (Guest Eds.), *Archival Science - Keeping cultures alive: Archives and Indigenous human rights* (in press); Kelvin L. WHITE, *Meztizaje and remembering in Afro-Mexican communities of the Costa Chica: Implications for archival education in Mexico*, *Archival Science* 9(2009), n. 1-2.

Initiative 1. Infrastructure Building: Pluralising archival education and enhancing pedagogy

A group of faculty and doctoral students convened a workshop at AERI 2009 to address issues relating to diversifying the archival profession and pluralising archival education so that it could better prepare new generations of archival practitioners, educators, and researchers for the archival multiverse. Naming themselves the Pluralising Archival Curriculum Group (PACG), they subsequently published a group-authored article (24 authors from universities in the U.S., Australia, U.K. and Croatia) in the *American Archivist* that explored how pluralist approaches implemented in archival education might help to achieve greater diversity and cultural sensitivity in practice and scholarship, and produce archivists well equipped to work in complex emergent national and community settings. Three key components were identified: “identifying ways in which dominant cultural paradigms narrow archival pedagogy and practice; envisioning and exploring alternatives to these paradigms; and developing an archival educational framework that might help to promote a critique of professional and societal norms and include and reflect upon diverse perspectives on archival theory and practice”¹⁰. The article called for a broader conversation on these topics, engaging archival academics and students, professional associations, roundtables and caucuses, accrediting bodies, archival employers, funding agencies, and diverse communities that create, manage and use records:

Archival studies education programs are conceptualised in strikingly similar ways worldwide, largely because of the overarching bureaucratically and legally-centred paradigms developed and exported from Europe through colonialism, evangelism, mercantilism, and technological developments, and later codified through national and international standards and terminologies, especially those developed by the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the International Standards Organization (ISO). However, archival curricula could be expanded in many ways to better reflect the archival multiverse. Pluralised curricula emerge from pluralised classrooms, from broader engagement in curriculum development, and from partnerships and alliances that bridge the academy and the community (including communities of practice, such as professional archivists)¹¹.

The article concluded with a proposed approach to pluralising archival curriculum which involves historicising and contextualising archival theory and practice; expanding existing curricula to focus on core archival concepts and values as well as processes; encouraging multidisciplinary approaches; strengthening community engagement in archival curriculum development (including professional communities of practice); promoting internships and service learning in a wide range of archival contexts; and pluralising the archival faculty, doctoral education and the student body. In November 2010, a working group of faculty from the University of Toronto, University College London, Monash University and the University of Oklahoma convened in Los Angeles with UCLA faculty and doctoral students for a preliminary exploration of approaches to building archival curriculum based on archival concepts rather than processes, highlighting the need to reflect the plurality of the contexts in which we teach and learn, as proposed in the *American Archivist* article:

Core concepts such as trust, evidence, accountability, creatorship/co-creatorship, ownership, authenticity, authority, access, and permanence can form the bases of curricula rather than archival processes such as appraisal, arrangement, and description around which current, often highly linear, curricular standards and hence programs are structured. This approach could address how these concepts are understood in different cultures and might open up the classrooms to multiple ways of viewing archives¹².

A concept-based approach has other benefits also. These include illuminating how different archival traditions that have evolved within particular political and legal structures vary in their understandings and implementation of core concepts; providing precision around archival ideas and needs that might be necessary to operationalise them in digital systems design, business process or activity modelling, or metadata schema development; and articulating the scope and specifics of core archival concepts to other fields with which we need or seek to cooperate or exchange data.

10. PACG, *ibid.*, p. 71.

11. PACG, *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89; referencing Anne GILLILAND et al., *Pluralising the archival paradigm*, *op.cit.*; and Anne GILLILAND and Kelvin WHITE, *Perpetuating and extending the archival paradigm*, *op.cit.*

12. PACG, *ibid.*, p. 91.

Following this meeting, a web-based collaboration site was developed. At AERI 2011 a workshop attended by approximately 40 attendees, many of whom are currently engaged in curricular development or revision within their own programmes, discussed concept-based curricula approaches and developed preliminary diagrams and mappings of selected archival concepts. This work is being continued in the interim between AERI 2011 and AERI 2012 by means of a collaborative wiki based at Monash University in Melbourne, and the preparation of a group-authored article reporting outcomes.

Initiative 2. Infrastructure Building: Research design, methodologies and techniques

Another major AERI initiative relates to building archival research infrastructure. This initiative aims to acknowledge and demonstrate the diversity of methods available to examine complex and/or emergent phenomena within the archival multiverse by publishing a major monograph on archival research design and methods¹³. The monograph, currently in process, will include chapters contributed by more than 60 different archival scholars from around the world, and will promote reflexivity and explicitness on the part of archival researchers about the development of their research agendas and the design of their research in order to encourage conceptual and empirical rigour; educate archival audiences in how to conduct, read and critically evaluate archival research; and promote robust and diverse methodological approaches to archival research. The monograph will discuss theoretical frameworks drawn from the archival canon and more recent archival thinking (e.g. postcustodial¹⁴, post-modern, records continuum theory¹⁵), and from other fields, such as postcolonialism, decolonisation, post-conflict approaches, critical theory/critical race theory (CRT)¹⁶/critical feminist theory and their application in archival research. It also explores the epistemological lineage of methods and techniques borrowed from other fields (e.g. ethnic, gender, human rights, cultural and memory studies, information systems development, actor-network theory, grounded theory) and the ways in which these methods are being adapted for archival uses; as well as the evolution and maturation of methods that are uniquely archival, having developed out of archival theory and practice (e.g. diplomatics, literary warrant analysis, and archival ethnography).

Initiative 3. Building a Research Agenda: Archival education and research challenges

At AERI 2011 in a plenary session led by Sue McKemmish, we began to explore archival education and research challenges associated with “grand societal challenges” identified, globally and locally, by organisations like the United Nations, the European Union, Amnesty International, Transparency International, national governments, global and local resistance and activist groups, and local communities. Grand societal challenges are being identified in areas such as peace and security, human rights, development, climate change, social justice and inclusion, corporate governance, and sustainable communities. Table 1 lists examples of grand societal challenges and associated archival challenges which were brainstormed during a plenary session at AERI 2011.

13. This work also builds on a special double issue of *Archival Science -- Building a research infrastructure for archival studies* nos. 3-4 (2004), edited by Anne Gilliland and Sue McKemmish.

14. Hallmarks of a postcustodial approach, according to Terry Cook, include a focus on “the context, purpose, intent, interrelationships, functionality, and accountability of the record and especially its creator and its creation processes.” See Terry COOK, *Electronic records, paper minds: The revolution in information management and archives in the post-custodial and post-modernist era*, “Archives and Manuscripts” 22(1994), n. 2, p. 302.

15. Records continuum approaches involve the integration of recordkeeping and archiving processes, and a multidimensional and pluralist view of archival functionality. Records continuum theory draws extensively on continuum philosophies relating to spacetime to address the infinite expansion of recorded information in modern information ecologies. See Sue MCKEMMISH, Barbara REED and Frank UPWARD, *The records continuum*, In Marcia BATES and Mary MAACK, *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 3rd ed., New York 2009; and Sue MCKEMMISH, Michael PIGGOTT, Barbara REED and Frank UPWARD, eds., *Archives: Recordkeeping in society*, Wagga Wagga 2005.

16. “Critical race theory is a reform movement within the legal profession, whose followers strongly believe that the legal system has disempowered racial minorities. Critical race theorists observe that even if the law is expressed in neutral language, it cannot be neutral. This theory states that the people who expressed the law had their own subjective perspectives that, once enshrined in law, have disadvantaged minorities and caused to continue racism.” See USLegal.com <http://definitions.uslegal.com/c/critical-race-theory/>. See also Richard DELGADO and Jean STEFANCIC, *Critical race theory: An introduction*, NYU Press 2001, pp. 2-3; Anthony W. DUNBAR, *Introducing critical race theory to archival discourse: Getting the conversation started*, “Archival Science” 6(2006), n. 1, pp. 109-129.

Table 1: Grand Societal Challenges and Archival Challenges

Area	Societal Challenge	Archival Challenge
Climate Change	Building a green economy	Building an integrated global archive of records relating to climate change
Peace and Security	Decolonisation	Decolonising the archive, archival functionality and recordkeeping practice
Development	Democratisation	Transforming archival access
Corporate Governance	Accountability and transparency	Developing recordkeeping and archival structures, strategies and tactics that support accountability and transparency
Human Rights	Enabling Indigenous peoples, oppressed and marginalised communities to exercise rights of self-determination	Building participatory archival models that support the exercise of cultural, information and memory rights as human rights
Social Justice and Inclusion	Bridging the digital and information divides	Bridging the archival divide
Sustainable Communities	Recognising and valuing local community cultures and knowledge as critical components in building strong, healthy communities	Supporting independent, sustainable community-based archives ¹⁷
Information Society and Technological Change	Addressing the complexity and plurality of the worlds of recorded information in online cultures	Developing global and local archival structures, strategies and tactics to address the “infinitely expanding ... continuum of recorded information that is engulfing us” ¹⁸

Addressing these types of archival education and research challenges in turn challenges our current and past theory and practice in terms of:

- the power and reach of archival metaviews, theories, principles and concepts;

17. Alternately referred to as “living archives,” “independent archives,” “do-it-yourself archives,” “archives without walls,” “democratised archives” and “participatory archives,” community-based archives tend to be generated and used by groups or movements whose perspectives and experiences are not fully represented in more mainstream archives. See ANDREW FLINN, *Independent community archives and community-generated content: ‘Writing, saving and sharing our histories’*, “Convergence: International Journal of Research in New Media Technologies” 16(2010) n, 1, pp. 39-51; Andrew FLINN, Mary STEVENS, and Elizabeth SHEPHERD, *Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream*, “Archival Science”, 9(2009), pp. 71-86; Isto HUVILA, *Participatory archive: Towards decentralised curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualisation of records management*, *Archival Science*, 2008, pp. 15-36.

18. UPWARD et. al., *Archivists and changing social and information spaces*, op.cit.

- the adequacy of archival functionality - e.g. appraisal, recordkeeping practices, metadata and descriptive regimes, access and use; and
- the development of appropriate global and local archival structures, strategies and tactics.

An archival education and research agenda based on identifying research and education challenges associated with grand societal challenges could be pursued by:

- forming partnerships around related “killer questions” (academics, organisations, communities);
- deconstructing the questions into research and education problems to be addressed by programs and projects;
- putting together required knowledge and skill sets (discipline and domain expertise, research strengths);
- developing required governance and infrastructure (including research and education frameworks, ethical frameworks, technologies, systems, research methodologies, methods, techniques, pedagogies); and
- securing funding/resourcing.

Central to the archival challenges identified in Table 1 are the notions of archival access and the archival divide - the gap between the archival “haves”, privileged by the cultural paradigm which has shaped the modern archive, and the archival “have nots”, those who are under-represented in that archive, or those who have been colonised or oppressed peoples and have few, if any rights, in the archives of the former colonial powers or oppressive regimes worldwide. Ensuring widespread and immediate access to the archive to meet the needs of contemporary society as reflected in the grand societal challenges, and bridging the archival divide will involve new theorising and conceptualisations; transforming archival functionality to support the greater democratisation and decolonisation of the archive; reinventing our structures, strategies and tactics to deal with “the complexity of place, time, volume, authority and ultimately accountability in our online recordkeeping present and future”¹⁹; and to enable those who have formerly been “passive and powerless subjects” or “captives of the archives”²⁰, to become what Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda calls “active participatory agents” - with rights that go beyond access rights to encompass engagement in creating and managing the archive, and participating in decision-making relating to its accessibility and use²¹. In the present and future this would involve radical change, globally and locally, not the kind of “piecemeal, uncoordinated action at national and state level”²² currently underway.

Conclusion

Through the initiatives outlined above, AERI is pursuing a transformational agenda for inclusive archival education and research in support of the archival multiverse. Digital technologies deployed within archival frameworks derived from continuum, postcustodial, postcolonial and post-conflict thinking, and the diverse ways of knowing of the many different populations and communities that make up our nations today, can enable the democratisation and decolonisation of the archive in ways which support emergent nations, sustainable communities and post-conflict societies with multiple ethnic communities in the broader context of a globalised society. Derrida defined “effective democratisation of the archives” as involving not only broad access to the archive, but also extensive “participation in its constitution and interpretation”²³. New ways of forming the archive are needed to enable the construction of multiple and contested views, and empower “the other”. In the archival multiverse, multiple perspectives, parallel or multiple provenances can be represented; shared control and the exercise of negotiated rights in records are enabled; past and present government, alternate and contested views can be presented in parallel or together in a shared archival space. This paper has reported on evolving archival research and education agendas relating to the development of multi-faceted fra-

19. UPWARD, *ibid.*

20. H. FOURMILE, *Who owns the past? Aborigines as captives of the archives*, “Aboriginal History” 13(1989), pp. 1-2.

21. Mick GOODA, *Harnessing the practical power of human rights to influence recordkeeping and archival practice*, “Archival Science” (in press).

22. UPWARD et. al., *Archivists and changing social and information spaces*, op.cit.

23. Jacques DERRIDA, *Archive fever: A Freudian impression*, Chicago and London 1996, p. 4.

meworks for the archival multiverse which can support the formation and transformation of archives to meet the needs of contemporary society, as well as social justice, human rights, and social inclusion agendas.

SUMMARY

This paper raises issues relating to the archival multiverse, with particular reference to the role of education, research, archives and archivists in promoting pluralistic approaches in situations of complex and emergent national and community identities. It discusses the Building the Future of Archival Education and Research initiative and the related Archival Education and Research Institutes (AERI). AERI is developing a range of research and education agendas relating to how multi-faceted frameworks informed by continuum, postcustodial, postcolonial and post-conflict thinking, and diverse ways of knowing can support the formation and transformation of archives to meet the needs of contemporary society, as well as social justice, human rights, and social inclusion agendas. The paper focuses on how we can address the challenges associated with plurality and complexity, globally and locally, particularly in a digital world. Major research themes emerging from AERI are identified, and specific areas of infrastructure-building are discussed, including initiatives relating to pluralising archival education and research, enhancing pedagogy in archival education, and the development of a globally meaningful archival research agenda. The paper points to how digital technologies deployed within archival frameworks derived from continuum, postcustodial, postcolonial and post-conflict thinking, and the diverse ways of knowing of the many different populations and communities that make up our nations today, can enable the democratisation and decolonisation of the archive in ways which support emergent nations, sustainable communities and post-conflict societies with multiple ethnic communities in the broader context of a globalised society.

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