

AERI 2010

Audiovisual Materiality and the Archival World

Where: Great Lakes North

When: Wed 6/23, 1:30 - 3:00 PM

Abstracts:

Conway, Paul. Interviewing Expert Users of Digitized Photographs

This paper builds on a small but intriguing social science research literature on interviewing peers and experts. It draws on findings from the author's qualitative investigation of the use of digitized photographic archives by domain experts from a range of occupational strata. The paper analyzes selected exchanges between interviewer and interview participant, with the goal of juxtaposing the roles played by specific terminology and jargon from archival theory and the practice of photography. The paper explores how archival knowledge may be elicited from domain experts through negotiation on the transparency of the interview process itself. The paper concludes with commentary on the particular benefits that accrue to the development of understanding the use of archives from research with populations of experts.

Becker, Snowden. On Janus and Juvenilia: Preserving student films in institutional archives.

Student work is a major product of the academic machine, but it receives short shrift in most institutional archives; even the personal papers of alumni who went on to become famous tend to be light on work done during their school years. The work of student filmmakers is a resource that is often neglected, despite being particularly rich in several respects. This paper will briefly discuss the results of a recent (Spring, 2010) survey of film schools and other colleges nationwide and summarize their practices in retaining, preserving, and providing access to student film productions. Case studies of a few of these archives will provide a jumping-off point for discussing how, when, and why schools create collections of student films, and the implications of their work for archivists who manage audiovisual materials in other institutional contexts.

Hubner, Brian. "Archiving of the Paranormal: The Case of Spirit Photography"

The presentation will examine how the Hamilton Family fonds, and other spirit photography collections have dealt with in archival settings. At the core of the Hamilton fonds are about 700 spirit photographs which will be compared with other fonds/collections of similar photographs in North America and Western Europe. Over the past 30 years the actions of archivists have contributed to how the Hamilton family fonds is used and perceived as much as T.G. Hamilton's camera's did. In the case of the Hamilton photographs the "presence" of the fonds has led to major decisions concerning other fonds or even the direction of archives acquisition policies in general. I will attempt to determine how other archives which hold these types of photographs have approached these kinds of fonds/collections, and what we can say about the archiving of the paranormal in general.

Lynn, Jessie. Zines, Archiving materiality; everyday zine practices and the archive

Institutional archives are spaces regulated by professional guidelines, national and cultural identities and social process, entrusted to preserve the memory of people and nations. These archives are containers of materiality, paying attention to order and preservation. However the material object is only one dimension or representation of culture. Following from Cvetkovich's archive of feelings, with zines as the research site, I consider non-material dimensionality as an absent and uncontainable element of the institutional archive.

This paper will consider other archival spaces of zines - spaces where everyday practices take place, practices that are ephemeral moments, where the material object is the 'trace left behind' (de Certeau, 1988, 97), which in the Archive becomes the thing with which we know the past.

Considering these other, everyday sites and processes as archival spaces we see the moments in history and memory-making of the non-material dimensions of zines (the currencies, the trades, the gossip and innuendo, the production processes, the contexts). I argue that an awareness of these 'other' dimensions reinforces the subjective, material nature of the institutional archive, and acknowledges (yet doesn't attempt to capture) the other spaces of everyday life.

Chair: Ricky Punzalan, University of Michigan

Bios:**Ricardo Punzalan**

I am currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Michigan School of Information and my advisor is Dr. Margaret Hedstrom. Aside from a Ph.D. in Information, I am enrolled in two graduate certificate programs: Science, Technology and Society (STS) and Museum Studies.

My most recent research experience brought me to the town of Techiman in Ghana. Under the auspices of the Museum Studies at Michigan program, I undertook six weeks of ethnographic research studying the recordkeeping practices of the indigenous leadership structure of Techiman. During this period, I helped organize the records of the Techiman Traditional Council and train some of the Council staff in basic archives management and preservation. A paper on this experience, which I intend to submit to a refereed journal, is underway. The paper reflects on the place of textual records in a postcolonial oral society and discusses the role of records within an indigenous leadership structure. I tackle the relationship of archives with the preservation of culture and traditions, and the process by which archival records come to be regarded as heritage.

I look at archives not as a set of impartial collection of records, nor as a set of practices driven by a neutral imperative to preserve artifacts. In this regard, I relate archives with the exercise of power, the creation of knowledge and official histories and narratives, and the politics of identity formation. Thus, I have been pursuing research that critically questions the place of archival records and the practices associated with record keeping and curation as legitimate sources or practices of information and knowledge.

I have explored these themes in recent papers and articles published as a student at Michigan. My article, "The Archives of the New Possession," in the refereed journal *Archival Science*, explores the entanglement of archives with colonialism, nationhood and the formation of national identity in the Philippines. In November 2009, I published a book chapter discussing how a collection of medical records created and consumed under a colonial system of medical segregation function as embodiment of community identity and memory within the context of commemoration on the island of Culion, a former leper colony in the Philippines. My pre-candidacy paper titled "Visualizing Leprosy: Archives, Stigma and Social Memory" discusses how images and visual depictions of leprosy function as both representations of medical knowledge and embodiment of stigma and segregation.

My duties as a Research Assistant on an NSF-funded research project that looks at the uses of digitized images allowed me to further pursue my passion in visual archives. My research experience in this project led me to pursue a dissertation research that looks at closely the interaction between materiality and digital surrogacy.

My dissertation explores how the transformation of analog photographs into the new digital format is affecting the research practices and the interpretation of images by visual studies scholars. Here, I continue to be true to my interest in interrogating archives more critically, this time in terms of accounting for how image digitization, often regarded as a neutral technical process, impacts research practice and interpretation of visual records in profound ways. I pursue my research with the belief that the process of digitization is not merely a technical concern, but an issue that inspires us to rethink the changing nature of visual records, revisit our notions of authenticity and originality, and most importantly, widen our understanding of the power new media has in structuring interpretation, bestowing significance and rendering meaning.

Before pursuing my Ph.D. studies, I was an Assistant Professor of archival studies in Philippines. In this context I had the opportunity to help establish archives and heritage centers in remote regions of the Philippines, facilitate workshop and training on collections management and preservation, and curate exhibitions on diverse subjects. In 2006, I organized a commemorative exhibit for the centennial of the Culion Leper Colony, a former medico-penal facility for people afflicted with leprosy in the Philippines.

Paul Conway

Paul Conway is associate professor in the School of Information at the University of Michigan. His research program encompasses digitization of cultural heritage resources, particularly photographic archives, the use of digitized resources by experts in a variety of humanities contexts, and the measurement of image and text quality in large-scale digitization programs. His work is supported by the National Science Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Conway teaches courses on digital libraries, understanding archives, preserving sound and motion resources, and digitization for preservation. He is also leading efforts at the School of Information to develop an undergraduate program in Informatics. Conway has extensive administrative experience in archives and preservation fields and has made major contributions over the past 30 years to the literature on archival users and use, preservation management, and digital imaging technologies. He has held positions at the National Archives and Records Administration, the Society of American Archivists, Yale University, and Duke University. In 2005, Conway received the American Library Association's Paul Banks and Carolyn Harris Preservation Award for his contributions to the preservation field. He is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, serves on the Editorial Board of *American Archivist*, and has been active in the Society for 25 years.

Snowden Becker

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Information at the University of Texas, Austin. I received a BFA in Printmaking from the Maryland Institute, College of Art in 1996 and an MLIS degree from UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies in 2001.

My ongoing research work investigates how audiovisual materials are integrated into our cultural heritage. I have written and presented on the use of home movies by the medical community in studies of autism and schizophrenia; the collector's market for home movies; preservation, legal, and access issues archivists encounter in collecting amateur films; and the increasing need for police departments to

preserve large quantities of audiovisual materials as evidence in criminal cases. My dissertation research focuses on the last of these interests, exploring the archival nature of the police evidence room and the people and processes involved in the long-term management of evidence in changing formats.

In 2001, I became the founding Chair of the Association of Moving Image Archivists' (AMIA) Small Gauge & Amateur Film interest group, a position I held until 2004; I have also served on the editorial board of the AMIA journal, *The Moving Image*, since 2004, and on the AMIA Scholarship Committee, which I currently chair, since 2006. Along with my colleague Katie Trainor, I have co-presented "Becoming a Film-Friendly Archivist" workshop since 2004, teaching basic film preservation skills to over 200 archivists and other cultural heritage professionals at the SAA annual meeting and other locations nationwide. I also taught Collection Development for the UCLA Moving Image Archive Studies Master's degree program and created new curriculum modules on amateur film for the NYU Moving Image Archiving and Preservation program.

In August, 2003, I helped launch Home Movie Day, an annual, international event that promotes public awareness and preservation of historic amateur footage. Three films rediscovered through Home Movie Day screenings have since been named to the Library of Congress's National Film Registry, and many others have been preserved by regional archives as a direct result of this event. In 2005, the Home Movie Day co-founders established a nonprofit organization, the Center for Home Movies, which coordinates Home Movie Day internationally and continues to work on collecting, preserving, providing access to, and promoting the understanding of home movies and amateur motion pictures.

I strongly believe that a 21st century archival education should prepare new members of the field to manage a historical record that has been accruing mechanical, electronic, digital, and visual components for well over a century. The burden of preservation and awareness of the need for active intervention to keep contemporary records accessible for the long term is something that the archival community must also work at sharing with a broader public through outreach, education, and access initiatives.

Brian Hubner

I am currently Associate University Archivist with the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections, and was previously employed at the Archives of Manitoba, Queen's University Archives, Kingston, and at the Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa. I have a Master of Arts (History, in Archival Studies) from the University of Manitoba, and a Master of Arts (History), from the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently enrolled in a PhD programme at the University of Amsterdam under Dr. Eric Ketelaar. The subject of the dissertation is archives of the paranormal specifically the Hamilton Family fonds at the University of Manitoba Archives I have written several articles on Aboriginal history and a book on the local history of the Cypress Hills of Alberta and Saskatchewan. My current interesting include archives of the paranormal and depictions of western Canada in film and television.

Jessie Lymn

I am in the second year of a PhD at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). I have a BA (Cultural Studies) (Honours) from the University of Adelaide and a MA (Information & Knowledge Management) from UTS. My professional background includes work in online information management and community archives, and I am currently tutoring in the information and communication programs at UTS.

My doctoral research considers archival spaces outside of traditional institutional archives. Using zines and the zine community as a specific site of research, I am exploring a series of 'other' spaces of memory making and collection. Zine practice is framed by ideas of DIY, the personal and small scale, resistance and ephemerality, and these ideologies provide alternative views on the archival process. As a practicing zine maker and member of the community/ies I am also interested in exploring the simultaneous roles of researcher and practitioner through my work.



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