Archives 2.0: Digital Archives and the Formation of New Research Methods

Alexis E. Ramsey-Tobienne

Archives—what they are, where they are, who they are for, how we use them—are gaining critical attention within our discipline. Witness, for instance, the recent publications of *Local Histories: Reading the Archives of Composition, Beyond the Archives: Research as Lived Process*, and *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*, not to mention a myriad of articles. Yet, as many rhetoric and composition historians have pointed out, the difficulty with archival research and with viewing archives as potentially generative, transforming, and transformational places stems from the lack of discipline-specific scholarship devoted to archival methods and methodologies. As Linda Ferreira-Buckley emphatically argues in "Rescuing the Archives from Foucault," methods sections are important because "historians of rhetoric need to return to the archives [because we are] underprepared in the specialized research techniques necessary to [write] revisionist histories. Theoretical sophistication does not obviate the need for practical training. We lack the tools of the historians' trade" (577, 582). Echoing, to a certain degree, Ferreira-Buckley's call, Janine Solberg reminded scholars of rhetorical history that

> we would do well to ask how digital environments promise to inform or transform our work as historians and what can we do to foster more explicit, discipline-specific conversations that consider the role and influence of digital technologies in our research. (54)

While Rhetoric and Composition scholars are responding to these calls (L'Eplattenier), certainly there remains much work to be done in regard to clearly articulated archival methods, particularly for digital archival

scholarship. As we continue to discuss and formulate archival research methods, we also continue to build our ethos as archival researchers. Such ethos-building is important for so-called archives 2.0 because questions of trust and community are central to concerns about this developing archival space. Yet, this shift, or perhaps more rightly this reconstitution of "archival space" may be a means for responding to both Ferreira-Buckley and Solberg's call for more explicitly stated research methods, even as these new archives help us, as researchers, define what it means to be an archival researcher and what it means to be "in" an archive.

Thus, this article will do three things: first, it will consider what is archives 2.0 and how we can define and understand the term "archives 2.0"; second, it will examine archives that might be considered as 2.0 (or, at the very least, heading in that direction); and finally, this article explores what these new spaces mean for rhetoric and composition scholars, particularly in relation to research methods, access(-ibility), and community.

What is Archives 2.0?

In the last few years, scholars in library science, information technologies, records management, and archival science have debated what exactly constitutes "archives 2.0." As I see it, the debate is actually a series of overlapping conversations regarding:

- How do archives 2.0 differ from, for lack of a better term, archives 1.0 or what we might consider more traditional, physical archives?
- How do archives 2.0 relate to web 2.0?
- What does an actual archives 2.0 look like? How does it function?
- What does this archival reframing mean for researchers/users of these spaces and how does it affect the research process?

The most basic conception of archives 2.0 is grounded on the idea of collaboration within a digital space. Yet, as many discussions of archives 2.0 point out, just because archives 2.0 rely on digital environments does not mean that web 2.0 + archives = archives 2.0. Rather, Joy Palmer, Senior Manager for Library and Archival Services at the University of Manchester, writes that archives 2.0 are "less about the integration of web 2.0 technologies into online finding aids, and more related to a fundamental shift in perspective, to a philosophy that privileges the user and promotes an ethos of sharing, collaboration, and openness" (Palmer).

Further, archives 2.0 are a culmination of many conversations and many movements in archives that now represent the majority view of how archives function (Theimer, "Meaning of Archives 2.0" 60). Thus, while archives 2.0 embrace and readily use web 2.0 technology, they are more about a perceptual shift in the way that archives function than just about using the web.

Likewise, archives 2.0 are not just digital representations of collections, although they can—and do—include digitized versions of collections. As Jim Ridolfo, William Hart-Davidson, and Michael McLeod note in their discussion of creating an archives 2.0 space for the Michigan State University Israelite Samaritan Scroll Collection:

> One may conclude then that simply digitizing the entire collection would solve most access problems, but this is not the case. We learned from our interviews and field research that both stakeholder communities need particular language, feature, and interface considerations in order for them to effectively utilize the archival collections online.

Archives 2.0 emphasize how collections are read, interpreted, and searched by a myriad of different kinds of users and they use web 2.0 technologies to enable such varied uses. They are more than digital collections because they invite participation in the formation and expansion of the sites, expecting involvement from both archivists and users/researchers alike.

Specifically, archives 2.0 are defined by the following characteristics: openness, transparency, user-centered, standardization, technology-savvy, measuring outputs, outcomes impacts, archivist as facilitator, open to iterating products, archivists valued because of what they do, innovative and flexible, looking for ways to attract new users. (Theimer, "Archives 2.0 is Here")

Unlike traditional archival spaces (and by traditional, I mean spaces that one physically enters, that are housed in buildings, where researchers get to touch, albeit with white gloves or very clean hands, the items), archives 2.0 are less about physical spaces and physical contact and more about establishing various levels of connectivity: between user and archivist, between users and users, between users and multiple collections. Archives 2.0 use web 2.0 technologies to facilitate these collaborative endeavors.

often through wikis, blogs, or Flickr, but the technology is always the means by which an end occurs, in this case, collaboration.

This emphasis on collaborative communities of users has led some to term these new archives "participatory archives." According to Isto Huvila, a Swedish Professor at the Department of Archival Studies, Library and Information Science and Museums and Cultural Heritage at Studies at Uppsala University, the foundations for participatory archives are "decentralized curation, radical user orientation, [and] contextualization of both records *and* the entire archival process" (15, italics original). In other words, archives become about the inclusivity of many different types of people, of items, and of knowledge.

One of the seminal and early instances of archives 2.0 is the September 11 Digital Archive. The repository for "more than 150,000 digital items, a tally that includes more than 40,000 emails and other electronic communications, more than 40,000 first-hand stories, and more than 15,000 digital images" collected items until June 2004 (September 11 Digital Archive). Although the site did not necessarily incorporate dialogues among users/uploaders, a feature of later archives 2.0, the idea that the users themselves shaped and gave substance to an archive space was a radical departure from earlier digital archives.[1] Huvila views this momentous, participatory shift as a way to create renewed relevancy for archives, rather than as a means for undermining archival legitimacy. In other words, by encouraging user contributions, the items preserved within are made accessible to a wider audience, are given contextualization beyond that offered by finding aids, and may become the basis for interesting connections among collections and among users leading to new research opportunities. An additional benefit is that interest in a digital collection may lead to the digitizing of other collections that may or may not have been in the queue for such treatment.

While the role of the user is clearly restated, so too is the role of the archivist. No longer simply a caretaker of documents, archivists must now "be active in their communities rather than passive, engaged with the interpretation of their collections rather than neutral custodians, and serve as effective advocates for their future" (Theimer "Meaning of

Archives 2.0" 60). Certainly, this is how the majority of archivists behave today, but as Kate Theimer points out, confirming, stating, and sharing this belief system showcases that "the professions has reached a new stage of maturity in the United States" ("Meaning of Archives 2.0" 60). Further, the emphasis on collaboration suggests that the dichotomy between user and archivist lessens, replaced by a sense of peer collaboration. As Joy Palmer asserts "in this new paradigm, content consumers become content producers." Or, as Huvila notes: "the radical user orientation is based on an understanding that together the participants are more knowledgeable about the archival materials than an archivist alone could be" (26). This emphasis on the sharing of knowledge is further elucidated by Kate Theimer in her presentation at the 2011 Society of American Archivists annual meeting when she defined participatory archives as "an organization, site or collection in which people other than archives professionals contribute knowledge or resources, resulting in increased understanding about archival materials, usually in an online environment" ("Exploring the Participatory Archives").

Yet, one downside of archives 2.0 or participatory archives is readily evident—the need for participation, the need for consumer buy-in. An early prototype for archives 2.0 was the Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections held at the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library. The collection was popular with both academics and Polar Bear enthusiasts, thereby acting as a logical collection for an experiment with a "next generation finding aid" developed by the Finding Aids Next Generation Research Group (FANG) and led by University of Michigan Professor of Information Elizabeth Yakel. In 2005, the group developed a site that enabled users to encounter the digital collection a number of different ways: through bookmarks, comments, link paths, browsing, searching, and user profiles.[2] Of particular interest were the two main ways that FANG created interactive finding aids: comments and link paths. The comment function allowed visitors to essentially add to the overall description of an object. Visitors could "supply information about sources, ask questions, or participate in discussions" (Krause and Yakel 285). Further, "registered users [could] also add comments to a document or respond to comments by other researchers or the archivist"

---

[1] For a fuller treatment of the September 11 Digital Archive, see Ekaterina Haskins "Between Archive and Participation: Public Memory in a Digital Age."

[2] FANG produced multiple publications discussing the use and maintenance of the site. The publications are listed here: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/polaread/about.html.

(Krause and Yakel 285). In addition to this feature, the site also used The Everything2 engine that created soft links or link paths that were

> intended to alert visitors to related pages viewed by other users. Link paths [were] an unobtrusive collaborative filtering mechanism in the Polar Bear Expedition site that show relationships among documents by collecting usage information from all site visitors, pooling this information, and feeding back an aggregated form of these data to later visitors. (Krause and Yakel 286)

However, as the site developers moved on to other projects, the site became difficult to maintain and keep up to date. Because the site was a prototype and thus not integral to the mission of the Library, the site was reformatted to the original concept of the digital collection. The participatory nature of the site was deactivated. The return to a more simplified search and retrieve system, one that is perhaps what most researchers using digitized collections expect, illustrates the time and people commitment necessary to maintain archives 2.0. The sites demand both the time and expertise of the users, as well as the archivists themselves.

Yet, we must not read the deactivation of the next generation finding aids as a failure of archives 2.0; instead, we can celebrate the successes of the next generation finding aid. While the site was active, FANG reported seeing commenters updating information on the collection, and querying about adding to the collection. In addition, interaction between researchers was also seen, such as in one example where one researcher offered additional internet and historical sources to another researcher (Yakel, Reynolds, Shaw). The site embraces the idea that, collectively, users and archivists can create a fuller description and context than archivists alone can. None of the discussions of the site refer to issues with participation suggesting that, based on usage, the experiment was a success. In other words, the site did not close down for lack of use, but for other reasons.

Examples of Archives 2.0 Projects

There are multiple examples of archives 2.0 projects. The BBC Memoryshare Project (http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/memoryshare/home), touted as "a place to share and explore memories" is a visually appealing
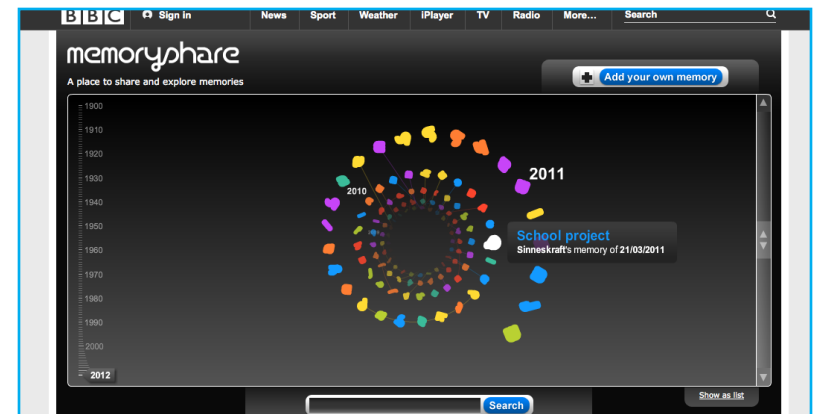

Figure 1: Homepage of Memoryshare

site, that invites users to make connections with other users and with major events (See Figure 1).

For instance, if I search "mother" ten memories are shown using a colorful spiral display (See Figure 2). If I then click on one of the hubs, "1946" for instance, I can read an account of Mina "who loved musicals, even the 'modern' ones" (Toddy) (See Figure 3). The page also shows other events, news stories, and people that coincide with the date of this memory. In this instance, the events and persons include Winston Churchill and Northern Ireland. I am also given the chance to add my own memory or to share this memory via Facebook, Twitter and other
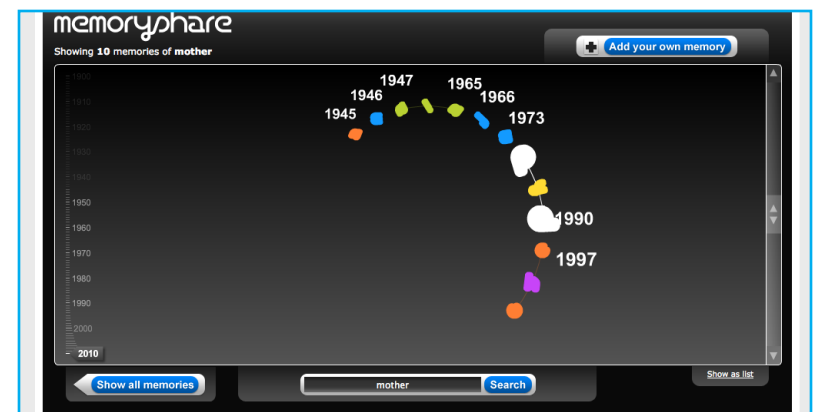

Figure 2: A spiral of memories based on the keyword "mother."

Figure 3: One "memory." Note the links to other memories posted on the same day, related memories, and other events from the same day as the memory.

Figure 4: Homepage of the Your Archives site. Notice the announcement regarding the closure of the site.

Figure 5: The new Discovery site from The National Archives.

social media sites. What is appealing about this site is the connection among individual, everyday people memories and headlines. It reminds me of the ephemera I find most fascinating in archives—those items that, for better or worse, were never really meant for posterity but are there anyway—the coloring book, the apron, the postcard.[3] Likewise, the site encourages users to add to the site or to share information via social media "likes" and "shares."

An interesting showcase of the rapid development of archives 2.0 spaces is the Your Archives wiki from the National Archives, Britain. (http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Home_ page). The site was launched in 2007 with the purpose of providing users an online platform for adding their knowledge of archival sources held by the Museum. Over 31,000 people registered for the site and contributed to it in various ways. However, as the homepage announces:

online technologies have changed rapidly in that time, and the expectations of our users have also changed. Users expect to see information relating to records in one place, whether the 'official' catalogue description or detail added by another user. While the wiki format of *Your Archives* still very much has its place on the web, it doesn't fit with the seamless user experience that we want to provide. (See Figure 4).

Your Archives closed to new users in January 2012, though it did allow modifications up to September 2012. Even as the site is closed to new users, already existing users continue to update records. On June 11,

---

[3] Historian Marc Bloch refers to the authors of these types of materials as "witnesses in spite of themselves," offering the example of the lake-dweller who threw garbage in a nearby lake. This "garbage" is later recovered by archeologists and forms the basis for interpreting the lake-dweller's life. The intention behind this act was not to save the material, but to dispose of waste. The lake-dweller did not exhibit, according to Bloch "the least desire to influence the opinions either of contemporaries or of the future historians" (61). These were the private actions of a private individual. Archives seem to be increasingly interested in these types of non-traditional materials, particularly as archival spaces themselves get redefined.
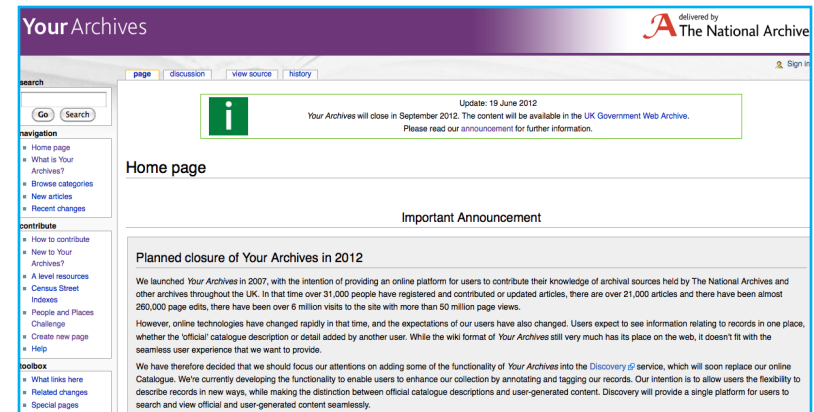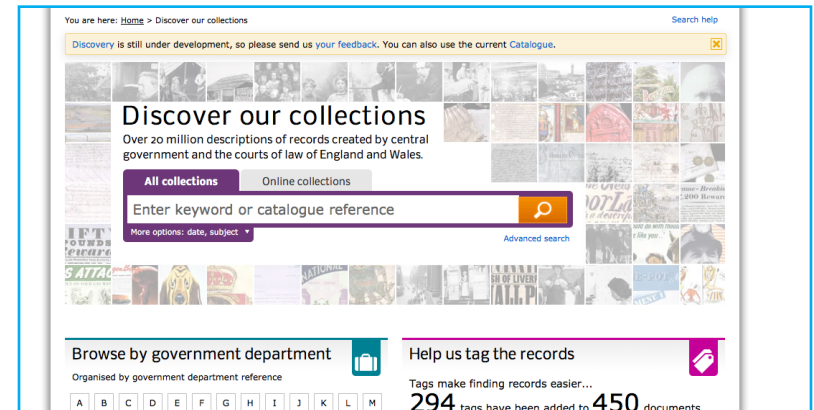
Figure 6: Detail of the requests for suggestions from users.

Figure 7: Homepage of the Our Archives wiki.

2012 a user added company names to the document "Royal Marines casualties of the War of 1812" while another user deleted an erroneous row to the "Coventry Registration District, 1891 Census Street Index" page. I see this continued involvement on the part of the users as a positive sign that users recognize the importance of their information and they recognize that their input is valued.

Currently, the Your Archives catalogue is being migrated to the new Discovery Service, an online catalogue that will bring more functionality and flexibility to searching the National Archives. According to the announcement on the Your Archives page "Discovery will provide a

single platform for users to search and view official and user-generated content seamlessly." (http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/new-catalogue.htm) (See Figure 5). The Discovery catalogue is still the beta version, but each record does include the following statements: "Found an error? Suggest a correction to help improve our descriptions" and "Help us tag the records" underneath of which are the boxes for "add a tag" and "show all tags" (Day) (See Figure 6). This request for tagging help also appears on the site's homepage (See Figure 5 above). These queries reinforce the Archives' statement that "*Your Archives* has helped us learn so much from researchers who use our collection, and has helped us realise the importance and value of user collaboration. We really do value your past contributions and hope that you will continue to work with us on our exciting new ventures."

This transition from a wiki to a more participatory site demonstrates the value institutions are placing on user feedback and participation, as well as the overall research experience. Kate Theimer makes the distinction between engagement and participation with the former suggesting a "having fun" attitude toward archival material and the latter suggesting the active contribution of new information to archival material ("Participatory Archives"). The Discovery site seems to want to capitalize on both ideas: encouraging both the Sunday browser as well as the more serious researcher.

A similar site to Your Archives exists for the United States National Archives, titled "Our Archives." (http://www.ourarchives.wikispaces.net/). The tagline "Our Voices. Our History. Our National Archives" speaks to the inclusionary nature of this wikispace archive (See Figure 7). Much like the former Your Archives site, this wiki encourages users to create their own wiki pages, expand on already existing descriptions, and generally add to the information available about a given subject.

Figure 8: The grey box with the clock and the "150" is a link to the site's revision history.

Figure 9: Page allowing viewers to compare different versions of a specific page.

Figure 10: The homepage for the Omeka.org *site.*

The participatory nature of the website is evident in the toolbar found on the top right of the homepage and on all pages within the site. This toolbar lets visitors view discussion posts or view any revisions about or made to that specific page. Recent discussions on the homepage, for example, have included how to tag and post on the wiki. While the homepage layout has been revised recently, users can click on the "view revisions" icon in the toolbar (See Figure 8) to compare various versions of pages (See Figure 9). When comparing various versions of a page, inserted material is highlighted in green while deleted material is highlighted in red.

In addition to user-generated pages, users of the site can also expand on descriptions in the online catalogue and edit pre-existing pages created by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Many have done so, if the 199+ registered users is any indication. However, NARA does oversee the edits. Further, the site's holding are always expanding. For instance, on June 13, 2012, NARA uploaded .jpg files of the Treaty of Ghent (which ended the War of 1812). This site showcases the commitment that an traditional archive must have to archives 2.0: to keep the site vibrant by uploading new content and to maintain the site by monitoring edits, updating or verifying links, and answering queries, among other duties.

Finally, the Omeka website, (http://omeka.org/) launched by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, allows users to essentially create their own archives using a highly adaptable content management system (See Figure 10). The software offers a different kind of participatory culture because it allows users to create archives, as well as upload a variety of different kinds of materials for digital preservation. For example, the Women's Building "Doing it in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building" archival site (https://wbexhibit.otis.edu/) includes both digital objects and oral histories, as well as calls for users to tell their story or submit a picture. Granted, users don't have a chance to directly comment on each others' stories, but the idea that archives can also collect, preserve, and celebrate recent history is another element of archives 2.0. We move away from what Steedman referred to as a place where the "dead walk and talk" (20) toward a place where history reminds not embedded in the past, but an active, changeable endeavor. Of note, Omeka now hosts the aforementioned September 11 Digital Archive, though the archive is no longer accepting donations.

Learning from Archives 2.0: New Research Methods

The move from simply digitizing collections to encouraging user contributions and celebrating user knowledge in these participatory archives suggests many possibilities for scholars in Rhetoric and Composition. Archives 2.0 can, by their very nature, become places for exploring or explaining our own research methods. We can leave behind traces of what we have done or we can follow the research paths of those
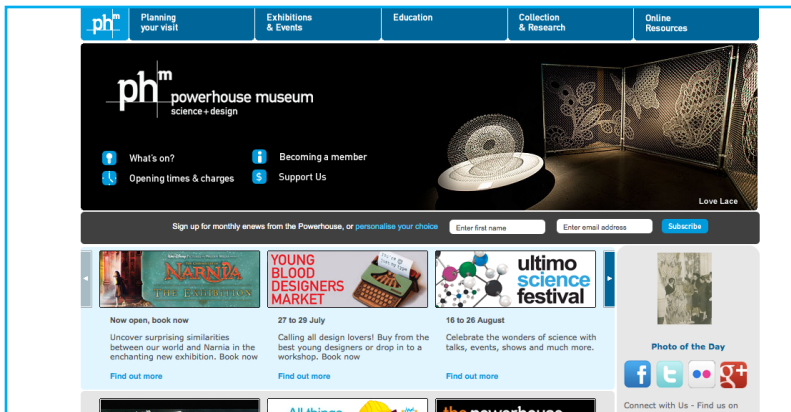
Figure 11: Homepage of the Powerhouse Museum.

who have come before us. The methods of other researchers, showcased visibly and visually through path links, tags, or recent search histories, can show new archival researchers one possible way to utilize the space, and give them a model for developing their own methods. There is also direct contact with other users through chat functions, discussion boards, and posted comments. Through these features, not only is the researcher intimately connected into or with a community of likeminded users, but the community can help with the research process by suggesting relevant or related materials and by adding knowledge about any of the items.

This idea of "working" with other researchers is exemplified in another prominent example of archives 2.0: the Powerhouse Museum (http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/) (See Figure 11). The Powerhouse Museum's Online Collection Database began in 2006 and has about 70% of the brick and mortar museum's collection available online (http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/menu.php). The site is regularly updated based on feedback and input from users. To facilitate searching, as well as to encourage chance discovery of items, the collection utilizes multiple, dynamic methods: "today's popular searches" "recent tags," "keyword searches," "related items." In addition to these user-genreated methods are those created by the Museum itself; one can look at recent acquisitions, at the Museum's "Photo of the Day," which is accompanied by a context note, or by following the blog "Inside the Collection," which provides the visitor with a kind of behind the scenes look at collections not available for public viewing, as well as
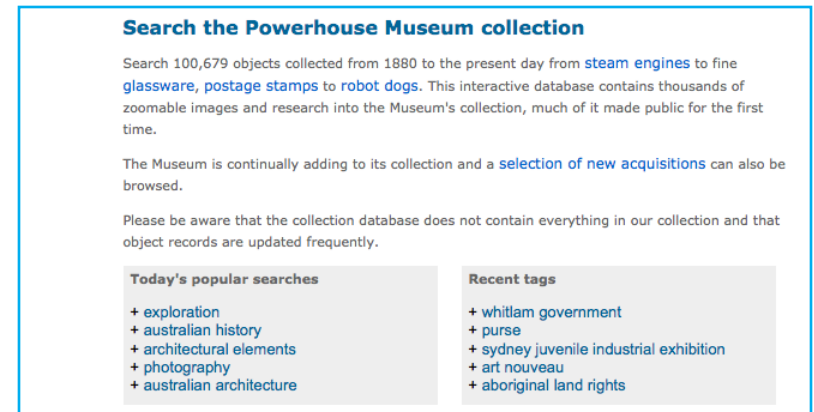

Figure 12: Screen shot of the search page showing "Today's popular searches" and "Recent tags"

highlights objects that are favorites of the Museum's curators, registrars, and conservators. There are a myriad of ways that one can enter into the collections held by the Museum, some more deliberate, some favoring the chance discovery, but all creating a sense of engagement with not only the objects, but with other people interested in and/or working for the Museum (See Figure 12).

This multi-modal system of searching, highlighting as it does the idea of "chance discovery" (to use the language of the Museum), very much mirrors how people often first encounter or experience archives. Many archival stories refer to either that serendipitous moment when a key document is found or revealed or they refer to the confusion, the stumbling, halting first attempts at doing archival research (See L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo, for example). Indeed, in "(En)Gendering the Archives for Basic Writing Research" Kelly Ritter recounts her first forays into archival research:

> I sat quietly among other scholars…but no one was talking; no one was noticing me, either, as I wandered, a little aimlessly, back to a seat in the far reaches of the reading room, near the oscillating fan. My nervousness—(*Am I the only one who sweats in the summer?* Apparently.)—led me to other questions that very much resemble the questions we often ask ourselves when we first begin to teach. Am I the only one here who is a visitor, who doesn't have some 'legitimate' affiliation with this institution?
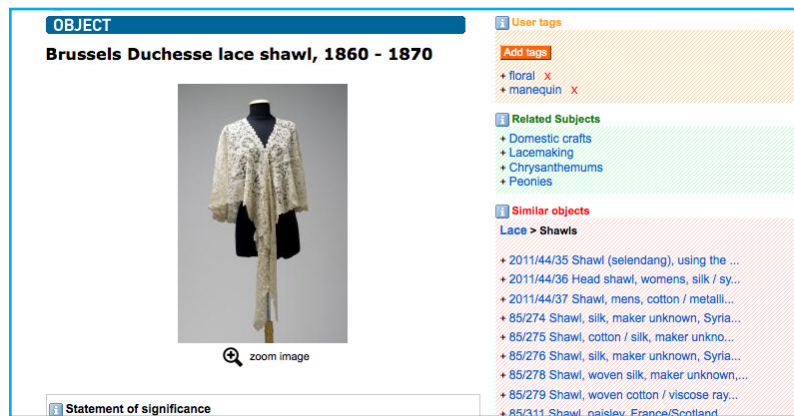
Figure 13: Page for "Brussels Duchesse Lace Shawl." Note the number of links to other objects on the right side of the page.

Does anyone know that I don't know what I am doing? Or, to put it more boldly, am I the only *imposter* in the room?" (182)

She is not alone in feeling bewildered by the intricacies and unknowns of archival research, which may be part of the appeal of digital archives generally and of archives 2.0 specifically. One is encouraged to "stumble" around, to "talk" to other users, to ask questions, and one can do so in (hopefully, air-conditioned) private spaces.

The Powerhouse Museum's search strategies allow a particular object's page to have chance discovery options. Along the right side of the page are links to "tags," "related subjects," "similar objects," and "auto-generated tags." Under the object are links to "subject tags." For example, a search for "lace" leads to a Duchesse Lace Shawl from Brussels, made sometime between 1860-1870 (See Figure 13). Once on the page for the shawl, links appear for other shawls held by the Museum and available for viewing digitally, as well as links for related subjects, such as "Chrysanthemums." If I follow the link for "chrysanthemums," I enter into a whole other search area that includes thumbnails of items with the same tag, as well as links for "related user keywords" and a "search filter." The site takes quite seriously its mission to encourage browsing!

I think that these various tags are one of the most interesting navigational and participatory choices utilized by the site. The tags are described as "experimental ways of navigating the collection [and] user added keywords [or tags] are useful in bridging the semantic gap between the language of the museum and that of the user" ("Browse Tags"). Note that the description doesn't necessarily portray the museum as the "expert" or as the holder of knowledge; rather, the museum understands the limitations of its descriptive abilities, and relies on the knowledge of users to make the objects readily searchable and findable. In other words, the museum acknowledges the diversity of ways that an object might be seen and described.

Cara Finnegan explores a similar point when she asks "What is this a picture of?" while searching through photographs and negatives in the Farm Security Administration-Office of War Information (FSA-OWI)—a traditional archival space. Specifically, she is referring to her search for a particular, though elusive, photograph:

> it features a ragged, middle-aged white man standing on the porch of a rough-hewn cabin in a rural area. His shirt and coveralls have stains and holes, yet the man stands confidently with his hands on his hips, gazing past the right edge of the frame. (116)[4]

Initially she viewed the photograph as depicting the man, but, in trying to find that picture among the thousands stored at FSA-OWI, she realized that the picture was taken to showcase the shack before which the man stands. From this perspectival shift she learned one must "read the file not on [our] terms, but on its own" (117). The reframing enabled her use the FSA's coding system to her advantage by narrowing down her search. Rather than looking through all the photographs taken by photographer Arthur Rothstein, an endeavor that would have required hours scrolling through microfilm images, she was able to pinpoint the correct subject heading "Homes and Living Conditions." Through her anecdote, she reminds readers of two things: 1. archives are not always set up to facilitate the research interests and research questions of Rhetoric and Composition scholars, noting that most scholars visiting the FSA seek information on a particular photographer or a specific subject, rather than Finnegan's interest in tracing a photograph's circulation over multiple media; and 2. Finnegan reminds us that the "archive is a product of a deliberative process of 'classification,'" (119), a place we must

---

[4] The photograph is available at the following URL: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998017600/PP/ or by googling the following negative number: "LC-USF34-T01-00042-D."

rhetorically navigate. Perhaps unwittingly, the Powerhouse Museum is likewise calling for such rhetorical navigation when asking viewers to tag, and thus to provide context and language, for an object.

Another way that archives 2.0 might shape our role as researchers is the openness and accessibility of the archives. They allow for a broader range of users, and not just those who are "qualified" or "experts." The archives become a less restrictive place (Themier, "Participatory Archives" 61), which might also attract more novice archival scholars or more diverse types of researchers. Those using the archives for academic purposes, like ourselves, are readily able to mingle and work with and/ or alongside those outside the academy, thus enabling new research directions, questions, and findings.

In addition, working with or alongside non-rhetoric and composition specialists gives us a greater awareness of the limitations of our own perspectives. Such awareness helps enable us to further our own disciplinary project of, as Donahue and Flesher Moon note in their introduction to *Local Histories*, moving from a single narrative of discipline's history to one that "extend[s], challenge[s], complicate[s], and [thus] enrich[es] the narrative" (3). Archives 2.0 give us the possibility of new interpretive frames. In "Disciplinary Histories: A Meditation on Beginnings" in *Local Histories*, Patricia Donahue writes that "the writing of disciplinary history is a highly collaborative act; 'new' work contains traces of numerous precedents" (223). Presumably, archives 2.0 might enable us to follow these traces or to offer alternative "beginnings." Further, we might learn from those who first viewed the archival documents, let's say, not as pieces of history, but as pieces of everyday life—the student who used the syllabus in class, the woman who helped draft that petition, the man whose relatives are in that picture. Essentially, archives 2.0 might help foster a renewed awareness of audience.

Further, the awareness of audience that is essential to archive 2.0 scholarship can help remind us of a lesson Jessica Enoch and Cheryl Glenn highlight in "Invigorating Historiographic Practices in Rhetoric and Composition Studies": that we need to "consciously acknowledge those who, beyond the researcher and archivist, might be affected by our scholarly conversation" (23). We need to be aware that we write our histories for each other, but also, to a certain degree, for those women who attended the normal schools, for those early abolitionists, for those female agitators as well as for contemporary readers who exist outside the academy.

Also, because archives 2.0 tend to work best with select types of collections (e.g. as of now those that have a strong audience already in place or at least strong user potential), there is perhaps a clearer awareness of what is not digitized, what is not made available for community involvement/feedback. Researchers must keep in mind that not only is digitizing collections a time and money intensive task, it also must keep pace with the rapidly changing technology.[5] Indeed, since 1994, the Library of Congress has been digitizing their collections for the American Memory project, but they note that digitization "raises preservation challenges on two fronts: preserving original Library items fully and accurately in digital form; and designing this vast treasury of digital objects so that their utility and accessibility survive and flourish beyond the inevitably limited lifespan of any single technological platform" ("Technical Information"). Therefore, one thing archives 2.0 do not do is obviate the need for visits to time spent in more traditional archive spaces. Archives 2.0 are thus not replacements for traditional archives, but rather are additions to them. For example, in recounting her use of the search engine Google in her own research, Renee Sentilles points out that

> had I only relied on digital archives, I would have missed nonverbal clues in my search.…Digital reproductions…were not enough; they told tales I had already heard. I needed to see what had been overlooked by curators and archivists posting the materials; I needed to see what had been deemed unimportant. (146)

Key here are the words "deemed unimportant" because they emphasize that someone else judged the importance of the documents. Archival visits allow researchers to make these judgments themselves. Although archives 2.0 do give researchers access to a plethora of new information, that information remains filtered by the decisions made of what and how to digitize and what to make available as an archives 2.0.

---

[5] For a somewhat dated, but still enlightening discussion of the costs of digitizing, see the 2007 article from The New York Times: "History, Digitized and Abridged" available here: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/10/business/yourmoney/11archive. html?pagewanted=all

Another element of archives 2.0 that the aforementioned examples showcase is the non-permanence of these archival spaces. Indeed, "recourse to the virtual archive does not mean that their posterity is any more secure.…The archives which cyberspace houses are no less fragile or vulnerable to disappearance, for a variety of technological, economic, and political reasons" (Burton 3). To help maintain digital collections, archivists create preservation metadata which is used by later archivists who may need to transition the collection to new platforms or make use of new technologies and software. In order for the collections to remain digitally accessible, archivists must have both the resources and the knowledge to continually update their digital collections.

Another key element of archives 2.0 is their ethical dimension. Since, as Huvila notes, archives 2.0 encourage "decentralized curation" they may, as Ridolfo, Hart-Davidson, and McLeod argue, more closely align or reflect the stakeholders' cultural values and taxonomies. While preservation remains important, so too is the cultural connection between the object and its history. Influenced by Malea Powell's work with tribal texts, Ridolfo, Hart-Davidson, and McLeod note that

> In the traditional archive the text is often turned into an artifact.…In the name of preserving culture, cultural contact is cut off, the cultural context fades away, and the text becomes a silent call number with a very limited viewership.

Though as Ridolfo, Hart-Davidson, and McLeod point out, such a silencing can still occur in an archives 2.0 space, there is also great potential for a more dynamic, more usable, and more accessible texts. As they rightly ask: "what do we posit or write about and around the digitized materials to make them findable and to keep them usable, useful?" How can we create archives 2.0 in ways that truly facilitate usability and accessibility without replicating past exclusionary tactics (e.g. taking artifacts away from the creators themselves in the name of preservation)? While I cannot answer these questions here, certainly archives 2.0 help us to think about how we frame a given object, how we decide, to return to Finnegan's question: "What is this a picture of?"

Discussions about archives 2.0, as well as discussions within archives 2.0 spaces emphasize the rhetoricity of archives themselves, and the fact that, history writing is often a rhetorical act (as rhetoricians Dominink LaCapra, Hans Kellner, and F.R. Ankersmit remind us). As Barbara Beisecker asserts, rhetorical scholars are uniquely situated to offer rhetorical histories of the archives, the "critical histories of the situated and strategic uses to which archives have been put" (130). By making clear a researcher's path of inquiry or by acknowledging the evolution of knowledge about a particular artifact, archives 2.0 spaces encourage users to think about questions of authenticity, of authority, and of the history of the archives itself. We can begin to follow how the archive has developed and changed over time through and because of users/researchers and archivists.

I believe there are lessons we can take from archives 2.0 research ideals and put into practice in more traditional archival spaces. Perhaps the most prominent lesson is one that has been reiterated often: develop a relationship with the archivist, see them not as a gatekeeper or a hindrance to a collection, but as a resource throughout the research process. Another strong lesson is the recognition that we can contribute to archives. We can encourage our colleagues to leave their papers to archives, ask archivists about certain holdings thereby encouraging their processing, and continue to actively share our archival experiences with each other. Palmer observes,

> Certainly, archives 2.0 remain a somewhat nebulous endeavor, but we must accept that any vision for 'Archives 2.0' will remain necessarily elusive, especially as data and archival content will be increasingly uncoupled from the traditional channels of the online finding aid or digital library, and instead will be made available via a plethora of alternative channels, supporting a range of different contexts and user models.

As such, archives 2.0 are less about technology innovation and more about a radical change in our thinking about what archives can or should do and our role as users/researchers of these spaces. I don't think that archives 2.0 are going to eclipse more traditional archival spaces; rather, as we can see from the Our Archives project, these spaces might become not a secondary archive (since that suggests a hierarchy), but a partner space. We create an archival parellism where exchanges happen side by side between the digital and the traditional archive. This partner space can help us elucidate our own research endeavors within traditional archives, even as they provoke new relationships and new connections in the digital realm, and can only strengthen the practice of doing history.

Works Cited

Ankersmit, F.R. "The Use of Language in the Writing of History." *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor.* Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1994. Print.

BBC *Memoryshare Project.* BBC, 2012. Web. 16 June 2012.

Beisecker, Barbara A. "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9.1 (2006): 124-131. Print.

Bloch, Marc. *The Historian's Craft.* Trans. Peter Putnam. New York: Vintage Books, 1953. Print.

"Browse Tags." Powerhouse Museum Collection. *Powerhouse Museum.* n.d. Web. 16 June 2012.

Brussels Duchesse Lace Shawl. 1860-1870. *Powerhouse Museum.* Web. 15 Oct. 2012.

Burton, Antoinette, ed. *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History.* Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2005. Print.

---. "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories." *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History.* Ed. Antionette Burton. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2005. 1-24.

Donahue, Patricia and Gretchen Flesher Moon. *Local Histories: Reading the Archives of Composition*. Pittsburg: U of Pittsburgh P, 2007. Print.

---. "Disciplinary Histories: A Meditation on Beginnings" Ed. Patricia Donahue and Gretchen Flesher Moon. *Local Histories: Reading the Archives of Composition.* Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2007. 220-36. Print.

"Discovery : Our New Catalogue." *The National Archives.* The National Archives, n.d. web. 12 Oct. 2012.

Doin' It in Public: Feminism and the Art of Women's Building. Otis College of Art and Design, 2011. Web. 15 Oct. 2012.

Enoch, Jessica and Cheryl Glenn. "Invigorating Historiographic Practices in Rhetoric and Composition Studies." *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition.* Ed. Ramsey, Alexis, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier, and Lisa Mastrangelo. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois U P, 2009. 11-27. Print.

Ferreira-Buckley, Linda. "Rescuing the Archives from Foucault." *College English* 61.5 (1999): 577-83. Print.

Finnegan, Cara A. "What is this a Picture of? Some Thoughts on Images and Archives." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9.1 (2006): 116-123. Print.

Haskins, Ekaterina. "Between Archive and Participation: Public Memory in a Digital Age." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37.4 (2007): 401-22. Print.

Huvila, Isto. "Participatory Archive: Towards Decentralized Curation, Radical User Orientation, and Broader Contextualization of Records Management." *Archival Science* 8 (2008): 15-36. Print.

Kirsch, Gesa and Liz Rohan. *Beyond the Archives: Research as Lived Process.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois U P, 2008. Print.

Krause, Magia Ghetu and Elizabeth Yakel. "Interaction in Virtual Archives: The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections Next Generation Finding Aid." *The American Archivist* 70.2 (2007): 282-314.

Kellner, Hans. *Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked.* Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1989. Print.

LaCapra, Dominick. "Rhetoric and History." *History and Criticism.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985. Print.

L'Eplattenier, Barbara E. "An Argument for Archival Research Methods: Thinking Beyond Methodology." *College English* 72.1 (2009) 67-79.

L'Eplattenier, Barbara and Lisa Mastrangelo. "Stumbling in the Archives: A Tale of Two Novices." *Beyond the Archives: Research as Lived Process.* Ed. Gesa Kirsch and Liz Rohan. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2008. 161-70. Print.

Omeka. Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, George Mason U, 2012. Web. 15 Oct. 2012.

Our Archives. National Archives and Records Administrations, 2012. Web. 12 Oct. 2012.

Palmer, Joy. "Archives 2.0: If We Build It, Will They Come?" *Ariadne: Web Magazine for Information Professionals* 60 (2009): n. pag. Web. 10 Oct. 2011.

Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections. Bentley Historical Library The University of Michigan, n.d. Web. 10 Oct. 2012.

Ramsey, Alexis, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier, and Lisa Mastrangelo. *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2009. Print.

"Records Available for Research in Science, Technology and Inventions at the National Archives at Atlanta." *Our Archives.* The National Archives. 5 April 2012. Web. 16 June 2012.

Ridolfo, Jim, William Hart-Davidson, and Michael McLeod. "Archive 2.0: Imagining The Michigan State University Israelite Samaritan Scroll Collection as the Foundation for a Thriving Social Network." *The Journal of Community Informatics* [Online], 7.3 (2011): n. pag. Web. 16 Jun. 2012.

Ritter, Kelly. "(En)Gendering the Archives for Basic Writing Research." *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2009. Print. 181-94.

"Search the Powerhouse Museum Collection." *Powerhouse Museum Collection.* Powerhouse Museum. n.d. Web. 17 June 2012.

Sentilles, Renée M. "Toiling in the Archives of Cyberspace." *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History.* Ed. Antionette Burton. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2005. Print. 136-56.

September 11 Digital Archives. Center for History and New Media and American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning. 2011. Web. 10 Oct. 2012.

Solberg, Janine. "Googling the Archive: Digital Tools and the Practice of History." *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 15 (2012): 53-76.

Steedman, Carolyn. *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2002. Print.

"Technical Information" *American Memory.* Library of Congress. n.d. Web. 27 July 2012.

The National Archives. *The National Archives*, 2012. Web. 15 Oct. 2012.

Theimer, Kate. "Archives 2.0 is Here: What Does that Mean?" *ArchivesNext*. Kate Theimer. 9 Aug. 2009. Web. 17 June 2012.

---. "Exploring the Participatory Archives: Why, What, Who, Where, and Why." Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting. Chicago, Il. 22-27 Aug. 2011. Conference Presentation. Web. 16 June 2012.

---. "What is the Meaning of Archives 2.0." *The American Archivist* 74 (2011): 58-68. Print.

Toddy. "Memories of my Mother Mina 1927-1999." *BBC Memoryshare Project.* BBC, 17 Sept. 2008. Web. 16 June 2012.

Your Archives. The National Archives, 2012. Web. 16 June 2012.

Yakel, Elizabeth, Polly Reynolds, and Seth Shaw. "Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections: Enhancing Online Use Through Digital Curation." *American Archivist* 70.2 (2007): 282-314. Print.

About the Author

Alexis E. Ramsey-Tobienne is an Assistant Professor of Rhetoric at Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL., where she is also Director of the Writing Portfolio. She teaches courses in Analytic and Persuasive Writing, Advanced Research Methods, Visual Rhetoric, and Social Change Writing. She is co-editor of *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition.* She has also published on the use of institutional repositories for preservation purposes and on archives and digital humanities.