



NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Garth Clarke, President



Archives are validated by what kind of use is made of them

— film archivist Rick Prelinger

For the past six years the ASA has worked hard to increase access to and public awareness of archival materials by participating in CAIN or the Canadian Archival Information Network (now called Archives Canada) — a visionary online project of national scope that provides researchers with contextual information about archival fonds and collections housed in institutions across this land.

The funding provided the ASA by CAIN has had an especially positive impact upon archivists, archival institutions and researchers in this province. Not only have many fonds-level descriptions been created and put online for researchers, but that funding led to a Centennial Legacies grant from the Alberta government. The provincial grant would not have occurred without the demonstrated participation of the ASA and its membership in aspects of the CAIN project. In effect, CAIN became a catalyst for the reinvigoration of Albertan archival institutions and the ASA itself.

The ASA was able to mount a province-wide description writing and digitization effort, which in turn has led to the creation of provincial photographic and documentary image databases that have been added to the pre-existing ANA descriptions database. Archives have benefited from the provision of grants for digitization, description writing, and the acquisition of required computer technologies.





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Dealing with the CAIN related projects did cause some growing pains. The ASA coped: a professional secretariat was created to help reduce the strain on voluntary board and committee members. And the expertise the ASA gained while dealing with CAIN funded proposals has led directly to other successful federally funded projects such as the well-received “Letters from the Trunk” and the “Prairie Populist Project.”

The ASA may face new challenges in its mission to provide better access to the archival resources of this province. We are, however, much further ahead than we might otherwise have been because of our participation in the CAIN project. That project allowed us to increase our knowledge and skills in various areas now the focus of archival outreach and education.

On behalf of us all at the ASA, I extend our thanks to the Canadian Council of Archives for its role in the development and stewardship of the CAIN project.

USER STATISTICS – CINEMAGE DATABASES

Janet McMaster, System Administrator, Archives Network of Alberta

The first full year that we were able to track the number of user sessions in our Cinemage databases was 2003. Since then, there has been a steady increase in the number of visits. Please note that the figures below represent user sessions initiated on asalive, and do not include sessions initiated by our Owner-Editors on asaback to add or revise material.

Year	No. of User Sessions
2003	55,722
2004	87,646
2005	116,483

While we have experienced growth with regard to the number of user sessions in all of the databases, the growth in our newest database, Alberta InWord, has been particularly dramatic. Alberta InWord was launched at the beginning of December 2003, and there were 604 user sessions that month. In 2004, there were 20,647 user sessions for Alberta InWord, and by 2005, the number had grown to 35,722.

In addition to tracking the number of user sessions, we are able to track the average visit time to our databases. This, too, has been steadily increasing, and the current average visit time exceeds 5 minutes, which in the “web world”, is considered to be very good.

A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE ASA'S DATABASES

Janet McMaster, System Administrator, Archives Network of Alberta

The Archives Network of Alberta (ANA) Database

Alberta was the second province in Canada to have an automated province-wide database of fonds level descriptions. In 1994, the ANA database was created, when six institutions participated in a pilot project. While there was some growth in the ANA database over the years, it was limited by the lack of staff and resources in many of the institutions. In October 2002, when the Cinemage system was launched, there were 6663 descriptions in ANA. As of October 2005, ANA contained 9407 fonds level descriptions from 38 different repositories. In addition, funds were used from one of the early federal CAIN grants to hire a contractor who completed a thorough analysis of the existing descriptions with regard to compliance with the *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)*, and many of the older descriptions have been revised so that they are RAD-compliant. Uploads from the ANA database are sent regularly to Archives Canada, the national archival database of fonds level descriptions.

Alberta InSight

Our photograph database, Alberta InSight, was launched in October 2002. At that time, five institutions contributed images for the official launch. By October 2005, this database contained 27,329 images from 18

institutional members. Alberta InSight has become a valuable source of images, including photographs, cartoons, posters, and historical art, relating to the province of Alberta. Contributions from Alberta InSight are sent regularly to Images Canada, a national database of photographs from archives, libraries, and museums.

Alberta InWord

Our newest database, Alberta InWord, was launched in December 2003. This database contains scanned textual records, such as diaries, letters, etc. Two institutions contributed material for the launch. As of October 2005, this database contained 1302 descriptions, representing over 60,000 scanned pages, from 9 institutions.

Repositories Database

Each description in the above databases has a link to the relevant entry in our Repositories Database, which contains contact information (name, address, phone number, e-mail and web-site addresses, etc.) for each archival repository.

This issue of the ASA newsletter marks the formal end of the project we initially described as “using information technology to give access to archival records”. Well we have done that and so much more. We used the Centennial Legacies award to build the technical infrastructure for the Archives Network of Alberta and to ensure that every member institution had access to all of the resources and tools necessary to complete fonds level descriptions. We also used the grant to leverage an equal number of federal dollars, something we had not expected at the outset. With this additional money we were able to digitize thousands of pages of archival material and more importantly, begin to interact and integrate with the broader learning community.

I think all of us can attest to what this has meant to us as an association and as individual members. We have matured as an organization and as professionals. We have raised the level of technical competency of staff members and the level of institutional participation in ANA. We have standards - that are clear and easy to follow. We have a robust and stable database for archival descriptions and digitized records. Just as important, we have built new networks, and expanded our audience, our client base, and our membership. It was a great opportunity - for us and, as I'm sure others will point out, for Albertans - and I think we can all be proud of what we have achieved on their behalf in these four short years.

*Jo-Ann Munn Gafuik
Access & Privacy Coordinator
University Policy Coordinator
University of Calgary*

ALBERTA InWORD

Susan Kooyman, *Glenbow Archives*

According to statistics provided by ANA Systems Administrator Janet McMaster, there are now over 76,000 pages of archival documents in the Alberta InWord database. From October through December 2005, a whopping 12,559 visitors used the database! John Gilpin, historical consultant and writer, recently decided to stay at home to undertake some archival research, and here are a few of his impressions of Alberta InWord.

“The value of the ASA publishing documents on the WWW was demonstrated by a research project I recently undertook for a publisher in Toronto. The objective was to locate diaries and letters written by Alberta immigrants. The challenge was to locate entries suitable for a grade four textbook. I discovered that diaries and letters written home by very young immigrants (at ten to twelve of age), during or immediately after their relocation to Alberta, have not found their way to an Alberta archives. The Alberta InWord database, however, does contain a rich assortment of such documents written by people generally in their late teens and early 20s who arrived from a number of locations. The youngest was Sophie Puckette who came with her family from Kansas.

In addition to the large number of individuals represented by InWord, large quantities of actual documents written by these people have been published on the site. This is particularly important since it is possible to derive a great amount of information on a greater number of themes. Sophie Puckette, for example, is preoccupied with receiving and sending mail. Keeping in touch with home is important since many of the authors of these documents did not expect to see those who stayed behind again.

Providing detailed information to the editors in Toronto was greatly facilitated by having the documents on the WWW, since the selections could be transcribed and the URL for the specific page provided. The potential of this site for teachers who want to introduce their students to the joys of reading original documents is immense. It is to be hoped that the school systems including the universities are taking note.”

25th Anniversary Conference June 9-10, 2006



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Featuring Keynote Speaker
Dr. Ted Bishop
“Riding with Rilke”
Registration includes

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- ♦ Exclusive use of the Hotel Selkirk
- ♦ Park Admission
- ♦ All meals
- ♦ Conference sessions such as
 - ♦ Religious Archives
 - ♦ Film as promotion
 - ♦ Electronic records
 - ♦ Private records
 - ♦ Built Heritage and Archives
 - ♦ Archives within other institutions
 - ♦ Archives and the Curriculum
 - ♦ Promoting Your Archives
 - ♦ Issues from Alberta's University Archives

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Accommodations at the Hotel Selkirk
available at special rates!
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PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Electronic Records

Thursday, June 8

9:00 - 5:00

Provincial Archives of Alberta



archives society of alberta

www.archivesalberta.org

CAIN – FROM A SMALL PERSPECTIVE

Carolyn Hill, City of Wetaskiwin Archives

“Be careful what you wish for; you might actually get it.” Although that saying does not really describe grant funding, for small institutions it can sometimes come very close.

As the new century began, the Executive and members of the Archives Society of Alberta wanted to ensure that Alberta’s archives became an integral part of the rapidly expanding world of web-based resources. And as was noted in the Spring 2001 ASA Newsletter, the ASA wanted to provide researchers with “efficient and effective access” to archives large and small across the province. With an incredible amount of hard work, the CAIN Committee managed to persuade both the Federal and Provincial governments that the ASA deserved substantial funding to make this vision a reality. The result, a Canadian Archival Information Network grant and an Alberta Centennial Legacies grant that would provide a stable source of funding for several years.

The first time this initiative affected the City of Wetaskiwin Archives was in 2001 when the ASA offered to set up websites for institutions that did not have the capacity to do it themselves. I gratefully accepted the ASA’s offer and jumped unwittingly into very deep water indeed. The reality was that only if researchers stayed away would I have the time during regular hours to provide text and images to the designer so that he could complete this project. Researchers didn’t stay away, so evenings and weekends became project hours. The web designer contracted to the ASA did a wonderful job and soon we had a professional looking site. The result of this new website was that our research requests doubled but of course our staff resources didn’t. Still we felt that it was something that we wanted to do to remain relevant and in line with our parent organization’s e-commerce direction.

Then came the next item on our wish list. As part of the ASA’s Centennial Heritage grant program, they offered to provide new computer hardware and software for institutions. Soon we were the proud possessors of a computer, scanner and printer. The archives only had to buy a new desk. There was, however, much more work for the City’s very small IT department who had to integrate the new system with the local area network and after a short while had

to provide a server to hold the images we were creating. There was also a steep learning curve involved in dealing with this new technology, especially for a chronologically challenged, paper happy archivist. The most difficult part of this process was trying to discover what questions needed to be asked. Once we mastered the basics however, it was hard to imagine not having this technology available.

In 2002 we again received help from the ASA in the form of a CAIN/RAD grant. The ASA provided a contractor, Scott Goodine, to complete this and other RAD projects in the Edmonton area. In the past, finding a well-trained person willing to travel to complete a relatively small job had proven very difficult. This approach by the ASA, to provide a contractor for groups of projects, was of real benefit to us. Along with well-constructed fonds level descriptions uploaded to ANA, Scott also provided an opportunity for much appreciated professional archival dialogue. However, as everyone is aware, a large part of a grant is preparing the application and then supervising and assisting during the project. So once again, the reality of being a one-person archives made itself evident and the day-to-day work had to be finished during evenings and weekends.

The final project we completed under the CAIN program was the digitization and description of 1000 images from the Walin photographic studio fonds. Along with the usual problem of staff time required to supervise and assist on the project, lack of space also became an issue. The reference room provided the only space available for the new computer equipment and any project workers. It was also where volunteers worked on their projects. It was a difficult situation for all involved.

While acknowledging the difficulties we encountered when working on various projects within the CAIN initiative, I also want to acknowledge the immense benefit that we have received.

These projects enabled us to participate in activities that we wouldn’t have otherwise embarked upon. The knowledge gained from ironing out some of the problems encountered would not have been acquired without this necessity. The work that the city IT

department did on our behalf, gave them a better appreciation of the unique requirements of the archives. It resulted in the archives being near the top of the priority list for new equipment, upgrades, new software and server space. The intellectual control that I gained from working on these projects has certainly improved my understanding of our holdings.

Improved access has indeed meant that the number of research requests has soared. However, it has also meant that we are making contacts throughout the

world, that donors are finding us more easily and that researchers that we have assisted on-line are sending us information and offering assistance in their city or country to local researchers.

Therefore I would like to thank several years of ASA Executives, committees and very hardworking staff who had the foresight and dedication to secure this funding.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ARCHIVES: CENTENNIAL LEGACIES PROJECTS

Lisa Atkinson, Archival Program Manager

During the course of the Centennial Legacies project, the University of Calgary Archives was able to complete several important projects as a result of funding received under the Archives Network of Alberta Grant Program. In total, four projects were completed, including two projects to write or revise fonds level descriptions and to add them to the ANA database; and two projects involving the digitization of records in our holdings.

The fonds level description projects had by far the greatest impact on the University Archives and our ability to effectively manage our holdings. In 2003 and 2004 a thorough review of our entire permanent records collection was undertaken to establish what fonds existed in our vaults, which fonds descriptions were complete and in ANA, which required updating to incorporate data relating to accruals received over time, and which required wholesale researching and writing. Due to a number of factors — the shortage of permanent staff in the Archives until the late 1990s, the huge rate at which records are transferred from university units, and the office's increased mandate to collect records from a broader range of private donors — there had been no updates to our fonds descriptions in ANA for at least 7 years prior to the first fonds level description project getting underway. There was much work to be done.

The funding available through the Legacies project was a prime opportunity to allow us to get our house in order. The project provided a starting point from which we could first *gain* control and then *maintain*

control of our highest level descriptions. By allowing us to ensure that accurate fonds descriptions existed for the whole of our holdings we were then able to implement a system of updating the descriptions annually to include the numerous accruals received from transferring offices the previous year. In addition to producing records at a massive rate, the University is also constantly undergoing restructuring and reorganization — faculties change names, units come and go, lines of reporting are altered — and all of this must be reflected in the Archives through the ongoing opening and closing of fonds, and through the updating of administrative histories. The fonds level description project was a huge success, resulting in 165 new or revised descriptions being uploaded to ANA. We are very grateful for receiving the funding to allow us to undertake a project of this magnitude, which would have been extremely difficult to manage in addition to our regular day to day responsibilities.

The two digitization projects we received funding for under the Legacies Project involved wholly disparate records in our collection. In 2002 the Archives was one of the first institutions to add digitized photographs to the Alberta InSight database through an ANA grant funded project. During the course of the project nearly 300 images from our Calgary Herald Photographic collection were scanned and uploaded into the database. The images were taken between 1954 and 1969 by Calgary Herald photographers to illustrate articles they wrote about events on the campus. The images are a reflection of the early history of the university: annual balls with girls dressed in



floor length gowns and hair piled high, Frosh Queens, Bermuda shorts day, student demonstrations during the drive for autonomy from the University of Alberta, and the building of campus infrastructure as the university



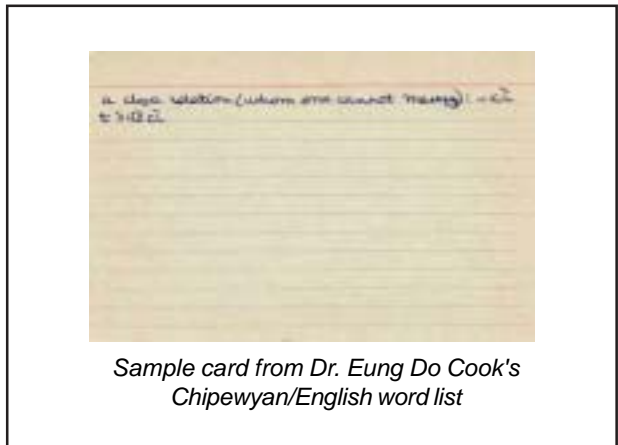
Queens, November 1963
U of C Archives, 82.010_1.27

grew from two lone buildings on the bare prairie to something grander and more imposing in scale and nature. These photographs are proving particularly popular now as the campus community gears up for the University's 40th anniversary year. The tendency at such a time is to look backwards through archival

images to catch a glimpse of where we have been and where we have come from. The Calgary Herald photographs are providing that link with the past that everyone is looking for.

In 2003 the Archives completed an ANA project of a wholly different nature. The Chipewyan dictionary digitization project involved the scanning of 2000 cards which constitute a Chipewyan word list in our private records collection. Emeritus professor of Linguistics Dr Eung Do Cook created these cards to document his work on the Chipewyan equivalent of English words. These word lists are particularly valuable to linguists studying aboriginal languages and to native groups wishing to promote the use of their languages which have been in a state of decline for the past half century.

As part of the project the Archives created a menu page listing the English words as they appear on the cards – clicking on a word will display the digitized card containing the corresponding Chipewyan word. Cross references were added where appropriate to ensure that researchers are able to access the words they require, and subject headings were also added in cases where several relevant cards existed. The project was very well received by the linguistics community in Alberta. We hope to enhance the existing site with sound bites of the Chipewyan alphabet with assistance from a linguistics professor at the University of Alberta who assisted with the project while working on her PhD at the University of Calgary. The cards can be accessed via the Cook fonds site located at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/archives/eCook.html>



Sample card from Dr. Eung Do Cook's
Chipewyan/English word list

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA

Irene Jendzjowsky, Provincial Archives of Alberta

In 1998, the Provincial Archives of Alberta embarked on a journey to become a RAD compliant archival institution. At that time, the project seemed quite daunting. It was not only a journey to become RAD compliant but also one of moving from a manual to an automated holdings management system, with 30 years of existing descriptions to be re-described. Once the decision was made, going forward and describing all new acquisitions according to RAD was considered the easy part.

As part of the project, institutional decisions had to be made including how best to describe government records using RAD. Another challenge was to re-describe the holdings following a RAD compliant rather than the traditional “main entry card” process. The Provincial Archives worked toward achieving their goal for several years, securing several sources of funding on a project by project basis. Our Friends Society initially funded an archivist to start the process in government records, where the need was the greatest due to the huge volume of records. In conjunction with these efforts, the timing was right when the Canadian Archival Information Network (now called Archives Canada) – funded by the Canadian Council of Archives – caught the imagination of the Canadian archival community. This initiative helped all Canadian archives, including the Provincial Archives of Alberta, to access much needed funding to re-describe their holdings. Subsequently with the additional assistance from the Archives Society of Alberta via their Centennial Legacies funding, the Provincial Archives maintained their momentum by focusing the effort of two archivists on the retro-conversion project for a two and a half year time period.

To describe the complex holdings of the Government of Alberta, a maximalist approach was first adopted. Following that was the establishment of policies, procedures and best practices to: identify the criteria for the various levels of description; ensure consistency in determining records creators; and track functional movements within the Government of Alberta. The final task involved researching and describing the holdings. The re-description project for government records was completed in early 2004.

The Provincial Archives’ private records were also part of this project. Once the Government Records re-descriptions were well underway, an archivist was hired

to re-describe private records holdings. When the funding received via the Archives Society of Alberta ended, 75% of Private Records re-descriptions were complete. The Private Records re-description process is continuing with the generous support of our Friends Society, which will help us to come even closer to our goal of completely describing the holdings of the Provincial Archives.

The cumulative results of the Provincial Archives’ efforts include:

- 10,067 government records accessions (over 24 linear kilometres) re-described, resulting in 65 fonds and 163 sous-fonds level RAD descriptions.
- 1,466 private records RAD descriptions including 2,159 accessions and over 433.5 linear meters of textual records, 1,040 maps, 87,942 photographs, 130,000 negatives, 7,600 transparencies, 3,100 plans, architectural drawings, blueprints and technical drawings, 1,500 postcards, 1,200 audio reels, cassettes and discs, 1,000 films, 33 microfilm reels as well as other records, such as paintings, scrapbooks, photo albums and posters.

These descriptions are now or will soon be available on the Archives Network of Alberta and the Archives Canada databases. The conclusion of this part of the project is evidence that RAD can successfully be used to describe large archival holdings with complex relationships between the records.

Archivists who worked on various stages of the RAD conversion project at the Provincial Archives have included Bev Brereton, Bob Edwards, Raymond Frogner, Anna Gibson, Karen Langley, Karen Simonson, Sharon Walz and Sharry Watson.

The Provincial Archives of Alberta is very proud of its accomplishment and congratulates the project archivists and staff on the tremendous work that has been completed. We greatly appreciate the generous support received from the Archives Society of Alberta, Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society and Canadian Council of Archives.

ROVING ARCHIVIST REPORT

Scott Goodine

For most Albertans, the Centennial was a year-long affair. However, for the ASA, the Centennial began years before and will likely drag on through 2006. Due to the largesse of the Centennial Grant, the ASA was able to hire several archivists to write RAD descriptions for member institutions. Unlike the other archivists hired with Centennial money, I was fortunate (I'm sure the other CAIN archivists would say unfortunate) enough to be hired in September 2002 as a roving archivist without any home base and directly supervised by CAIN project supervisor Janet McMaster.

Though based in Edmonton, I was sent to archives throughout most of Alberta and was thus given a nice introduction to the varied beauty of the province. More importantly as a newly minted archivist I was able to get a crash course in archival work processes in a wide variety of archives. I began my work at the University of Alberta Archives in October 2002. After this soft landing of good company, strong political talk and Lumberjacks coffee, I was sent down to the City of Wetaskiwin Archives for three months, before being sent to work at the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Northern Alberta for a month. After that I

went down to the Legal Archives Society of Alberta in Calgary before returning to the U of A in April 2003. While I was enjoying work at the City of Edmonton Archives for May and June 2003, I received word that I had been hired for a permanent position at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Before starting work at the PAA and leaving the ASA behind, I was fortunate to be sent to the Town of Athabasca Archives for a two week stint.

Though I was certainly happy to get permanent work, I left my time as roving archivist with some sadness. One of the things I most enjoyed about my term with the ASA was the people I had the fortune of meeting. From the large institutions to the several one person shops I worked at, I was always made to feel welcome and supported. It was also great to see how all my "co-workers" brought a level of professionalism and enthusiasm to their job. It was a wonderful introduction to the Alberta archival community.



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PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA'S DIGITAL PRESERVATION SURVEY SUMMARY

Lori Podolsky Nordland, Digital Archivist, Provincial Archives of Alberta

As part of the Provincial Archives of Alberta's digital preservation project, the PAA has been seeking information about digital preservation from a variety of sources at the international, national and provincial levels. This was done through a survey that was sent in September of 2005, to eleven institutions, including two located in the United States (Library of Congress and Library of Virginia), Library and Archives Canada, Council of Nova Scotia Archives, McGill University Archives, and the following provincial archives – Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, New Brunswick Provincial Archives, Archives of Ontario, University of Toronto Archives, Archives of Manitoba and Saskatchewan Archives Board. Over the course of five months, eight institutions responded for a successful return rate of 73%.

The survey was undertaken in an effort to determine the level in which other institutions have developed and implemented a digital preservation strategy, including the digital archives infrastructure and extent of the digital collection. Our objectives with this survey were to learn about:

- the policies and procedures for appraisal, acquisition, processing, management, administration, storage and access of digital objects;
- the development and implementation the digital archives infrastructure (or systems architecture);
- learn about the extent and scope (size, format, complexity) of the digital objects being acquired;
- the application and generation of preservation metadata; and
- any challenges encountered in the acquisition and management of digital objects.

The following are some of the survey highlights which were drawn from the responses relating to questions on the appraisal, storage and access of digital objects. Some institutions provided more detailed information than others, depending upon the institution's development stage in their digital preservation strategy.

Policies:

Almost all responded that no formal policies or procedures were in place for preservation and

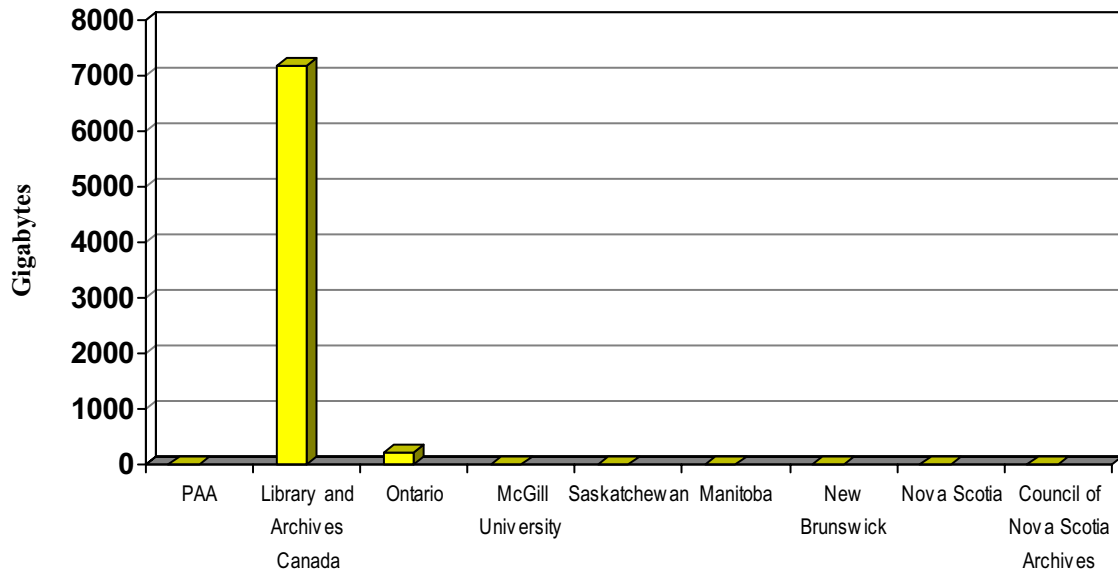
management of digital objects. Everyone did indicate that they are either in the process of developing a strategy or will be initiating this process in the near future. Library and Archives Canada is currently working on a Digital Collection Initiative to streamline and enhance the acquisition, management, access and preservation of its digital holdings, which includes several working groups and projects focusing on transfer, preservation and web archiving. At the moment, provincial institutions are using existing policies and procedures and adapting these to digital objects until a strategy has been developed. Additionally, Archives of Ontario and McGill University are in the process of developing formal email archiving policies.

Appraisal:

Most institutions follow "technology-neutral" appraisal criteria for their records – appraisal decisions are the same regardless of the medium. Additionally, a few institutions did acknowledge that technology may impact the appraisal decision when the cost of preservation and access outweigh the archival value. Technical aspects to keep in mind that identified in one of the responses includes file types, medium storing the files (10" floppy, zip disk, etc.), access and storage requirements, and so on.

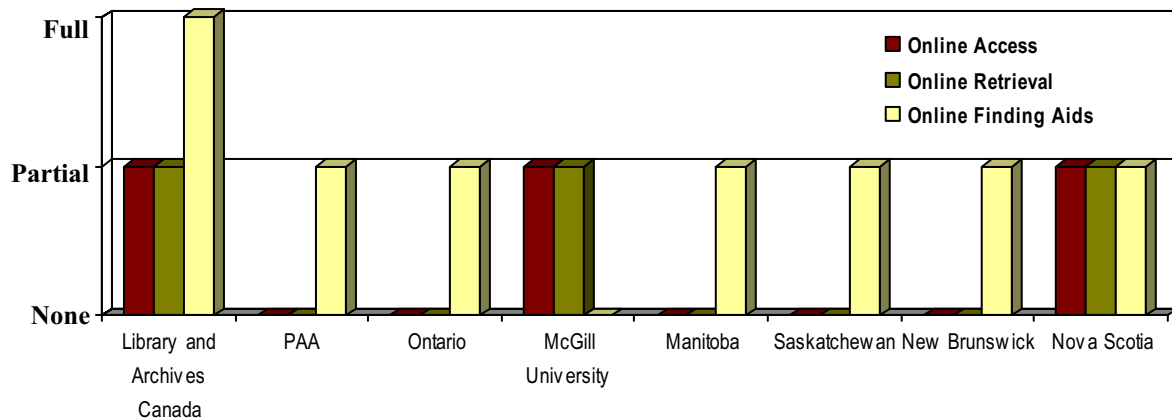
Acquisition:

As most institutions were not yet acquiring digital objects, responses were brief compared to the appraisal section. In most cases, digital objects were stored on a variety of media, including spinning disks, magnetic disks, floppy disks, zip disks, and CD/DVDs). Some institutions did have SAN (Storage Area Network) servers, but these were limited to staff access. Only three institutions responded as having acquired digital objects. The quantity of digital information that these institutions have received individually ranges from approximately 2 gigabytes to 200 gigabytes, with one of the institutions has accumulated nearly 7200 gigabytes. To put this into context, 7200 gigabytes is equivalent to just over one-third of the information held in the Library of Congress!



Online Access:

Currently, only a few institutions have some online access to their collections, and this consisted of digitized copies of traditional records, such as diaries and photographs. For those institutions that had digital-born objects (as opposed to digitized items), the access procedures were to print hard copies and provide these to the researcher.



Challenges:

The respondents also identified several challenges – foremost was the sheer exponential increase in information (or the information explosion) needing to be appraised, followed by the ability of having good records management practices to maintain and manage the digital object during their lifecycle and after transfer to the institution. Other challenges included capacity of staff and resources.

The survey responses are useful as the PAA works on developing its digital preservation strategy. The insights provided by the respondents highlight the need for appraisal criteria that is technology-neutral, yet also takes into account the uniqueness of digital objects, the need for flexible acquisition policies and procedures for accessing various media, and adequate storage that can handle the increase of space needed to store digital objects in the future. These procedures need to be based in sound records keeping and electronic information management frameworks and policies to be successfully implemented across an organization.

The survey responses also highlight for us that, archival institutions are at various stages in terms of

developing and implementing a digital preservation strategy. Most of the institutions are reviewing their policies and procedures so as to incorporate digital information management into their everyday operations. This includes developing metadata standards based on Dublin Core Metadata Initiative and PREMIS (Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies) as well as exploring issues of archival appraisal and technology. Overall, the responses are inline with what we are doing at the Provincial Archives and the initiatives and working groups within the Government of Alberta as we move towards a corporate solution to digital preservation management.

2006 ACA INSTITUTE

The ACA is delighted to announce the theme for the 2006 ACA Institute which will be held immediately before the annual conference in St John's, Newfoundland, on Monday and Tuesday, 26-27 June 2006.

The theme for the 2006 Institute is: "ARCHIVES IN THE WAKE OF HUGH TAYLOR: SHAPING ARCHIVAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY". With Taylor's passing in September 2005, it is appropriate to hold a kind of "wake" for him, to consider archives in his wake, or the legacy for our work today of Canada's premier archival thinker.

The Institute's aim is to integrate new ideas and approaches to a variety of archival tasks into an overall view of how archival programmes may be best conceived and implemented to meet the key challenges we face. The Institute will [use Taylor's ideas as a springboard for a discussion of this aim that also draws on a wide range of archival writers and experiences. These challenges affect the day-to-day work planning and service delivery of the vast majority of archives. Taylor tackled these challenges with his imaginative insights and spurred further research into them (for instance, in the areas of contextual description, macroappraisal, electronic records, and relationships with other heritage and information specialists).

In break-out groups, participants will consider the practical workplace challenges that they will have prepared and submitted in advance of the event. Each participant will receive several weeks before, covered by the registration fee, a copy of *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections* by Hugh A Taylor (2003, edited by Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds), as well as other material.

The ACA is fortunate to have secured as Institute leaders Terry Cook and Tom Nesmith, two of Canada's foremost archival educators who have both written and taught about Hugh Taylor's ideas. Both are professors in the two-year Archival Studies MA program at the University of Manitoba and are well known as writers and lecturers on many archival subjects, in Canada and abroad.

Institute fees have been lowered to encourage ACA Conference attendees to arrive a bit early for what promises to be a stimulating exploration of archival theory and practice. For ACA members the registration fee is \$500 (plus HST & \$10 mailing fee for participants from outside of Canada). The fee for non-ACA members is \$675 (plus HST & \$10 mailing fee for participants from outside of Canada). These fees include all course materials, two lunches, and four refreshment breaks. Maximum participation is capped at 25, so register now for this special event.

Registration forms and other information sheets for participants are available on the ACA website (http://www.archivists.ca/prodev/aca_institute.aspx). If you have questions about this exciting opportunity, please contact the ACA Education Committee Chair.

We look forward to seeing you at the Institute in St. John's!

Denise Jones (dejones@gov.mb.ca)
Chair, ACA Education Committee
www.archivists.ca

THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA PRESERVATION METADATA STANDARD

Lori Podolsky Nordland, *Digital Archivist, Provincial Archives of Alberta*

For some time, archivists have been struggling to understand and articulate the concept of metadata, and its function as a standard. The International Council on Archives (ICA) has adopted the common metadata definition of “data about data”. While they do recognize the International Standards Organization’s definition of metadata in the context of records management, the ISO 15489-1:2000 definition of “data describing context, content and structure of records and their management through time” has limited applicability in the archival world. The ICA definition provides a broader function for the retrieval, usability, authenticity, reliability, maintenance, preservation and appraisal of the record. In their view, an archival definition should highlight the various properties of the record, and its components or elements that encompass metadata. The Government of Alberta is also in the process of developing its own metadata standard for its business functions including preservation. The Government standard is based upon recognized and approved international standards, such as Dublin Core.

The Government of Alberta has developed an Information Management Framework that guides the management of government information in a disciplined and coordinated manner to optimize the value of the Government of Alberta’s investment in information assets, support effective and efficient operations and improve the delivery of services to Albertans. The mandate of the framework is based upon six principles that focus on the accessibility of information; usability to meet the needs of employees, clients, partners and stakeholders; accountability in the management of information; an integrated approach of information throughout the records’ lifecycle; a planned and coordinated approach of information to business and budget planning; and optimization of information as a government asset.

As part of the integrated approach to information management, the Government of Alberta has struck a cross-ministry committee to explore a set of core metadata elements that are required in all ministries as part of the life-cycle management of records. This committee, the Metadata Standards Management Group (MSMG), is composed of members from records, library and information management

disciplines, Health, Education and Geospatial metadata communities, Government of Alberta Enterprise Architecture, Service Alberta, and Provincial Archives of Alberta. Its purpose is to make recommendations to the Information Management Advisory Committee (IMAC) on corporate metadata standards to support access, use, management and preservation of information content within the Government of Alberta. IMAC is responsible for sponsoring the initiatives implemented in the Information Management Framework.

The PAA is currently working towards the creation of a metadata standard for the preservation of digital objects that are defined as a unit of information that includes properties, attributes or characteristics of the object, and may also include methods or means of performing operations on the object. Part of the standard includes identifying the elements that will help ensure that digital information and related records with permanent and enduring value are preserved. This preservation metadata standard compliments the Government’s metadata core elements including those competencies outlined for preservation, identification, access, use and administration of corporate records. The preservation elements are being adopted from the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (ISO 15836) and Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS), an international working group responsible for defining and implementing a set of core preservation elements. As well, information derived from the PAA’s digital preservation strategy survey that was sent to various provincial and federal institutions will be informing the preservation metadata standard.

The Information Management Framework and the MGSG provide the context for the Provincial Archives of Alberta to work towards the development of a preservation metadata standard. Additionally, the development of a metadata preservation standard was identified in the *Digital Preservation Pilot Study* final report submitted to the PAA and Alberta Government Services in



March of 2005. Within the Information Management Framework and the *Pilot Study*, an integrated approach to managing records throughout their life-cycle to optimize their value is recommended. Within this approach, metadata plays an important role in the life-cycle management viz. a viz. the functions of creation, capture, administration, storage, access, and use of the records. Capturing adequate metadata, therefore, ensures that the necessary information in managing the record is described, and that the ministry meets the goals and objectives of the Information Management Framework.

WHAT ARE OUR USERS SAYING ABOUT US?

- From the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (October 2005):
...Love your website! I work for the Alberta Distance Learning Centre and we are in the process of developing instructional materials in print and online for the new Social Studies curriculum. I looked over both the Prairie Populist site and the "Letters from the Trunk". What great projects! I am sure we will find a use for both of them in our Social Studies courses for our online students.

Your tutorials on how to use the database and the database itself are so user friendly and comprehensive- just incredible. I know where I will be spending my research hours from now on! Thanks!

Janet McMaster, System Administrator, Archives Network of Alberta

PEOPLE AND PLACES

The City of Calgary, Corporate Records, Archives

We have been so busy at The City of Calgary, Corporate Records, Archives that we neglected to formally announce staffing changes that took place during 2004 and 2005.

Glennnda Leslie

Chantelle Opyr joined the Archives in July of 2004 to assist the staff with public service and project work. She worked on a grant project, funded by the Archives Society of Alberta, during the spring of 2005. Chantelle became a permanent Archivist after **Regina Landwehr** moved to the University of Calgary Archives. Chantelle holds a BA from the University of Alberta, where she graduated in 2002. She volunteered with the Department of Museums and Collections Services at the University of Alberta from 1999 to 2002. She was employed there as a Curatorial Assistant in 2003 and also worked at the University of Alberta Archives as an Archival Records Assistant in the summer of 2003.

Janice Brum joined The City of Calgary as a permanent Archivist in October of 2004 after **Sarah Bleach** resigned to accompany her husband who was transferred to Trois-Rivières, Quebec. Janice brings a wealth of experience to her position with The City. She worked for the Northwest Territories Archives from 1990 to 1998. Between 1999 and 2004 she was employed in contract or term work for The Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists, The City of Saskatoon Archives, the Saskatchewan Archives

CHANGES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAVEL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Lisa Atkinson, ASA Treasurer

The Board of the ASA recently voted unanimously to change the way in which Professional Development Travel Assistance (PDTA) grants are made available to members. In the past PDTA grants have been available to both individual members and to institutional members who wished to send one of their staff members to a workshop, conference or meeting that was related to archival activities but that was not sponsored by the ASA. The changes in funding guidelines now permit only individual members to receive PDTA support. Institutional members are no longer eligible for these grants.

The rationale for this change is that the budget for this member benefit has often been insufficient in recent years to support all the requests that have been received during the fiscal year. Grants are paid as applications are received, so those events which occur early in the fiscal year (like the ACA conference) are most likely to be supported by PDTA funding. Since each individual member is eligible for grants to a maximum of \$500 per fiscal year, the PDTA budget of \$6000 will fund only 12 grants where the allowable amount is requested.

A review of the grants paid over the past several years revealed that the few applications received from institutions for PDTA grants often went to support individuals who had also claimed the maximum grant as an individual member. The result was that one person might receive as much as \$1000 of the \$6000 budget allocation while other individual members' applications which were received later in the year could not be supported due to a lack of available funds.

In the interest of fairness to all members, therefore, it was decided to make PDTA funds available only to individual members. The review of past years' grants suggested that the current budget of \$6000 is likely to be adequate to support all applications received from individual members for PDTA grants. This is due to the fact that the ASA has a large number of individual members who do not normally attend out-of-province events. Institutions which have non-members working for them are encouraged to remind their staff of the benefits of ASA membership: where else does one find

a \$40 membership fee that will realize \$500 in professional development support these days?

The option of increasing the PDTA budget was considered by the Board but rejected. PDTA funding is not, and has never been, intended to fully support attendance at approved events. Institutions surely should expect to finance the professional development of their staff and should not rely on small professional associations to pay these costs on their behalf. The Board also agreed that the expenditure of ASA finances should be to the benefit of the membership at large and should not unduly support only a small minority of members. ASA's expenses have increased markedly over the past several years as we have developed three online databases and (soon-to-be) four online learning tools which are the envy of most of the rest of the country. The significant and ongoing costs of these enormously successful projects are expenses that we all as a profession and a community continue to benefit from.

The ASA has generous benefits of membership for both individuals and institutions compared with other provincial archives associations in Canada. In addition to PDTA grants the ASA offers financial support through the Education Program Travel Assistance (EPTA) grant program to assist individual and institutional members to attend workshops offered through its Education Program. The ASA is also the only provincial association in Canada that provides arrangement and description grants from its operating budget: institutions in other provinces rely solely on the federal grants available through CCA and LAC to assist them with the costs of processing of records in their holdings. In Alberta we are fortunate to receive significant support from the provincial government through an annual grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation (AHRF). This grant enables the ASA to offer its members unequalled benefits of membership.

If you have any questions or comments about these benefits, or about the new policy on PDTA grants I welcome your input. My coordinates are on the ASA website.

SUBMISSIONS? QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS?

The *Archives Society of Alberta Newsletter* is published quarterly by the Archives Society of Alberta. Submissions, questions and suggestions should be directed to the Newsletter Editor c/o

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Individuals and institutions are encouraged to submit articles, reviews, reports, photographs or Letters to the Editor to the ASA Newsletter, Issues #2, 3 and 4. Submissions are preferred in electronic format as DOC or TXT files for textual submissions, or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

Submission deadlines are:
September 30th Issue #2 - Winter
January 15th Issue #3 - Spring
April 30th Issue #4 - Summer

*Issue #1 is reserved for Annual Reports of the Society and its committees

The views expressed in the *Archives Society of Alberta Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Archives Society of Alberta or its Editor.

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Archives Society of Alberta Membership Application 2006 - 2007

Name (Institution or Individual)

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Voting Delegate (Associate / Institutional)

Institutional Affiliation (Individual Members)

Type of Membership - Please Check

- Archives Employee \$40.00
- Students, Volunteers, Seniors \$20.00
- Associate Institutional Member \$60.00
- Institutional Member (membership fee is based on the archives operating budget. Please contact the ASA for further information)
- Yes, I would like to volunteer for an ASA Committee

Please make cheque or money order payable to the Archives Society of Alberta and mail to:

*Archives Society of Alberta
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Edmonton, AB T6E 4S8*