



## Colloquium on Innovations in Archival Processing

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Panel Discussion with Scholars and Archives Administrators

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Nancy Perloff, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Collections, Getty Research Institute

Stephen Phillips, Department of Architecture, California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo

**Katja Zelljadt:** Great, I am very honored to be here. Let me introduce the people that you don't know first: Lucy Bradnock is a project researcher here at the Getty Research Institute. She is working on our Pacific Standard Time research project and she'll tell you a little bit more about herself perhaps later, and if she doesn't then you can pigeonhole her afterwards and ask her all of the particulars about her academic history.

Nancy Lutkehaus is a professor of anthropology at the University of Southern California and she was a Getty Scholar this past year.

Nancy Perloff, were you here this morning? Did you introduce yourself?

**Nancy Perloff:** Andra mentioned me.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Nancy Perloff is a Curator of Modern Materials?

**Nancy Perloff:** Modern and Contemporary.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Modern and Contemporary at the Getty Research Institute. And we have Stephen Phillips who is an architect and an architectural historian and a professor at Cal Poly SLO. And was also a Getty Post-Doctoral Fellow last year at the Getty Research Institute. So people who are both, I would say inside and outside the institution, and I suppose that when David asked me whether I might chair the afternoon panel or moderate, I had a kind of different understanding about what subject experts meant, or I didn't really know what subject experts meant, and so we kind of have a grouping of people at this table who are different types of subject experts, and I think that one of the things that I learned over this afternoon is that these terms are very complicated. So, "User", "Scholar", "Reader", "Subject Expert" are kind of slippery. And I think that might be one of the things that we might want to talk about, and in a very strict definition that I might have had for myself, which is why we have these kind of insider outsider people on the panel, they are the people who are actually using archives and special

collections for their primary work which is in a university environment, whether as students or as professors. And I think that experience is relatively different than the experience of people who are working within the institution. And so, before we get to the individual people on the panel, I wanted to kind of throw out some things that I think are really important to think about when talking about these subject experts who have in many cases entirely different goals than people who work within the institutions. Their goals are getting tenure, publishing as much as possible, finding dissertation topics, or finding academic communities that they didn't know existed. So, I think the thing that's quite important is the question of compensation. Are you paid to do something with hidden collections or special collections, in whatever way that takes form? Namely, does your institution pay with you health benefits, or without health benefits? Or, are you receiving a grant from an institution, or are you paid through your university? Or, are you coming to a place to look at things, and the place to which are you going has no monetary involvement with your looking at these objects?

I think then the next question is then, if the goal is, and I think this is also a question, to involve these people who are coming into an institution who might not be bound to the institution by more than the fact that the institution has a special collection, how do you harness what is surely in many cases very interesting work that they're doing on your objects; for your institution to broaden, deepen, change the information that you provide to the public, which is what you're required to do if you have a special collection and a desire to make it public. So, is this a good thing? Do we want to try and do this? And if so, what are the mechanisms by which we do this? And I think that there's, in the examples earlier this afternoon, there was a focus on payment and also on training, in at least a rudimentary archival practice, which goes above and beyond what most researchers in special collections are willing to do when they are looking at their special collections because really they're there to extract the information and leave and write their articles. So, that gets into a question about technology and willingness to actually engage with the processes of archiving, and how much can the scholar/is the scholar willing to do that, or would the institution want to demand that in return for having shown them these collections. I think that is also a kind of moral question. The moral question slides into another question of intellectual property of the scholars. I mean scholars are very, very well known for having intellectual property over even ideas and how does the intellectual property of doing work on a collection translate into giving over some of that work to an institution which is going to make it public to a broader range than just the individual looking at the collection? I have a lot of European colleagues who are working in our collections, who are really upset that they don't know who else is working on the archive at the same time because in Europe we don't have – in Europe they don't have the same privacy laws that we do. And so, if, for example, one of our boxes is with another researcher, they want to know who the researcher is, and we can't give them that information because they want to have a conversation with that person. So, this intellectual property issue, as well as privacy issues, are really important to kind of accessing and handing over information.

The other two questions that I think are really relevant are about issues of professional conflict, or professionalization that meets scholarship. So, if you have - now I wrote this down - MPLP - if you have MPLP processed collections, which as I understand are more rudimentarily processed than long finding aid collections - if you have an MPLP collection and you're soliciting, or a subject expert actually gives you deeper information on some kind of, whatever it is, is the subject expert replacing the archivist? And, is the archivist, or special collections cataloger thereby losing the ability to have a deep intellectual experience with a collection? I know it's kind of striking that in both the Huntington and UCLA cases, the graduate students are doing the finding aid work and also the physical processing, but they don't do the technological EAD/MARC record, and then that's left to the person who works for the institution who might not have as deep a relationship with the collection, and is something getting lost in that process?

Then the final thing that I thought was, or in conversations with actually most of the members of this panel, which was really interesting, and also with other scholars who happened to be running around the Getty, was I'm looking at a collection and I'm interested – it's five boxes – I'm interested in four of the folders in the first box and I have a great item level list of those folders, but I really didn't care about anything else that was happening in the other boxes and I would really like to give you that small list, but is that going to be helpful to you if it's a fragment? And, how does one kind of get fragments into what is otherwise a bare bones situation of either a finding aid or not even a finding aid? So, at what point does a fragment become even difficult to integrate? And this is a larger question of how to integrate what scholars produce, which is often very subjective, complex, and not with the mandate of totality that hopefully archivists and special collection catalogers have. How does one integrate this kind of all over information into a system which is heretofore been aimed at a kind of a complete survey? Ok, so, comments?

**Nancy Perloff:** I'll start with just something that also goes back to Andra Darlington's presentation, which I think is something that is both really wonderful, but also perplexing and challenging, which is this idea of iteration. That there is an inventory, which a curator develops as he or she is acquiring a collection, maybe the inventory was actually handed to the curator and modified, maybe the curator had to create the inventory himself or herself, and then this goes to the cataloger. The cataloger then has to work with it in the terms that we have been discussing today. That inventory may have detail that is mind boggling, no organization, no correspondence/project files, and so there's this process by which the cataloger has to then make sense of it and make it work with – what is it? MPLP – cataloging, and so it just puts with Katja's question, then some kind of - a new kind of cataloging is created, but what happens when the detail that was in that inventory is so valuable that somehow it needs, or could stay, with that new cataloging record? And following up on that, do we modify those catalogs, or finding aids I should say, when we get new expertise coming in from scholars? So I'm making a question more than an answer, but I think it's a big issue.

**Tom Hyry:** I think this fallacy of - the idea of completeness, or whatever – comprehensiveness – is a complete fallacy. Speaking from the terms of an archival administrator, we always collect more than we could possibly – you would want us to collect more than we could possibly process to a certain level. But then it is also a fallacy to think, all right even if we could process everything to a certain level, that there wouldn't be revelations twenty years from now about the materials that we don't know today. And so, I don't know, I feel like the iterative nature of this is somewhat self-evident and it also works for us because one thing that we know in developments in scholarship is there isn't just a single viewpoint through which to see a set of sources, but the trap is if you're an archivist or a if you are scholar you can only see it through that lens. So, I think we absolutely need to build systems that allow different voices, different viewpoints and probably to get at some of the - I think you actually brought up a really interesting technical point – that we get these really detailed inventories in that don't have any structures or don't conform the structures that we generally use and what do we do with that? And there are ways around that - but it's not - there are methods that we have routinely used in the past and I think that is a good challenge for us all I guess.

**Stephen Phillips:** I guess my question then is what is the ambition of the sources basically? Is the ambition for the user, as in for the scholar to have access to the material, know where the material is, and then be able to reference that material later? Because reference is really important, because it's not just that we use these finding aids to find information and then when we get into these detailed lists of information you don't really need, or you don't really need to know, or are confusing, or tell you more than you need to know, right, sometimes - but then the role of the original researcher is also a question

I would like to bring up as well - What is original research in terms of part of, part of, let's say what my original research was uncovering forty plus some odd boxes that hadn't been looked at, that hadn't been processed, and were in the process of being discovered and processed because the widow had finally allowed them to come out of her – well they were kept in a closet basically. And then she opened up the closet and allowed everyone to have access to it, and then it got privatized, publicized, it was very interesting what happened, and I ended up arriving at that moment in history and was the person who was allowed into these forty-two some odd boxes, and it was messy, it's still messy. And yet, in that process, they have processed the whole boxes and even the finding information that I had to reference in the beginning is different now than it was then. So that's also confusing. So we talk about reiterating, that if we start changing the number systems that it's very confusing. And then the product itself that I have created is in itself a finding aid of sorts, right, because it allows you to understand what that information is. And so, is that the point, to create an opportunity for people to discover and make what should be qualified as original research? I mean, at the UCLA, I thought that it was very interesting, both of the students said what was most exciting to them was touching the original objects and then finding original research – (**Nancy Lutkehaus**: Being the first to do that)being the first access to the material and if the detail list is so detailed, it's kind of maybe a turn off in some ways because it gives you the fact, the knowledge that all this stuff is here, and we all know it's here, and it's very mundane material, it's every day, and in a way it's less exciting than discovering that document. And then worst off, in the case I've discovered, is a private archive that will then disseminate the imagery en masse, right, put it on the internet en masse, just to get it out there. Well then when you go to try publishing your documents, well then it is no longer original imagery because it is out there on the internet or it's out there in a public disseminated way that hasn't been digested; it's just out there and so I question that as well. So how much is too much, and what is the perfect amount of detail?

**Nancy Lutkehaus**: Can I just follow up on that, as a scholar who is very envious of the fact that here is someone who has had the opportunity to do this and the flip side of this is the frustration of being a scholar, knowing that there is a hidden archive there that you would love to be able to have access to. And so, I actually have a question, you know, for all of you, because I was here at the beginning of the day and then here at the end, and so I missed the middle and I am very eager to go and look at the reports about the grants that have gone out via CLIR, because to me as a scholar what would be really exciting is to be able to work with an archivist. For example, I have been doing work at the Rockefeller Archive Center, so I don't know if there is anyone here from the RAC, but over the time I've been working there I have gotten to know the archivists who knows the material that I have been interested in. And every time I go there, you know, she says, 'well, we haven't been able to process that yet'. It's not high on their priority, but what excited me was the possibility, maybe, you know, there's a grant out there where a scholar, like me, could work with an archivist, you know, view an archive, on a particular archive and that I'd be happy to be helping with that process. So, it wouldn't – it seems to me that there might be some possibilities for collaboration there that allow the archivist also, and I may not be talking about the right person, it might be the cataloger, I mean I've learned about how much I don't know today about the whole process of getting those materials to the point where I finally see them, and that's been very interesting, but as a scholar too, wanting to take part in the discovery process, but also process, but also wanting to have access to things that might be low priority within an institution. So, I would just hope that there might be more opportunities to do that kind of work, whether it was for a graduate student working on their dissertation or a more advanced scholar going into a new area of research.

**Katja Zelljadt**: Would you do it for no money?

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** That's an interesting question because there are times, yes and no.

**Marta Brunner:** Scholars do a lot of stuff on a volunteer basis...

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** Or we could get supported by our university, you know, there are pockets of money. It's a matter of how much time you are talking about, at what point in your career it's really important to do that. Whether if you're on tenured faculty and maybe you can't, you know, maybe you're more along in your career, you can.

**Lucy Bradnock:** And how much do you want to see the collection.

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** Right

**Lucy Bradnock:** I mean, I think that it's much less about financial reward, 'cause you know scholars are not well paid in any institution. We're not – we never could have had those amazingly well paid jobs, but the reward is getting access. And so I think, it's not necessarily about financial remuneration it's about – you know for a young researcher it's about experience, and for a more advanced researcher it's about access, and it's kind of a – yes, it's a little bit of a selfish motivation, but that's what we get out of it, rather than some extra cash.

**Stephen Phillips:** But I would also add that what would have been fantastic would have been a training session somewhere along the journey. Because inevitably you will document what you see, you have to, so you can get back to reference it. So I have outlines and outline and outlines, of every single box, what's in each box, and every box I've looked at. I do it for myself because I have to, right? And then also to be able to communicate back with the archive and say I need something in box such and such and of such image and then you can actually maybe even photograph that image and show them the image and say now I need a scan of it. But had I been trained when I first came in, maybe with some methodology of how to organize my list, they may be more useful. They could have been useful to somebody. I don't know if they're necessarily going to be more hard work for someone to have to go through that, and you have to check it, right, I mean you couldn't just take the scholars out right – say hey, this is what's in our boxes – someone's going to have to go back and check them all. So, if they had been trained in some remedial manner when they first walked in.

**Nancy Perloff:** You mean when they first walk in here? Or just...

**Stephen Phillips:** Into a certain archive. You have an archive and you want to manage the people coming into your archive and make them a – put them to good work. Part of it may be not just filling out a form and filling out and saying 'I want these pens'. Just like going into a woodshop or any other sort of facility, you have a – need more work, after a one hour training session, but maybe you offer the training sessions twice a year or something like that.

**Nancy Perloff:** I think that's a great idea.

**David Farneth:** Could I follow up a question? So, hearing you say that, I think I've heard you say that you would be willing to share that list with the repository, and if I have heard that, at what point in your research would you be willing to share it?

**Stephen Phillips:** I suppose it depends on what you put on your list, right? A certain level of detail? I'd probably from the beginning. Just a basic list of what's in a folder, but... I don't know, it's interesting. It's a good question because some of the art to what we do is not letting people know there's available information to them close at hand until we publish. Which is an unfortunate reality.

**Marta Brunner:** As both a scholar and someone working in the library, I am very impatient with it, and that what's I'm saying the same thing I do because I am also I am active in open access movement. We need to change the academia. I mean that's the problem. Because, there's this myth of, yes, you did, you know, this original research, but did you do it all by yourself? No, you have conversations with colleagues, you have conversations with archivists, you have lots – you have people who read and give you feedbacks on your drafts – it's collaborative, it's always been collaborative. And yet, the system of the academy, at least in the humanities and social sciences, is only willing to offer remuneration, and job perks, and job security if you play by that myth. And so, part of what I would like to advocate is a little bit more standing up to that.

**Lucy Bradnock:** I think, as a foreign scholar, the European Scholar, I think there is a shift in British academia at least, whereby the research excellence framework by which scholars are judged and funding is awarded accordingly, is shifting now towards usability and accessibility of research, as well as the quality of research and, you know, the peer review journal that you publish in. And so I think it's something that it's incredibly controversial in British universities right now and it's not without its problems, but I think there are possibilities for opening up a more collaborative practice, and a practice whereby research doesn't necessarily need to be presented in a published paper, but could be presented as a finding aid or as an archival collaboration, as well as an academic one; and it's a long way off.

**Marta Brunner:** I think that we can take a lead from the folks in digital humanities who are actively pushing for – you know we just had Kathleen Fitzpatrick at Pomona, I believe, who just got tenure on the basis of a crowd sourced kind of peer review monograph, and that's pretty incredible. That's the kind of push back that I think that...

**Stephen Phillips:** I would say though that it was systematized, and therefore it was inevitable. So, to use the Getty archive, you have a certain training session that says when you go into a box we are asking you to simply itemize only to a certain level of detail, if it hasn't already been done. And maybe that piece of paper then gets typed up and gets put in the box, or wherever it goes, so the person knows, or it's already been done, and it's an understood level of information, it's not all the most nuanced information, or the subjective information, but the clearly obvious, right? There's these twelve documents in this folder. You know, it's kind of already there in some ways.

**David Farneth:** Following up on that one more time, if I may. So then, if you, later on, as a researcher came across such a list, or it were sort of integrated in our normal finding aids, would you like to know what the source of that list was?

**Stephen Phillips:** No. You mean who the person was...

**David Farneth:** Or whether it came from a Getty staff member or from someone else? Is there any level of authority you would be looking for?

**Stephen Phillips:** No, because if the list is objective and vague enough it's just simply telling you what's in the box. It's not giving me the nuance of what's in the letter, and telling me that interpretation of the letter. I don't need that.

**Nancy Perloff:** One thing somewhat related, but also slightly different direction. Based on some notes you gave me from the March 2010 CLIR Conference - anyway - This interested me a lot and it's part of this notion of teaming up more. And when I brought up the inventory that the curator receives or maybe creates and then works with the cataloger on, to me that kind of team work can actually save time and help on both sides assure, objective or subjective, that certain information is there in an understandable and kind of consistent format. So similarly, if I do an exhibition, this was mentioned in this report, that there are possibilities of linking the exhibition website, not just with say a concert that is going to go on or a symposium, but maybe with a finding aid. Now, that could be really interesting if it features or relates to collections, or books, or photographs that are shown in the exhibition. That again suggests an important teamwork - it's not my favorite - working - collaborative work, let's say that, with somebody in cataloging or archiving as well as the curator and a scholar in residence who knows a lot about the photographs in the exhibition. You don't want too many cooks spoiling the broth, but I do think that's a challenge to make those finding aids better and to keep working on them in a way that is functional in relation to other programming.

**Brooke Black:** Stephen, I want to tell you, if you want to come to the Huntington you can be my volunteer anytime because that is exactly what we have volunteers do. Sit them down with a box and we ask them to inventory the box. We don't give them a lot of training. And we don't [inaudible] the archivist [inaudible] information. It's an interesting transparency question because I am sure that there are plenty of scholars at the Huntington right now salivating over some our collections that will never, you know, won't be ready for another ten years, especially - I have a really large modern collection, they're huge and take a lot of time. If someone just inventoried them, they'd be done, you know, I don't know, in three months or something like that.

**Stephen Phillips:** They'd have to have a reason to want to inventory that box, so...

**Brooke Black:** Well, right, but they don't even know that they exist.

**Stephen Phillips:** Not yet, and that's the problem. If there's no information that the boxes even...

**Brooke Black:** Right, and so if Sophia, a volunteer, who has access says 'oh, I'd love to work with your material, I have subject specialty. I'm a volunteer and working on [inaudible]' ... That's an area of interest for him, he's just inventorying stuff. Now he's inventorying it to a very detailed level because it is messy collection and he has all the time in the world, but if he's a volunteer or if he's retired or whatever, but if a scholar came to me and said 'I know you have John Smith's collection, I would love to get into that...

**Katja Zelljadt:** How would he know that you have John Smith's collection?

**Brooke Black:** Well that's just the problem. And I think that's the disconnect between the backlog and people who might be able to help us. And I don't know whether...

[Many people speaking at once]

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** But you know that you have that? So, that is the question.

**Tom Hyry:** Right, sometimes.

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** I was just going to say are there ways of just putting it up on your website for the Huntington Library, for the resources?

**Brooke Black:** And I think it's also a conversation. I know some scholars might be interested in it. So perhaps I could float it to them. You know who you are, any of your colleagues, and you know you would really use this well and would... then you have an 'I scratch your back, you scratch mine' type thing. I do the inventory you'd be the first one to see it. Umm, and that would be basically helping out with the process.

**Stephen Phillips:** If you could get it into the database so that someone online could just simply put it in that name and find that there's an archive, even if it doesn't say anything more than the name, if they're a good researcher, they'll come to you.

**Tom Hyry:** Ok, that's the key question, from the archival perspective for this panel. And we're sort of making fun of MPLP - you know it's not this mystical, technical thing. But it's a way of looking at processing collections that says something for everything is preferable to a great deal of detail on a small number of things. And that philosophy is based exactly on what you guys are saying. What you want to know is basically what is in every repository, and are there ways that you can do that, and then beyond that how can we dig up detail, but.. – So I'm just testing that assumption – We're just hearing from scholars, is that right?

**Lucy Bradnock:** As a researcher sometimes a little bit on everything is better than a lot on everything. That, you know, finding aids that go down to every single letter in every single folder are not only, as Stephen said, slightly less intriguing, but can also be misleading where the subject of a letter is listed and that might be the subject of a letter according to one person's interpretation, but for me the letter is about something completely different, and I think sometimes there's a real kind of assumption that more detail is better and that's not necessarily the case for researchers. And yeah, I mean even just the subject of the whole archive can be enough to get a researcher to ask for access.

**Katja Zelljadt:** I guess I have a question for the hidden collections. Is there an institution, perhaps you talked about this, this morning – Is there an institution that has in some way publicized even just by the archive name, all of the things that have not yet been processed with a kind of advertisement 'come help us process these?'

**Lucy Bradnock:** Or get your graduate student to do it.

**Julie Graham:** I'm not sure from the archival viewpoint that, that would necessarily be the best way to go about that because there are other issues: security, resources, space. There's a whole list of things that got into all of this. So, that's sort of 'pie in the sky' I think, if we all had all the meetings, courses, and everything in the world where we could do that, well yeah, that would be swell. We could [inaudible] – Can I just say, I would trust Stephen's finding aids, but I'm not sure I would trust a mark scholar.

[Several people talking at once]



**Nancy Lutkehaus:** Isn't there some middle ground? I think that's sort of what I was envisioning. Where, if you know that these uncataloged, these hidden collections, exist and you make a case for why you would be interested in working...

**Julie Graham:** I don't want to make generalized statements, but if this is going to sound too generalized – You folks are probably really honest and really good scholars, but there are some people who are sort of mischievous and they want to come in and present themselves in a way that's not true and try and, you know, do us harm. So we have to make a little – We also have to be a little judicious about who we are going to let at our unprocessed collections.

**Katja Zelljadt:** I have lots questions in the back and then Andra.

**Dawn Schmitz:** Oh, I just wanted to point out that, yeah, we're doing this, - we're in the process – we're nearing the end of the process of creating collection level records for everything we have. It doesn't say you can come in and see this, it doesn't say come in and help us work on it, it just says – it's not in process, ask us about it, you know, and so we can decide on a case by case basis. But one thing this will do is help us a little bit determine whether there is demand for it and if three people are requesting something of course we are going to process it. Sometimes unprocessed materials are – we can make them accessible – sometimes. And scholars often are more than happy to do that. Again, no one has looked at this before.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Yeah, it's candy.

**Dawn Schmitz:** yeah, exactly. I've had people make [inaudible]. A collection level record doesn't have to say 'come in and get it'; it can say 'hey, let's talk about it'.

**[Woman in Audience]:** So, one thing in response to one of your questions. So, I would advocate, yes let's all survey all of our collections and put up, not even minimal records, but just accession records so that the world can know that the collection is there and as Dawn said just because we're saying it's there doesn't necessarily mean that we can make it accessible, but by putting it there we can be getting feedback from scholars and know how to prioritize our processing, if not just plain being able to make it available unprocessed, and, so that's just my response to that - I would love to be able to do that. And secondly there are – that same idea about surveys – you're asking that our people putting up information about the unprocessed collections – the Bancroft is doing, actually has just completed a complete survey of their collections and they had a team of archivists surveying the collections and putting up a blog and talking about their discoveries as they went – scanning pages and things like that – so that's another thing [inaudible].

**Katja Zelljadt:** Andra?

**Andra Darlington:** Well, first I wanted to say that, like Dawn, we do have catalog records for everything that we own. It's part of the accessioning process, we create a MARC record when it comes in the door, so we actually have a record and it says 'unprocessed' on the record, so although we don't have a list that we advertise, people can search our catalog and find out what we have and whether or not it is processed. I actually do have a list and I have it handy and I'd be happy to share it, so let me know. But that said, I am not sure that making an inventory is necessarily adequate because these materials for the most part are not arranged and then you have this situation, and this is kind of what Nancy was talking

about, the curators, when they check in collections when they arrive, they actually make inventories; but they're not arranged at all so you have a letter from one person over here and a letter from the same person over there and a thousand things in between, and that's why it's difficult for us to make use of those inventories because we want to put the materials in order so that you can get all of the correspondence in one place. So arrangement has to be a part of the process and I don't think that many scholars who want to take that kind of time.

**Nancy Perloff:** Although, Andra, wouldn't you add to that, though, you know, I think, the Getty Research Institute has as much as possible, tried not only to be sure they're acquiring a complete archive – and that doesn't always happen – but also that the organization is to the best extent possible, true to the way that the archive appeared? Now that isn't always, as I say, that obviously has to shift, but there's a sense of the integrity of the way the archive as it appeared, that at least has to be present for scholars who are researching the archive.

**Andra Darlington:** To some extent I think, if there is some order that reveals something about the creator, then that's definitely – that's fantastic, but I think that's generally the exception of our collections. Usually somebody, you know, tossed it into a box, and grabbed one hand full and put it in that box, and grabbed – It's rarely the creator, him or herself, that's putting these materials in boxes.

**Stephen Phillips:** But the scholar could be useful to helping you with some of that arrangement, because what I've discovered is that a lot of things are not in the right boxes, because something that I finally figured out was in 1952 was in the 1937 box. Because it wasn't actually dated, but if you'd really reached – you know, read through the stuff, you'd go “no, no, no he wasn't even there” and then- but then you kind of want to tell them, but they may not want to hear it. So it's...

**Andra Darlington:** And that's the kind of feedback that we definitely want. And you weren't here in the morning so...

**Stephen Phillips:** Yeah I know.

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** I was going to say, I found that, the fact you have that form now, where you can actually give that information online, could be really useful and interesting and a great model.

**Lucy Bradnock:** I would say, I've given, I've found things in the wrong folders and boxes and told archivists, actually not here, but at USC I think, and they were incredibly receptive, and you know, didn't sort of just take it out and move it, but would definitely...

**Stephen Phillips:** no, no they've got to think about it...

**Lucy Bradnock:** Well, yeah, but I mean... I completely - kind of understand that, 'cause well you're taking my word for it, but at least, you know, they were, they were really, perfectly happy to take a look.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Tom, Jennifer, and John.

**Tom Hyry:** These are minor points that are sort of assuming there is a place for every piece in an archive. And I guess what I would love to get my fellow panelists, from a scholarly perspective, is this, to get at this sense of the assumption that, would you rather have it as it was when it came into the archive or would you rather have us put in what is often a fairly arbitrary order that may or may not work towards

your research interests. So there are many different ways to order something. And, you know, how do you – because there is an archival principle at stake here. We are guided by a, you know, by a principle of original order. That is something you guys may or may not know, but you know the credo is, that if something comes in and it's got some order to it, you don't touch it because that reflects something about the creator and their background. So I guess, but we don't, you know, I think that that's not often tested with our user base.

**Katja Zelljadt:** I think seeing the stuff, no matter what it is, versus not seeing the stuff, is the priority.

**Tom Hyry:** Sure.

**Stephen Phillips:** Yes, but I would say I have a wonderful/ painful example. Probably 2000 letters, instead of being left in their dated – put into a dated fashion, right, as in 1946, 1947, 1948, which one archive did – this archive did it by alphabetical – the person that the letter was about. So suddenly you have all these letters dispersed by their alphabetical, not by date, so you can't recreate the history without knowing the history. So, if you don't know the name of this person, you wouldn't know to look at that letter, and you wouldn't know that's it's in 1926 versus 1955, so like the curator can create an enormous problem in their collection thinking and making an arrangement, right? So there are...

**Tom Hyry:** Well the creators can do the same thing. I mean, you could organize your own stuff by subject and, you know, and so... which is why the principle is leave it be if you can make sense of it.

**Jennifer Schaffner:** So I feel like I'm in a different time warp and I'm working with a collective, or a cooperative, of something like over a hundred of the top research libraries, many of which are also in the U.K., and unlike Julie, I mean I have a crowd of people who get me on the phone and ask me to work on – how on earth are we going to be able to capture the work that the scholars have done? Let's capture the expertise, I mean, how can we do this? Isn't there an infrastructure we can build [inaudible]– isn't there a way to hang a PDF? They are very experienced within these social metadata techniques?

**Stephen Phillips:** Like a Wiki site or something?

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** I'm not sure if this is addressing what you're asking, but what I've been asked to do at the Rockefeller Archives, and this is, I must admit, now that I think about it, there's a difference between anyone who has come in there to use an archive versus someone that they've given funding to. So I've been in both capacities. When I first started using that archive, I simply came in as a scholar, and I was interested in seeing in what they had and using the archive. I then applied, after that, to use their archives and as a result of getting funding from them that then allowed me to go back, I was asked to write a detailed report with information about specific files and material that I used. And that is available, you can google, you know, go to RAC and they'll have a list of who received the funding and then you can download their descriptions of what they found there, what they used there, where they found it. Now it varies from scholar to scholar because they're people at different points in their careers who are using this material, but it is a model that might address some of what you're asking. It doesn't capture everyone who's come in there of course.

**Katja Zelljadt:** But your question is more using, you know, web 2.0 technology to leverage?

**Jennifer Schaffner:** Not necessarily, I mean, this is just sort of a concern that's been expressed by high level [inaudible] network of research libraries, including many of the people here in this room; and, "Oh my god, we're being overwhelmed because we have these fabulous collections" - we are collecting them for access - we're holding them for access. How can we capture the expertise of somebody in the room - can't we just hang, you know - it's better than nothing. Just seeing something messy is better than not seeing it. Seeing a preliminary list is better than not seeing it. And so this whole group is really interested in this - and I hazard to guess, that this has been underway a long time. I mean my experience - my limited experience in smaller places - the collaboration with scholars and known materials, they can get their letters and move them - move them out of order or anything. I've just had a completely different experience than this business of trying to control the access of the collection. What I find in big research libraries is that they can't wait for you guys to get your hands on it and if you learn anything, please tell us, or please contribute it back to collections.

**Andra Darlington:** Yeah, all of our unprocessed collections, if they're not going to fall apart in your hands, we'll let you look at them.

**Jennifer Schaffner:** And it's not just the Getty, perhaps the University of Montana - also, went through and put up a list of everything they had, maybe just a name, or a collection, and then this principle that is going by the rubric of MPLP is to come back, and when somebody asks: 'do you have so and so's papers?' Then that's the opportunity to crack open some boxes, let's see what we've got...

**Katja Zelljadt:** John?

**John Tain:** Well this is to get back to your original question about are there places where people just kind of throw things [?] at them and then have to attract assistance in kind of organizing things. I was really surprised when one time when I was at the Museum of Modern Art in Europe and I was looking at the artist files and somehow I started asking them about how they organize it - and I think that it's because we actually at the GRI have this set of artist files that we've been, we've had problems dealing with because we don't have really a process and it's just kind language stuff. And so I asked them what they, how they processed it because it's basically what happens is the curators kind of clear off their desks and tend to these boxes and then go down to the library, and then the library is expected to sort it all, make an order up so that there is no impression [?] - no problem, is there an order that we need to preserved? There is nothing, you just kind of start fresh. And what I was told was that basically they have a council of people who are interested in helping the library, and the council not only contributes money to become council members, but also comes in, donates their time and creates these artist files for them. So that's an instance where it's kind of very rudimentary sorting that can be done by most anyone and it's a very ingenious as a kind of solution for a problem.

**Katja Zelljadt:** So getting donors into the trenches?

**John Tain:** Sort of, yeah.

**Tom Hyry:** Well, lots of people, you know, there are all kinds of innovations about how not to get only scholars, but creators involved in this - some places work with the creators themselves, like OK, 'describe your own stuff before you give it to us' and there's this hang up, between the standards we use to describe and then promote things and there is a lot of technical knowhow that goes into that. There're also - so that's a tension here, but it should be a creative tension, it should be a dynamic tension that shouldn't prevent possible collaborations but it should be stuff that we should be able to

overcome. From an administrator's standpoint I'd feel I need to go back to a really early question about what is the point of this. All right, I'm just going to be very bare bones about this: we collect things so people can find them and come and use them to learn more about our world and report back to the rest of us. That's very basically how we're doing - as an administrator I'm open to many, many different pragmatic ways of getting this done. A lot of devils in the details, but...

**Katja Zelljadt:** I guess I have a question maybe for Marta particularly. You were talking about maybe making 'best practices' out of this survey and is there a best practice for ingesting or harnessing these scholarly contributions in whatever form that you found through the survey?

**Marta Brunner:** I don't know that that's come up so much because - well the first year of site visits - we're only just now starting the second round of site visits for the current year's project, so I can't really speak to those very much. I suspect that more of those institutions, having heard about what we're looking for, may be giving some more thought to it than last year's. But more focus has been really on just like, what's in our backlog and let's start dealing with it. But what I have seen is that a lot of the places, and I think Getty included, have found that 'oh, yeah, we're actually implementing a lot of these new workflows or new assumptions about how we do business throughout our operation more quickly than we thought we would' or that kind of thing. So, it's quite possible that those kinds of conversations are happening more.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Do you have any best practices Tom that you know of, of how people - if it's a web 2.0, or a Wiki, or Twitter, or a whatever environment?

**Tom Hyry:** I think there's been a lot of experimentation. The National Archives of the UK has something called - I forget exactly what it's called, but it's a Wiki that researchers can come in and, you know, put up what they've learned about collections. It's distinct from what the archives put up about their collections, but various places have used...

**Marta Brunner:** I'm sorry, I thought you were talking about acquisition of new collections. You were talking about...

**Katja Zelljadt:** No, no, no.

**Tom Hyry:** Places have used blogs, and there's comment features, and there lot's of - I haven't seen it happen yet, but I think for close to a decade we have talked about different ways that people could annotate finding aids and catalog records and I think that some systems do allow for annotating of - I think some of the tensions have come up is like 'do we trust the researchers' and stuff like that. And this is a personal perspective, but - I would like to see it be a dynamic tension and not a controversial one, or not one of antagonists.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Just to follow up on...

**Marta Brunner:** In case I totally misinterpreted your question. Yeah, a lot of - I think it's hard to come up with, like, best practices because each institutional context is so, can be so different, that what's appropriate for one may not be within the normal possibilities...

**Katja Zelljadt:** But there might be a range. (**Marta Brunner:** Sure) 'oh, this historical society has this' - but is there knowledge about what those institutions are that are doing these types of things?

**Marta Brunner:** Yeah, in terms of like a clearinghouse?

**Katja Zelljadt:** Well, no, just that you know because you read the survey and you did the survey – I know that the Bancroft is doing this, and I know...

**Marta Brunner:** We're trying to put that – that's up on the CLIR website for the hidden collections projects. Yeah, so not the steady one, but for the grant recipients, that you can go there and see a list of all the past and present...

**Katja Zelljadt:** No, but how they're using scholars, how they're leveraging scholar information as a particular point within this whole other survey.

**Marta Brunner:** So that would be in our reports.

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** Katja, I just wanted to go back to something that really intrigued me about what you were saying, Tom, about the way in which there are various types of collaborations going on now in terms of trying to get information out about different kinds of collections because it strikes me that, as I've listened to what's going on, this – we're talking about levels of information as kind of a process, as a continuum from rather gross information to very detailed. But from the standpoint of let's say an anthropologist, who thinks about an archive as a cultural object, that - and there are anthropologists who particularly - those who are interested in colonialism, who are going back and looking at colonial archives, what they're interested in is the way in which the archive was collected, what was collected, what is in that archive. So what struck me about what you were saying about talking with the person whose archive it is, let's say who's giving it to you, if it's an artist; that's fascinating information. How they would organize this. So there are different levels of information about the actual categorization and classification that would be interesting to have, to keep all of that. And that maybe now you can in terms of the fact that things can be scanned and put into computers and whatever. So that – I guess what I am getting at is it seemed to me that to not keep those messy earlier, either with the curator is putting in, or what the scholar – all of that is really interesting information about the archive for someone who is ultimately interested in that archive.

**Tom Hyry:** Right, or we would keep it. Whether we would show it to you is separate question.

**Nancy Lutkehaus:** That's what I'm getting at. It would be really interesting perhaps for some situations to be able to get at it.

**Tom Hyry:** Well I think you are absolutely right. And I don't even think it's within a colonial – I'm an a archivist, but I don't know when these archives were put together or used – that's a fascinating thing.

**Nancy Perloff:** That colonial one is one example.

**Tom Hyry:** Yeah, it's a fascinating – I think it's also, to be honest, something that most users just completely take for granted, I mean, like boxes kind of show up on the tables in front of them and I don't know how carefully you consider all the processes and decisions that go behind the moment where you're sitting down in a reading room in front of some sources. It's really complicated and it's entirely social and most of it has to do with a bunch of subjective decisions people have taken ... (**Nancy Lutkehaus:** Yes. And ephemeral)

**David Farneth:** I just would love to jump in here because this is one of my passions even though it sounds like it might be off topic, but I don't think it is in terms of we're talking about what is hidden, and what - a huge part of what has always been hidden are these acquisition files. And everything that we know as archivists about these collections and how we got them is typically not shown to researchers. And I know there's some bits of sensitive stuff in there, but we don't even try to sort of vet out those sensitive parts and let people see them, and that's something I think we need to really work towards in words of really un hiding the archives. Plus, we don't share with researchers often what we know about what is not in the archive and why it is not there, and these are the key things that really give those papers context. So, that's just my soap box.

**Katja Zelljadt:** Great, I know we're all eager to have our food and drinks and so I want to close. I just wanted to kind of sum up and say that there is a real desire and willingness for communication between what might be perceived of as two entities but they're actually working on the same thing to further knowledge and understanding. And I guess I would charge all of us, and myself especially - I've had conversations with everyone about this - about how to create these best practices and maybe do some experiments with web 2.0, or with putting sheets in boxes, or whatever it is to make the dialog between the archive, the cataloger, the archivist, the institution, and the person who's reading the archive more fertile. Thanks so much.

Transcribed by Cassandra Heiser, Getty Research Institute.