FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

AN INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL CONVERGENCE: LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES, AND MUSEUMS IN THE INFORMATION AGE

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The idea for this special issue arose at the Cultural Heritage Information Professionals (CHIPs) workshop in April 2008. Supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Florida State University, and the Ringling Museum of Art, the workshop's goals were to explore the ability of educators to meet the information needs of cultural heritage organizations and to encourage a closer relationship between education and practice in library and information science, museum studies, and archival studies programs. This workshop provided a valuable opportunity for the deans, directors, and faculty of those programs to meet and share ideas with professionals from the nation's libraries, museums, and archives about the challenges facing information professionals as they work to transcend the traditional boundaries among libraries, archives, and museums and meet user needs in the information age (for more information about the workshop, including the final workshop report, please see http://chips.ci.fsu .edu).

With the outcomes of the CHIPs workshop, the editors of *Library Quarterly, Archival Science,* and *Museum Management and Curatorship* agreed to publish three special issues (one for each journal) exploring the shared information needs and challenges facing libraries, archives, and museums in the information age; the overlapping educational goals of library and information science, archival studies, and museum studies programs; and areas of convergence for educators and professionals working to meet user needs in libraries, archives, and museums. This special triple issue was driven by the idea that the increased use of and reliance on digital resources has blurred traditional distinctions among information organiza-

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tions, leading to a digital convergence of libraries, archives, and museums and encouraging more research examining how libraries, archives, and museums can collaborate and combine forces to better serve their users.

The topic of the "digital convergence" of libraries, archives, and museums has a lengthy history. W. B. Rayward (1998), for example, examined early on how changes from physical to digital media affect the traditional distinctions among information organizations in his article on electronic information and the functional integration of libraries, archives, and museums [1]. The commonalities of libraries, archives, and museums has also served as the theme for several different conferences, including RLG 2005 ("Libraries, Archives, and Museums—Three-Ring Circus, One Big Show?") and Rare Books and Manuscripts Section 2006 ("Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Twenty-first Century: Intersecting Missions, Converging Futures?"). More recently, the Online Computer Library Center has published a thought-provoking study, "Beyond the Silos of the LAMs: Collaboration among Libraries, Archives, and Museums," which also wins the award for the punniest name of any paper on this topic [2].

Building on this prior work, we sought papers for this special triple issue that addressed one or more of the following three broad questions in ways that transcend the traditional distinctions among libraries, archives, and museums:

1. What are the information needs of libraries, archives, and museums in the information age, both internally and externally?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of information professionals in libraries, archives, and museums in the information age?
3. What kinds of educational programs best prepare information professionals to meet the needs of libraries, archives, and museums and their users in the information age?

In response to the call for papers, we received fifty submitted abstracts, which resulted in thirty submitted papers, of which fourteen were chosen to be published across the three journals. Of those papers, four are presented here in this special issue of *Library Quarterly* (vol. 80, no. 1):

- "What's Old Is New Again: The Reconvergence of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Digital Age," by Lisa M. Given and Lianne McTavish
- "The Convergence of Information Technology, Data, and Management in a Library Imaging Program," by Fenella G. France, Doug Emery, and Michael B. Toth
- "Preservation in the Age of Google: Digitization, Digital Preservation, and Dilemmas," by Paul Conway
- "Two Librarians, an Archivist, and 13,000 Images: Collaborating to

Build a Digital Collection," by Nancy Chaffin Hunter, Kathleen Legg, and Beth Oehlerts

These papers are complemented by five papers in the special issue of *Archival Science* (vol. 8, no. 4):

- "Archives, Libraries, Museums and the Spell of Ubiquitous Knowledge," by Thomas Kirchhoff, Werner Schweibenz, and Jörn Sieglerschmidt
- "Smithsonian Team Flickr: A Library, Archives, and Museums Collaboration in Web 2.0 Space," by Martin R. Kalfatovic, Effie Kapsalis, Katherine Spiess, Anne Van Camp, and Michael Edson
- "Points of Convergence: Seamless Long-Term Access to Digital Publications and Archival Records at Library and Archives Canada," by Greg Bak and Pam Armstrong
- "Documentary Genre and Digital Record Keeping: Red Herring or a Way Forward?" by Gillian Oliver, Yunhyong Kim, and Seamus Ross
- "iSchools and Archival Studies," by Richard J. Cox and Ronald L. Larsen

And five papers are in the special issue of *Museum Management and Curatorship* (vol. 24, no. 4):

- "Collaboration of Croatian Cultural Heritage Institutions: Experiences from Museums," by Sanjica Faletar Tanackoviæ and Boris Badurina
- "Think Global, Act Local: Library, Archive, and Museum Collaboration," by Günter Waibel and Ricky Erway
- "The Convergence of Information Technology and Data Management for Digital Imaging in Museums," by Doug Emery, Michael B. Toth, and William Noel
- "Sharks, Digital Curation, and the Education of Information Professionals," by Joyce Ray
- "Emerging Convergence? Thoughts on Museums, Archives, Libraries and Professional Training," by Jennifer Trant

As one might expect, these articles have much in common, with themes that transcend the functional boundaries of libraries, archives, and museums and defy simple classification as a library, archive, or museum project.

In this issue, for example, Given and McTavish take a close look at how library and information science, archival studies, and museum studies programs have historically prepared their students for careers as information professionals and examine how the functional convergence of libraries, archives, and museums in the digital age may bring our current educational methods full circle. Their detailed case study shines light on the educa-

tional and professional goals of librarians, archivists, and museum professionals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and complements their intriguing analysis of the goals and agenda of the current iSchools movement. By examining how educational programs prepare students who can achieve the interdisciplinary goals of such institutions as Library and Archives Canada, the authors draw parallels with the article by Bak and Armstrong in the special issue of *Archival Science.*

France, Emery, and Toth detail their experiences implementing new digital-imaging technologies in the Library of Congress. They describe the capabilities of a new digital-imaging system specifically designed to prepare large amounts of data from multiple sources for the use of diverse audiences and explore the impact of high-resolution digital imaging on information provision and access in all types of cultural heritage organizations. Their work developing a suitable information architecture for processing extremely large and detailed digital images, as well as the corresponding data management and information infrastructures necessary to support related preservation and research efforts, echoes the experiences of Emery, Toth, and Noel in developing similar systems at the Walters Art Museum as detailed in their paper in the special issue of *Museum Management and Curatorship.*

Conway's article on the changing nature of digitization and digital preservation provides valuable insights into the dilemmas facing information professionals as they work to preserve cultural heritage in the information age. Preparing students capable of navigating these dilemmas and successfully establishing digital preservation policies for diverse cultural heritage institutions presents challenges for educators in library and information science, archival studies, and museum studies programs. By articulating the distinctions and trade-offs between digitization and digital preservation and highlighting the decisions information professionals will need to be able to make about their preservation priorities, Conway is able to provide a road map for future professionals in libraries, archives, and museums. By relating the goals of digital curation programs with those of digital preservation, Conway's recommendations parallel those of Ray in her article in the special issue of *Museum Management and Curatorship.*

Hunter, Legg, and Oehlerts examine the importance of encouraging collaboration between librarians and archivists when accomplishing shared goals. Their analysis of a digitization project at Colorado State University illustrates how such activities can bring communities together and engage library, archives, and museum professionals in a discussion of their complementary skills and perspectives. By detailing the relationship between librarians and archivists and the evolution of their roles and responsibilities throughout the course of a collaborative project, Hunter and her col-

leagues draw connections to the article by Cox and Larsen in the special issue of *Archival Science.*

Finally, the task of assembling these papers across three special issues of three different journals illustrates the challenges facing libraries, archives, and museums in the information age—no matter how strong the desire to collaborate, there are always barriers to overcome. Creating one unified special triple issue on this theme involved working with three different publishers, three different journal management systems, and three different publication schedules. Even with the good will and full support of everyone involved (including the publishers, editors, and authors), the act of putting these issues together was challenging. Authors whose work covers the topic areas of all three journals, for instance, had a hard time identifying the journal to which they should submit their papers, and at the last minute, we continued to shuffle papers between journals to achieve a better balance of topics. Publishing three simultaneous issues on one common topic across three different journals stands as a powerful metaphor for the opportunities and challenges facing libraries, archives, and museums in the age of digital convergence.

In the end, the final product—one-third of which you hold in your hands, physically or virtually—is a testament to the ability of the library, archives, and museum community to overcome these challenges and to create a powerful work of unified effort. The end result gives us hope for a future in which the boundaries between libraries, archives, and museums continue to melt away and collaborative work crosses those boundaries in the same way that these authors' projects cross the boundaries among these journals. It is our fervent hope that the efforts of the authors, editors, and publishers that resulted in this special triple issue on digital convergence will help shape the future of library, archives, and museum collaboration.

REFERENCES

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