

# AABC Newsletter

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## Remembering Hugh Taylor

A great archivist, Hugh Taylor passed away recently. In my time in the archival community over the past thirty odd years, no one was held in higher esteem than Hugh. Hugh was born in 1920, served in the Second World War, after which he was educated at Oxford and at Liverpool, where he took archival courses. He held several archival posts in England between 1951 and 1965. In 1965, he became the first provincial archivist of Alberta, a feat he repeated in New Brunswick, 1967-71. He was at the Public Archives of Canada from 1971-77, where he was instrumental in founding the division for sound and moving image archives, and was provincial archivist of Nova Scotia from 1978-82, during which he saw to the construction of a new building. As you can see from this list of his posts, Hugh loved to start things, loved to set his formidable imaginative powers to the task of laying the foundations of a new program or a new initiative. At every one of these Canadian institutions, he left a strong imprint of those powers, even though many of his stays were relatively short.

Known by us all in the 1970s as a kind of philosopher archivist, who used to get up at meetings and offer wise and often witty reflections on the topic of the moment, Hugh and crossed paths with me in the 1980s after he retired from his archival work. In 1981, I went from the Provincial Archives in Victoria to UBC to start the Master of Archival Studies Program. I was appointed in April, and in June the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists was held in Halifax. One evening a reception was held in the new Public Archives Building Hugh had had built. He was very proud of its energy efficiency, and of the design of the building to facilitate reference to the various types of records the institution held. Archivists have not always liked the building, but users of it that I have encountered invariably say it is the best place in the country to do research. During the reception Hugh took me aside to discuss the new program at UBC. I remember the meeting well. We went into his office. He sat me down and then sat at his desk with his feet on the desk, and mused about the program and his future. I listened intently, for Hugh had had a life long interest and commitment to archival education. He and Edwin Welch had written the first ACA guidelines on archival education issued in 1976. He told me that he intended to retire the next year, and would be available to help with the teaching in the program.

Beginning in the fall of 1982, Hugh was an adjunct professor in the M.A.S. program for four separate terms. It was a delight to have Hugh's wise counsel and support in those early years. Looking back, I see how green I was, and how much he helped to guide the program along productive lines. Of course, he brought his philosophical bent and imaginative approach to thinking about archives to a course he developed and taught during those years. While I was flying the bloody flag of practice, Hugh was trying to expand students' horizons and to make them think deeply about what archives were and the role caring for them played in the community, whether national, provincial, or local. Much of that thinking is reflected in articles that have recently been republished in *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor*. He had a wonderful and sometimes quite biting sense of humour. On one occasion, in a mock debate we put on, he played Muller of the Dutch archival trinity Muller, Feith, and Fruin. It was a hilarious display of fun with archival principles and the effort to articulate rules for practice, both of which exercises Hugh actually supported, but he could see the funny side of such efforts as well. He could be shockingly irreverent. One day, he was showing students an ancient English deed from Special Collections in the Library. He held it up and fragments of it fell to the table, which, he noted by their reaction, was greeted with some alarm by the students. He said: "Don't worry, there are hundreds of thousands of these in England," and went on to make his point.

Hugh believed strongly in grass roots archival activity. He loved to speak about a fictitious local community, variously called Upper Rubber Boot, Nova Scotia or just Cupcake Corners, and its need to preserve its archival heritage. He believed deeply in scholarship, in democracy, and in stewardship of the planet, and managed to connect archives with all these passions. In his later years, he volunteered as the archivist of the Sierra Club in Victoria, where he was able to indulge his passion for ecology and environmental concerns and for archives. I think it is fair to say that Hugh never met an archivist he didn't respect and few he didn't like. For all his irreverence and high-mindedness, he believed deeply in the archival calling to which he devoted his life and his many extraordinary talents. He will be greatly missed. I doubt that we will see his likes again

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***Chip Monks at the Gate: The Impact of Technology on Archives, Libraries and the User***  
by **HUGH A. TAYLOR\***

The "monk at the gate" has for some time symbolized the manner in which the monasteries of the early Middle Ages preserved wisdom and knowledge within their walls and, at the same time, through the great ecclesiastical bureaucracies which fed the state administrations of Europe, stood guard over their monopoly of literacy and used it to their advantage in an age of scarce literacy. By contrast, the secular "chip monks" today control and manipulate the nature and flow of patterned knowledge as a protection against information overload in an age of abundance. But where then in this context, does technology make its impact?

The structure of this paper is based on experimental physicist Ursula Franklin's 1989 Massey Lectures, *The Real World of Technology*, which extends the field of inquiry far beyond the crafts and machinery of material culture to the systems which are developed to render them viable and productive. In short, technology involves "organization, procedures, symbols, new words, equations, and a mindset."<sup>1</sup> For the theologian Matthew Fox, wisdom is dying as a consequence of technological systems.

The Enlightenment produced so much knowledge and information that we have found it necessary to invent a multi-billion dollar industry to store it all and retrieve it all on command. Computers are the libraries of such a civilization. But what would it take to store all the wisdom we have accumulated these past three centuries? Where is the wisdom? ... Wisdom is of Mother Earth, for nature contains the oldest wisdom in the universe. Wisdom requires the right brain as well as the left, for it is berthed by both analysis and synthesis.<sup>2</sup>

Fox further believes that to speak of wisdom in a university today is a bit like talking of chastity in a brothel<sup>3</sup>

This point is also taken up by the cultural historian William Irwin Thompson<sup>4</sup> and Professor Franklin herself,<sup>5</sup> who both maintain that the requirements of technological systems impose the utilitarian curricula which are in tune with the job market. In the university we should experience our place in the universe.<sup>6</sup> In the ways in which we structure our information in archives and libraries, are we playing along with this technological imperative? Technology can be used for good or ill. It is the systems we build around it which determine this.

Arthur Kroker, in his *Technology and the Canadian Mind*, examines the writings of Marshall McLuhan, Harold Adams Innis, and George Grant<sup>7</sup> Kroker sees Canada as lying culturally between Europe with its ancient continuities from guild and craft over against the USA with its drive for transcendent technology as the spearhead of modernity. In his view, Grant saw a lack of morality and vision in this technological dynamo, which also includes technocratic bureaucracies. Innis, on the other hand, saw Canada representing a balance between civilization and power. McLuhan was concerned with the impact of technological media, which include the media of record, on the user: this in the archival context, has been discussed at length elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> What impact does technology, using Franklin's definition, have on the archivist and librarian?

Since most of us ply our trade within some form of bureaucracy, and since we are all limited by the literate mindset and the tools of literacy which make such structures possible, it is not surprising that we are diminished in our potential by these technologies. Jeffrey Katzer<sup>9</sup>, editor of *Library/Information Science Review*, deplores "too little research in our writings and too low quality in our research." What about the role of the American Library Association? There are those who would argue "that ALA is simply an organization of practitioners," in other words they are trapped in the daily operation of the library machine. Howard Zinn, in a lively address to the Society of American Archivists some years ago<sup>10</sup> (which the very conservative editor of *The American Archivist* would not publish), pointed out that professionalism is a powerful form of social control resulting in almost total immersion in one's craft. Knowledge for Zinn has a social origin and a social use and reflects the bias of a particular social order (the Marxist position): hence, until recently, a neglect of the records of fringe movements making their way towards the centre. Assuming that libraries and archives are technologies based largely on printing and text in one form or another, how neutral and impartial are we? Are we as "user-friendly" as we think?

The impact of technological systems on libraries and librarianship can inhibit personal communication with users. As Beverley Lynch points out:

Professionals tend to chafe under perceived bureaucratic constraints and strive for greater participation in library affairs ... In many libraries the decision to change classification schemes was made on the grounds of greater efficiency, as managers sought ways to reduce the costs in technical service operations ... Rarely was the decision based on extensive analysis of classification schemes or on an assessment of how the particular library's clientele need the old scheme to find needed materials and information.<sup>11</sup>

But professionals, through their training and administration and management, buy into the bureaucratic system and become managers themselves.

Archivists, for their part, often rely too heavily on finding aids designed more for their own use than for the client's research tools which mirror the bureaucratic structures which created the records in the first place, and neglect communication skills which would elicit what the user is really seeking. Whereas librarians have carried out a whole range of user surveys (though with limited success), archivists have been slow to respond; some introductory studies have nevertheless appeared. Linda Long has shown<sup>12</sup> how the techniques used in counselling, such as active listening, feedback, and self-disclosure can be of considerable assistance. Our profession is not exactly overwhelmed with technological systems, but it is still locked into an approach which is not always as user-oriented as it should be.

So much for mindsets. As Franklin points out, however, technology also restructures social relations<sup>13</sup>, and the anthropologist Jack Goody has shown how writing was essential to the evolution of the bureaucratic state. I believe that *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* should be on the bookshelves of all of us.<sup>14</sup> His comparison of the ancient world and medieval society in terms of their record-keeping, with the oral cultures of Africa, is most revealing, especially in light of Ursula Franklin's discussion of what she terms holistic and prescriptive technologies - which is central to her thesis.<sup>15</sup>

"Holistic technologies (HT) are normally associated with the notion of craft," where the artisans control the entire process of their work and enjoy the fullest possible freedom of decision. Prescriptive technologies (PT), on the other hand, require discipline, planning, organization, and a command structure with very little latitude for personal decision-making by the operative. The work is fragmented, sequential, and monotonous; it is designed for compliance (as is much preparatory education).

Allied with these technologies, Franklin identifies the growth model (GM) where "the features of growth, the very process and cycles of growing, the diversity of the components of each growing organism, all have resonated through the historical written record ... In any given environment, the growing organism develops at its own rate."<sup>16</sup> With the production model (PM) "all essential parameters will become controllable" and there is a noticeable disregard for context and natural surroundings.

Let us consider these typologies in relation to archives and libraries, where there is a striking contrast. Archives could

be said to employ a holistic technology in that, wherever possible, the archivist is involved in all the operations of acquisition, arrangement, description and public service, and resists division by function among specialists. Archives also exhibit a growth model in accordance with their organic nature, although bureaucratic imperatives increasingly focus on production. Libraries, on the other hand, have long exhibited a prescriptive technology:

Much of the work performed in libraries is divided into specialized tasks and is conducted outside the framework of the client relationship. Rarely does a librarian participate in all the tasks required.<sup>17</sup>

Librarians in consequence often chafe at the limitation of their freedom, as noted above. The circulation of published material through loan and reference also tends towards a production model as the yardstick of effectiveness.

This is not to argue that in each case one is good and the other bad - a mix of holistic and prescriptive is probably essential when economics of scale are considered, which should take into account the human environmental context. The danger is that PT and PM will dominate to the detriment of archivists, librarians, and their users.

Insofar as archivists and librarians are communicators in the full sense of that meaning, communication studies can be helpful. James Carey makes a similar distinction to Franklin between the *transmission view* involving the passage of information by technology, largely in a serial manner, where various textual references lead to the required work, followed by its receipt and return, as "the extension of messages across geography for the purpose of control" - Franklin's PT and the *ritual view*, her HT, through sharing, participation, association, fellowship, that typify the oral elements in communications, which means "living with the contradictions and ambiguities of our culture as exemplified in the New England Town Meeting."<sup>18</sup> Prescriptive technology sees people as the source of problems; machines and devices as the source of solutions. Machines are so much more reliable, but what becomes of the human beings?

Another consequence of the technological orientation is the downgrading of experience and the glorification of expertise<sup>19</sup> and the expert. One problem that leads to this reliance on "the expert" is that tools redefine the problem. This is particularly true of the "Arms Race"; it is equally true of word processing (WP). For Michael Heim, "the word processor is the calculator of the humanist" (which includes the archivist and librarian). He asks, "Will literature be eroded?" Does it crank out fastfood prose?<sup>20</sup> His critique is that WP eliminates handwriting, which is "a sign and signature of the self, the linkage of hand and thought through gesture." The typewriter was originally a person operating the "typewriting machine." The elimination of the person, as the machine takes over, is also true of the telephone.

Meanwhile, we struggle to make words become units in the technology of cataloguing and retrieval through one word, one meaning. This is perhaps a chimera, for, in J.C.R. Licklider's words, "No one seems likely to design or invent a formal system of automating sophisticated language behaviour. The best approach, therefore, seems to us to be somewhere between the extremes - to call for a formal base plus an overlay of experience gained in interaction with the cooperative verbal community."<sup>21</sup> Allen Kent lists the following unsolvable problems with information systems: (1) What society will be like; (2) What words will mean; (3) How people will act; (4) How people will view events.<sup>22</sup>

Diane Beattie's user study on sources for women's history<sup>23</sup> illustrates some of these points quite well as they affect archival perceptions, and discusses the way in which archivists in the past were victims of a social mindset and approach to history which virtually ignored women and ethnic minorities. Likewise, we do not know what society will be like in the future or how people will view events, and our information systems may be seriously flawed if we rely too heavily on technology. The archivist and librarian must provide "the overlay of experience" as they interact with the "verbal community."

One historian describes "a new seam of history," which

describes the reality of people's lives in addition to the image they would have liked us to see or ... the way we would like to seem to them. In other words, the new history has unmasked heritage history ... and moves on from people's individuality into an attempt to describe the culture within which and through which they

express themselves. Perhaps the simplest word to use here is *lifestyle*.<sup>24</sup>

How will our various research tools deal with this kind of approach?

Words do not always provide absolutes, and we are all in danger of diminishing both ourselves and the user in a lonely deadlock if our technologies become inappropriate and lacking a human context. Abraham Kaplan's article, "Age of the Symbol: A Philosophy of Library Education," though written in 1964, is still full of wisdom of which we archivists should also take note:

Everything in the library must ultimately be related to its uses, and these uses must ultimately depend upon the users. Words do not mean anything. *People* means things by words. Information means nothing, but *people* are informed and then take action or make informed decisions ... A library then is first of all an archive, a repository in which society can find what it has already learned.<sup>25</sup>

It is this edifice at the gate of which, as monks, we serve those who seek to enter.

I have no doubt that the world of librarians is divided over the extent to which the scientific method should rule. With us archivists, librarians share the multi-media corpus of recorded information, and it is tempting to speak of library science and archival science, where it would be more accurate to speak of two technologies and their systems in Ursula Franklin's real world. However, the root of *scientia* is knowledge, not just science, from which should come *sapientia*, wisdom; but we have tended more and more to equate knowledge with scientific knowledge, to the exclusion of knowledge built upon information as ideas. Curtis Wright, in an extended investigation into the philosophy of librarians, notes that "Kaplan has consistently argued that librarianship is an intellectual discipline based on the philosophical study of ideas, not an empirical discipline based on the scientific study of facts."<sup>26</sup> This to a lesser extent applies also to archival science, concerned as it is with the relation between acts and facts in the real world of transactions between parties. It is significant that archival studies of appraisal and description are increasingly focusing on the purpose of the record, on the activity, rather than on being lost in the serbian bog of content. Likewise, Curtis Wright asserts that "if librarians go for content, ... they must either become encyclopedists, who go for all of it, or specialists who go for some of it."<sup>27</sup> Kaplan maintains that the first is no longer possible and the second would fail dismally to perform the broad knowledge functions of librarianship. Archivists and librarians alike are swimming for their lives in a sea of symbols, and technology is only of limited help. We must design our own rafts from the riches of humanism and a new cosmology which, for Matthew Fox, consists of "a scientific story, our psychic response to the universe, and art which translates science and mysticism into images."<sup>28</sup> What will archives and libraries be like then, I wonder? Whatever happens, the monk must never be sacrificed to the chip.

To return to Franklin again, as she discusses the elimination of the human element from "successful" automatic and automated processes:

Once the development and the social integration of the technology has been accomplished to the satisfaction of its promoters, once the infrastructure of needs had been eliminated, the technology began to remove the human links.<sup>29</sup>

She then cites the virtual disappearance of the telephone operator, whose mediation rendered the telephone "user-friendly" in the first instance, adding that, "As the technologies matured and took command, women were left with fragmented and increasingly meaningless work."<sup>30</sup> Let this serve as a warning to us all, especially in the context of David Bearman's announcement of the imminence of the wrist phone and data tablet on the lap (shades of the ancient world!), receiving satellite transmissions and storing them so that the "individuation of information resources" will be greatly enhanced.

Individuals will increasingly carry their knowledge and the means to access new information in any format from any place around with them - which for archivists is a prospect greeted with some foreboding.<sup>31</sup>

This surely is a neo-oral culture in which we carry our knowledge around in an extension of our brains.

In the light of all this, Eric Ketelaar wonders whether researchers, who will be able to process so much automated information for their own purposes relatively easily, will accept the information available in archival finding aids which served their purpose one hundred years ago. "Can, in future, someone who has consulted a data bank be expected to turn over pages and find nothing?"<sup>32</sup> Will this lead to "fastfood research," to adapt Heim's expression?

Meanwhile, electronic technology is beginning to change the nature of recorded information in other ways which should also alarm the archivist. Ronald Weissman in a recent paper warns us that in the world of "hard copy," during which the archival profession came of age, "documents existed in clearly defined and separate classes of things."<sup>33</sup> Archivists of various media of record have developed their own disciplines and expertise "but, for an increasing number of document related types of work, the old world in which different types of information required the skills of different kinds of document specialists is rapidly disappearing."<sup>34</sup>

Compound records composed of text, graphics, tables, sound and images, for all their complex nature, "stand alone" and can be isolated, separated, and preserved if necessary.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the hypermedia database is a much freer form, controlled by navigational and data-oriented links by which

the content of one document can be embedded in another, so that, as changes occur in a table, corresponding changes in the underlying data in a spreadsheet or data base are automatically reflected in updated charts in word-processed reports. In a system employing 'hot links', changes in one document are reflected automatically in every document that "subscribes" to that source document's content. In a system employing 'warm links', users are given the option of updating documents as source documents change.<sup>36</sup>

Weissman points out that this powerful flexibility is also a source of weakness, since there are "neither rules nor formalism."<sup>37</sup> In this kind of environment, documents as we know them will lose their separate formal identity and dissolve into a fluid mass of "tagged" content and information all too easily detachable from the initial documentary act, in the manner of Alice's Cheshire cat of which only the smile remained. Modern diplomacies will have a hard time with all this. The virtual (original) document will become increasingly elusive and fragile as it is plundered by data bank users transmogrifying sources through a multitude of links and object-oriented software "in a content mark-up architecture."<sup>38</sup> We may need to rethink some aspects of archival methodology if we are to deal with this babble of electronic discourse. What is information in the *archival* context? Will the monk standing bravely at the gate be swept away in a flood of content without form? On the other hand, perhaps we attach too much importance to originals in this environment of neo-orality, echoing the impermanence of speech in contrast to the persistence of cultural memory.

A clue may be found in the archival administration of written records created by or for aboriginal peoples to preserve tribal history and traditions. For instance, the Maori approach to this knowledge is one of reverence and love within a cosmology alien to the *pakeha* (white) archivists, which demands an appropriate ritual whenever such records are used and, in particular, their location close to the tribe and the land. "There are spiritual connotations surrounding Maori manuscripts which contain traditional knowledge,"<sup>39</sup> which require accommodation. Perhaps, if we are not to drown, we too need to let go of our concern for the material minutiae of documentation grounded in scientific reductionism, and give thought to Matthew Fox's new cosmology referred to earlier. Let Curtis Wright have the last word:

Does information reduce to something physical in the empirical world of matter and energy as in science? Or does it reduce to metaphysical patterns in the intellectual spirit world of ideas as in philosophy? Is information the machinery of communication? Or is it distinct from communicative machinery? ... Scientific theories of the physical are paralleled today by humanistic theories of the symbolic referent.<sup>40</sup>

Our world of symbols surely requires human mediation to reveal their changing meanings, as we search for knowledge and hope to acquire wisdom.

### Notes

\*This paper was originally read at the Annual Conference of the Archival Association of British Columbia, 25-27

April 1991.

<sup>1</sup>Ursula Franklin, *The Real World of Technology* (Toronto, 1990), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* (New York, 1988), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>William Irwin Thompson, Chapter 2, "Walking out on the University", *Passages About Earth* (New York, 1973).

<sup>5</sup>Franklin, *Real World*, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup>Fox, *Coming*, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant* (Montreal, 1984).

<sup>8</sup>Hugh A. Taylor, "The Media of Record: Archives in the Wake of McLuhan," *Georgia Archive* 6 (1978), pp. 1-10.

<sup>9</sup>Jeffrey Katzer, "ALA and the Status of Research in Library/Information Science," *Library and Information Science Review* 11 (1989), pp. 83-87.

<sup>10</sup>Howard Zinn, "Secrecy, Archives and the Public Researcher," *Boston University Journal* 19, (Fall 1981), pp. 37-44.

<sup>11</sup>Beverly P. Lynch, "Libraries as Bureaucracies," *Library Trends* (Winter 1978), p. 262.

<sup>12</sup>Linda J. Long, "Question Negotiation in the Archival Setting: The Use of Interpersonal Communications Techniques in the Reference Interview," *The American Archivist* 52, no. 1 (1989), pp. 40-51.

<sup>13</sup>Franklin, *Real World*, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup>Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge, 1986).

<sup>15</sup>Franklin, *Real World*, pp. 18-24.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup>Long, "Libraries and Bureaucracies," p. 264.

<sup>18</sup>James W. Carey, *Communications as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston, 1989), pp. 15-18.

<sup>19</sup>Franklin, *Real World*, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup>Michael Heim, *Electric Language: A Philosophical study of Word Processing* (New Haven, 1987), pp. 1-4.

<sup>21</sup>J.C.R. Licklider, *Libraries of the Future* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 204.

<sup>22</sup>Allen Kent, "Unsolvables Problems," Anthony Debous, ed., *Information Science: Search for Identity* (New York, 1973), pp. 299-311.

<sup>23</sup>Diane L. Beattie, "An Archival User Study: Researchers in the Field of Women's History," *Archivaria* 29 (Winter 1989-90), pp. 33-50.

- <sup>24</sup>Michael Honeybone, "The Nature of History and the National Curriculum," *Teaching History* no. 60 (July 1990), p. 9.
- <sup>25</sup>Abraham Kaplan, "The Age of the Symbol: A Philosophy of Library Education," *Library Quarterly* 34 (1964), pp. 296-297.
- <sup>26</sup>Curtis Wright, "The Symbol and its Referent," *Library Trends* 34, no. 4 (Spring 1986), p. 743.
- <sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 745.
- <sup>28</sup>Fox, *Coming*, p. 1, note.
- <sup>29</sup>Franklin, *Real World*, p. 107.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.
- <sup>31</sup>David Bearman, "Communications in the 90s," *Archives and Museums Informatics* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1991), p. 1.
- <sup>32</sup>Eric Ketelaar, "Exploration of New Archival Materials," *Archivum* 35 (1989), p. 172, quoting P. René-Bazin, "Vers une informatique archivistique," *Gazette des archives* (1985), pp. 114-115.
- <sup>33</sup>Ronald E.F. Weissman, "Virtual Documents on an Electronic Desktop: Hypermedia, Emerging Computer Environments and the Future of Information Management," Cynthia Durance, ed., *Management of Recorded Information: Converging Disciplines* (Munich, 1990), pp. 37-60.
- <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.
- <sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42.
- <sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42.
- <sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.
- <sup>39</sup>Jane McRae, "Translating the Grey Maori Manuscripts for the Public," *Archifacts: Bulletin of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand* (June 1985), p. 52.
- <sup>40</sup>Wright, "Symbol and Referent," p. 739.

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# AABC Newsletter

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## Editor's Note: Hugh Taylor

*Chip Monks at the Gate: The Impact of Technology on Archives, Libraries and the User* was originally read by Hugh Taylor at the Annual AABC Conference in 1991 and later published in *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92). It seems fitting to honour Hugh Taylor's memory through his own words. This particular article was selected upon the recommendation of Terry Eastwood as it, "...is in many ways Hugh at his suggestive and provocative best on a topic, the impact of technology on our lives, we all must think about now and then."

Thank you to Daphne Taylor for her permission to publish this article in the AABC Newsletter.

*Marnie Burnham, Editor*

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# AABC Newsletter

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## British Columbia Archival Network News

### New and Notable on the Web

#### 1) City of Victoria Archives -- "Victoria Vignettes" Online

A new online resource, "[Victoria Vignettes](#)", provides access to a series of programs jointly produced by the City of Victoria Archives and Shaw TV. Each segment focuses on a location, building, or event that has played a special role in Victoria's past. Available online now are the first three segments: The Immigration Building, Enterprise Wharf, and The Centre of Town.

#### 2) Archives Society of Alberta -- Archives in the Classroom: "Letters from the Trunk"

Developed jointly by the Archives Society of Alberta and the Alberta Online Consortium, "[Letters from the Trunk](#)" is an interactive online resource for use by teachers and students. Users enter a virtual train station filled with photographs, newspapers, posters and recordings that provide evidence of the lives and experiences of Canadian immigrants. Inside the station, one finds trunks containing the experiences of three immigrants, complete with the photographs, letters, and recordings that tell their stories. Students maintain their own interactive journals to collect photographs and documents that help to record their experiences.

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### British Columbia Archival Union List -- New Descriptions on the Database

Archives in the province are reminded that new and revised BCAUL descriptions should be submitted to the BC Archival Network Service Program. For more information on the various ways submissions can be made, people are asked to contact Bill Purver, BCANS Coordinator, by phone (604-876-9150), by fax (604-876-9850) or by email at [bpurver@aabbc.bc.ca](mailto:bpurver@aabbc.bc.ca).

The following are new or revised descriptions recently submitted and added to the *British Columbia Archival Union List* at [aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcaul.html](http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcaul.html):

#### **British Columbia Medical Association Archives:**

Dr. Sydney Segal fonds

#### **City of Richmond Archives:**

British Columbia Packers Limited photograph collection

## **City of Vancouver Archives:**

Westcoast Transmission Company Ltd. fonds

## **City of Victoria Archives:**

Association of Women Electors of Greater Victoria fonds

## **Glenlyon Norfolk School Archives:**

Glenlyon Norfolk School Society fonds

## **Nanaimo Community Archives:**

Nanaimo Foundry fonds

## **Saanich Pioneers' Society Museum and Archives:**

Dominion Astrophysical Observatory (Saanich Observatory) collection  
Farm/berry business collection  
Sidney Fire Department collection  
Experimental Farm collection  
Saltspring Island collection  
Central Saanich District collection  
First nations collection  
Saanich Historical Artifacts Society (Heritage Acres) collection  
Telegraph line collection  
Parks collection  
Post offices collection  
Butchart Garden collection  
Norman Morison ship collection  
Aviation and airport collection

## **Salmon Arm Museum:**

Helen Brown Akrigg fonds  
Salmon Arm Farmers' Exchange fonds  
Shuswap Consumers' Co-operative and Mainline Co-operative fonds  
Cooperative Granite Trading Association fonds  
North Okanagan Coin Club fonds  
Canoe United Church fonds  
Salmon Arm Forest District fonds  
Fraser Basin Council fonds  
Ruth family fonds  
Owens family fonds  
McKay and Currie fonds  
Lois May Harrington fonds  
Edward Charles Turner fonds  
South Canoe and Larch Hills Red Cross Auxiliary fonds  
Salmon Arm District Municipality, City and Village fonds  
Ladies Orange Benevolent Association Shuswap Lodge 473 fonds

## **Simon Fraser University Archives:**

Technical University of British Columbia fonds

Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association fonds  
Office of Continuing Studies fonds  
Ann Messenger fonds  
School of Communication fonds  
Fraser Valley University Society fonds  
SFU Archives Ted and Nora Sterling Prize collection  
School of Computing Science fonds  
Office of the President fonds  
Gordon Hardy Kenneth Strand interview collection  
Peter Stursberg Hugh Keenleyside interview collection  
Peter Stursberg Pauline Jewett interview collection  
Terry Spurgeon Roy L. Carlson interview collection  
Office of the Registrar fonds  
Evelyn T. and Leigh Hunt Palmer science collection  
Department of History fonds  
Ceremonies and Events Office fonds

### **University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections:**

Philip Farmer fonds  
Stanley John Hunter fonds  
Technocracy Movement fonds  
Denbei Kobayashi fonds

### **University of Victoria Archives:**

Faculty of Fine Arts fonds

### **Vancouver Maritime Museum:**

Donald Graham fonds

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## **Guide to Archival Repositories in British Columbia -- Recent Updates**

The following is information recently updated on the AABC's online directory, *A Guide to Archival Repositories in British Columbia* ([aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcguide.html](http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcguide.html)):

### **1) University of British Columbia Archives**

New address: Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, 1961 East Mall, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z1

### **2) University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections**

New address: Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, 1961 East Mall, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z1

### **3) Powell River Historical Museum and Archives**

New web address: [www.armourtech.com/museum](http://www.armourtech.com/museum)

### **4) Anglican Diocese of British Columbia Archives**

New email address: [darchives@bc.anglican.ca](mailto:darchives@bc.anglican.ca)

New web site: [www.bc.anglican.ca/archives.htm](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/archives.htm)

### **5) Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society**

New web site: [www.cfdcnadina.ca/e-business/green/centralparkbuilding/cpbpages/museum/museum.htm](http://www.cfdcnadina.ca/e-business/green/centralparkbuilding/cpbpages/museum/museum.htm)

## **6) Cortes Island Museum and Archives**

New e-mail address: [cimas@island.net](mailto:cimas@island.net)

New web site: [www.cortesisland.com/pages/museum/](http://www.cortesisland.com/pages/museum/)

## **7) Delta Museum and Archives**

New web site: [www.corp.delta.bc.ca/EN/main/residents/266.html](http://www.corp.delta.bc.ca/EN/main/residents/266.html)

## **8) Falkland Heritage Park**

New web site: [www.shuswap.bc.ca/Falklandmuseum.htm](http://www.shuswap.bc.ca/Falklandmuseum.htm)

## **9) Historic Yale Museum**

New web address: [www.heritage.gov.bc.ca/historic\\_yale.htm](http://www.heritage.gov.bc.ca/historic_yale.htm)

## **10) Kootenay Gallery of Art, History and Science**

New email address: [info@kootenaygallery.com](mailto:info@kootenaygallery.com)

## **11) Nelson Museum**

New email address: [collections@nelsonmuseum.ca](mailto:collections@nelsonmuseum.ca)

New web site: [www.nelsonmuseum.ca](http://www.nelsonmuseum.ca)

## **12) Matsqui-Sumas-Abbotsford Museum Archives**

New address: #1B – 32320 George Ferguson Way, Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 6N4

New phone number: (604) 853-3722

New fax number: (604) 853-3726

New email address: [msaarchives@shaw.ca](mailto:msaarchives@shaw.ca)

## **13) Salt Spring Island Archives**

New email address: [info@saltspringarchives.com](mailto:info@saltspringarchives.com)

## **14) Sandon Historical Society**

New email address: [shs@slocanlake.com](mailto:shs@slocanlake.com)

## **15) Silverton Historical Society Archives**

New phone number: (250) 358-2852

New address: 408 4th Street, Silverton, B.C.

New mailing address: Box 9A, Silverton, B.C. V0G 2B0

New email address: [rkprovan@netidea.com](mailto:rkprovan@netidea.com)

New web site: [www.silvertonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.silvertonhistoricalsociety.ca)

## **16) Summerland Museum**

New email address: [info@summerlandmuseum.org](mailto:info@summerlandmuseum.org)

New web site: [summerlandmuseum.org](http://summerlandmuseum.org)

## **17) U'Mista Cultural Centre**

New email address: [umista@cablerocket.com](mailto:umista@cablerocket.com)

### **18) Unitarian Church of Vancouver**

New web site: [www.vancouver.unitarians.ca](http://www.vancouver.unitarians.ca)

### **19) Valemount and Area Museum**

New address: 1090 Main Street, Valemount, B.C. (mailing address unchanged)

New web site: [www.valemountmuseum.ca](http://www.valemountmuseum.ca)

### **20) Victoria Medical Society**

New web site: [www.victoriamedicalsociety.org](http://www.victoriamedicalsociety.org)

### **21) Village of Fraser Lake**

New email address: [village@fraserlake.ca](mailto:village@fraserlake.ca)

New web site: [www.fraserlake.ca](http://www.fraserlake.ca)

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## **British Columbia Archival Network Service - Contact Information**

Archives or archivists wishing to submit new information for any of the AABC's web resources, including new or revised descriptions for the *BC Archival Union List* and the online *Guide to Archival Repositories in BC*, should contact Bill Purver at the BC Archival Network Service program (Phone: 604-876-9150 ; Fax: 604-876-9850 ; Email: [bpurver@aabc.bc.ca](mailto:bpurver@aabc.bc.ca)).

For more information about the program, people are asked to consult the BC Archival Network Service homepage at [aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcans.html](http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcans.html).

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## B.C. Archival Education and Advisory Service

So many of the inquiries that I receive from small archives, either by e-mail or on site visits, centre around computers and databases. While I don't want to appear to be endorsing one particular database, I would like to offer some general guidelines that might help you during your research.

I'll start with a warning. Don't assume that computerizing your records or digitizing your photographs will be the end-all and be-all for your archives. I've almost had to physically restrain enthusiastic employees/volunteers whose main goal is to enter everything into a database or digitize every photograph they own. As they said long ago – GIGO, or garbage in, garbage out. You cannot begin to even think about using a computer for your records until you have your records in order. Archival material must be appraised, arranged, and described before you look in the direction of the computer. The computer database entry is your last goal, not your first. Photographs must be appraised, arranged and described before you begin digitization or item level description. Think of the time and computer storage space you will waste if you decide at a later date that a good third of the photographs you have digitized or described at item level are not worth keeping in your collection.

Accession records lend themselves to being entered into a computer database as the information is already available in fields. However, if your gift forms are carefully kept in alphabetical order and your paper accession records are kept in accession number order, these two will provide a convenient and fast method of looking up information without entering information in a database. Assess the use of your archives - the majority of your requests will be for photographs or textual archival material. Keep track of the number of times you must look up information in your accession records, other than finding the next accession number available. I think you will find that that number is low. With that use in mind, use the computer first for your archival records and second for your office records.

Once you have your archival records in order, decide what you want a computer database to accomplish. Are you a corporate archives with one fonds (your own records), and many photographs? Do you have a photo or map archives that might function better with item level description as well as fonds and series level description? Are you a community archives with many fonds/collections, photos, maps, and oral histories?

The more straightforward off-the-shelf inexpensive databases are fine for item level description, but do not offer the sophistication of the specialized more expensive databases designed specifically for libraries and archives. These specialized databases offer linked levels of description that allow you to print out descriptions almost automatically. Check with other archives in your area to find out what databases they use and whether they are happy with the results. Ask if you can drop by for a demonstration. Talk to the database representatives at AABC conferences and check the internet for information. Think about the support network available. Will you have to take a night school class or can you rely on the distributor for help?

Whatever you decide, do your homework! Even if you think the purchase of a computer is down the road, resign yourself to the inevitable and prepare ahead of time. Computer databases were made for archives. Just compare the ease of identifying everyone on that hockey team photo once as you enter the information into a database compared to having multitudes of index cards for one photo, one for every name and subject. Databases give you the satisfaction of knowing you have found every bit of information available in your archives to fulfill that request for a certain image. They also allow you to easily transmit your fonds level descriptions to BCAUL. To prepare for the day the computer arrives, start now to catalogue your archival material in the same manner that it will be entered into the computer. For example, your main photo catalogue card can have the same fields that you would eventually use in a database. On the day you welcome that new computer, all you will have to do is hire a fast typist and your records will be entered in no time.

For those of you who are still using catalogue cards and who are also contemplating the purchase of a computer, I can supply some fonds, series, and item level templates that could help you with the transition. Contact me at [lwills@aabc.bc.ca](mailto:lwills@aabc.bc.ca) and I can e-mail you what you need. One last piece of advice – choose your software before you choose your hardware. Hardware must be powerful enough and have enough memory to run your chosen software.

Good luck!

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## Digital Preservation: Where to Start

Trolling the internet for preservation information is fun but can be time consuming and frustrating particularly when you are not able to locate the information you need from a site you trust.

In response to BC Archival Preservation Service email inquires about digital preservation and where to get "start-up" information I have highlighted three excellent online publications which can be used as a primer for beginning a digital program.

### 1. Digital Preservation Handbook

[www.dpconline.org/graphics/handbook/](http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/handbook/)

The **Digital Preservation Handbook** was designed to " provides an internationally authoritative and practical guide to the subject of managing digital resources over time and the issues in sustaining access to them". The Handbook offers an instructive overview to the world of digital records. It is a very useful place to start the adventure of creating digital records or in the acquisition of born digital records.

### 2. Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access: Creation of Production Master Files – Raster Images

[www.archives.gov/research/arc/techguide-raster-june2004.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/techguide-raster-june2004.pdf)

This 87-page document produced by the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) provides excellent guidelines for the creation of digital copies of archival records. This document provides an excellent overview of 'best practice' and has very useful background discussion section. The type of archival records included for discussion in this document are: textual, graphic illustration/art work/originals, maps, plans, photographs, aerial photographs and objects/artifacts.

Topics covered in this document include:

- Digital Image Capture – production of master files, digitization environment, colour management etc.
- Minimum metadata
- File formats, naming and storage
- Quality Control

### **3. The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) – Library of Congress**

[www.digitalpreservation.gov/index.php](http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/index.php)

The NDIIPP web site is comprehensive and necessarily so as it attempts to meet the NDIIPP mission statement which is to "develop a national strategy to collect, archive and preserve the burgeoning amounts of digital content, especially materials that are created only in digital formats, for current and future generations."

Of particular interest to archivists and conservators is the "Digital Formats" web page. ([www.digitalpreservation.gov/formats/index.shtml](http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/formats/index.shtml)).

In "Digital Formats" sustainability, evaluation and discussion of a wide range of file formats is presented for still images, moving images, sound and textual records.

Rosaleen Hill  
AABC Conservation Coordinator  
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# AABC Newsletter

Volume 15 No. 4 Fall 2005

## People and Places

The Vancouver Office of Library and Archives Canada welcomes *Caitlin Webster*. Caitlin has recently returned to the Lower Mainland after five years working for LAC in Ottawa. Caitlin is replacing *Jana Buhlmann* who is away on maternity leave until August 2006.

Several new appointments have been made recently in the City of Vancouver's Records and Archives Division. *Glenn Dingwall* has accepted the City Archives' new full time continuing position of Digital Archivist. Glenn previously worked at the Archives as an Archivist and most recently has been working in the Division's Records and Information Management section (RIM) as a Corporate Records Administrator on the City's Corporate Records Standards (CRS) Project. *Jeannette Black* has accepted the full time continuing position of Corporate Records Administrator in RIM. Jeannette has over 20 years experience with records management in the City's Engineering Department and City Clerk's Office. She most recently was working as a Records Analyst on the CRS Project. *Scott Redgrove* has accepted a four-month CRS Project position as Corporate Records Administrator. Scott joined the CRS Project team earlier this year as a Records Analyst.

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# AABC Newsletter

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## Doreen Stephens

### **Thank-you.**

I am retiring at the end of 2005, completing 20 years as an archivist for the Anglican Church. I can't leave without thanking the members of the AABC & its predecessors for all they have done to make my job so satisfying - by serving on executives and other committees, by leading workshops and planning conferences and above all, by being passionate about archives. I can't imagine the 20 years without you.

*Doreen Stephens*

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## Ray Wunderlich 1924-2005

Archivist, teacher and WWII veteran, Ray Wunderlich, died 6 September 2005.

Ray was the founder of the School District 61 Educational Heritage Archives and Museum, instrumental in setting up the archives at Vic High as well as promoting the heritage of schools Province wide. As an executive member of the Retired Teachers Association, Ray conducted the first schools inventory and played a big part in seeing the Schoolhouse exhibit come to fruition and in securing a major collection of textbooks. His experience and enthusiasm did much to get the B.C. Education History Project going. "School archives tend to get lost" says Shirley Cuthbertson, a fellow retired teacher and archivist who worked with Ray on several heritage projects "but Ray did his best to see that they were saved for future generations".

A native of Cudwoth, Saskatchewan, Ray obtained his teaching degree at UBC and started his 30 year teaching career in Kelowna later moving to Victoria where he retired in 1981. Ray taught math and was "one of those really good teachers who helped in the best of ways" remembers Shirley Cuthbertson.

Apart from preserving school history, Ray was passionate about many things including the environment, traveling and square dancing. Ray leaves his wife of 60 years, Peggy, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

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