



# AABC Newsletter

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## President's Message

Lara Wilson

Dear colleagues,

Spring is finally here to stay (fingers crossed!) and a new year has begun for the AABC...

First of all, I am happy to report that our joint conference with ARMA Vancouver Island was a success! The conference theme "Future Evidence, Past Record" brought together approximately 130 members of the archives and records management communities over 3 days of sessions and workshops. We hope to have more on the conference in a future newsletter.

It's a testament to the good works undertaken by the BC archival community that our honorary patron, His Honour, The Honourable Steven L. Point, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, hosted the joint conference reception at Government House, on the evening of April 24th.

Those present at Government House were moved by His Honour's personal account of his family's experience with archives. AABC members carry out their work with a strong sense of responsibility for ensuring that our province's documentary heritage is preserved. Accounts, such as that told by His Honour, ground our endeavours in the experience of archives' many and varied patrons and communities.

In other developments, I am pleased to report that we have a full slate for the Executive for 2008/09....

I convey sincere thanks to Lisa Glandt (née Beitel) and Ramona Rose for their many hours of work as Secretary and Institutional Member-at-Large, respectively. My gratitude to the following AABC members for volunteering for our organization, and to their institutions for supporting this in-kind contribution to the provincial archival community:

Vice-President - Jordana Feist

portfolio: Programs Committee

Secretary - Jane Morrison

portfolio: Communications (Newsletter, PAAL, Regional Reps)

Treasurer - Jennifer Mohan

portfolio: Finance Committee

Institutional Member-at-Large - Shaunna Moore

portfolio: Nominations and Grants Committees

Individual Member-at-Large - Valerie Billesberger

portfolio: Membership and Conference Committees

As many of you may know, this summer AABC is undertaking a pilot project for the upgrade of the British Columbia Archival Union List (BCAUL), using the AtoM (International Council on Archives: Access to Memory) software. On the

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# President's Report

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Friday afternoon of the conference, Peter Van Garderen of Artefactual Systems Inc. (<http://artefactual.com>), demonstrated the software to a packed conference salon. Peter is the system architect and Software Release Manager for the ICA-AtoM project, which he is managing through his New Westminster-based consulting firm, Artefactual Systems Inc.. He is a graduate of the University of British Columbia's Master of Archival Studies and Software Engineering programs, and a part-time Doctoral Candidate at the University of Amsterdam where he is researching the use of Web 2.0 technologies in archives access systems.

Some of the features of AtoM include:

- open source; free license
- fully web-based application
- multiple platform operation
- interoperability with other systems
- use of international standards
- multi-level description
- full text search indexing capability
- content harvestable by web search engines
- multi-lingual user interface and content capability.

Artefactual is developing the AtoM code and giving it back to the community as open-source software. Different phases of the software development have been funded thus far by financial contributions from: the United Arab Emirates Center for Documentation and Research; the Dutch Archiefschool Research Institute; UNESCO Information For All Programme; the French Archives Directorate; and the World Bank Library and Archives of Development.

Among the funded activities planned for the BCAUL pilot: development of an [ISAD-to-RAD](#) crosswalk, test migration of data from the current BCAUL database, remote data-entry directly into the BCAUL database via the AtoM web forms, EAD XML import of archival descriptions from an alternate system into the BCAUL database, and

development of an archival description harvesting features. Financial support for the pilot and implementation phase will be provided by the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre and Library and Archives Canada, and we are grateful for this assistance. Be assured that we will keep you updated on pilot project developments, and we will seek your feedback as we move towards the implementation phase.

Respectfully submitted,

Lara Wilson  
AABC President

## Sidney Museum and Archives goes Online!

*Diane Webb, Archivist, Sidney Museum and Archives*

The Sidney Museum and Archives are pleased to announce that an updated version of their holdings has been uploaded to BCAUL.

A grant from the Canadian Council of Archives, through the National Archives Development Programme enabled a more thorough description of their holdings to be completed according to Rules for Archives Description.

Sometime ago, the Sidney Museum and Archives purchased a copy of the *INMAGIC* add-on program *Archives Online*, which is specifically designed for archival descriptions. Through the grant, volunteers at the Sidney Museum and Archives were able to participate in online tutorial sessions on how to use the program.

# BC Archival Network Service Program - Update

Janet McMaster, BCAUL Coordinator

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 that submissions can be made, please contact Janet McMaster, BCAUL Coordinator, by e-mail ([jmcmast@shaw.ca](mailto:jmcmast@shaw.ca)) or by phone (403-236-3406).

## Statistics

I am often asked about the level of usage of the AABC's web site and the BCAUL database. Statistics are gathered on a monthly basis, and quarterly and annual summaries are provided to the AABC Executive. As the following table illustrates, the statistics reflect a strong level of usage of BC's on-line resources, and the totals show significant increases of 45% - 50% over the previous year.

It is very encouraging to see that over the last year, there has been a daily average of 15,583 hits to the web site, as well as an average of 2425 database user sessions per day.

## New Entries to BCAUL

The following are new descriptions that have been recently submitted and added to the British Columbia Archival Union list at <http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/bcaul.html>.

### Kelowna Museum Archives

Conroy family fonds  
Dehart family fonds  
Dorothea Walker and Primrose Upton fonds  
Loyal Orange Lodge fonds  
Naomi Griffin fonds  
Penticton Museum collection

### University of British Columbia Archives

Alison Rice fonds  
Department of Medicine fonds  
Development Office fonds  
Paperny Films fonds  
William A. McDill fonds

## "The BCAUL Stats"

### 2006-2007

Total Requests (Hits):	3,845,601
Total Unique Visits:	777,098
Total Database Sessions:	594,822

### 2007-2008

Total Requests (Hits):	5,687,935
Total Unique Visits:	1,684,935
Total Database Sessions:	885,260

### Gross increase over one year:

Total Requests (Hits):	+1,842,334
Total Unique Visits:	+907,837
Total Database Sessions:	+290,438

# Archival Community meets to Discuss the TV Series: *Who Do You Think You Are?*

Ramona Rose

On behalf of the AABC Executive, Ramona Rose attended the March 31 meeting held in Toronto with representatives of the provincial/territorial archival community, the Canadian Council of Archives, Library and Archives Canada, and the producers of the LAC-sponsored CBC-TV genealogy series *Who Do You Think You Are?* The TV series was 13 episodes long and was filmed in archival institutions throughout the country.

At the meeting, the archival community and the TV production company discussed ways to create a fruitful working relationship if the TV series was renewed. At CCA's request, LAC agreed to support one representative from each provincial and territorial council. The meeting was attended by 33 representatives from archival organizations, provincial and territorial associations across the country, and by representatives of Barna Alper, the independent producers of the TV series. While CBC was invited, they did not send a representative.

The goal of the meeting was to use the experience gained by both the producers and the different archival institutions that collaborated in making the episodes. The discussion focused on: future best practices learned by the producers and the institutions in making the series; insights gained on the realities both face regarding mandates, staffing/time limitations; and the potential for closer collaboration between the Canadian archival community and TV/film production companies.

The meeting was organized around a discussion of three phases of TV production--planning, production, and post-production--with the executive producers, story editors, and researchers explaining the challenges of producing a genealogy-based show and the experiences gained using Canadian archives.

Challenges included:

- the massive underlying content and research required to determine a focus for each show
- the time-sensitive research required by genealogists and TV story editors

- the extent of global travel required to find family links of the featured guests
- concerns of having one person "carry content" of a show
- the limited budget and limited staffing that determined which story leads to follow

Another challenge was the CBC's mandate, which in Barna Alper's view, determined the show's themes, guests, and show's length limitation. Barna Alper noted that being only a half-hour show (22 minutes total) restricts the ability to tell genealogy-based stories; an hour-long show is really required to fully appreciate "strong story lines."

From the archival community's perspective there was general agreement that continued collaboration with TV and film production companies can be extremely beneficial in both promoting the values of archives to Canadians and to lobby federal/provincial governments for continued support.

A point of discussion continuously made was that better pre-visit communication between researcher(s) and the archivist(s) is required. Also, some participants reported that researchers did not fully explain their research queries in advance of their visits (Barna Alper noted that for some shows it was meant to be a surprise for the show's featured celebrity). Other participants reported that researchers did not take full advantage of the professional archival staff available to them.

The archival community realized that it would have been good to inform the TV/film production companies of the myriad of archival/heritage resources and networks available: TV/film production companies could benefit by using and understanding the Canadian archival community network system in order to ensure that their queries are directed to the institutions that have the primary sources needed to assist them with their productions.

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# Who Do You Think You Are?

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A few institutions noted that they were not fully aware of the amount of on-site production time required by the archives involved, which could be up to one or two full working days--this had a definite impact on the archives' regular researchers. It was agreed that having a production schedule in advance would be beneficial for reducing the impact on other users.

The participants agreed to create a 'first point of contact' list for each of the regions. This proactive approach would allow the television/film production companies to find the appropriate sources more quickly. Christina Nicholls, Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Archives, agreed to maintain the list. For BC, the AABC Education & Advisory Archivist Kelly Stewart will serve as the archival liaison.

Other general comments made by Barna Alper that may assist archives preparing for on-site TV/film productions included:

- Genealogists and TV/film story editors may have only 2-3 months to contact archives around the country regarding a story line, so working with an archival network is valuable
- Get a 'wish list' from the TV/film director of archival resources they might require
- Directors often rely heavily on on-line databases & film footage, so direct to those first
- TV production staff select records mostly on "how fast they can get it"
- Develop FTP sites, if possible, to send materials to production companies
- Set up interview/location releases & photograph releases before the shoot – if not, production companies may not select the sources/materials to be included on camera
- TV companies are often willing to pay 'rush fees,' if necessary, so this could be a potential source of archival revenue

Generally, individual photos are not credited on camera, but do ask for a credit if your institution provides materials. If a promotional website for the production is created, ask for a credit line/promotion on that website with your url address.

For more information on the series see:

<http://www.cbc.ca/whodoyouthinkyouare/stories/index.php>

*Postscript: On the day of the meeting, Barna Alper was still waiting to hear whether the show would be renewed. The meeting participants were later informed in April by LAC that the CBC had decided not to renew the series. While it maintained that the show did well in the ratings, its reasoning had to do with scheduling. Barna Alper is hoping the series will be picked up by another broadcaster. The production company representatives maintain that similar programmes will continue, as there is an interest in historical TV/film programming by the Canadian public.*

## Catholic Archivist Group Annual Meeting

The next Catholic Archivist Group Annual Meeting is being held in Edmonton, Alberta from September 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>.

Check out [www.catholicarchivist.ca](http://www.catholicarchivist.ca) for details. Conference information will be on the site by the end of May.

# AABC/ARMA VI Conference Reception Remarks

Delivered at BC's Government House, 24 April 2008

Lara Wilson, AABC President

Your Honour, Emily [Shrimpton, ARMA VI President], Archives Association of British Columbia members, ARMA Vancouver Island members, and special guests from near and far, on behalf of the AABC Executive, I thank you Sir for hosting our joint conference reception.

I can think of no better way to celebrate our conference, in our province's 150th year since Crown Colony founding, than to be invited to the ceremonial home of all British Columbians.

I would like to acknowledge the Coast Salish People on whose traditional lands we gather this evening, as well as the City of Victoria and the Province of British Columbia. I would like to thank Gary Mitchell, Provincial Archivist of British Columbia, and Ian Forsyth, Chair of the Canadian Council of Archives, for joining us. I am also very happy to welcome our other special guests:

-Marland Grove, Director, Corporate Information Management Branch, Ministry of Labour and Citizens Services

-Rob Woodland, Corporate Administrator and Director, Legislative and Regulatory Services, City of Victoria

-Sue Baptie, Member of the Board, Friends of BC Archives

-Russ Fuller, President of the Victoria Historical Society

and

-Mrs. Daphne Taylor, wife of the beloved and eminent Canadian archivist Hugh Taylor

I also convey greetings from Ms. Jan Wallace and Ms. Leonora Crema of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at the University of British Columbia, who thank the AABC for the positive work the Association engages in to expand archival support for BC's communities.

Our conference theme "Future Evidence, Past Record" encompasses sessions and workshops concerning the challenges we face in our work and how we organize, select, preserve and make records accessible to our many and varied users. This collaboration between our organisations is a natural fit, as each of us strives to manage information in our care to professional standards and to make our societal memory available to those who will come after us.

All of you are at the conference and here tonight because you are active in your profession and because you are dedicated to your work. For those of you who are able to dedicate extra time to volunteer for your associations, a special thank you. Volunteering is a rich and rewarding experience, for what you give back to your community and for what you discover about yourself and your abilities. I extend my sincere thanks to the AABC volunteers who made this conference possible:

-Conference chair, Carey Pallister, City of Victoria

-Local arrangements committee chair, Caroline Duncan (Saanich Municipal Archives) and her committee members: Mickey King (Sisters of St Anne Archives), Jean Sparks (Oak Bay Archives), Valda Stefani (North Saanich), Brenda Waksel (Saint Michaels University School Archives), and Don Bourdon (BC Archives)

-Programs committee chair, Jane Morrison (University of Victoria Archives) and her team: Debra Barr (Royal Roads University Foundation), Linda Nobrega (Corporate Information Management Branch, Ministry of Labour and Citizen's Services) and Ken Oldenburger (Oldenburger Consulting and ARMA Vancouver Island).

-Finally, I would like to thank our generous conference sponsors, including the Royal British Columbia Museum/BC Archives, and our AABC funders: the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, the National Archival Development Program of Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives, and especially our institutional and individual members.

Thank you.

# News from SLAIS

Michelle Malette, SLAIS Student Coordinator

## Irving K. Barber Learning Centre

The University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival & Information Studies (SLAIS) is settling into its new facilities in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. We officially moved in February 1 opening to the public February 22. Students are delighted with the open and spacious study areas, 24 hour drop-in computer lab and state of the art instructional lab. The floor-to-ceiling windows in the lounge offer a stunning vista of Koerner Library and, behind it, a peekaboo view of the Strait of Georgia.

## Graduation

Mere weeks after the move into our new home, 64 SLAIS students bid us goodbye as they graduated and received their degrees at convocation ceremonies on Thursday, May 22. Four received a Master of Archival Studies, 49 received a Master of Library & Information Studies, 9 received the joint MAS and MLIS degrees, and 2 graduated with a Master of Arts in Children's Literature.

## Co-op Award

Two SLAIS students have been named inaugural winners of the SLAIS Co-op Student of the Year Awards. Joint MAS/MLIS student Karine Burger won the archival studies placement award for her work at Library & Archives Canada, working with 19<sup>th</sup> century documents. On the library & information studies side, MLIS student Randi Robin won for her work at the University of Victoria. Each award comes with a \$1000 prize. See the UBC Arts news item at [http://www.arts.ubc.ca/index.php?id=433&backPID=4&tt\\_news=2023](http://www.arts.ubc.ca/index.php?id=433&backPID=4&tt_news=2023). For information on hiring a SLAIS co-op student in any term, visit the UBC Arts Co-operative Education page at <http://co-op.arts.ubc.ca/>.

## Alumni Reception

SLAIS Director Edie Rasmussen and UBC Arts Co-op Director Julie Walchli welcomed about 25 alumni at a reception held during the AABC Conference in Victoria. It was an opportunity to update alumni on SLAIS happenings, inform them of the remarkable growth of the co-op program, and share a bite and a beverage with friends and colleagues.

## Faculty News

SLAIS faculty, staff and, students are sorry to say goodbye to Dr. Heather MacNeil, who has accepted a position as associate professor at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information Studies. She begins her new position in Toronto on July 1, and is leaving many friends and colleagues behind in British Columbia. Heather joined SLAIS in 1999 and has served as chair of the Archival Studies program, as well as graduate advisor. A regular contributor to journals and conferences, Heather currently serves on the editorial board of *Archivaria*, the journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists

## Research Grant

Congratulations to Dr. Luciana Duranti, who, along with co-investigator Anthony Sheppard, has been awarded a major SSHRC (Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council) grant for a study on "Digital Records Forensics" covering 2008-2011. The grant is valued at \$120,000.

The project, based on a collaboration between SLAIS, the UBC Faculty of Law, and the Vancouver Police Department, intends to develop:

- concepts and methods allowing the archival, legal, judicial, and law enforcement professions to recognize records among all digital data objects produced by digital technologies once they have been removed from the original system
- concepts and methods for determining the authenticity of records no longer in the original system
- methods for extracting records from the system in which they are found and maintaining them over the long term so that their authenticity will not be questioned
- the theoretical and methodological content of a new discipline, called "Digital Records Forensics," resulting from an integration of Archival Diplomats, Computer Forensics, and the Law of Evidence

The ultimate goal of the research is to place this new discipline at the core of a graduate program of education for digital records forensic experts, who are specialists operating in the context of the legal and records professions or serving the public as independent professionals or as a third neutral party in case of dispute.

# The Northern BC Archives Presents: "Phase II of the Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd. Fonds Access Project"

Erica Hernandez, UNBC Archives

The Northern BC Archives has completed an electronic finding aid to make accessible the photographic holdings of Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd.

Thanks to funding from the National Archival Development Program, the Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd. fonds Access Project Phase I & II have been completed; a project that has enabled the creation and input of over 9000 item level photo descriptions into the Archives' on-line database. This launch concludes the Archives' public access initiative to Northwood's photographic records which were officially donated to UNBC's Northern BC Archives in 2005. The entire Northwood fonds consists of almost 14,000 photographic items (prints, slides, negatives) as well as sound & moving image recordings and textual records.

While Phase I, completed in December 2007, provided access to 3,600+ colour slide images documenting the company's industrial activities, Phase II includes an additional finding aid to 5,360 photographic print items and over 9,400 negatives from Northwood's corporate holdings that span its 35 year tenure in the Central Interior of BC. The completed finding aid will assist those researchers interested in the visual documentation of forest industry operations and developments under Northwood. This electronic resource, accessible via the Archives' web-based database, will also be made available to non-university, regional, and even international public users via two archival portal sites: the [BC Archival Union List](#) and its national counterpart [Archives Canada](#).



The Archives' electronic finding aid provides researchers with item-level descriptions of this plethora of photographic material, the existence and content of which providing visual documentation of Northwood's industry operations. The diverse historical content of these images includes, but is not limited to: pulp mill construction & expansion; Northwood's sawmills in Prince George, Giscome, Upper Fraser, Shelley & Houston; Northwood's Woods Division including technical equipment and forest-related activities (i.e. timber cruising, hand & mechanical falling, de-limbing, skidding, scaling, loading, hauling, arch trucking, helicopter logging, patch logging, and slash-burning techniques).

Other subject areas identified in these photographs include: Northwood's corporate activities; corporate portrait shots of groups and individuals; Northwood safety awards and awareness; service awards to employees; public outreach activities; employees at work; Northwood's 25th year anniversary celebrations; public presentations to sponsors; and documentation of corporate agreements with foreign investors and distributors.

The Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd. fonds also contains general images of interest to a wide range of research topics relevant to Northern BC: visuals of landscapes; scenery; wildlife, and aerials of Northern BC communities including Prince George, Giscome, Shelley, Houston, and Babine Lake. To view a selection of these images (see sample below) the public is invited to the photograph exhibit Visual Retrospective which features 30 images from the Northwood fonds. The exhibit is on display at the Prince George Railway & Forestry Museum at Cottonwood Island Park, Prince George from March 18 to May 14, 2008 and will be on display at the Northern BC Archives in the summer. For more information contact the Railway Museum or view their website at <http://www.pgrfm.bc.ca/>

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Willow Canyon Nursery, Lifting seedlings, Sept 1980, Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd. – A # 2001.26.1.1794

To gain electronic access to the Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd. fonds photographic holdings go to:

<http://lib.unbc.ca/UNBCArchives/web/default.html>

From the Archives' Home Page go to the 'Search' Page to view the holdings; search the 'fonds detail' page of the Northwood Pulp and Timber fonds Ltd.

Once in the Northwood fonds go to the "View Series" Page; click on "Photographic Materials" then click "view items for series" to view the descriptions for the 8900+ photographic images.

The Northern BC Archives, UNBC wishes to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through Library and Archives Canada, administered through the LAC and the Canadian Council of Archives.

# UNBC



Library and Archives  
Canada

Bibliothèque et Archives  
Canada



Canadian Council of Archives  
Conseil canadien des archives

# Canada

## Words and their meanings: The quandary and conundrum of translating records

Jo-Anne Allison, Archivist, Diocese of Prince George

The Archives of the Diocese of Prince George holds a large manuscript collection, the bulk of which is correspondence between Bishops and priests from the early days of the Diocese. Previous archivists were concerned that these materials would not be accessible to parishioners in the Diocese because most of these early documents are in the French language. About ten years ago a program was devised whereby volunteers would translate correspondence from the French language into English. Over the course of the next few years all of the French language correspondence in the fonds of the Diocese' first Bishop, Emile-Marie Bunoz, OMI was translated into English. This was a massive undertaking, involving thousands of volunteer hours.

Unfortunately, the quality of the translations was not assessed either initially or on an on-going basis. Words were often translated literally, complex meanings were simplified and spelling mistakes were uncorrected. Volunteers, while good hearted and generous did not have the translation skills required to do these letters justice. In addition to issues of grammar, spelling and composition, there were other problems. The difficulties associated with deciphering the cursive scripts of over 100 different correspondents; the fact that many priests were writing in a second or even third language making their original meanings unclear; the elaborate formal language of the era; fading ink; and references to contexts outside of the translators' experience, have all contributed to less than effective translations.

As a consequence, many of the resulting English language materials are not only difficult to understand but original meanings are confused, clouded and even lost. If researchers do not have the language skills which will allow them to check the original French documents for clarification, the priests and Bishop Bunoz may appear to be uneducated, misguided or even worse, silly.

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# Translating records

Continued...

Poor translations can lead to misunderstandings of meaning as well – something which is of critical importance to those involved in historical research. A common error is the translation of the word “ignore.” It has been translated into English as ‘ignore’. This inadvertently sends the message that Bishop Buonoz’ priests rarely paid him any heed!

Some mistranslations are merely funny. For example, the use of the word ‘appliance’ instead of ‘application’ for “application”; or ‘I did not lose my time’ instead of ‘I didn’t waste my time’ for “je n’ai pas perdu mon temps”; or ‘I accuse reception of your letter’ instead of ‘I acknowledge receipt of your letter’ for “j’accuse reception de votre lettre.”

Some are more serious. The phrase “les peintres achevent la toilette de notre chapelle” was translated as ‘the painters are almost finished the chapel’s toilet.’ It is clear from the context of this sentence in the letter and indeed the text of subsequent letters that there is no toilet or w.c. in the building but rather that the original writer was referring to the completion of the chapel’s painting and decoration.

Why keep these translations? This is a challenging question and the answer is not as obvious as it seems. One cannot shred these translations without negating the selfless and long-term dedication of the volunteer translators. In a Diocese that still depends heavily on volunteers, this gift of time and effort cannot be lightly dismissed. And, while the skills of these translators may be wanting, the reality is that most of the researchers who use the Diocesan Archives are unilingual English speakers who do not possess French language skills and who cannot afford or are unwilling to pay for professional translation services.

The fact that the translations are often flawed cannot be denied, however they afford an opportunity for learning about the past which would not otherwise be possible. The question then becomes one of accessibility. If these translations allow for some level of investigation and understanding of our history; isn’t that better than nothing?

# Journeying into the Metadata Jungle

Kelly Stewart, Education and Advisory Services Coordinator

Are you thinking about embarking on a digitization project? Perhaps you want to scan your photograph holdings, voter lists, or taxation records with an eye to one day making them available on the Internet via your Archives’ website. You’re probably doing some research on types of scanners, how to properly scan photographs and at what bit depth and in what file format. Hopefully you’re giving some thought to storage and back-ups.

Have you thought about how you’re going to make the information about your digital files available? Metadata is a big deal right now because of the exponentially increasing information on the Internet and the desire of information professionals like us to make that information meaningful and easier to locate. I know that when I was working as an archivist and scanning photographic acquisitions on a regular basis I was primarily worried about the physical scanning process and not about the information I wanted to capture to accompany that scanned image.

Don’t be afraid! The good news is that, as archivists, we are metadata experts!! What is RAD, after all, but a metadata scheme to describe archival records? So, let’s take a brief tour through the metadata jungle, pointing out some new vocabulary terms along the way. With this minimal level of information you will be able to continue your journey on your own.

**Metadata** is “structured information that describes, explains, or locates and information resource so that it is easier to retrieve, use or manage” (NISO, *Understanding Metadata*). An **information resource** is any digital object, such as a .TIFF file or web page. Just like a finding aid is a link between a fonds and the researcher, so metadata is a link between the digital object and the user.

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# Metadata Jungle

Continued...

There are many different types of metadata, depending on what you want to describe. These types of metadata are known as **schemes** or **schema**. Each metadata scheme contains a set of **elements** (i.e. title, date, format, etc). The definition of the elements is known as their **semantics**.

Making digital objects more accessible and useful becomes more difficult if there are many schemes (like the Tower of Babel), so **crosswalks** are created to map the elements of one scheme to another. For example, the author element in one metadata scheme could map to the creator element in another metadata scheme.

Into any language a little grammar must fall. **Syntax** rules tell how a scheme should be encoded so that the metadata is recognizable and processed by a computer program. Some schemes do not have a prescribed syntax so they are known as syntax independent.

Some of the more common metadata schemes are Dublin Core, METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard), EAD (Encoded Archival Description), TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) and MPEG-7 (for digital audio and video). Start your metadata exploration with a look at Dublin Core (<http://dublincore.org>), which is a scheme designed for simplicity.

Some database programs automatically create a Dublin Core (DC) record from the information you enter. The program has created a crosswalk for you. Beware, however, because sometimes these crosswalks are done by non-subject experts so they can be a bit crooked. Remember, you want to make sure that your scheme is as meaningful as possible so that users will be able to find the information they are seeking.

Most important, you are not alone in the metadata jungle. There are lots of us in the biggest to the smallest of institutions trying to cut a swath through the undergrowth of technical terminology. If we work together maybe we'll have some success! With that in mind, please email me if you have any questions ([kstewart@aabbc.bc.ca](mailto:kstewart@aabbc.bc.ca)).

In successive articles I'll talk a bit more about types of metadata schemes but in the meantime, for an excellent article that clearly explains metadata, go to the following website:

[www.niso.org/standards/resources/UnderstandingMetadata.pdf](http://www.niso.org/standards/resources/UnderstandingMetadata.pdf).

Good luck and happy exploring!

Kelly Stewart  
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604-931-1285

## Editorial Postscript

### Note from the Editor

Thanks to all the diligent contributors to this edition of the AABC Newsletter. I'm always surprised to see how active the archival community is in BC, and further a field.

The AABC Newsletter will be taking a hiatus for the Summer, and will be published as a joint Summer/Fall edition later this year.

As a future direction, the Newsletter will try to become more theme-based. Future themes will include new perspectives on BC's Freedom of Information and Privacy landscape, how BC organizations are faring with implementing their ERDMSs, innovative approaches to archival outreach, and "green" archives, to name a few. Naturally, even if a Newsletter has a theme, "non-themed" submissions will be most welcome.

Necessarily, all themes will be announced well in advance, allowing writers plenty of time to put their sagely words to e-paper.

If you have any suggestions as to what you'd like to see in a future Newsletter, please let me know!

**Editor**  
Greg Kozak

**Editorial Board**  
Kelly Harms  
Kelly McElroy

Got news? Send AABC news, tips, suggestions or letters to the editor: [gkozak@alumni.sfu.ca](mailto:gkozak@alumni.sfu.ca)

Greg