Objects or archives? Redeeming the object in archival thinking

Sarah Welland and Amanda Cossham

Introduction

While most archives house objects that are managed archivally (for example, uniforms, cups, badges, council seals, and mementos), "the status of these objects is often ambiguous."[1] This ambiguity was highlighted in May 2021 when the NZRecords mailing list debated whether objects in the form of three-dimensional things could be included on a list of 'Protected Records for Local Authorities' and whether objects had informational, accountability, administrative, research or heritage value. Some wrote that objects can be records since accepted definitions of records (and archives) allow it and are format neutral; others disagreed, saying objects can only relate to the 'real' archives as a form of evidence; others suggested that objects per se do not need to be retained unless they meet the definition of 'public record' under the Public Records Act. The question of whether historical objects were appealing to retain and who should retain these (and how) was also raised. One person commented that "one can't automatically assume a non-documentary object such as one would typically associate with a museum collection isn't a record and, therefore, couldn't also potentially be a local authority protected record".[2]

Using this debate as a starting point, this article explores theoretical perspectives on the nature of objects as archival items. It looks at the different perspectives around the nature of the document and the record as well as archival canon (such as it can be said to exist) to discuss how objects can be archives, and archives can be objects, but this is not true in all instances and contexts. We specifically acknowledge Sanderson's research, which not only examines the nature of archival understanding

and thinking but also provides analysis around the interpretation of heritage objects in the design of knowledge enabling systems.[3]

In this paper, the terms used are: *archival item* – a single thing; *archival collection* – fonds; *archives* – archival items and collections within or across repositories; and the *Archive* (or *Archives*) – the organisation(s) responsible for managing the archival collection(s).

We acknowledge that objects may be excluded in the Archive because they do not have a close relationship to the archival collections which they accompany such as would necessitate retention. We also acknowledge occasions where objects cannot be defined as an information object or do not have documentation to support their inclusion, or that a collection policy may explicitly exclude objects (however, that begs the question of whether such a policy might benefit from reconsideration). Rylance notes that despite a wide variety of materials being found in the Archives, "archival acquisition strategies have privileged medium over message" with paper-based formats often being explicitly specified and textual forms preferred.[4] Sanderson expands on this in discussing digital convergence, saying that "objects kept in heritage sector institutions were treated as goods to be divided, and where notions about the nature of those goods, their use, and practices facilitating their use, were imagined in terms of the norms for each institution type".[5]

An archival item is an object

Most existing discussion around archives and objects stems from general acceptance that an archival item is 'an object' in the sense that a document is an object, like a vase is an object. Te Tiriti is both a document and a historical object and is perceived as both. New Zealand's Protected Objects Act 1975 uses the term 'object' to include a variety of forms that would also (depending on the situation) be archival items, such as photographs, film, maps and digitally born objects.[6] The term 'object' can be a handy one to use when dealing with general concepts and questions around the form, format, meaning, and use of archives in both digital and physical contexts, particularly when those archives are image or text based.[7] Any archival item can be (and indeed, is) an object; we choose as archivists to focus on what it says or the evidence it provides rather than what it *is*. Notions of what is an archival item have changed and expanded over time: palm leaf books, papyrus rolls, bark and clay tablets are no longer used as archives (or records), while the 19th and 20th centuries saw a proliferation of record formats including photographs (prints, and acetate and glass plate negatives) and various ways of storing sound and moving pictures,

such as film, wax cylinders of audio, vinyl records and cassette tapes. These changes can create questions around what an archival item is by the way it is represented. For instance, more recently there have been discussions about whether e-books and audio books (and e-audio books) are 'really books'; the format seems in some way to call into question the form of the book and the nature of the content because our engagement with it is different. It is the same with archives. Rylance notes that the UNESCO Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity:

> *renders legitimate the safeguarding of those cultural manifestations that defy the traditional archives' notion of enduring value and simultaneously lends credence to a transmutation of the archive.*[8]

In turn this leads to the preservation of "culturally meaningful expressions regardless of either the physicality of the expression or of the archives itself."[9]

However, use of the term 'archival object' seems more common among users of archives than archivists, being only occasionally used in archives-related discourse relating to photographs.[10] There is little evidence of archival definitions pertaining to 'archival object' outside that of specific digital practices (for example, the use of the term 'digital object') or discussion of ontological aspects around classification or description.[11] The term 'information object' does not seem to be used as a substitute, even though archives are undoubtedly information objects and the term is applied in a variety of other information management and ICT contexts. The closest common term relating to 'information object' seems to be 'artefact', which is occasionally used in New Zealand. The Society of American Archivists defines artefact (artifact) as "a physical object that is made or modified by human culture."[12] However, this is usually contextualised as appended content to archives rather than the archives themselves.[13] One of the most common terms for generally describing an archival item is 'archival document'. This term seems to have transitioned successfully from a paper-based to a digital environment and is often used in discussion relating to the concept of 'archive (or record) as object'. For example, New Zealand's Public Records Act 2005 lists 'a document' as a first example of a public record.[14] However, use of the word 'document' can be and often is interpreted as referring to text-based archives, although Ketelaar claims that "objects can be archival documents".[15] We pick up on this point below.

Mental models and prototypes

The question of whether objects can be archives may be determined by how archivists conceive archival items or archival documents. Often a mental picture relating to these concepts is used to help understanding and explanation. This mental picture supports but may also limit and constrain our understanding because we expect all instances of the concept to conform to that picture, even if this is our unconscious assumption. This form of conceptualising is referred to as a mental model in cognitive psychology.[16] Mental models are "constructed by individuals based on their personal life experiences, perceptions, and understandings of the world. They provide the mechanism through which new information is filtered and stored."[17] Mental models can help explain how individuals make sense of the world and make meaning in ways they can express to others.

According to Johnson-Laird, mental models are varied because they can "take many forms and serve many purposes."[18] One form is that of prototypes; accepted examples of typical things that support shared understandings and enable engagement with the world. Broadly speaking, these are our mental pictures of the world. Prototypes act as short-cuts and determinants of how we understand simple and complex concepts, objects, relationships, and so on. They help us to understand, formulate and talk about things and concepts. Prototypes are heavily embedded in individual, disciplinary/domain, social, and cultural contexts. For example, the typical bird to someone British might be a robin while the typical bird for a New Zealander might be a tūī. Some things may be non-prototypical, i.e., less likely or less common instances of a category of things. For example, someone may 'see' in their mind a penguin rather than a tūī when talking about birds, although a penguin is a less-good example of birds generally because it doesn't fly, doesn't live in trees, nests on the ground, and can dive and swim. Thus, penguins are not likely to be the prototypical bird for most people.

Some prototypes come down to disciplinary agreement. Bowker and Star's book, Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences[19], explains how communities of practice (including disciplines or domains) categorise and classify information, determining how they see the world and interact with it. Individuals learn how a discipline 'thinks' (domain knowledge, canon) through study or work within that discipline. They then adopt ways of conceptualising their discipline and its practices in line with that domain knowledge. Specific language and terminology are used, which facilitates understanding of the domain and makes it harder for those outside the discipline to engage with it (e.g., medical professions). Within

the domain knowledge, certain ways of classifying and conceptualising are more prototypical, more likely to represent an understanding held by a wide range of those engaged in the discipline, and more useful to the discipline's practice. A domain knowledge determines how the community of practice understands the discipline, and at the same time is determined by those within the discipline.

Our mental models and our prototypes do not have to be fully formed to be useful, and they can and do change over time as we learn more or experience more of a particular phenomenon, or as the accepted patterns of thought in a discipline change. People will have mental models of information, of archives, of archival items, of information as a 'thing'[20] that are quite different in 2023 to those held by people in 1923. These changing models determine how people respond to, use, and work with archives and objects. They can also influence how archives and objects are 'seen' within the Archives. For example, as archivists, our mental models can affect how we select, arrange or describe the archival items in our care, and consequently influence how users will conceive different forms of information 'thing' as archives. 'Information as thing' is a theoretical concept, and includes data, text, documents, objects, and events, i.e., things that are informative, according to Buckland.[21]

Documentality and document theory

Two related theoretical areas that contribute to our understanding of the nature of objects as archives and archives as objects are documentality and document theory. Both discuss some of the theoretical concepts behind how people make sense of the world by focusing on how a document can be defined and perceived in relation to our interaction with it, our understanding of it, and our own subjectivities around it (For example, through "cognition, emotion and motivation."[22]) The term 'document' is the term used by these theorists to describe any type of information 'as thing' or item. Documentality and document theory are briefly discussed below.

Documentality argues that documents are separate evidence of the 'independence' of social reality[23]. That is, documents are the recorded (or symbolic[24]) result of a social act that "establishes the nature" of the tacit and explicit constraints (for example, through mutual agreement by both parties to do something) and "guarantees the endurance" of that act.[25] For example, a marriage is a marriage because there is documented evidence of an agreement to wed, framed within a country's legislation, authorised by an individual with the legal power to authorise it. A couple is not married because they decide they are married; they are married because they

have a document that says they are married.[26] A document encompasses written forms as well as graphic and non-verbal (such as tattoos[27]) or inscribed objects.

Document theory sees the document as a variety of things including constructed meaning, cultural code, media type, and physical media.[28] The question of what a document is and whether objects can be documents is covered well by one of the founders of documentation theory, Paul Otlet.[29] Otlet's work is summarised by Buckland as follows:

> *Graphic and written records are representations of objects, [Otlet] wrote, but the objects themselves can be regarded as 'documents' if you are informed by observation of them. ... Otlet cites natural objects, artifacts, objects bearing traces of human activity (such as archaeological finds), explanatory models, educational games, and works of art (Otlet, 1934, p. 217; also Otlet 1990, pp. 153, 197, and Izquierdo Arroyo, 1995).*[30]

Based on this explanation, documents are not just restricted to written and drawn "representations of objects" or any set format, even if we might have in our heads the prototype of 'document' as a paper with written text on it.

In *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* (*What is documentation?*)[31] Briet explains that while a living animal in the wild is not a document, animals that are catalogued and shown in zoos are forms of documents because their existence has been documented in an informed way. Notably, an antelope could be 'a document' if it was catalogued (the initial document) and had secondary or derived documents (such as press releases, news articles, written studies, recordings of its call, its stuffed form in a museum, paintings, photographs etc) arise from that initial catalogued document. However, a document (even an antelope document) only 'becomes' a document when people gain information from it. This information may not be content-related but may relate instead to their perceptions to and experience of it. This indicates that, theoretically at least, if an antelope can be a document in some contexts, other objects that are catalogued and have secondary or derived documents can also be documents in their own right. Buckland gives the example of dinosaur fossils to illustrate how objects are potentially informative, noting that objects are "collected, stored, retrieved, and examined as information, as a basis for becoming informed."[32] Another example is objects presented as evidence in a court case. By themselves, they are objects; with inclusion in the court case and the secondary documentation, they are documents (and therefore records and potentially, archives). In the NZRecords discussion, items mentioned in this context included sculptural coats of arms, seals,[33] mayoral chains,

historic uniforms, flags, and briefcases containing items of significance to the local authority.

Record prototypes and their relationship to archives

Records, like documents, tend to be understood according to how we engage with them. As a result, whether (or how) we see records as objects affects how we see archives and whether (or how) we see objects as archives. Yeo notes that as we talk about records, we often have a prototype in our minds that means 'record' to us, even though other disciplines conceive the nature of 'record' differently.[34] If an object fits into the definition of being an informational object and/or is documented in ways similar to Briet's antelope, it would be reasonable to expect it would be included as a record or an archive. As a result, we cannot definitively say that objects are not records or archives, but rather we are less likely to *think* of them as records or archives; they are non-prototypical archives. Ketelaar notes that "the meaning of a record or of any other cultural artifact must be understood in two different ways—first, the meaning of the record and second, the meaning for someone or for an occasion"[35]; he emphasises that there are multiple meanings for records within each of these ways, depending on the context of use and the users. Additionally,

> *Meaning as such is never fixed once and for all, but is something that happens in the way events, texts, and other cultural products are appropriated (over and over again, always with a difference).*[36]

How we view these two aspects (that is, the meaning of the record and its applied meaning for other people and contexts) will determine how we form our own prototype of what is a record, and whether we include the notion of 'object' within it. While the term 'record object' can be used conceptually to describe the nature of the record (see for example, Sanderson, 2017), it is rare for a record to be defined purely as an object. Like with archives, 'where evidence is frequently used in the archives domain as a means of differentiating records from purportedly other heritage objects'[37], people tend to privilege the content of the record (and what it can explicitly tell us as evidence) over the form (and what it can tacitly symbolise), regardless of the format involved, or whether 'the thing which speaks of the past is itself the past of which it speaks'.[38]

The NZRecords discussion participants appeared in agreement that objects had to fit into the Public Records Act 2005 interpretation of 'record' in order to be kept as records (or archival items) although several seemed generally reluctant to retain objects that might be considered museum items. Participant disagreement was more around how, when,

and whether objects could be deemed to be records. The context of the original question was local authorities, but the discussion was widespread and included what Archives New Zealand actually holds. Their holdings, it was suggested, could be considered as precedent for keeping objects, although that was contentious to those challenging the fundamental notion of whether an object is an informational item.

With this in mind, it's possible that community archivists are more amenable to the notion of objects as archives, because there are fewer constraints around standards relating to what a record is (for example, they may not be concerned about or aware of ISO 15489 and its definitions of the business record). They may also experience less movement of records into archival collections because their archival collections may be deliberately created and format neutral in ways that traditional Archives are not. There may be no alternative mechanism for keeping objects of significance to the community involved with the Archive (e.g., cups in school archives; honours boards; newsletters; membership lists).

More generally, it is also possible that different Archives may choose to retain objects in museum-style collections adjacent to archival collections to make them more accessible and increase the prestige of the organisation (e.g., for exhibition or teaching purposes, as cultural artifacts), rather than as core archival items subject to (potential) constraints or regulations from external bodies. On a practical level, this approach may also free up space for archives storage: organisations may simply not have room to manage objects, nor the expertise needed to preserve or store certain kinds of object (e.g., garments, briefcases, hats, works of art). Sanderson notes that while attention may focus on consciously collected objects,

> *behind the scenes ways of thinking, ways of talking, and habits of practice play a part in determining the nature of physical and digital assemblages of those collected objects; and so, subtly, influence how they are perceived and how they can be used.*[39]

Mental models, prototypes, and archival objects

Prototypes help us to picture a record or archival item in our mind to help us make meaning about it and discuss it with others (see for example, Yeo [40]). These prototypes can be the result of perception (how we establish it based on the understanding we gain from our own experience) or prescription (how we establish it based on how others describe it to us, including disciplinary or domain knowledge and categorisation). For instance, a paper file may be the 'prototypical record' for many archivists. Along with prototypes, there are also non-

prototypical understandings). This means there can be considerable fluidity around how a record or archival item can be perceived and conceptualised, depending on the archival repository, country, purpose of the archive, and individuals involved (archivists, contributors, users) – even depending on the time period. Objects are 'symbolised' as records or archival items in our minds due to our real and perceived experiences with their existing content, use, metadata, and purpose.[41]

Comparing two editions of the textbook *Keeping Archives* provides a useful example of changing perspectives when it comes to objects. The second edition said:

> *If records are defined as 'documents containing data or information of any kind and in any form, created or received by an organisation or person in the transaction of business and subsequently kept as evidence...'[then] An object...is not normally attached as a record – unless it forms part of or is attached to a record item or series.*[42]

In comparison, the third edition said:

> *Objects – non-paper items in a collection – are traditionally regarded as museum items, that is, the items are managed and cared for separately to archives... while objects in archives exist in many different formats, they usually do not form a large proportion of the overall collection... but are significant nonetheless for the information they hold, the event they captured, or the 'story' they tell of a certain aspect of an organisation's history.*[43]

Both descriptions demonstrate changing prototypical views of objects that stem from changing concepts around records. Views may change again in a future edition. Our understanding of what a record or an archival item is, is never static.

As archivists, our mental models of objects, records, and archives, including prototypes of each, and indeed, disciplinary or domain understanding of such things, need to be amenable to expansion over time and as a result of the needs of the archival collection, organisation, and developing shape of the archives repository in question. Our mental models may be heavily focused on documents as archival items, but not objects as archival items. However, we have illustrated how an object can be a document and we contend that an object can also be an archival item (or record).

Archives and objects

The statement that 'archives are objects' is one that is well supported by archival theory, and in many cases, by archival practice as well. Archives, as records, can be comprehended as documents and therefore as objects, both generally and as part of our meaningful interaction with them, and as sources of evidence and through subjective response.[44] This is demonstrated (as mentioned earlier) by document theory and documentality, by related areas such as diplomatics,[45] and other heritage-related discourse.[46]

Archivists' mental models will also be influenced by the archival canon (domain knowledge), which in turn will affect whether they conceptualise a prototypical archival collection as being text-based and excluding objects, or more encompassing of objects. For example, an archivist who works predominantly with government records may be less likely to see objects as archives because the records created by government are more likely to be textual and to document decision-making. On the other hand, an archivist who works with community archives may be more likely to see objects as archives because there is no canonical understanding of what a community archive is; the community Archive becomes a place that manages things the community considers necessary to capture the essence of that community. This can result in individuals managing community Archives who may not be familiar with canonical understandings accepted by archivists in other kinds of Archives.

Reflecting back on the variety of opinions in the NZRecords list discussion, archivists may see 'an archival item as an object' or 'an object as an archival item' based on the mental models they have developed. These mental models will be formed by individuals' experience and how they have been taught as much as (or even more than) domain knowledge. In turn, these mental models will influence whether they look at an object and think of it as an archival item (or record), whether they consider it on the "edge of the archive",[47] or whether they choose to exclude it from the archive based on its nature as object. These mental models will also influence whether they see objects as evidence that links to a record or an archive, or as documents in their own right, or as discrete things that are more commonly found in a museum. In fact, the existence of museum collections may lead individuals to think of objects as explicitly *not* being part of an archival collection, even when such objects manifestly fit within accepted definitions of archives and records.

Additionally, individuals' mental models may affect decisions that are made about objects that are acceptable to include as archives (e.g., photographs) while similar objects may be excluded (e.g., paintings). Our perceptions

may be the result of successful persuasion,[48] domain knowledge,[49] or imposition by one party rather than any concrete or complete evidence or agreement. They can even be at odds with the requirements of the Archive or the types of materials deposited or even the disciplinary understanding of what 'an archival item' is. As we have demonstrated with Briet's antelope, an object 'in the wild' (e.g., an item found at a crime scene) is not a document (e.g., police evidence); it requires collection, documentation, analysis, and context for it to become one. Ultimately, it is our mental models that constrain us to see certain objects as archives.

User perceptions of objects in the Archive

Users' personal conceptions of archives are determined by their own mental models of archives, just as archivists' conceptions are. Many users accord value to an archival object because it is an 'old object' which happens to contain information, rather than an archival item that demonstrates evidence according to the archival organisation's definitions of archival value.[50] Although users' mental models of an archives may align with the cliche of 'cool old stuff', they may be closer to the disciplinary canon in not differentiating between objects and non-object archival items.

When objects are treated as archival items in the Archives, the archival collection provides their arrangement, description, context, and meaning as determined by the Archives and/or the archivist, and transforms them into 'acceptable' archival items. An object within an archival collection provides different opportunities for user-based interaction compared to text and adds to the archival story by providing a different kind of experience for the user. [51] Interaction with an object can become a mental, physical, spiritual, or emotional experience much as viewing a painting in person is different to looking at a reproduction of it.[52] Objects in archival collections can create pathways to a greater user experience and understanding of the text (which can represent the memory being interacted with).

Objects and archival practice

Limiting the scope of an archival item to (for example) 'something written that is not an object' (as some collection policies do) can limit the archival collections that are formed, providing only a partial understanding of the memories, testimonies, events, decisions, experiences, and personal and cultural expressions documented by these collections. Even when objects are included in archival collections, they may still be treated differently because they are primarily seen as objects rather than as archives. Our mental

models can affect how we apply the principles of provenance and original order to objects so we see them as challenging to arrange and describe effectively. The evidential value of objects as records may be deemed different to that of more traditional documentary archives. As a result, objects within archival collections can be side-lined from the archival story or treated within finding aids as ancillary items, making them harder to locate and associate.

Darms states that

> *... frequently, archivists separate objects both physically and intellectually from textual or visual materials, even when they arrive as part of a larger fonds. To arrange and describe objects as something distinct from documents is to implicitly claim that they do not play a role within the fonds, and do not provide evidence of, or information about, the actions of a creator.*[53]

Darms uses the example of a wooden box called the Magic Box, which is part of a collection by David Wojnarowicz, an "artist, writer, musician, performer, photographer, and activist".[54] The box itself was not written on but it was part of the Wojnarowicz's personal expression. He stored it under his bed, "adding objects to it occasionally".[55] While the individual items in the Magic Box have no original order, the box as a collection assembled by a creator does. The potential archival treatment of the Magic Box as an object represents two fundamental archival principles at odds with one another: to preserve the intellectual or physical arrangement of collections (the fonds), and to preserve the physical objects within collections.[56] This is something Lord reflects on with regards to the Official First World War Art Collection at Archives New Zealand:

> *in an archival setting, all artistic and artefactual significance becomes superfluous to the primary function of an archive as the repository of historical records. This begs the question: Does the artistic, cultural and commemorative value of the war art collection remain intact within ANZ [Archives New Zealand], or has it been lost?*[57]

Archival discourse shows that archival collections are often constituted as they are because archivists have discounted (for reasons practical and theoretical) the value of objects as signifying or displaying other forms of cultural expression such as dance, cultural display, weaving, oral stories and whakapapa, or buildings such as wharenui. One result of this is the marginalisation and alienation of non-western cultures and other groups from archival collections, and the silencing of their memories where memories are contained in and transmitted through sequential works of duration such as oral stories and poems, or music, dance, and film.[58]

Conclusion

There is nothing in the archival canon which says that objects can't be archives and quite a lot that says that they are. Maybe we as archives professionals need to be less precious about holding on to our mental models of what is and what is not an archival item, and more open to experiencing the archival item as object and all that it can represent. While objects in archival collections may be considered unnecessary or extraneous, this may be because of our praxis-based understanding rather than any theoretical purview. As a result, we may be guilty of thinking that 'an object cannot be an archival item because it would be inconvenient for 'my' institution to keep it' or 'because I consider it does not fit well with the rest of the archives'. Overall, there may be no practical nor theoretical reason to exclude an object from an archival collection and quite a few archival principles which demand objects are included. Restricting items for resource-based reasons is understandable, but just because we can't (or don't) select and maintain an object in an archival collection, we can't assume it's wrong to do so generally speaking. Objects *are* archives no more or less than documents *are* archives.

Allowing an archival item to *be* an object may also open the way for further questioning of the limitations of more traditional archival praxis. It can help address whether the archival principles of province and original order can still define and defend the Archive and examine any selection and description bias. Accepting both the archival item as an object and the 'object as archival item' may also help to support a more reflective process around how mental models can delegitimise other perfectly legitimate views and step the discipline further into a place where the archival collections can be comprehensively experienced on a broader level.

Bibliography

Anderson, Scott, and Robert Allen. "Envisioning the Archival Commons." *The American Archivist* 72, no. 2. (2009): 384-400. https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.72.2.g54085061q586416.

Barros, Amon, Adéle de Toledo Carneiro, and Sergio Wanderley. "Organizational Archives and Historical Narratives: Practicing Reflexivity in (Re)Constructing the Past from Memories

and Silences." *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 14, no. 3. (2019): 280-94. https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-01-2018-1604.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations.* Translated by Harry Zohn. New York, NY: Schocken, 1955/2007.

Bettington, Jackie, Kim Eberhard, Rowena Loo, and Clive Smith, eds. *Keeping Archives*. 3rd. ed: Australian Society of Archivists, 2008.

Bowker, Geofrrey C., and Susan Leigh Star. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Briet, Suzanne. *What Is Documentation? English Translation of the Classic French Text.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1951/2006. http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~roday/briet.htm.

Buckland, Michael K. "Document Theory: An Introduction [Preprint]." In *Records, archives and memory: Selected papers from the Conference and School on Records, Archives and Memory Studies, University of Zadar, Croatia, May 2013,* edited by Mirna Willer, Anne J. Gilliland and Marijana Tomić. Zadar, Croatia: University of Zadar, 2013. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/87s642x7.

———. "Information as Thing." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 42, no. 5 (1991): 351-60. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199106)42:5<351::AID-ASI5>3.0.CO;2-3.

———. "What Is a 'Document'?" *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 48, no. 9. (1997): 804–09. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199709)48:9%3C804::AID-ASI5%3E3.0.CO;2-V

Darms, Lisa. "The Archival Object: A Memoir of Disintegration." *Archivaria* 67, Spring. (2009): 143-55. https://www.academia.edu/74895265/The_Archival_Object_A_Memoir_of_Disintegration.

De Nardi, Sarah. "An Embodied Approach to Second World War Storytelling Mementoes: Probing Beyond the Archival into the Corporeality of Memories of the Resistance." *Journal of Material Culture* 19, no. 4 (2014): 443-64. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183514554987.

Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai. "Artefacts and Archives." n.d., accessed February 1, 2023, https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/heritage/heritage-topics/artefacts-and-archives/.

Edwards, Elizabeth. "Thoughts on the "Non-Collections" of the Archival Ecosystem." In *Photo-objects: On the materiality of photographs and photo archives in the Humanities and Sciences,* edited by Julia Bärnighausen, Costanza Caraffa, Stefanie Klamm, Franka Schneider and Petra WodtkeMax Planck Institute for the History of Science, 2019. https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/21998.

Ellis, Judith, ed. *Keeping Archives*. 2nd. ed. Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Thorpe in association with The Australian Society of Archivists Inc, 1993.

Ferraris, Maurizio. *Documentality: Why It Is Necessary to Leave Traces.* Translated by R. Davies. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Ferraris, Maurizio, and Giuliano Torrengo. "Documentality: A Theory of Social Reality." *Rivista Di Estetica* 57. (2014): 11–27. https://doi.org/10.4000/estetica.629.

Fortier, Alexandre, and Elaine Ménard. "Inked in Time and Space: Exploring the Documentality of Tattoos " *Knowledge Organization* 45, no. 4 (2018): 292–96. https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2018-4-292.

Gloyn, Liz, Vicky Crewe, Laura King, and Anna Woodham. "The Ties That Bind: Materiality, Identity, and the Life Course in the "Things" Families Keep." *Journal of Family History* 43, no. 2 (2018): 157-76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0363199017746451.

Hjørland, Birger. "Domain Analysis in Information Science: Eleven Approaches, Traditional as Well as Innovative.". *Journal of Documentation* 58, no. 4 (2002): 422–62. https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410210431136.

Johnson-Laird, P.N. *Mental Models: Towards a Cognitive Science of Language, Inference, and Consciousness.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Jones, Natalie A., Helen Ross, Timothy Lynam, Pascal Perez, and Anne Leitch. "Mental Models: An Interdisciplinary Synthesis of Theory and Methods." *Ecology & Society* 16, no. 2 (2011). https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-03802-160146.

Ketelaar, Eric. "Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities." *Archival Science* 12. (2012): 19–33. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-011-9142-5.

Lakoff, George. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Le Deuff, Olivier, and Arthur Perret. "Paul Otlet and the Ultimate Prospect of Documentation." *Proceedings from the Document Academy* 6, no. 1 (2019): article 14. https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/6/1/9.

Lester, Peter. "Of Mind and Matter: The Archive as Object." *Archives and Records* 39, no. 1 (2018/01/02): 73-87. https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2017.1407748.

Lord, Caroline. "Artwork, Artefact or Archive? The Evolution of New Zealand's Official First World War Art Collection." *Journal of Australian Studies* 44, no. 4 (2020/10/01 2020): 473-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2020.1837915.

Roeschley, Ana, and Jeonghyun Kim. "Something That Feels Like a Community": The Role of Personal Stories in Building Community-Based Participatory Archives." *Archival Science* 19, no. 1 (2019): 27-49. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-019-09302-2.

Rosch, Eleanor. "Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 104, no. 3 (1975): 192–233.

———. "Principles of Categorization." In *Cognition and Categorization*, edited by Eleanor

Rosch and B. B. Lloyd, 27–48. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978.

Rylance, Keli. "Archives and the Intangible." *Archivaria* 62. (2006): 103-20. https://www.archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12890/14121

Sanderson, Kay Mary. "Digital Materiality, Heritage Objects, the Emergence of Evidence, and the Design of Knowledge Enabling Systems". PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2017.

Schlak, TIm. "Framing Photographs, Denying Archives: The Difficulty of Focusing on Archival Photographs." *Archival Science* 8. (2008): 85-101. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9081-6.

Tanselle, G.Thomas. *A Rationale of Textual Criticism.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

Watson, B. M. "Please Stop Calling Things Archives." *Perspectives on History: The News Magazine of the American Historical Association*, January 22 2021. https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/january-2021/please-stop-calling-things-archives-an-archivists-plea.

Yeo, Geoffrey. "Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects." *The American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (2008): 118-43. https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.71.1.p0675v40tr14q6w2.

Endnotes

1. Darms, "The Archival Object," 143.
2. K. Sanderson, May 13 2021, post to NZRecords listserv, quoted with permission.
3. Sanderson, "Digital Materiality, Heritage Objects, the Emergence of Evidence, and the Design of Knowledge Enabling Systems".
4. Rylance, "Archives and the Intangible," 106.
5. Sanderson, "Digital Materiality, Heritage Objects, the Emergence of Evidence, and the Design of Knowledge Enabling Systems", i.
6. New Zealand, "Protected Objects Act," schedule 4.
7. Rylance, "Archives and the Intangible."
8. Rylance, "Archives and the Intangible," 104.
9. Ibid., 104.

10. See, for example, Schlak, "Framing Photographs, Denying Archives."
11. See, for example, Anderson & Allen, "Envisioning the Archival Commons."
12. Society of American Archivists, 'Artifact' *Dictionary of archives terminology*. https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/artifact.html
13. Dept. of Conservation, *Artefacts and archives*; Lord, "Artwork, Artefact or Archive?"
14. New Zealand, "Protected Objects Act," schedule 4.
15. Ketelaar, "Cultivating archives," 28.
16. See, for example, Johnson-Laird, *Mental Models;* Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things;* Rosch, "Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories" and "Principles of Categorization."
17. Jones et al., "Mental Models," 1.
18. Johnson-Laird, *Mental Models*, 410.
19. Bowker & Star, *Sorting Things Out*.
20. Buckland, "Information as Thing."
21. Ibid.
22. Ketelaar, "Cultivating archives," 24.
23. Ferraris & Torrengo, "Documentality," para. 18.
24. Darms, "The Archival Object."
25. Ferraris &Torrengo, "Documentality," para. 17.
26. Ferraris, *Documentality.*
27. Fortier & Ménard, "Inked in Time and Space."
28. Buckland, "Document Theory."
29. Le Deuff & Perret, "Paul Otlet and the Ultimate Prospect of Documentation."
30. Buckland, "What is a 'document'?," 805. *Italics* in the original.
31. Briet, *What is Documentation?*
32. Buckland, "Information as Thing," 354.
33. Seals are listed as a specific example of a record in Section 4 of the Public Records Act 2005, but the context of the discussion implied that the poster meant 'matrix', i.e., the thing that creates the seal.
34. Yeo, "Concepts of Record (2)."
35. Ketelaar, "Cultivating Archives," 23.
36. Rigney, "The Dynamics of Remembrance", 348, as cited in Ketelaar, "Cultivating Archives," 30.

37. Sanderson, "Digital Materiality, Heritage Objects, the Emergence of Evidence, and the Design of Knowledge Enabling Systems", 3.
38. Ibid, 135.
39. Ibid, 1, chapter 7.
40. Yeo, "Concepts of Record (2)."
41. Lester, "Of Mind and Matter."
42. Ellis (Ed.), *Keeping Archives,* 413-414.
43. Bettington et al. (Eds.), *Keeping Archives,* 508-509.
44. See, for example, Sanderson, chapter 4.
45. Roeschley & Kim, '"Something That Feels Like a Community'."
46. De Nardi, "An embodied approach."
47. Edwards, "Thoughts on the "Non-Collections" of the Archival Ecosystem," 67.
48. Yeo, "Concepts of Record (2)," 122.
49. Bowker & Star, *Sorting Things Out.*
50. For example, Watson, "Please Stop Calling Things Archives."
51. For example, Barros et al., "Organizational archives and historical narratives," Gloyn, et al., "The Ties That Bind," and Ketelaar, "Cultivating Archives."
52. Benjamin, *Illuminations.*
53. Darms, "The Archival Object," 143-144.
54. Ibid., 144.
55. Ibid., 146.
56. Ibid., 148.
57. Lord, "Artwork, Artefact or Archive?," 487.
58. Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism.*