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ARANZ ARCHIVES & RECORDS ASSOCIATION OF NZ TE HUINGA MAHARA

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ON THE COVER

Image of Will Hansen, *Archifacts* 2025 contributor

OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION (1976)

THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION SHALL BE:

1. To foster the care, preservation and proper use of archives and records, both public and private, and their effective administration.

2. To arouse public awareness of the importance of records and archives an in all matters affecting their preservation and use, and to co-operate or affiliate with any other bodies in New Zealand or elsewhere with like objects.

3.To promote the training of archivists, records keepers, curators, librarians and others by the dissemination of specialised knowledge and by encouraging the provision of adequate training in the administration and conservation of archives and records.

4. To encourage research into problems connected with the use, administration and conservation of archives and records and to promote the publication of the results of this research.

5. To promote the standing of archives institutions.

6. To advise and support the establishment of archives services throughout New Zealand.

7. To publish a journal at least once a year and other publications in furtherance of these objects.

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EDITORIAL

By Sarah Welland



Haere mai, welcome to the 2025 issue of *Archifacts*.

I have been thinking about the whakataukī "*kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua - I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past*"[1]. I have been wondering whether the last year has demonstrated that this may be easier said than done, particularly for those of us with some form of responsibility for heritage records and archives.

I suspect that for many of us, our ability to listen to the echoes of the past while surveying the horizons of the future continues to be compromised by a working context influenced by the whims of other agencies, groups and individuals who may not always understand what we do. While the results of this can vary and occasionally be positive, I am concerned that this state can also result in the continuation of what Cuellar and others have called "archival debt". That is, "the myriad issues we now grapple with as a profession, including harmful or inadequate description, performative or competitive collecting, languishing backlogs, failure to recognize staff potential, shortsighted fund management, neglected constituencies, a lack of documentation, and poor project management…"[2]

Most of us probably know of situations like this. The never ending back-log. The meetings where people speak on our behalf. The constant demands around doing more with less. The same old tired 'jokes' about digitising everything.

It can get pretty tiring.

Which brings me (quite unapologetically) to *Archifacts* and why it is so important.

While it is not a 'professional journal' in the strict sense of the word, *Archifacts* is a key voice for all of us involved in recordkeeping practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Each issue provides a variety of ideas, examples and voices, giving us the much-needed sense that we are not alone, that the issues we are facing are also faced by others, and that solutions can, and do, exist. It can also help us (to quote Richard Foy in his thought-provoking *President's Report*) to work together as a team and carry out "*our* work and *our* calling". *Archifacts* can provide some welcome insight into *why* we are doing what we are doing (beneficial or otherwise) and *how* we can change things for the better.

The 2025 issue is no exception. Eamonn Bolger's article *Records Appraisal and Disposal of Government Records 20 years on from the Public Records Act 2005: A Review of Progress* makes sobering reading, as well as a timely example of how lack of traction in Archives New Zealand can create ongoing impact on recordkeeping practices in government agencies. On a more positive note, Rauhina Scott-Fyfe demonstrates the ongoing value provided by a new archivist role in *A Relational Approach to Digitisation: Hocken's Kāi Tahu Digitisation Project and the Beattie Papers – A Case Study*, while Stephen Clarke addresses how our intellectual capital has a key part to play in the ethical management and use of AI in his article *Ethical AI, RIM and the Role of Ontologies*. We also have Alison Day discussing the merits of inclusive cataloguing in their review of the book *Inclusive Cataloguing: Histories, Context, and Reparative Approaches*, and Lachy Paterson and Anne Jackman introducing the important role of *The Preserving Local History and Educational Trust Te Pupuri I Nga Hitori o Te Rohe Trust* in their article *Accessing the Pictorial Supplements of the Otago Witness*. Particularly, how the Trust helped with the digitisation of pictorial supplements for uploading into its *Recollect* site. The benefits of using Recollect as an archives-focused content management system are also discussed by Abigail Warne in Abigail's *Review* of Recollect as a Content Management System.

However, discussion of systems and ideas cannot exist without the people behind them – often quietly passionate advocates of good recordkeeping practice. We lost one of these stalwarts in 2025 with the death of Lindsay Fergusson. Kathryn and Brad Paterson's *Obituary* for Lindsay outlines just how much he contributed to archives and recordkeeping in this country, and in doing so,

they provide a good example of why we as professionals should never abandon hope in the face of what seem to be a continuing stream of louder voices, bigger demands, and dogged ignorance. This ability to keep going is also clearly demonstrated in our *Getting to Know You* articles where Hollie Taiwhao and Will Hansen introduce themselves.

I hope you will enjoy this year's issue – one that has been brought about not only by the willingness of the authors of the articles to provide content but also by the hard work of co-editors Maja Krtalić, and Alison Day, and the support of the ARANZ Council. As you will see, this year's issue has a different flavour to that of 2024, but I consider both issues a testimony to the work that so many do to ensure that our records and archives are managed appropriately.

Keep walking backwards.

ENDNOTES

1. Rameka, Lesley, "Kia Whakatōmuri Te Haere Whakamua: 'I Walk Backwards into the Future with My Eyes Fixed on My Past'", *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, vol 17, issue 4, 387–98, 2016, available at https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1463949116677923

2. Cuellar, Jillian, Audra Eagle Yun, Jennifer Meehan, and Jessica Tai, "Defining Archival Debt: Building New Futures for Archives." *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*, vol 10, issue 1, 2023, available at https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol10/iss1/8.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



By Richard Foy

In my 2024 President's Annual Report for Archifacts, I began with a reference to the oft-quoted aphorism "*change is a universal constant*". At that time, this was my reflection on the confronting and tumultuous times within our sector, in the midst of shrinking public services, restructuring of institutions, and general malaise brought on by 'austerity'.

A year on, in 2025, many of those changes remain in motion and continue to be felt within our community and by members. However, I'm reminded of a personal mantra that I tell myself regularly - in times of existential desperation as well as in moments of personal contentment - "*Everything is temporary. Nothing is permanent.*" I tell myself this because it helps me keep perspective when times are tough, but also when things are going swimmingly, so that I don't get too despondent, nor too complacent with my lot in life.

Those words and sentiments are of no specific origin, but they possess a striking similarity to the Buddhist doctrine of *anicca*, the mark of impermanence that exists in the Universe as all things, physical and mental, come into being and eventually dissolve. The tenet of *anicca*, or impermanence, also has strong associations with the thermodynamic concept of *entropy*, the tendency for systems to naturally drift towards greater disorder and dissolution.

I draw out these philosophical and scientific notions of impermanence and disorder because they are the forces that our archives, records, and information management community are in perpetual pitched battle with. We are constantly reminded of the ephemeral nature of memory and the evanescence of our human existence in time and history. As archivists, record keepers, and information managers, we often take quixotic stands against the *agents of deterioration* - in vain hope of holding back the inevitability of decay, and of disappearing from memory, from record, from space-time.

Despite the gloomy presence of *anicca* and *entropy*, ours is not a futile pursuit. Even if information chaos is inevitable, there's nobility and human value in holding on to, and preserving, our memories and identities - however fleeting that may be on a cosmic timescale. Civilisations, empires,

nation-states, institutions, and communities are all temporary, according to Buddhist tradition and the laws of thermodynamics, but for brief moments our collective and individual lives carry meaning. Someone had better be keeping an account of us in those moments.

That's *our* work, and *our* calling.

We are not alone in our noble pursuit as a profession to remember, and to be remembered. This is where I draw strength, and hope, from our interconnectedness with others who share our thirst for recollection and remembrance. I refer to those who work adjacently and collectively alongside us in the archives, records and information world - librarians, museologists, archaeologists, researchers, genealogists, historians, educators, creatives, and all those committed to protecting, and creating, our cultural heritage and democracy.

Ours is a team-sport. If we're ever going to truly succeed in our collective mission, we really need to learn how to play as a versatile, purposeful, and coordinated team. Teamwork - at both sector and ecosystem levels - is what I'm instinctively drawn to as a strategy for sustained success. The challenges facing our ecosystem demand that we work in alliance with adjacent parts of civil society - our fellow associations. We must actively engage with the institutions that collect, manage, preserve and provide access to the primary 'sources'- notably archival records, artefacts, and places - and also influence the arms of government responsible for public policy and funding. The challenge is simply too big for our association alone. Working together - across disciplines, institutions, and communities - is how we shape our sector's future.

Our sector faces tremendous and momentous change in the years ahead. Not just from the sheer scarcity of resources and waning public attention, but from the creeping advances in digital information, data storage, and access - and the imminent onslaught of artificial intelligence (AI). We're being inundated with endless servings of 'AI Slop' churned out by powerful, hyper-scaled Large Language Models (LLMs). The surging quantity and improving quality of this synthetic slop is making it almost impossible for mere humans to discern fact from generated fiction. To filter the signal from the noise.

This is where I have faith in our community. Archivists are the OG data scientists. We have always worked to amplify our signal over the noise, mining the *context* and meaning from the chaos of *content*. We're well placed to face artificial intelligence, neural networks, and sycophantic chatbots head-on. We're exactly the professionals who can understand and exploit the benefits of LLMs, rather than simply being swamped or befuddled by them.

The cacophony of artificial 'intelligence' and 'information' assaulting our society's senses will surely have profound implications for our profession, like all technological advancements. But, as society's addiction for the 'artificial' and the 'synthetic' grows at vast scale, I believe that we'll want to lean into what is uniquely and distinctively non-artificial - that is, being human. Our human profession deeply understands and upholds the values of provenance, evidence, authenticity, trust, and the human experience. This is our difference. Where LLMs find statistical patterns in data, we look for meaning.

I'll say it again. This is *our* work. This is *our* calling.

It is our community of fabulous - and organically intelligent - humans that continues to draw me to ARANZ. Co-convening the 2024 ARANZ/ASA/PARBICA conference in Ōtautahi reminded me of the deep connections I have with this community, its professionals, and its institutions. The conference felt like both a reunion and a homecoming - reaffirming for me that the archives and records community is my professional home, my people, my tribe. I know that many other conference delegates shared those same feelings of kinship and connection. All 100% natural, nothing artificial.

Next year, 2026, will mark the 50th anniversary of the Archives & Records Association of New Zealand, *Te Huinga Mahara*. As we all look towards that momentous anniversary date, we'll want to spend some time acknowledging, remembering, and celebrating the first fifty years of this wonderful Association. Half a century is not even a blink of an eye for the cosmos, but it's roughly half a human life for some of us. We can begin contemplating the next 50 years of our Association's life, first by honouring our collective past, and then by imagining what we want to become. I'm betting that we humans will be firmly enmeshed in a rich, diverse, and flourishing ecosystem alongside our partners and stakeholders, all

the while harnessing the utility of our AI assistants. It's anyone's guess whether ARANZ will make 100 years, because *everything is temporary*, but if we do, it'll be from the efforts of our enduring human relationships, values, and connections as an Association.

I conclude by acknowledging and thanking all those who contribute to the strength and vitality of our Association - my fellow ARANZ Council members, Branch Committees, ex-officio volunteers, and our wider membership who continue to show up, speak up, and support one another. My warm thanks also go to the editorial team behind Archifacts - Sarah Welland, Dr Maja Krtalić and Dr Alison Day. Thank you for stewarding this journal with care, expertise, and dedication. Archifacts remains a vital *space*. Not just for publication, but for contemplation, commentary, and conversation across our community.

Happy reading!



REVIEWS REPORT

By Alison Day

Kia ora, I am Alison Day and I have taken over the position of Reviews Editor from Ashwinee Pendharkar. I am a PhD candidate in Information Systems at Victoria University of Wellington and I am also an ARANZ Executive Council member.

This edition of *Archifacts* contains a book review and a review of the Recollect platform. This aligns with the expanded scope of the review section, encompassing not only books but also podcasts, open-access journals, blogs, and software, in fact, anything related to records and/or archives that would be of interest to our readers.

I want to increase the number of reviews in 2026 and would welcome expressions of interest from reviewers as well as any review suggestions you wish to contribute. Only 300 words required for a review!

Please email Alison at reviews@aranz.org.nz for further information.

UNESCO MEMORY OF THE WORLD

Aotearoa New Zealand 2025 Inscriptions

By Jane Wild, Chair, UNESCO Memory of the World Trust Aotearoa New Zealand

The UNESCO Memory of the World Register recognises items and collections of unique national significance.[1] The Memory of the World programme was established by UNESCO in 1992 to raise awareness of the significance of unique documentary heritage and to support preservation and access to these collections. The Aotearoa New Zealand register was initiated in 2010 by the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO. The National Commission also supports other UNESCO initiatives including the UNESCO Creative Cities Network[2] and the first New Zealand global geopark, the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark.[3]

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND REGISTER

The Aotearoa New Zealand register welcomes the 56th inscription in 2025 with the exceptional *William F Crawford* Collection at Tairawhiti Museum Te Whare Taonga o te Tairawhiti. This collection of over 5,000 glass plate negatives documents the development of Gisborne and its surrounding district from 1874 through to 1912. The photographs range across people and places, including large events, commercial interiors and informal picnics. Many of the 5,000 + images are now online, thanks to ongoing digitisation by Tairawhiti Museum.[4] It is very significant for the Memory of the World Trust to have our first inscription from the Eastland, the "land of the first light", and the photographic format provides a powerful record.

INTERNATIONAL MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

In 2025 we also celebrate the *Katherine Mansfield literary and personal papers and belongings* collection being added to the International Memory of the World Register.[5] This significant research collection of Katherine Mansfield's writing at the Alexander Turnbull Library was originally inscribed on the New Zealand register in 2016. We now have four inscriptions represented on the International Register, with the others being the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi,* the *Women's Suffrage Petition* and the *Sir Edmund Hillary Archive*.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND NOMINATIONS

We continue to seek unique documentary heritage collections for the Aotearoa New Zealand register. For more information and advice please register an expression of interest through the website.[6] Nominations for the 2026 register close on 31 May 2026.

ENDNOTES

1. Memory of the World Aotearoa New Zealand Ngā Mahara o te Ao, "About New Zealand Memory of the World", n.d., available at https://unescomow.nz/about-us, accessed 9 July 2025.
2. UNESCO,"Creative Cities Network", n.d., available at https://www.unesco.org/en/creative-cities, accessed 21 July 2025
3. Waitaki Whitestone Geopark. "Our UNESCO Story", n.d., available at https://www.whitestonegeopark.nz/our-unesco-story, accessed 21 July 2025.
4. Tairawhiti Museum Te Whare Turanga o te Tairawhiti, "Searching for: Crawford", n.d. available at https://collection.tairawhitimuseum.org.nz/objects?query=Crawford, accessed 9 July 2025.
5. See "Katherine Mansfield literary and personal papers and belongings" in UNESCO, "UNESCO Memory of the World Register, 2025, available at https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/register2025, accessed 9 July 2025.
6. See: https://unescomow.nz.

Crawford was able to comfortably take his camera anywhere from city events to marae to coastal settlements

2025



Ropata's tangi. Self portrait by W F Crawford on board SS Hinemoa 1897.

William F Crawford Collection

The collection of over 5,000 glass plate negatives created by William Fitzgerald Crawford (1844–1915) is an unparalleled record of the development of Gisborne and the district between 1874 and 1912. Crawford had an ability to make quality images that both were informative and artistic.

His style could easily be described as journalistic. Its breadth covers nearly all aspects of life from important events to simple rural living. The growth of Gisborne is well documented, and social and business activities are well represented. Subjects appear comfortable in the camera's presence.

Nomination supporter Karl Johnstone writes: "At a time when many visual records reinforced colonial ideologies of Māori decline, Crawford's lens offered a counterpoint: portraying Māori as dynamic, expressive, and resilient – caught mid-karanga, mid-haka, mid-laughter."

Archive Location

Tairawhiti Museum
Te Whare Taonga o te Tairawhiti

unesco National Committee

Inscribed onto the UNESCO Memory of the World Aotearoa New Zealand Register in 2025

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RECORDS APPRAISAL & DISPOSAL OF GOVERNMENT RECORDS

20 years on from the Public Records Act 2005: A review of progress



By Eamonn Bolger

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the current state of appraisal and disposal implementation processes introduced by Archives New Zealand (Archives NZ) under the *Public Records Act 2005* (PRA). Appraisal is one of the most important activities undertaken by any archival institution; most commonly it determines what records from agencies such as groups and organisations are of sufficient archival value to warrant permanent retention and what records are of temporary value and appropriate for destruction. Disposal (or sentencing) is part of this process, often involving the consistent identification of high value records as archives against a disposal authority and destroying low value records after a specified period.

The points covered here may be of interest to a wide range of groups and individuals, particularly those interested in the accountability and transparency of government decision-making, rights and entitlements, and specialist and historical research. This is because appraisal and disposal are prerequisite processes in the identification and preservation of archives generally.

The appraisal of records has been a core function of New Zealand's national archives since the establishment of the then National Archives following the *1957 Archives Act*. However, during this early period appraisal decisions were often poorly documented and did not appear to follow any consistent methodology. This lack of appraisal documentation has frustrated some modern researchers and Archives NZ itself when looking for explanations as to why some records were retained as archives and others destroyed.

By the mid 1980's the appraisal process became more systematic with the introduction of structured appraisal reports. This change at least partly reflected increased process maturity at National Archives - something necessitated by the "Rogernomics"[1] revolution in government from 1985. The political state also led to unprecedented quantities of records suddenly becoming available for appraisal owing to restructuring across government, the dis-establishment

of many previously core agencies such as the *Ministry of Works*, and the creation of State-Owned Enterprises which inherited many government functions.

Since this period, an even greater challenge for appraisal has been an ongoing technological revolution, with ever increasing quantities of digital records being created which require a completely different approach to appraisal. Most significantly, a change from a largely reactive 'end of life' lifecycle approach commonly applied to physical records to a proactive interventionist 'continuum' approach which necessitates intervention at the point of digital records creation (or before).[2]

In my article on records appraisal published in the October 2009 - April 2010 edition of Archifacts (*How do we get it right? Some thoughts on Appraisal in New Zealand and what it means for us as archivists, records managers, researchers and other stakeholders*),[3] I outlined three potential future scenarios for appraisal within the New Zealand government context. The first scenario was that Archives NZ re-engineers appraisal processes in recognition of the changing technological and recordkeeping environment. The second was that Archives NZ does not adapt its appraisal approach to the new environment. The third was that Archives NZ 'muddles through', making some changes to appraisal processes but avoiding a full commitment to change.

This paper considers the progress Archives NZ has made in adapting its appraisal and disposal implementation approach since 2010 and reflects on which of the above scenarios best fits Archives NZ's current approach. The focus then shifts to exploring the issues and factors impacting on improving the level of appraisal coverage by Archives NZ. To do this, the paper focuses on information from two key Archives New Zealand publications; the *State of Recordkeeping Reports*[4] (hereafter Recordkeeping Reports) and the *Public Sector Information Management Survey Findings*[5] (hereafter Survey Findings). These Recordkeeping Reports and Survey Findings were conducted between 2018 and 2024 to assess how Archives NZ had progressed against their own measures of success; namely, against levels of disposal coverage and implementation. The article also refers to periodic discussions regarding appraisal methodology and strategy in several of these reports.

Firstly however, it needs to be noted that Archives NZ's published reports referencing appraisal during this period lack coherent, consistent strategy and methodology for identifying and prioritising the highest value records in government. Rather,

Archives New Zealand's reporting around appraisal has largely focused on measuring appraisal progress by the level of disposal coverage across government rather than the value of records appraised. Despite the limitation of this measure, it is still a useful indicator of Archives New Zealand's success in achieving its nominated objectives around disposal coverage over time.

A NEW ACT FOR A CHANGING RECORDKEEPING WORLD

By the late 1980's the *1957 Archives Act* was not fit for purpose, particularly in the face of contemporary recordkeeping issues. Most pressingly, the introduction of electronic systems for creating and storing records was steadily eroding the relevance of the traditional concept of the appraisal archivist as a 'sifter' of paper records, often decades after they had been closed. A Public Records Bill was introduced into Parliament as early as 1984 but a later version only passed as the *Public Records Act* (PRA) in 2005. The new PRA finally introduced a modern framework for managing government records irrespective of format, providing Archives NZ with the means to engage in the management of records and information from creation to disposal via a range of instruments. These included mandatory recordkeeping audits and the ability to issue standards.

For appraisal, the most significant change was the introduction of a public notification process (PRA s20). This meant that appraisal recommendations (usually in the form of appraisal reports and disposal schedules) were required to undergo a public comment or notification process before final approval by the Chief Archivist. In essence this meant that the public would be provided a right to comment on draft appraisal recommendations prior to the final approval of disposal authorities by the Chief Archivist. The primary means for facilitating this was by making appraisal documentation available for public comment via the Archives New Zealand website for a minimum of 30 days. This provision was a late addition to the Public Records Bill, added in response to public submissions.

At the time there were divergent views within National Archives about the likely effectiveness of the public comment or notification process, particularly for facilitating external engagement around appraisal approvals. Based on my personal experience working with these processes, the public notification process has subsequently proven to be an ineffective, clumsy and time-consuming tool for facilitating public engagement in appraisal decision-making – one that has unnecessarily complicated the appraisal process and provided little benefit to the quality of the final disposal authorities.

ARCHIVES NEW ZEALAND'S APPROACH TO APPRAISAL, DISPOSAL COVERAGE AND IMPLEMENTATION

In May 2017 Archives New Zealand outlined its ambitious appraisal plan around increasing disposal coverage in its *Archives 2057 Strategy*.[6] The Strategy boldly described the level of information management maturity as "unacceptable" among agencies 10 years after the PRA[7] and proposed that within 4 years (i.e. by 2021) a "great" state would exist where all core public sector records would be covered by disposal authorities, thus increasing coverage from 80% coverage to 100%.[8] The Strategy did not indicate how such a result might be obtained, and as demonstrated below, the disposal coverage measures have never come close to being achieved.

In my opinion, Archives New Zealand's primary focus should be to ensure that the most significant records of government are identified, appraised and preserved as archives. A secondary purpose of appraisal is authorising and enabling the destruction of low value records. Regardless of whether all government agencies have disposal authorities or not, it is my view the current Archives New Zealand approach overly focuses on the level of disposal coverage for low value records at the expense of ensuring the identification and preservation of high value ones. This opinion is predicated on two related assumptions. Firstly, that some functions and activities of government are more important than others. For example, records of Treaty of Waitangi negotiations would be considered more important than administrative records such as staff recruitment files. Secondly, that it is not feasible to ensure total disposal coverage and consistent implementation across all of government.

While defining quality in an appraisal sense can be difficult, the risk of over-focusing on the level of quantity means that even if the level of disposal coverage increases over time, this will not always ensure that the most significant records in government are covered. As a result, it would be extremely difficult for Archives New Zealand to not only ensure that 100% of government agencies have up to date disposal schedules, but that these schedules are consistently implemented in ways that capture all appropriately designated high value records.

Getting agreement about which records should be prioritised from an all-of-government perspective is challenging, despite the adoption of practice-based initiatives such as function-based appraisal. However, any workable government-wide appraisal solutions are made almost impossible for Archives NZ due to the ongoing absence of an appraisal methodology that is supported

by a coherent implementation strategy in a recordkeeping context. This seemingly untenable state is exacerbated by two further factors. The first is that far more information is being created than can be effectively managed, making it inevitable that many nationally significant records will not be preserved as archives. The second is that responsibility for ensuring disposal coverage and implementation is currently left by Archives NZ with individual agencies. These agencies may not always prioritise appraisal work, irrespective of the potential archival value of their records or any risks to their preservation and future accessibility.

This last point may be due in part to agencies finding Archives NZ's processes for transfer and disposal difficult to facilitate. The 2022 / 2023 Recordkeeping Report[9] notes that public sector agencies have struggled to implement records disposal processes, including transfer to Archives NZ. For example, approximately 35% of agencies were reported to be at the "beginning stage" for developing disposal authorities and approximately 50% at the "beginning stage" of implementing them.[10] This is a poor result given that of the five levels of information management maturity identified by Archives New Zealand (beginning, progressing, managing, maturing and optimising),[11] "beginning" is the lowest. It is therefore not surprising that out of the three non-compliance themes highlighted in the report (creation and capture, access to information, and disposal of records) one was records disposal.[12]

Earlier Recordkeeping Reports also demonstrate a similar theme around higher levels of non-compliance for records disposal. For example, the 2021-22 Report noted that more than half were at "beginning" maturity for having a current agency-specific disposal authority, with just a quarter achieving a maturity rating of "managing" (i.e. achieving basic compliance).[13] Between 2018/19 and 2021/22 recordkeeping surveys show that the percentage of agencies having disposal authorities covering all or nearly all records actually fell, from 55-60% compliance in 2018/19[14] to 40-45% in 2021/22.[15] The Chief Archivist's forward to the 2021 Recordkeeping Report acknowledged this trend, stating "a consistently low area of maturity is the implementation of disposal and archival transfer".[16] There also seemed to have been little improvement and even some regression with disposal implementation since the 2018/19 Recordkeeping Survey.

Based on my own experience with Archives NZ's audit processes over the years, I suspect the actual level of disposal coverage is likely to be lower than reported in the Recordkeeping Reports. This is because some agencies reported a

high level of disposal coverage without considering their bespoke or specialised business information and data systems. These systems are often more complex to appraise, resulting in the implementation of disposal actions that are better suited to traditionally structured 'document centric' management systems such as electronic and document management systems. This seems to be confirmed in part by the Survey Findings for 2021-22, which shows that the percentage of agencies implementing some form of records destruction had fallen from 65-70% in 2018-19[17] to 55-60% in 2021-22.[18]

The Recordkeeping Reports and Survey Findings from 2018 to 2024 also show a pattern of stagnant or declining levels of disposal coverage and implementation. A review of these reports shows that Archives NZ's explanations for this have included challenges with implementing digital disposal owing to six reasons. Namely; a lack of functional capability in many digital systems; appraisal being onerous for both the agencies and Archives NZ; a lack of resources and priority given to implementing disposal in agencies; challenges with large scale digital transfers to Archives New Zealand; the suspension of physical records transfers in Wellington; and the moratorium on the destruction of records of potential relevance to the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and Faith Based Institutions*.[19]

While many of the reasons above can be owing to the particular complexities of digital records, the situation for physical records is unfortunately no better. Under the PRA agencies with large holdings of historical physical records are often motivated to develop and implement disposal authorities so they can transfer records to Archives NZ and reduce the cost of managing non-current records they are not funded to maintain or preserve. However, the longstanding suspension of physical record transfers to the main Wellington office has resulted in several perverse effects. One is that historical records are now at increased risk of damage or destruction as agencies, struggling with storage space, place records in substandard storage or management. The other is that a large backlog of stored physical archives is growing in many agencies in the Wellington region, and these will all require transfer to Archives NZ when the transfer restriction is eventually lifted. When this happens no-one yet knows, but I suspect that almost inevitably this will be at a time of reduced resources, making it much harder for Archives NZ to effectively deal with the electronic and physical backlog. For example, in the 1990's, there was a specialist team of three or four appraisal

archivists led by a manager who specialised in appraisal type work and advice. However, ongoing restructuring of Archives NZ functions (including the development of a shared 'heritage campus'[20] with the National Library) may not only reduce regulatory and recordkeeping capacity around transfer and disposal but also inhibit any effective and strategic solutions to the issue.

RECENT ARCHIVES NZ DISPOSAL COVERAGE AND IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

Archives New Zealand has launched several initiatives addressing low levels of disposal coverage and implementation over the last ten years, perhaps in response to this issue being outlined in successive Recordkeeping Reports and Survey Findings. The first was the development of Functional Disposal Authorities (FDA's), as referenced in the 2017/18 Recordkeeping Report.[21] In this report the FDA initiative was described as a component of Archives New Zealand's work to transform disposal machinery across government, and FDA's described as covering specific functions and activities common to multiple government agencies. As a result, these FDA's were expected to provide more consistent and broader disposal coverage across agencies and, consequently, ensure better identification of high value records.

The first stage of the FDA initiative involved Archives New Zealand staff working with the (then) District Health Boards around 2017-18 to develop a disposal authority to test elements of how this new approach might work. In the 2018-/19 Recordkeeping Report it was reported that several disposal authorities were completed, and staff were going to engage with other agencies about the FDA initiative and alternative processes.[22] However, the lack of reference to FDA work in subsequent Recordkeeping Reports suggests that this work has not progressed – something that seems confirmed by the lack of any new sector-specific FDA's in recent years.

In the 2020/21 Recordkeeping Report an Appraisal, Disposal and Implementation (ADI) redesign project was referenced.[23] This project was initiated in recognition that appraisal and disposal systems need to be re-designed for the digital age, and this was to be an all-of-government multi-year programme consisting of three discovery, design and delivery phases. The project also planned to make a change in appraisal approaches from what was described as a "top-down" approach (probably forms of 'macro-appraisal' that had considered record values across government) to a greater focus on individuals and communities. Work commenced in assessing the

technology and tools information management staff in public agencies would need to manage records efficiently. This included automated rules and algorithms to apply disposal policies. However, in the subsequent Recordkeeping Report (2021/22) ADI is noted as being paused to address 'regulatory uplift components'.[24] The lack of reference to ADI in more recent Recordkeeping Reports (including 2023/24) suggests that this work has not progressed since.

Requirements around appraisal still however continue to be acknowledged by Archives NZ. For example, in the Chief Archivist's apology to the survivors of abuse in care dated 20 November 2024,[25] the Chief Archivist apologised for Archives NZ's previous failures to effectively monitor government recordkeeping by not exercising better control over the disposal of care records. The Chief Archivist proposed to amend the *Public Records Act 2005* to strengthen powers around the monitoring of government recordkeeping and the taking of action when issues were identified. A care records disposal authority project was also proposed – one which was to include records relating to aged residential and in-home care.

While Archives NZ's reactive response is understandable in the aftermath of the Royal Commission of Inquiry Abuse in Care reports,[26] I do not think the Chief Archivist's suggestions will do much to address Archives NZ's current need to develop a strategic approach towards their appraisal practice that will prioritise high value records, particularly during a time of reduced resources. In my view the current PRA has sufficient provisions for monitoring public office recordkeeping, Archives New Zealand has tended to be reluctant or inconsistent in using them.

FACTORS INFLUENCING DISPOSAL COVERAGE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Several factors outside of Archives NZ's control should however be acknowledged when it comes to the lack of progress in mitigating issues with appraisal practice. Firstly, the exponential increase in information and data managed by government agencies. This has overwhelmed and invalidated the more traditional methodologies for appraisal and disposal implementation (of which some are still used by Archives NZ) and also left what the Chief Archivist described in the Executive Summary of the 2020-21 as a 'digital landfill'.[27] Secondly, the replacement of electronic content management systems (which often had integrated records management functionality) with systems primarily designed for collaboration and information sharing. For example, *SharePoint*. Without major configuration and/or add-ons, such systems are non-compliant with most

key mandatory recordkeeping requirements around creation, access, use, and re-use, especially disposal implementation. However, government agencies often overlook this, seeing instead significant cost benefits when it comes to implementation and out-of-the box collaboration potential.

In times of significant resource constraints across the government sector, there is an understandable unwillingness by senior management to invest substantial resources in addressing the 'hidden costs' of recordkeeping compliance. The net result is that information management professionals tend to struggle to get the attention of decision-makers when business requirements for new or upgraded systems are being developed, or they can be left out of the loop completely. When this happens, the lack of existing disposal functionality in new systems means that even if agencies create and apply disposal schedules approved by Archives NZ, many will have no means of effectively implementing the range of disposal practices required for compliant recordkeeping.

Some archival institutions have provided guidance about how to improve the compliance of specific collaboration systems including Archives NZ's own *Microsoft 365* advice.[28] Even with such guidance, a lack of specialist skills to configure these systems and a lack of resources to prioritise the work required to improve compliance means that many government agencies with these systems are unable to ensure the preservation and accessibility of information over time.

CONCLUSION

In my 2009 Archifacts article considering future appraisal scenarios, I stated the following:

> The second scenario is that Archives New Zealand does not adequately adapt its appraisal approach to this changing environment and consequently becomes increasingly disassociated from the modern recordkeeping sector and community stakeholders. This will see a decreasing proportion of high value records being appraised and preserved.[29]

Evidence from Archives NZ's Recordkeeping Reports and Survey Findings from 2017 onwards demonstrates that the second scenario is being realised, with consistently low levels of disposal coverage and implementation in government agencies. While initiatives such as the ADI and FDA projects indicate Archives NZ's awareness of a need for change, there appears to be a lack of the will required to sustain effort through to new appraisal outcomes – something possibly exacerbated by the influential role of the Department of Internal Affairs on day-to-day business.

Additionally, there remains a concerning and continuing lack of any form of methodology and coherent strategy to facilitate the proactive identification and

prioritisation of the highest value records in government. In my 2009 article, I noted that without a strategy "a substantial proportion of significant electronic records will be lost without even being assessed by an appraiser".[30] This state is continuing, and with it, the possibility of it leaving permanent holes in the fabric of New Zealand's archival holdings.

This view has been further reinforced by recent correspondence I have had with Archives NZ about their current appraisal review practices. I was advised that since late 2023, Archives NZ had changed its approach to reviewing draft appraisal reports by implementing a prioritised queue according to need, risk and agency dependency. This change was described as temporary and resulting from a number of factors, including the redirection of senior staff time and energy to meet the expectations of *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care*[31] recommendations.

Despite engaging with Archives NZ regarding appraisal since 2023, this was the first I had heard of this approach. I subsequently checked the Archives NZ website for appraisal advice but found no reference to this changed practice. This seems odd since the consequences of this approach may result in less time for staff to review appraisal reports and a progressively adverse impact on overall disposal coverage across government. Information about this changed approach should have been communicated to government agencies and information management professionals to allow them to prioritise their work programmes.

Moving forward, Archives NZ requires a coherent, proactive and consistent approach towards appraisal, both to increase disposal coverage and to prioritise the identification of high value records from the point of creation. This necessitates a significant change from its current passive approach of leaving the responsibility for disposal coverage to government agencies which may not prioritise such work. One possible solution to a more active approach is greater collaboration between Archives NZ and government agencies. This would create intentional partnerships that would improve the quality and level of disposal coverage. It would also prioritise the development of suitable methodology and strategy to ensure that collaborative partnerships are ethical, consistent and effective.

However, in concluding this paper, I find I am less optimistic about the future of appraisal practice at Archives NZ now than when I wrote my original article in 2009. In fact, I am less optimistic than at any other time since I entered the archives profession in 1988. Analysing the evidence from Archives New Zealand's own reports has been a sobering experience – one that demonstrates

that appropriate appraisal and disposal practice in government agencies has deteriorated more than I had originally anticipated.

It seems that Archives New Zealand remains wedded to a failing status quo – one caused by either an unwillingness to change or an inability to make meaningful changes to their appraisal approach. Either way, this is of great concern for a government recordkeeping context that continues to grapple with growing system-based complexity, exponential increases in data, and a range of issues around equitable, ethical, and accountable information management.

A possible net result of this state could be that government agencies will end up having an increasing influence over what records will be available for future researchers, historians and others. They will, by necessity, have needed to step into the gap left by Archives NZ and invested in the resources required to ensure the ongoing accessibility of records they consider to be of high value. If this happens, I suspect that Archives New Zealand, overwhelmed by the change it has not adapted to, will (as I predicted in 2010) continue along a path of increasing irrelevance.

There are times when maintaining a failing status quo is far riskier than making some fundamental changes and risking mistakes or criticism for doing so. The area of appraisal and disposal is one of them. Ultimately, Archives New Zealand has a choice- adapt and reprioritise to meet the changing environment, or carry on as usual and ignore the fact that the world is changing,

ENDNOTES

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7. ibid. Page 9.
8. ibid. Page 12.
9. The 2023/24 r*eport on the State of Government Recordkeeping* was published during the time this paper was being written. When it came to Archives New Zealand's appraisal practices, it demonstrated similar findings to the 2022/23 report, indicating little change.
10. See Appendix 3, page 47 of Archives New Zealand, "Report on the State of Government Recordkeeping 2022/23", Te Rua Mahara o Te Kawanatanga Archives New Zealand, n.d., available at https://www.archives.govt.nz/about-us/publications/report-on-the-state-of-government-recordkeeping/report-on-the-state-of-government-recordkeeping-2022-23, accessed 10 July 2025.

11. For example, see "Report on the State of Government Recordkeeping 2022/23".
12. ibid. p. 38.
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ETHICAL AI, RIM AND THE ROLE OF ONTOLOGIES



By Stephen Clarke

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses how ethical AI governance can be supported by records and information management (RIM) processes and practices, particularly the use of relational ontologies. The role of RIM in ethical AI governance is, and will increasingly be, vital in ensuring AI content is compliant with legislation, and that it demonstrates the characteristics of reliability, integrity, authenticity and usability as set out in RIM standards such the *ISO 15489 Standard for Records Management.*[1]

This narrative is deliberately general and aspirational. It aims to provide an opportunity for further thinking and debate around the ethical use of AI, and the vital role that records and information management plays in its governance. To do this, it summarises content from some of my previous articles on the topic of AI, RIM and ontology, it also introduces some of my more recent thinking on the topic. It starts by covering what ethical AI is, and the role of RIM in achieving these aims. It then moves onto a summary of the role of ontologies in RIM, why they can be the ultimate underpinning design model for AI, and why they are essential in RIM as we move from traditional manual paper paradigm practice towards digital-native, automated modes of operation. It then concludes with some brief discussion of ontology-based RIM approaches for ethical AI.

WHAT IS ETHICAL AI?

As artificial intelligence (AI) technologies proliferate across public and private sectors, ethical governance has emerged as a central concern. Organisations and regulators are scrambling to develop responsible AI principles, accountability frameworks, and compliance protocols.[2]

For the purposes of this article, I define Ethical AI as the practice of designing, developing, and deploying artificial intelligence systems in a way that aligns with fundamental human values and rights. It's about ensuring that as AI becomes more integrated into our lives, it does so in a manner that is fair, transparent, accountable, and beneficial to society. At its core, Ethical AI seeks to prevent harm and promote well-being.

Ethical AI governance provides the framework to operationalize these principles. It is the comprehensive system of policies, processes, and structures that an organization puts in

place to ensure its AI activities are conducted responsibly. This governance extends beyond simple legal compliance to embed ethical considerations throughout the entire lifecycle of an AI system, from its initial conception to its eventual decommissioning.

THE KEY ASPECTS OF ETHICAL AI GOVERNANCE

The practice of Ethical AI and its governance revolves around several key principles:

- *Fairness and Non-Discrimination:* AI systems, particularly those used for decision-making in areas like hiring, lending, and criminal justice, must be free from biases that could lead to unfair outcomes for individuals or groups. This involves scrutinising the data used to train AI models for inherent biases and implementing techniques to mitigate them, and keeping full and accurate records of these activities.

- *Transparency and Explainability*: For an AI system to be trusted, its decision-making processes should not be a "black box." Stakeholders should be able to understand, to a reasonable degree, how an AI model arrives at its conclusions. This is crucial for identifying errors, challenging biased outcomes, and ensuring accountability. Robust recordkeeping of these processes is a critical underpinning to achieving these outcomes over time.

- *Accountability and Human Oversight*: Clear lines of responsibility must be established for the outcomes of AI systems. This means that there should always be a "human in the loop" who can intervene, correct, or override an AI's decision, especially in situations where the outputs impact on humans' rights and entitlements. Organisations must be accountable for the impact of their AI technologies and must maintain records for this purpose.

- *Privacy and Data Protection*: AI systems often require vast amounts of data to function effectively. Ethical AI demands that this data, particularly personal information, is collected, used, and stored in a way that respects individual privacy and complies with data protection regulations. Having this information available for future audit purposes can be challenging.

- *Reliability and Safety*: AI systems must be robust and secure, performing as intended without causing unintended harm. This includes protecting them from malicious attacks and ensuring they function safely in real-world environments

In practice, Ethical AI governance involves establishing internal AI ethics apparatus, creating clear AI usage policies and codes of conduct, conducting risk assessments to identify potential ethical harms, and fostering a culture of responsible

AI development and deployment within an organisation. These practices mirror the existing apparatus and practice for information governance and there is a clear opportunity to align and/or combine the functions within established organisational governance structures.

THE CRUCIAL INTERSECTION WITH RECORDS & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The principles of Ethical AI are deeply intertwined with the RIM discipline. As AI systems generate and consume vast quantities of information, the role of RIM professionals becomes paramount in ensuring ethical governance. The interface between Ethical AI and RIM manifests in several critical areas, which I will briefly summarise.

High-quality, well-governed data is the bedrock of trustworthy AI. RIM professionals play a vital role in establishing and maintaining robust data governance frameworks. This includes ensuring data quality, managing 'data lineage' (provenance), and implementing appropriate access controls. Without sound data governance, the risk of "garbage in, garbage out" in AI systems, leading to biased and unreliable outcomes, is significantly heightened.

AI systems create new types of records, from the prompts used to interact with generative AI to the automated decisions made by machine learning models. These records must be managed to ensure their authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability. RIM principles provide the foundation for identifying what AI-generated information constitutes a record, determining how long it needs to be retained for business, legal, or accountability purposes, and ensuring it is stored in appropriate recordkeeping systems, not just within the AI platform itself.

A key aspect of Ethical AI governance is the ability to demonstrate how an AI system was developed and how it makes decisions. RIM professionals are essential in ensuring that the entire AI lifecycle is properly documented. This includes records of the initial business case, the data used for training, the design and testing of the model, and any subsequent updates or changes. This documentation is crucial for audits, investigations into algorithmic harm, and maintaining public trust.

AI presents unique challenges for information management, including the potential for creating misinformation, infringing on intellectual property rights, and perpetuating biases present in its training data. RIM professionals are at the forefront of developing policies and procedures for the responsible creation, use, and management of AI-generated content, helping to mitigate these risks.

In the age of AI, the role of records and information management extends beyond traditional archiving. It is a strategic function that underpins the very possibility of ethical and trustworthy artificial intelligence. By applying the established principles of their profession to the new frontier of AI, RIM professionals are critical to ensuring that these powerful technologies are harnessed for the benefit of all and ensure transparency, accountability, and the minimisation of bias.[3]

THE ROLE OF RIM IN ETHICAL AI GOVERNANCE

Many of the challenges currently being addressed by those debating the ethical use of AI are not new. In fact, RIM professionals have often confronted the same ethical questions now being rebranded through an AI lens: how to ensure data quality, maintain transparency, protect privacy, and uphold public trust.

Far from being left behind, I believe that RIM professionals hold a key role in aiding ethical AI governance, both in terms of managing the risks and realising the benefits of AI. This belief is fuelled by my suspicion that much of the current discussion around the ethical management of AI systems are based on the often under-employed and/or under-appreciated RIM skills and archival processes as summarised above. As a result, RIM-related tools and thinking may offer practical pathways to AI accountability, explainability, and compliance.[4]

Traditionally records management practice has been designed for creating, maintaining, and ensuring the accessibility of information within a paper paradigm. For example, EDRMS and document management systems were created to address the increasing scale of electronic documents, and to provide electronic access across space (you no longer had to have access to a filing room in a specific location, or get files delivered to your in-tray). There were also collaborative systems (such as SharePoint) that were adapted to manage information to a certain level and achieve 'document management' capabilities. However, these systems are often not yet able to fully manage the sheer scale or complexity of current information, and to achieve 'records management' level capability. AI tools can finally address this issue. For example, where collaboration tools provide document management but not records management level attributes and outcomes at an evidential level, AI can minimise human error and deficiencies in manual classification and manage metadata attribution, consistent labelling, version control, etc, particularly if underpinned by the automation of RIM tools and practices such as ontology-based information modelling.

With the rapid uptake of AI, much of how we 'see' and treat information is being disrupted, and this is also true of both the public and private sectors with the growing use of GenAI business tools. While the Aotearoa New Zealand government is developing guidance,[5] the day-to-day use of AI can still often result in practices that not only plagiarise existing content, but raise several issues around information access, use, and dissemination as summarised above in the key aspects of AI Governance. As a result, the need for robust ethical frameworks and governance mechanisms around AI (particularly when used in business systems) becomes mission critical for modern organisations.

This is where RIM practice and practitioners come into their own. While we have seen the rise of (often self-proclaimed) new role descriptions, such as "AI Ethicists", and "AI Governance Experts", these roles are often based on a lack of awareness that many required solutions already exist in RIM. For example, I consider that RIM practice can support ethical AI through appropriate and accountable practices around data and information stewardship, integrity, process management, disposal, privacy and access. RIM practices in these areas are not new, being based on legislation such as the Public Records Act 2005,[6] and the Privacy Act 2022,[7] and established theory and practice. For example, the original Lifecycle Model was conceived by Phillip Coolidge Brooks and Emmett J. Leahy in the United States National Archives in the 1940's,[8] before itself being superseded in the 1990's by the Records Continuum Model to accommodate the non-linear nature of electronic and digital records.[9]

THE ROLE OF ONTOLOGIES IN RIM

Before delving into its pivotal role in ethical AI, it is necessary to understand the role of the ontology in RIM professional practice. Ontology provides a structured and conceptual framework for organising information, which improve the consistency, quality, and discoverability of data and information by creating a shared semantic layer between the data and information and the user, providing the following benefits:

- *Improved Data Quality*. Ontologies establish clear definitions for concepts, ensuring that data across systems is consistently structured and semantically aligned. This directly contributes to higher data quality, as it eliminates ambiguity and misinterpretation.

- *Enhanced Interoperability*. By using a common conceptual framework, ontology supports seamless data integration across diverse business systems. This is particularly valuable in large

organisations where business-related information often resides in silos.

- *Efficient Data Governance*. Ontologies assist in data governance by clearly defining the roles, rules, and relationships of data elements, making it easier to manage access, compliance, and security.

- *Better Knowledge Discovery*. With an ontology in place, organisations can leverage advanced search and reasoning capabilities. Users can query data in more sophisticated ways, discovering relationships and insights that may not be apparent through traditional keyword-based search.

Semantics

The role of semantics is central to ontologies due to its ability to model the meaning of data and information by focusing on how concepts, terms, and relationships are defined and understood. This includes semantic principles such as:

- *Defining Terms and Concepts*. Semantics ensures that each term or concept within the ontology has a clear, agreed-upon meaning. This is critical for enabling shared understanding between different systems or people.

- *Relating Entities*. Semantics in ontology modelling defines how entities are related (e.g., part-whole, type-instance, cause-effect relationships). This allows systems to interpret the meaning behind data, rather than treating it as isolated facts.

- *Disambiguation*. Semantics helps to differentiate between homonyms (words with multiple meanings) and synonyms (different words with the same meaning), ensuring that the data model captures the correct meaning in context.

- *Formal Semantics*.: Ontologies use formal logic to define the relationships between entities, allowing systems to reason over data and derive new meanings or facts based on the modelled relationships.

Semantics gives meaning to the concepts and relationships in an ontology, allowing for effective communication between systems and enabling machines to interpret the data in a human-like way.

Semantics and Tautology

Semantics also help ontologies to avoid the risk of tautology, which is saying the same thing in different ways (for example "free gift"). This ensures that relationships and definitions are logically consistent and non-redundant, aiding:

- *Consistency in Definitions*. Ontologies must avoid tautological definitions (where terms are defined using themselves), ensuring clarity and avoiding circular reasoning in data relationships.

- *Logical Integrity*. While tautology in natural language is often seen as redundant in formal logic, it can ensure that certain statements are always true (e.g., a "dog is a dog"). In ontology design,

tautological rules help maintain the logical integrity of the system, ensuring that any entity is correctly classified without contradiction.

- *Minimising Redundancy*. A well-constructed ontology minimises tautological or redundant information to avoid inefficiencies and confusion, ensuring that each concept is defined uniquely and with purpose.

The avoidance or minimisation of tautology ensures logical consistency within the ontology, avoiding circular definitions and maintaining a robust framework where entities and relationships are logically sound and non-redundant.

Epistemological principles

Epistemology focuses on the theory of knowledge, particularly around how we can clarify what we think we know. Within the context of data and information modelling, epistemology more specifically relates to how knowledge is structured, acquired, and validated within the system at a semantic level. As a result, ontologies can apply epistemological principles to classify or categorise different facets of information in order to help both people and machines differentiate between "what we know" and "how we know it". For example, by:

- *Knowledge Representation*: Defining the relationships between entities and concepts to represent knowledge in a way that both humans and machines can understand.

- *Assertions and Inference*: Ontologies allow for logical reasoning, where new knowledge can be inferred from existing data. This can come from embedded epistemological principles that ensure that the data structures support the derivation of valid conclusions and decision-making.

- *Trustworthiness*: Epistemological principles can also ensure that the provenance of data (where it comes from and how it was derived) is clear, making it possible to evaluate the credibility of the information.

Ontologies use epistemological principles to ensure that data is not just stored, but that its meaning and sources are well-understood. These principles shape how knowledge is represented, validated, and organised within the ontology, ensuring that it reflects the way knowledge is structured in the real world.

ONTOLOGY AS THE ULTIMATE UNDERPINNING DESIGN MODEL FOR AI

Due to the considerations and benefits outlined above, ontologies not only provide a strong foundation for RIM, but also RIM provides a strong foundation for AI governance when it is used in relation to business systems. For example, an ontology-based approach to RIM can support AI business systems in returning results that are clearer, more structured, and with a more semantically rich understanding

of the records. This is particularly important when using a query-based approach to apply records management policies such as retention and disposal.

Employing ontological approaches can also enhance better information governance around the use of AI through broader system interoperability, information compliance, contextual accuracy, and scalability. For example, ontologies can help with:

- *Knowledge Representation*: Defining the relationships between entities, and concepts to represent knowledge in a way that both humans and machines can understand. This helps systems differentiate between "what we know" and "how we know it".

- *Assertions and Inference*: Ontologies allow for logical reasoning, where new knowledge can be inferred from existing data. This helps ensure that the data structures support the derivation of valid conclusions and decision-making.

- *Trustworthiness*: Ensuring that the provenance of data (where it comes from and how it was derived) is clear, making it possible to evaluate the credibility of the information.

Ontologies can also ensure that relationships and definitions are logically consistent and non-redundant. For example, they can help with:

- *Consistency in Definitions*. Ontologies avoid tautological definitions (where terms are defined using themselves), ensuring clarity and avoiding circular reasoning in data relationships.

- *Logical Integrity*. Ontologies aid formal logic where required, ensuring that certain statements are always true (e.g., a "dog is a dog"). In ontology design, inherent rules help maintain the logical integrity of the system, ensuring that any entity is correctly classified without contradiction.

- *Minimising Redundancy*. A well-constructed ontology minimises vagueness or redundancy to avoid inefficiencies and confusion, ensuring that each concept is defined uniquely and with purpose.

Overall, these aspects help to avoid the use of circular definitions, maintaining a more robust framework where entities and relationships have a greater chance of being logically sound and non-redundant, and helping to better represent the way knowledge is structured and represents the real world.

Ontologies also provide value when customising AI models like Generative Pre-Trained transformers (GPTs), Large Language Models (LLMs), and in particular business-centric Small language Models (SLMs) in making them more relevant and effective in specific cultural and organisational contexts. We currently see this challenge with different GPTs across cultures e.g.

Mistral from the EU, DeepSeek from China, or Claude from the USA. The underlying cultural perspectives, socio-political perspectives and societal mores increasingly present an emerging frontier for understanding information context across cultural realms.

Accordingly, for organisations to derive the most value from these models within the business environment, they need to be fine-tuned to specific contexts—both organisationally and culturally. Ontologies can help to create culturally specific frameworks that define key concepts, practices, and language use. They may also (eventually) allow generally accepted conceptual understandings to be mapped across culturally specific concepts. For example, an ontology tailored to a particular cultural context may be able to 'teach' an AI system the nuances of communication, norms, and values that are unique to that culture. For example, a science-based organisation with a highly specialised domain of knowledge a general-purpose language model will usually lack the precise understanding of the technical language and interdependencies within that domain. By incorporating the organisation's ontology, an AI system could better grasp these nuances within existing business systems, hopefully leading to more relevant outputs and more accurate decision support.

In addition, ontology-driven fine-tuning can help organisations embed their internal policies, values, and mission-critical objectives into AI models. This ensures that any AI-driven automation or decision-making processes are aligned with the organisation's strategic priorities, not only minimising risks and enhancing efficiency, but also enhancing AI systems to be more culturally aware and contextually appropriate. This could be particularly valuable in applications like customer support, content creation, and global-scale decision-making.

Knowledge graphs

In addition to the benefits derived from ontologies themselves, ontology-based knowledge graphs also play a critical role in supporting better AI logic processing using business systems. For instance, they can serve as a practical, flexible and dynamic option for representing the relationships and hierarchies defined in the ontology, enabling AI systems to interact with, infer from, and visualise the structured relationships between an organisation's records and its associated data and metadata. This is because knowledge graphs organise information into nodes (entities) and edges (relationships), making it easier for AI to traverse and query complex data structures.

Knowledge graphs can also, due to their dynamic, integrated

and extensible nature, allow for continuous updates and integration of new data. This enables the better support of evolving organisational needs, enhancing RIM maturity and capability and helping AI systems perform complex, context-aware queries. For example, identifying relationships between records or extracting trends across datasets. Four practical implications of ontologies include:

1. *Enhanced Personalisation*. Ontology enables LLMs to generate more relevant, contextually aligned outputs, whether the goal is customer engagement, internal communication, or strategic analysis.

2. *Improved Collaboration* Across Teams. Ontology can serve as a shared knowledge framework, helping cross-functional teams communicate more effectively and work together on AI initiatives with a common understanding.

3. *Ethical AI*. Ontology helps organisations develop AI systems that are more culturally sensitive, ethical, and aligned with their values. This is particularly important in avoiding biases and ensuring fair, inclusive AI applications.

4. *Faster Time-to-Value*. With an ontology in place, organisations can accelerate the fine-tuning of AI models. The time and effort needed to adapt a generic LLM to an organisation's needs are significantly reduced, allowing businesses to extract value from AI more quickly.

WHY RELATIONAL ONTOLOGIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR RIM

Traditional hierarchical taxonomies have long served as a useful basis for data and information management tools in RIM (for example, by supporting function-based classification systems). However, they are increasingly proving insufficient to handle the complexity and dynamism of modern data and information environments, particularly in the private and public sectors. Key limitations hierarchical taxonomies are:

1. *Rigidity*: Taxonomies are typically static. Once data is categorised, it's difficult to adapt to new information, relationships, or changes in the way data is used or understood.

2. *Loss of Context*: Hierarchical taxonomies often force data into narrow categories, which can result in a loss of the rich, contextual relationships that exist between entities.

3. *Over-simplification*: Real-world data is rarely as clean and straightforward as a taxonomy suggests. Complex entities often belong to multiple categories or have relationships.

4. *Poor Adaptation to Change*: In a taxonomical structure, adding new data or understanding new relationships may require reworking entire hierarchies. For example, when new technologies or business processes emerge,

hierarchies can struggle to accommodate these shifts without undergoing significant restructuring.

5. *Inflexible for AI and Machine Learning*: AI systems thrive on understanding patterns, relationships, and context. Without a relational database to "translate", hierarchical taxonomies can limit these capabilities by constraining data into rigid categories, making it harder for AI to detect the subtleties and complex interconnections inherent in relational data.

6. *Fragmentation and Redundancy*: Hierarchical systems often lead to data fragmentation, where similar data is classified in different parts of the taxonomy without clear connections. This can lead to redundancy and inefficiencies, as information that could be linked together remains siloed.

As a solution, a wider, relational, ontological approach could offer further flexibility, interconnectedness, and adaptability in RIM-related tools and practices. It would also allow for the adoption of a more flexible, web-like structure where data points are related through multiple, often dynamic, associations. That is, entities are not forced into one-size-fits-all categories but instead understood in the context of its various relationships—whether those are temporal, geographical, functional, or thematic. Two key advantages of this approach are:

1. *Flexibility and Scalability*: A relational ontology can evolve with the organisation. As new data sources or relationships emerge, the ontology can easily adapt without the need to reclassify everything under a rigid hierarchy.

2. *Contextual Richness*: By capturing relationships between entities in multiple dimensions, a relational ontology offers a much richer representation of information, one that mirrors the complexity of real-world systems and interactions. This allows for more nuanced data discovery, analysis, and decision-making.

For organisations managing large volumes of data and information, a fully relational ontology approach could also help to:

- *Handle Complexity*: Organisations often deal with intricate and complex data ecosystems that include structured and unstructured data, multimedia assets, customer interactions, and Internet of Things (IoT) generated information. A relational ontology can manage these complex interconnections, enabling the discovery of insights that a taxonomical model might miss.

- *Enable Semantic Search and AI*: Relational ontologies are at the heart of semantic search engines and AI applications. Because they capture relationships between data points, they enable more intelligent querying, making it easier to locate

relevant information and generate insights. Ontology-driven AI systems can use this relational web to understand context, reason over data, and deliver more accurate predictions or recommendations.

- *Enhance Interoperability*: A fully relational ontology provides a shared conceptual framework that allows data from different systems to interact seamlessly. This is especially important in large organisations or multi-party collaborations where data silos can hamper efficiency. Relational ontology fosters interoperability by enabling data from various domains to connect in meaningful ways.

- *Allow Dynamic Data Governance*: A relational approach makes it easier to manage data governance in a world of ever-evolving privacy regulations, security requirements, and business needs. Instead of manually updating hierarchical categories and policies, organisations can automate governance processes based on the relationships between data elements. For example, if a new regulation affects data tied to a specific process, a relational ontology can instantly update governance protocols across all related data.

- *Tailor AI Systems to Organisational Contexts*: Relational ontologies enable AI systems to be fine-tuned to the unique processes, workflows, and culture of an organisation. By embedding specific relationships and knowledge structures, organisations can create AI models that are contextually aware and highly relevant.

- *Support Generative AI (GenAI)*: A relational ontology is crucial for enabling GenAI systems to generate contextually and culturally appropriate outputs. By embedding complex relationships and cultural nuances into the model, organisations can ensure that GenAI generates more accurate, meaningful content that aligns with their specific needs.

- *Improve Decision-Making*: With a relational ontology, decision-makers can query data from multiple perspectives, uncover hidden relationships, and make informed choices that reflect the full complexity of the situation.

ONTOLOGY-BASED RIM APPROACHES FOR ETHICAL AI

For the reasons above, I think it becoming increasingly critical for us to have an ontology-based approach to RIM, particularly when it comes to the development of tools and systems that help with the efficient running of AI systems, and for the operation of the AI tools themselves for use in RIM systems or general business applications. With this in mind, I have outlined nine reasons below that explain some of the benefits of doing so.

1. *Provides Semantic Interoperability*. Organisation-based AI systems often operate with diverse datasets and information sources from across a variety of business systems. An ontology can provide a shared vocabulary and standardised structure for data representation to enable more seamless integration across different RIM systems and domains. It can also ensure that records from these disparate sources are interpreted in a more consistent and meaningful way by AI, avoiding some potential misinterpretation by users or the development of information/data silos.

2. *Enhances Contextual Understanding*. Ontologies can also define the relationships between entities, attributes, and processes within records, offering rich contextual information for AI systems to read and analyse, and more accurately apply classifications, policy decisions and any additional contextual metadata. These processes in turn can improve the decision-making capabilities in AI, helping it to grasp the nuanced meanings and relationships inherent in the records and to retain records of these contextual relationships, as well as more trustworthy evidence of these decision-making processes.

3. *Improves Data Governance and Regulatory/Legislative Compliance*. RIM practice requires compliance with a variety of legal, regulatory, and organisational policies.[10] Ontologies can encode rules and classifications that align with these requirements, making it easier for AI to automatically enforce compliance routines and policies within and across business systems. For example, through access permissions, privacy protocols, and legal holds/retention and disposal actions. Not only is this valuable to ensure ongoing business compliance, it also helps to enable better information-related compliance in highly regulated industries such as healthcare, finance, and law, where regulatory adherence is critical.

4. *Aids Efficient Records Classification and Retrieval* Ontology-based approaches allow AI to classify and retrieve records more effectively by leveraging the hierarchical and relational structure of information and also provide the basis for automation of these processes. This ensures that relevant records are surfaced based on their meaning and context rather than just through keywords, enhancing search precision and efficiency for users, as well as access controls, de-duplication and version control.

5. *Provenance Tracking and Process Automation.* Ontologies can provide the apparatus for assigning definitions and workflows around the creation, use and disposal of business records and information, enabling AI to automate and monitor them. Ontology-based frameworks can also facilitate the tracking of provenance, ensuring

transparency and accountability in how records are used and modified by AI systems. This is critical for implementing records and information management practice in AI Business Systems as we move from twentieth century models of lifecycle management to modern data flows were the status of information objects can move through all the phases of the lifecycle, in any direction based on forms of Continuum thinking.[11] This non-linear information model means the ability to capture provenance in ever more complex muti-entity relationships makes it even more crucial to track and capture provenance metadata effectively and retain it over time as part of the record context.

6. Facilitates Explainable AI (XAI). Explainability is critical for AI systems, particularly in high-stakes applications. An ontology-based RIM approach makes it easier to trace and explain AI decisions by linking them back to well-structured, semantically rich data sources. This improves trust in AI systems and enables stakeholders to audit decisions effectively, and retain trustworthy, accurate authentic and usable records of these business processes.

Essentially, we cannot have accountability expressed through governance, audit, or support explainability without the ability to consult the records. That is, the records of inputs, outputs, algorithms, training data, training methods, the determinations and subsequent actions. The maintenance and availability of records, with their contextual attributes, provide information on the process of quality of the underlying data and the logic and reasoning of engine performance, and are therefore critical to understanding the final results of an AI query or process and detecting any potential bias or inaccuracy.

7. *Supports Scalability and Adaptability*. AI systems will increasingly need to adapt to new domains, data types, or regulatory environments. Ontologies can be extended or modified to incorporate new knowledge without disrupting existing structures. This can make the RIM framework scalable and future-proof, thereby allowing for diversification and growth in, and across, AI capabilities and data complexity, extensibility across geographical spaces, languages and cultural frameworks at a more global scale.

8. *Addresses Ethical Concerns.* Ontologies can be used to define ethical guidelines and constraints directly within the RIM framework and associated information architecture, guiding AI systems to operate within pre-determined and well-scoped boundaries, helping to set and enforce boundaries and guardrails.

9. *Aids Enterprise Business Information Standardisation.* By adopting an ontology-based approach, organisations can create a standardised foundation for records management. This can help to reduce inconsistencies and ensure a more uniform application of AI processes across teams, departments, and regions. It would also provide a basis for better systems-based interoperability across organisations and more consistent metadata schema and data classification for cross-organisational information systems and data-lakes.

This approach would also allow for a centralised data dictionary, 'business taxonomy', or term-store. That is, if a new item is added or a term removed or altered, this change can then be applied globally across the data ecosystem - not just locally within the particular silo, single instance, or subset of the overall data enterprise information and data ecosystem.

CONCLUSIONS

In essence, ethical AI governance requires embedded RIM practice, and RIM practice enabled through a relational ontological framework. In combination, these approaches enable organisations who use (or plan to use) AI to develop forms of good and sustainable data and information practice that by design incorporate concepts of data quality, privacy, compliance, and transparency and accountability.

As AI continues to evolve, integrating ontological concepts around established records and information management principles are vital in order to develop workable, responsible, effective and ethical AI solutions through traditional RIM capabilities, particularly since the use of AI technologies in business are only going to expand. RIM concepts, models and approaches are sound but need to be implemented in ways that support both AI automation of RIM practice, and RIM Practice for AI systems and outputs.

ENDNOTES

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A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO DIGITISATION

Hocken's Kāi Tahu digitisation project and the Beattie papers – a case study



By Rauhina Scott-Fyfe (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Ngāi Pākehā)

ABSTRACT

This case study explores a relational approach to digitisation of collection material held at the Hocken Collections which was identified as culturally significant to Kāi Tahu.[1]

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the Hocken Collections ('the Hocken') received funding from the University of Otago's General Alumni Appeal Fund for the purpose of digitisation for preservation of Hocken collection material of cultural and historical significance to Kāi Tahu. This article details the collaborative decisions made during the selection and preparation of material for digitisation, and its digital image capture and digital access, as enabled through the establishment of the Hocken's Māori archivist role and a Kāi Tahu digitisation advisory group. These decisions and processes exemplify a relational approach to digitisation – one that seeks to build and maintain trust in light of historical colonial practices within the context of Aotearoa's collecting institutions.

THE CONTEXT FOR DIGITISING CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT MATERIAL AT THE HOCKEN

In recent years, heritage institutions globally have been instigating processes which both recognise and begin to deconstruct historical power imbalances in collections – especially collections which are by or about indigenous communities. For example, *The Tandanya Declaration*, made in October 2019 at the *International Council on Archives' Indigenous Matters Summit in Tandanya* (Adelaide, South Australia), called for public archives in colonial jurisdictions to acknowledge indigenous cognitive frameworks and knowledge authorities through "respectful engagement across imperial and indigenous worldviews."[2] Within archival collections, such processes have included repatriation and rematriation, reparative description, adoption of more diverse vocabularies, enhancing provenance information, and removing barriers to access to collections.

The Hocken's own journey in this direction began fairly recently.

The Hocken was established by Trust Deed in 1910 based on the gift of Dr Thomas Morland Hocken.[3] A renowned specialist research library, archive and gallery, the Hocken sits within Te Pātaka Mātauraka o Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka (the University of Otago Library) in Dunedin. In 2022, a review by the University Quality Advancement unit co-chaired by Edward Ellison and Professor Tony Ballantyne resulted in the *Review Recommendation Report*,[4] which included recommendations that the Hocken continue to build connections with Kāi Tahu whānui, who hold mana whenua (customary authority) status in the area on which the Hocken Library building stands. The review also recommended increasing access to collection material through digitisation and description work.

It is within this context, then, in 2023, that the Hocken embarked on a programme of digitisation specifically focused on the preservation and enhanced access to collection material of cultural significance to Kāi Tahu

Mā kā huruhuru ka rere te manu – A bird needs feathers to fly

The digitisation of the first tranche of material for the programme was made possible through a grant from the University of Otago's General Alumni Appeal Fund. The grant, intended to increase visibility and access of archives, covered the cost of contracting New Zealand Micrographic Services to carry out the digitisation work onsite at the Hocken from September to October 2023.

Additional funding also enabled the Hocken to establish an initially fixed-term Māori archivist role to support digitisation work. In March 2023 I was seconded into the role, transferring to the Hocken's Archives team. The main purpose of my role was to enhance access for iwi and whānau to the Hocken's archival collections by researching, listing and describing collections of interest to Kāi Tahu

Nā tāu rourou, nā taku rourou, ka ora ai – taking a relational approach

In her 2004 article 'Kaitiakitanga: the role of the Māori Archivist', Jeanette Wikaira (at that time working at the Hocken) described some of the challenges experienced by Māori working in kaitiaki roles within Aotearoa's cultural heritage institutions. Wikaira proposed that:

> change is not going to be effective until a [Māori] world view permeates at all levels... a world-view that incorporates [Māori] values, perspectives and people who work together with mutual respect and can make decisions about [Māori] cultural heritage in equal partnership with [Pākehā].[5]

Taking a lead from Wikaira's vision, I focused on building relationships and sharing information via regular email updates to a wider Kāi Tahu audience. This included local rūnaka (marae-based governing bodies) and their members, the

Ngāi Tahu Archive, Kāi Tahu historians and other Kāi Tahu individuals working within heritage institutions.

Hocken staff also established a Kāi Tahu digitisation advisory group to discuss tikanga around care and handling of archival taonga, description, cultural statements and digital access. This comprised of mana whenua and rakatahi (youth) representatives from three local rūnaka, Ngāi Tahu Archive staff, a Ngāi Tahu historian and Hocken staff. The scope of the group was to:

- Provide feedback/support in response to regular email updates from the Māori archivist relating to material in the Kāi Tahu digitisation project;

- Offer support and advice in response to 'ad hoc' requests regarding specific issues/challenges throughout the project (by email); and

- Attend two advisory group hui (in person or online, approximately three hours each) to discuss and advise on guiding tikanga, selection, description and access.

Reciprocity remains an important and ongoing aspect of the project. Mana whenua and rakatahi members of the advisory group were acknowledged by koha (contribution or gift following Māori protocol) and were invited to the launch of the digitised collection. Copies of the high-resolution files and descriptive metadata were also gifted to the Ngāi Tahu Archive and will be made available on Ngāi Tahu Archive's digital repository, *Kareao*, in due course.[6] Dialogue continues between the Hocken and the Ngāi Tahu Archive about the Hocken's digitisation and description work as it relates to Kāi Tahu.

KEY PHASES OF WORK

Selection

Through consultation with local rūnaka and the Ngāi Tahu Archive, the *James Herries Beattie papers* (ARC-0162, from now on referred to as the *Beattie papers*) were selected as the main focus for the first tranche of digitisation work in the ongoing Kāi Tahu digitisation programme. The *Beattie papers* are one of the most significant collections held by the Hocken, and there was a sense of excitement evident in the suggestion that the entire collection of more than 20,000 pages be made digitally accessible.

The advisory group also identified other material of significance to Kāi Tahu that was held at the Hocken, and which could be appropriate for digitisation in future. This included the *Chapman papers*, *Octavius Harwood papers*, *Edward Shortland journals*, and early church registers.

The Beattie papers

An article by David McDonald in the third issue of *Archifacts* in September 1974 outlined the Beattie papers and their significance to the study of both Māori and European history of

the South Island.[7] The papers include correspondence, newspaper clipping books, notebooks, childhood diaries, manuscripts of published and unpublished works, typescripts, ephemera, plans, photographs, sketches and illustrations.[8] Much indexing and description work of the collection has been done by Hocken staff, but digitisation offered an opportunity for much greater access and use.

A significant part of the *Beattie papers* are the records of interviews with South Island Māori (including from Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe and Waitaha) that were conducted by Beattie in 1920 in collaboration with H.D. Skinner of the Otago Museum.[9] During his lifetime, Beattie travelled by train and bicycle to communities around Te Waipounamu and interviewed more than 130 South Island Māori, including people such as Eruera Poko Cameron, Tiemi Haereroa Kupa, Taare Reweti Te Maiharoa, Tuhituhi Te Marama, Teone Taare Tikao, Eruera Kingi Kurupohatu, Tieke Pukurākau and John Pūao Rakiraki.[10]

Used together with iwi traditional knowledge, Beattie's research notes have become a source of information on place names for Kā Huru Manu (the Ngāi Tahu cultural atlas). The notes have also been used to support biographical information in *Tāngata Ngāi Tahu/People of Ngāi Tahu*, and to inform the claims made to the Waitangi Tribunal under the *Wai 27* claims district.[11] The *Beattie papers* were listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Aotearoa New Zealand Register in 2018.[12]

Preparing the papers for digitisation

Once the selection of priority items for digitisation had been agreed on – namely, the entirety of the *Beattie papers* held in the Hocken's archival collection – the papers were prepared for digitisation. The items were assessed for size, fragility and content. Some items, such as large bundles of correspondence were given individual piece-level reference codes and descriptions. Items were labelled clearly using archival-quality acid-free paper and brass paper clips, with notes for the image technicians relaying any specific requirements around handling. During this process, a spreadsheet listing each item was prepared including reference codes, file names, file type and size, and any additional notes which would aid the image technicians in their work.

Digital imaging

New Zealand Micrographic Services (NZMS) were contracted by the Hocken to carry out high resolution digital imaging on-site over a five-week period in September-October 2023. Leading up to that time, Hocken staff had prepared a working space for the NZMS image technicians with required lighting conditions.

The team from NZMS were welcomed to the Hocken with a mihi whakatau (an informal

welcoming ceremony) by Hocken staff and mana whenua representatives from Ōtākou and Puketeraki Rūnaka. The mihi whakatau gave the NZMS team the opportunity to meet local rūnaka representatives and to get a sense of the significance of the project to the communities.

Two NZMS image technicians worked five days a week, at a rate of around 1000 images per day, to create more than 20,000 high-resolution, preservation quality images of the *Beattie papers*. After physical items were digitally imaged, they were returned to the archives workroom for processing and then returned to the temperature- and humidity-controlled stack. NZMS delivered the digital image files to the Hocken at the end of 2023.

Description

Enhanced description of the collection – particularly identifying subject headings – is ongoing. Enhanced description of records within the Beattie collection was discussed by the advisory group and it was decided that names and place names should be prioritised in description work. As a result, I am continuing to work on enhancing name descriptions with my Hocken colleagues, entering metadata into a spreadsheet to be imported into the Hocken's archival collection management system (MINISIS). In many cases, new personal and place name authorities needed to be created on the system. Two iwi subject headings were also applied to all Kāi Tahu material within the digitised Beattie collection, these being *Kāi Tahu* and *Ngāi Tahu.*

Developing Taoka Māori statements for access

The Hocken's Kāi Tahu digitisation advisory group thoroughly discussed the risks of providing digital open access to the Beattie papers, and a consensus was reached that the benefits outweighed the need to place restrictions on material. Instead, the group decided that a clear *Taoka Māori statement* should accompany Māori material displayed on the Hocken Digital Collections website, and that terms of use – as well as unambiguous descriptions of inappropriate use – should be plainly stated.

The advisory group used the Tauranga City Libraries' *Kaitiakitanga framework* as a starting point for developing a locally-contextualised version of a Taoka Māori statement.[13] The Taoka Māori statement applied to taoka with no known copyright reads as follows:

> Taoka Māori materials provided by the Hocken Collections need to be used appropriately. Whilst no known copyright exists, it may be appropriate to seek endorsement from the iwi, hapū, whānau group/s or individuals to whom this Taoka Māori material relates. When using this material, the mana and dignity of the subjects depicted within should be respected and upheld, in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The extended terms of use went on to define *Taoka Māori* materials as "items, images, published or archival material within the collection which depict or describe:

- Māori individuals (either living or deceased), whānau, hapū or iwi;

- archaeological, historic and contemporary artefacts and visual culture relating to and/or created by Māori;

- traditional rohe (tribal areas), wāhi tapu (sacred sites), mahika kai (food-gathering sites) and kāika (homes or villages) where Māori lived, and/or continue to live;

- mātauraka Māori (systems of knowledge), pūrākau (cultural narratives), tikaka (practices), reo Māori (language), whakapapa (genealogies), ikoa (Māori names), and tūtohu whenua (place names)."[14]

The advisory group also suggested that examples of *inappropriate use* of *Taoka Māori* materials should be stated. A list of examples was developed as follows:

- "Altering images, for example by inappropriate stretching, cropping, fading, altering colours, or replacing any part of an image.

- Printing images on any surface which might:

- be walked on or sat on (e.g. doormats, rugs or cushions);

- be damaged as part of regular use (such as dartboards); or

- come into contact with food (e.g. tea towels, coffee mugs, cake decorations).

- Commercial use, including selling or distributing copies of images for financial gain, unless you have been granted permission from the Hocken Collections to reproduce an image for a specific commercial use (e.g. public display, publication, or use in filming).

- Displaying or describing images in ways that are intended to offend, disparage, or belittle the people, places or subjects depicted within."[15]

An abridged version of the terms of use statement is viewable on the Hocken's *Digital Collections* Recollect website at the time of writing.[16]

Another aspect of access discussed by the advisory group was around how the items would be displayed. A sub-group gave feedback on presentation which resulted in two separate portals on *Digital Collections* – one forthe entire *Beattie papers* collection, a second for digitised Kāi Tahu material.

Updating data and metadata

I can't write this case study without acknowledging the generous work of the University of Otago Library Systems team, who updated data on the library's systems and websites in preparation for the launch of the digitised *Beattie papers* collection. In addition, I must give special thanks to my colleague, Archivist David Murray, who wrangled data from my spreadsheets into *Digital Collections*.

Launch event

The digitised collection of the *Beattie papers* was launched on *Digital Collections* on 6 June 2024. Having an in-person event was another chance to build interpersonal connections: the launch event gathered together mana whenua from Ōtākou, Puketeraki and Moeraki rūnaka, descendants and relations of James Herries Beattie, staff members from across Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, members of the Kāi Tahu digitisation advisory group, staff from the Ngāi Tahu Archive, NZMS staff, board members of UNESCO Memory of the World Aotearoa New Zealand, and others. Copies of the high-resolution files were gifted to the Ngāi Tahu Archive at the launch event.

NEXT STEPS

As with all digitisation work, there is always more that could be done. Some possible next steps in terms of the Beattie papers include digitising and providing access to Beattie's published works, developing easy-to-use finding aids, and working together with the Ngāi Tahu Archive and whānau members to index, transcribe and/or further describe the digitised material (including adding Ngā Upoko Tukutuku subject headings).[17] Other possible next steps include exploring further options for signalling traditional knowledge provenance, and ensuring appropriate attribution and use (for example, by piloting the application of Traditional Knowledge Notices and Labels).[18]

While the project's Kāi Tahu digitisation advisory group has ended its term, it continues to serve as an exemplar to the Hocken and the wider University of Otago Library of partnership with mana whenua in action. The digitisation of collection material of significance to Kāi Tahu continues to be one of the Hocken's digitisation programme priorities, with the Hocken's newly established Digital Capture Unit enabling digitisation to continue in-house.

ENDNOTES

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ACCESSING THE PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENTS

of the Otago Witness

By Lachy Paterson & Anne Jackman[1]

In April 2024, *The Preserving Local History and Educational Trust / Te Pupuri I Nga Hitori o Te Rohe Trust*[2] uploaded newly digitised versions of the pictorial supplements of the early Dunedin newspaper, the *Otago Witness*,[3] covering 1900 to 1924, onto its Recollect site. The Trust expects the years up to the newspaper's demise in 1932 to be added later in 2025. While the Trust's mission is to preserve historical newspapers through digitisation, it maintains a policy of not digitising content that is already microfilmed or digitised. Despite the *Otago Witness* having been both microfilmed and digitised, the Trust made an exception. This article begins with a brief history of the *Otago Witness* and its pictorial supplements and an account of the Trust's work to date. It follows with why the Trust decided to re-digitise the pictorial supplements and the issues it faced and concludes with how it envisages their use in the future.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OTAGO WITNESS AND ITS PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENTS

Newspapers and photography were both early features of colonialism in New Zealand. In Dunedin, the short-lived *Otago News* appeared just months after the colony's founding in 1848.[4] The more successful *Otago Witness*, initially published every two weeks but quickly becoming a weekly, published from 1851 until 1932. The *Otago Witness* first mentions photography in 1853, the closure of a 'Daguerrean Gallery' in the city in 1855, and the opening of the first photographic studio in 1857.[5] It was not until the 1890s that 'photomechanical and half-tone production allowed photographs to be easily reproduced on newsprint',[6] with the *Otago Witness* introducing their pictorial supplements from 1900.[7] As technology advanced, with hand-held cameras and improved film, and as photographs from other districts and countries became more available, newspapers were able to publish a wider range of photographic content.[8]

As a weekly, the *Otago Witness* was aimed at the isolated rural market for whom receiving a daily paper would be difficult. Its publishers had started producing a daily title in 1861, the *Otago Daily Times*[10] and while the *Otago Witness* repackaged news from the daily newspaper, it also developed a different style, including featuring pages for women and children, as well as fiction. It was thus able to attract urban and rural readers from across Otago and Southland, with some subscribing to more than one publication.[11] With the *Otago Daily Times* not printing photographs regularly until 1927, and then somewhat sparingly, the

pictorial supplements of four to twelve (although most often eight) pages were an additional bonus for the *Witness*'s readers. The paper eventually folded in 1932 as better communications enabled most rural folk to receive daily newspapers.[12]

THE PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY & EDUCATIONAL TRUST & ITS WORK

Formed in 2022, the Trust is a registered charity, whose 'goal is to digitise, and make available, all historical newspapers (from 1840) that are at risk of loss or decay'.[13] Most historical newspapers are no longer being published, and many are not well conserved. In some cases, the only surviving copies have even been scrapped and destroyed. While the loss of physical print artefacts is unfortunate, if they have not been microfilmed or digitised, the knowledge of the history, culture, and people of the communities they served also disappears. Because smaller local communities rarely have the resources to adequately conserve their heritage periodicals, the Trust has taken a particular interest in community newspapers.[14]

Of course, the National Library (through its National Digital Heritage Archive and Papers Past website) is New Zealand's primary repository for digitised newspapers and other texts, but it has a finite budget and priority areas of interest. The National Library is one of the Trust's two strategic partners (New Zealand Micrographic Services (NZMS), who undertake the digitisation work, is the other). Once digitised, the Trust makes the content it creates accessible through its own Recollect site,[15] until the National Library can take over kaitiaki duties for these resources by uploading them to Papers Past. *The Marlborough Express* will be the first Trust title gifted and transferred to Papers Past. This is expected later in 2025.

One challenge that the Trust faces is gaining permission from copyright holders to make digitised material publicly available. Even the copyright for titles that have not been published for decades may still be owned by currently existing legal entities. The rights to the *Otago Witness*, for example, are still held by Allied Press. However, the biggest challenge is funding. The Trust applies for small local grants and occasionally works with local organisations to gather the money needed to meet the costs of digitisation, but most heritage groups just do not have large amounts of cash sitting idle. It was therefore very fortunate to gain a sizeable grant from New Zealand's Lottery Grants Board that has enabled it to kick-start its digitisation programme.

The costs are various and substantial; the first being the safe and secure transport of newspapers

from their existing location to the closest NZMS facility.[16] The digitisation of the material to the high quality required for the National Library's Papers Past website, the intended final home, is not cheap especially when the runs may extend over decades. The *Otago Witness* pictorial supplements from 1900 to 1924, for example, comprise more than 10,000 pages, entailing thousands of dollars in digitisation costs.

THE RE-DIGITISATION OF THE OTAGO WITNESS PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENTS

With the *Otago Witness* already microfilmed and digitised, according to its own policy the Trust ought not have re-digitised the paper's pictorial supplements, especially with so many other titles out there still waiting to be done. Unfortunately, the original digitisation of the newspaper from microfilm was optimised for text, resulting in the very low-quality images now available on Papers Past, in which content is often barely discernible and thus, practically unusable. In discussions with two of Dunedin's premier heritage institutions, Toitū Otago Settlers Museum and Hocken Collections, both of whom were having to reimage *Otago Witness* photographs to satisfy requests for them, the Trust also became aware that students often wanted to utilise this material in their assignments. While local Dunedin students could come into the Hocken or Toitū to copy images from the original newspaper, this was more problematic for students further afield. Creating high-quality images of the pictorial supplements would be valuable for students and others wishing to view or use the images. Refilming these supplements also allowed preservation of the physical newspapers, as the paper could not be retired while still required to provide copies of photographs. Institutions will now be able to retire the paper copy to storage, knowing there are quality images freely available on the Trust's Recollect site.

The following image, one of several photographs from a 1905 issue of the *Otago Witness* of a train accident at Chaneys Station near Kaiapoi, demonstrates the issue of quality of digitisation. The details in Figure 1, from Papers Past, are barely recognisable. In contrast, Figure 2, from the Trust's Recollect site, reproduces the same photograph to a far higher standard.

See Fig.1 and Fig. 2.

USE OF THE PICTORIAL SUPPLEMENTS

Historical research into New Zealand topics is almost unthinkable today without using Papers Past to read newspapers online. This ready access has allowed researchers to go in different directions, find new





Figure 1 & 2.

"A general view of the Derailed Engine and Carriages, showing the full extent of the disaster". *Otago Witness*, 5 July 1905, p. 42.

stories, and ask new questions, whether they are local, professional or academic historians. The range of users is wide, including genealogists exploring family connections, or even government employees looking for historical data that might have missed inclusion in other archives.

Another key user group is school students. As the New Zealand history curriculum beds in, school students will increasingly be accessing online digital newspaper content to undertake their research projects, to satisfy the curriculum's focus on Māori histories and colonisation and settlement more generally, and emphasis on primary resources and contexts relevant to communities and rohe.[17] In discussions with a group of Dunedin history teachers, it is clear that teachers value online digital newspapers, use them in their teaching practice and would like to see more available.[18] One teacher also stated that "next term we'll be looking at WW1 and so plan on using the *Otago Witness* [on the Recollect] website quite often."[19]

The digitised *Otago Witness* pictorial collections are well placed to assist school students and other researchers, providing additional visual information to the preponderant textual material. While many of the images relate to people, places and events in the southern half of the South Island, there is also considerable coverage of the rest of the country, as well as photographs from Britain and the Empire, the Pacific and elsewhere. While tāngata whenua do feature in a number of photographs, the images also reveal an appreciation of New Zealand scenery and natural spaces, pride in the country's farming and industrial progress, as well as both national and imperial sentiments. Related photographs were occasionally grouped together, or as montages, but are often mixed eclectically, as seen in the following pages.

See Fig. 3.

Many images marked the colony's development. This included new buildings such as a proposed new girls' school in Dunedin and Hokitika's public buildings, industrial gold sluicing and a waterfall earmarked to generate electricity, and perhaps more randomly, a haul of game birds, and a Chinese conjuror on tour in New Zealand.

See Fig. 4 on the next page.

Several images show fishing, of a Māori man at Kakaunui, and another near the Māori kāika at Puketeraki. Genealogists may find images of relevant people, such as the couple celebrating their golden wedding. Advances in transport as seen in the first aerial flight to Northland grace the page, as do the visit of the Prince of Wales to a Dunedin convalescent home, the unveiling of a war memorial in Foxton, and the latest in Paris fashion.

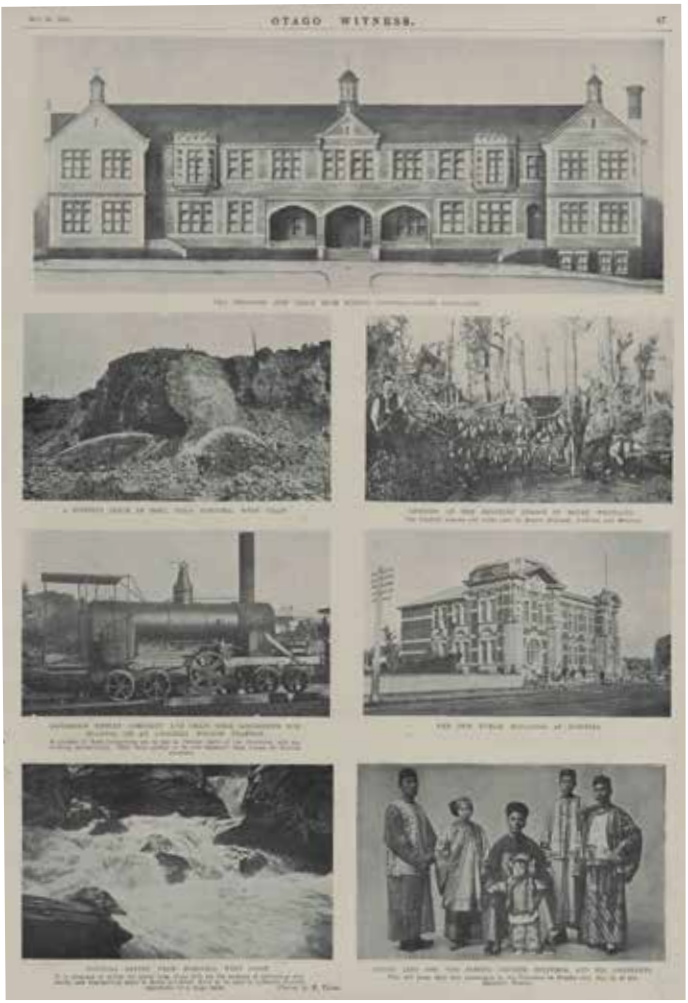


Figure 3.

Otago Witness, 26 May 1909, p. 47.

Figure 4.

Otago Witness, 15 June 1920, p. 36.



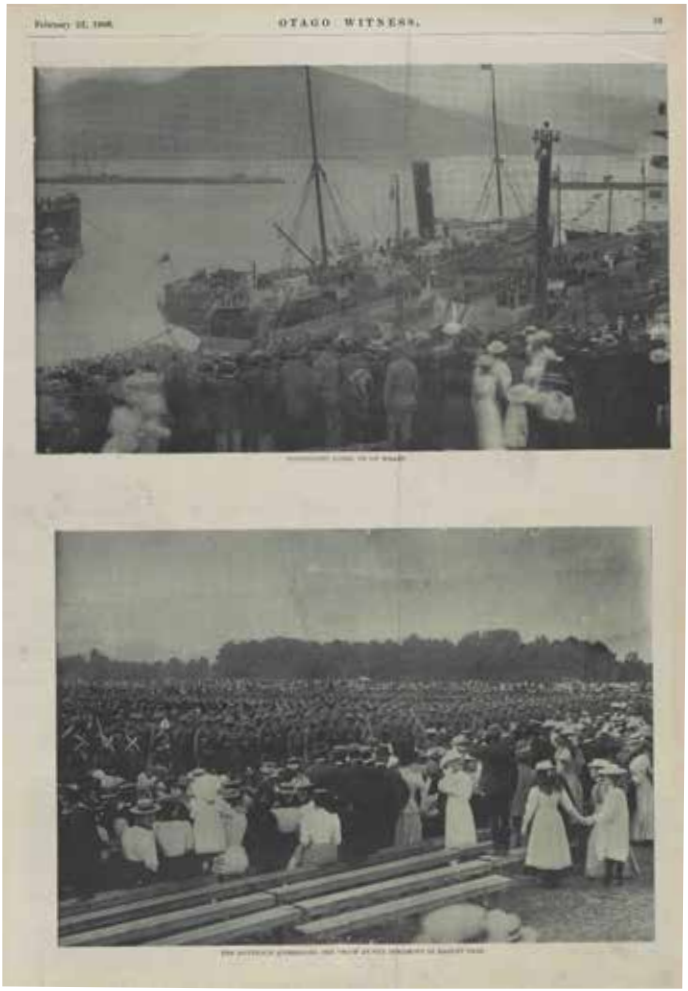


Figure 5.

Otago Witness, 22 February 1900, p. 36.

See Fig. 5.

New Zealand was directly involved in two wars during the period the *Otago Witness* was publishing photographs, the Second South African War (1899-1902) and the First World War, both of which the paper covered. The image above shows the people of Christchurch farewelling the Third Contingent about to sail off to fight the Boers in 1900. While

relatively few New Zealanders died in South Africa and the mood of the population was fairly jingoistic, as the First World War ground on, the massive losses resulted in a far more sobering frame of mind, as the faces of men who had made the "supreme sacrifice", as seen below, made their appearance on the country's "Roll of Honour".

See Fig. 6.

CONCLUSION

Re-digitising the *Otago Witness* pictorial pages may have sat outside of the remit the Trust originally set itself, but it was ultimately a good decision. Without these high-quality images being accessible, fewer researchers and school students are likely to bother looking at them. Indeed, the images should be particularly useful for cultural historians, and whoever attempts the much-needed history of New Zealand's illustrated periodicals. Other newspapers the Trust digitises are destined eventually to sit within the Papers Past collection, but due to technical issues the *Otago Witness* images may not, although they remain accessible on the Trust's Recollect website. Ultimately, knowing more of our past allows us to know more about the society we live in now, and where we might want the country to go. Putting digitised newspapers online is one way of making that knowledge available, and the Preserving Local History and Educational Trust / Te Pupuri I Nga Hitori o Te Rohe is pleased to be assisting in this endeavour.





Figure 6.

Otago Witness, 2 January 1918, p. 28.

ENDNOTES

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7. Grant, p. 388.
8. Keller, pp.162, 164.
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11. Grant, p. 387; Tony Ballantyne, 'Reading the Newspaper in Colonial Otago', Journal of New Zealand Studies, no. 12, 2011, pp. 51, 55-57; Joanne Mary Morgan, 'Sites of Memory: Memorialisation in the Landscape', Master's thesis, University of Canterbury, 2001, p.18.

12. Grant, p. 387.

13. The Preserving Local History and Educational Trust: Te Pupuri I Nga Hitori o Te Rohe Trust, available at https://preservinglocalhistory.com, accessed 8 May 2025.

14. See 'Digitised Papers: The work that has been completed so far', The Preserving Local History and Educational Trust: Te Pupuri I Nga Hitori o Te Rohe Trust, available at https://preservinglocalhistory.com/digitised-papers, accessed 8 May 2025.

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16. NZMS have three facilities where digitisation to a high standard can be undertaken, in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

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OBITUARY

Alan Lindsay Ferguson, 1952-2025



By Brad Patterson and Kathryn Patterson

It was with great sadness that family, friends and colleagues learnt of the accidental death on 22 March 2025 of Alan Lindsay Ferguson, known to most as Lindsay, to some as Alf. While there will be fond memories for many who worked with him at Archives New Zealand, he may have been unknown to many current ARANZ members. For over 30 years, Lindsay was a stalwart contributor to, and campaigner for, the causes of archives and records management in New Zealand.

Although born in Sydney, Lindsay grew up in Christchurch. The elder son of a politically active family, he imbibed early a strong sense of ethics and a commitment to honesty and social justice, and with these, a corresponding lack of patience with cant.

Educated at Aranui High School in Christchurch, he achieved some early distinction as a cricketer, also playing senior rugby league at age 16. After leaving school, he joined the public service, later studying as a mature student at Canterbury and Victoria Universities and ultimately completing a Master of Public Policy at the latter.

Transferring to Wellington in the early 1980s, Lindsay rose to be a Deputy Registrar at Lands and Deeds, joining Archives New Zealand (National Archives as it was then) in early 1992, initially as Corporate Manager and then Finance and Business Manager. His appointment was the result of an internal restructuring following the institution's 1991 move to the Mulgrave Street building, with the new Chief Archivist believing that additional experienced managerial support was necessary.

It was to prove a sound choice. Lindsay was to be instrumental in the setting up of new regional offices in Dunedin and Auckland, while at the same time proving himself expert at making limited funding go further. He was always keen to develop networks through the public service and beyond - links which could be drawn upon when needed. Invariably, he was thinking ahead, always keeping a close eye on expenditure. Critically, he also immersed himself in understanding the purpose of a national archives, recognising the paramountcy of the

constitutional role. When late in the 1990s Archives New Zealand was confronted with Internal Affairs 'reforming' zealotry, he was unstinting in his personal support for successive Chief Archivists, and despite his deep disapproval of the reforms themselves, maintained a professional stance at all times.

Lindsay came into his own with the incoming 1999 Labour government's decision to remove Archives New Zealand from Internal Affairs control and set up a separate state department. In the resulting disengagement, he was an astute operator in the severing of previous links and the reallocation of resources, notwithstanding the State Services Commission's reluctance at the time. As Group Manager, Finance and Business in the new department, he was at the forefront of a number of new initiatives, perhaps foremost was the acquisition of a site for, and the construction of, a new Auckland building at Mangere for the Archives New Zealand Auckland Office. It was no doubt helpful that he established excellent working relationships with the offices of two Ministers responsible for Archives New Zealand - Hon Marian Hobbs and Hon Judith Tizard, and perhaps even more significantly, the office of the Minister of Finance, the Hon Dr Michael Cullen.

During Lindsay's stewardship of ways and means at Archives New Zealand, the institution won high rankings from KPMG and Treasury and was described by the State Services Commission as 'a well-functioning department', a model for other smaller ministries and agencies. Yet by the mid-2000s, it was apparent there was a lack of harmony at the most senior levels of the department. Lindsay's abrupt departure in early 2006 was considered by many colleagues to be the institution's loss.

From mid-2006, Lindsay embarked on consultancy and contracting work on his own behalf, establishing two companies - E-Recordkeeping Limited and Body Corporates Limited. Through the former he offered advice on policy and implementation, particularly in respect of electronic records systems and legislation, to a number of government departments, including the Inland Revenue and Justice. In more recent years, he moved more towards advising, in some cases personally managing, small body corporates. Utilising his deep knowledge of property law, he proved a strong advocate when representing the interests of small proprietors and owners against monied developers and their lawyers, the latter finding him a hard nut to crack. At the time of his death, he was contemplating taking on further responsibilities in the area.

Joining ARANZ soon after his appointment to Archives New Zealand, Lindsay was a constant

supporter, assisting in many quiet ways while never taking a conspicuous role. He remained a forceful supporter of Archives New Zealand. His disapproval of what he considered the retrograde reincorporation of the institution back into Internal Affairs in 2011 was evidenced by letters to the paper and a stream of probing Official Information requests. He was part of a small group which, upon request, drew up policy papers bringing a Labour pledge into its 2017 manifesto to restore the independence of Archives New Zealand. Unfortunately, Lindsay was disillusioned by Labour's failure to deliver.

In 2007, he accepted an invitation to become Secretary-Treasurer of the newly formed Ian McLean Wards Memorial Trust, set up to support and defend the integrity of archival repositories and research libraries. He played a key part in making decisions over the award of the Trust's Research Scholarship. Further indication of Lindsay's ongoing commitment was his decision some years ago to enrol part-time for a PhD examining the significance of privacy considerations in the use of archives and records. It was a matter of regret that health considerations and business commitments eventually necessitated suspension.

A person with wide-ranging interests, an ever-inquisitive mind, a conversation with Lindsay was generally stimulating. Whether the topic was the Crusaders' season, political theory, or the virtues of particular vintages (he was a connoisseur), the discussion was likely to be extended, frequently over a glass. If the world order could not be changed during such encounters, at least a fair attempt would have been made. In addition, for around 18 years, Lindsay was a part-time Uber driver. While undoubtedly the earnings provided useful supplementary income, there must be at least a suspicion that there was more to this continuing involvement. Lindsay was a gregarious man; he thrived on discourse. He was delighted to pick up certain passengers, senior public servants, MPs, other relevant dignitaries, whom he could then inform just what needed to be done to restore the constitutional standing of Archives New Zealand. It is a sad irony that his death should occur in the course of one of his evening stints.

A mark of the respect and affection with which Lindsay was widely held was the presence at his funeral of a large number of family, friends and acquaintances from all walks of life, from Archives New Zealand, the public service, academia, locals encountered through morning coffee, and not least other Uber drivers. Family had travelled from the United Kingdom and Australia, along with friends and acquaintances from all parts of New Zealand, joining locals in celebrating Lindsay's life.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Hollie Tawhiao

1. What is your name and what do you do?

E wehi ana ki ngā atua, ko koutou ngā kaitiaki mō mātou. He mihi ki ngā kaimahi o Archifacts, ngā mihi nui ki a koutou. Tēnā koutou, ko Hollie Tawhiao tōku ingoa, ko au te Kaitiaki Mātangireia i Te Iho o te Manawataki, i te University of Waikato. I am Hollie and I work as Kaitiaki Mātangireia at the University of Waikato Library, recently renamed Te Iho o te Manawataki, the heartbeat.

My role spans the care for special collections, archives, taonga, and all aspects of collection management and development. I also support our Poutiaki Taonga with the university art collection, archives and exhibitions. My special focus is on Māori and Pacific materials and their accessibility and care, both physically and digitally.

2. Can you tell us a little bit about the path that led to your current role?

I found my way into a PGDip in museum studies after a Māori art history paper in my undergraduate degree introduced me to repatriation and taonga care. I had a young family so I could not relocate to Australia to study conservation and needed to be able to study via correspondence. When I completed my diploma with Massey, my kaiako at that



time, Dr. Susan Abasa, introduced me to people in the GLAM sector and set up various placements for me. This is how I began a three-year stint volunteering with Cerys Davidson at the university. During that time, I also began working part-time with Te Pūkenga | WINTEC as the manager of Ramp Gallery while continuing to work with the university on a casual basis. In 2022 a newly created full-time position was advertised to care for the newly created Mātangireia collection which included the taonga and manuscripts of Dr. Pei Te Hurinui Jones. Since beginning my role my interests have diversified significantly, as every portion of the Mātangireia collection, and our university collections, have presented new challenges and considerations that move beyond simply "liking the stuff". This has helped grow my knowledge and skill set exponentially.

3. What is your biggest challenge in your current role?

Removing the usual suspects such as finances, changing user needs, cataloguing language, data sovereignty, Te Tiriti responsibilities, suitable space, poorly documented "mystery collections", and broader institution politics which include frameworks that do not always align with indigenous worldviews and community expectations, one key challenge at present is a rise in extremist views that have caused trepidation in how our library staff can promote and develop our collections. A rise in bigoted propaganda from external groups in our library and campus, as well as push back against diversity initiatives both formally and informally, have negatively affected our staff and their sense of safety.

As a challenge this directly impacts our ability to honour our responsibilities to our users and communities. We are a university known for our Māori studies, we are situated on Waikato land, our stakeholders include five hapū, and our student body is heavily multi-cultural. It compounds our existing challenges as most recently we had been cautioned against having a te reo speaking section because it could be seen as Māori favouritism. To put this in perspective, the Waikato cohort of the full immersion language programme Te Tohu Paetahi had a record breaking 200 students enrolled. This is coupled with the 100 enrolled at our Tauranga campus. To support their learning Te Iho o te Manawataki has followed the lead of Auckland University Library and implemented "Kōrero Corner" for those wanting to practice their reo. Further, inspired by lanyards at Te Tuhi art gallery, we have cards available for users to choose their level and converse with staff from beginner to expert throughout the whole library. This initiative is directly in support of our provided papers and yet it is still perceived as favouritism. Please note we have not yet been challenged on our full new e-sport section nor our whānau room for parents, both of which were also responses to user needs.

To reiterate how this is a challenge, it seeps into all aspects of my role, especially as the kaitiaki of what is our "Māori, Pacific, and Aotearoa" collection. This is further exacerbated by a bureaucratic system that struggles with open and candid discussion on how to respond and manage the various aggressor tactics of people and groups that wish to enforce their ideals. It is very difficult to execute any new initiatives, processes or collection development plans fully when we have to anticipate if it will be worth the potential pushback of offended extremist groups. I would much rather be worrying about the best way we can include our broad communities more fully and authentically in our collections.

4. What is your favourite archive or collection you have seen or would like to see?

I would like to see a full inventory of my father's work and photo catalogue as many of the pieces as I could into a digital collection. This is thousands of pieces, scattered across the globe. I have been so fortunate to view GLAM spaces across the world but my wants in this space are actually pretty humble because the way I connect with the pieces that directly relate to my family is the foundation of why I love material culture and my work. However, to pick a collection that is my favourite at present? Probably mine at the university. Not as a "fake plug" but genuinely because I have spent so long learning this collection it has become like an old friend with little easter eggs we get to discover over time.

5. What do you most enjoy about the work you do?

Researching the collections. It is rewarding to connect the collection to our communities, but hiding in a backroom for days or weeks on end, connecting threads of information across a collection, is where I find peace. The unfortunate thing about being in a middle management role is that I am unable to do the hands-on side of the mahi as much as I'd like.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Will Hansen, Trustee – Kawe Mahara Queer Archives Aotearoa



1. What is your name and what do you do?

Kia ora koutou! My name is Will Hansen, and I am a trustee of Kawe Mahara Queer Archives Aotearoa (formerly known as the Lesbian and Gay Archives of New Zealand, Te Pūranga Takatāpui o Aotearoa (LAGANZ)). Kawe Mahara is a charitable trust that collects, preserves, and makes available for research the materials and taonga of queer people and organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our records are housed in the Alexander Turnbull Library. We use "Queer" as an umbrella term for people who identify with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and innate variations of sex characteristics, in acknowledgement of the fluidity of identities and the multiple acts of identifying and finding ourselves through time and space.

As a volunteer, my role is very varied and I am afforded the great privilege of being able to do the work I'm most excited about. Alongside governance duties, I am focused on Kawe Mahara's outreach. Queer histories are infrequently taught in schools or by families, so I am interested in finding ways to enable younger people to connect with the queer past. I produce youth-oriented content, such as zines and social media information (@kawemahara), give talks in schools and run interactive workshops.

As a transgender man, Aotearoa's trans histories have my heart. I'm in the process of launching a new Kawe Mahara working group focused on actively collecting digital-born trans and intersex materials.

2. Can you tell us a little bit about the path that led to your current role?

When I was closeted in high school, researching queer histories on the internet became a way for me to feel connected and empowered. I knew that Wellington was home to Kawe Mahara, and moved down as soon as I could, to pursue a degree in history at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University. As part of my degree I signed up to do a summer internship in 2017, and luckily I was placed at the Alexander Turnbull Library under the mentorship of Roger Swanson,

one of Kawe Mahara's curators and (at the time) a Research Librarian at the ATL. My task was to create a research guide that would help researchers navigate queer archives in Aotearoa. During this time Roger invited me to a Kawe Mahara board meeting, where the trustees indicated that it would be great to have more youth and trans representation on the board…tick and tick! I have been serving on the board since 2017, and it has been a fantastic way to be of service to local queer communities while I completed my studies (I am due to graduate with a PhD in history in December 2025).

3. What is your biggest challenge in your current role?

Trans communities are under attack, in Aotearoa and elsewhere. I feel as though every month the urgency to archive trans materials in the current moment, to keep them safe for future generations, grows and grows. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed and scared that Kawe Mahara itself will come under threat from the right-wing. When I do have these feelings, I remind myself that Kawe Mahara has been through it all before – including literally being targeted by arsonists in 1986, not long after the victory of the Homosexual Law Reform Act. We survived then, and we will continue to resist the suppression of queer lives and queer histories.

4. What is your favourite archive or collection you have seen or would like to see?

My favourite collection has to be the HERO and Devotion magazines, produced in the 1990s to accompany queer festivals and dance parties by the same name in Auckland and Wellington respectively. They are so playful, colourful and sexy, and provide such an interesting snapshot of contemporary queer communities. Over the years both HERO and Devotion became increasingly aware of the necessity to platform marginalised voices within queer communities, and so each have stories from trans, takatāpui, disabled, bisexual, and queer Pasifika communities.

5. What do you most enjoy about the work you do?

I most enjoy being able to feel connected to queers of the past. They are not my ancestors by blood, and yet I relate to them deeply. I owe so much to those who fought so hard to make the world a better place for myself. I feel so privileged to have the opportunity to learn more and more about queer histories, and to find ways of honouring them.

CMS REVIEW

Recollect Content-Management-System



Review by Abigail Wharne, Rotorua Library, Te Aka Mauri

RECOLLECT

Archive-management systems have long struggled to bridge the divide between high-quality metadata and easy-to-access digital surrogates. The latter often appears to be an afterthought. Axiell CALM, for instance, enables users to easily navigate the archival hierarchy, while images display as underwhelming thumbnails. The questions this review aims to answer are: Does the Recollect Collection Management System (CMS) close the gap, and if so, does it support archives in better meeting the needs of users?

Recollect CMS was launched by New Zealand Micrographic Services (NZMS) in 2015. Three years later, it split from NZMS to form a separate legal entity.[1] The system is marketed as supporting organisations to "manage, preserve, and showcase" their archive by helping you, as their customer, to "consolidate your archive's management software, streamline your patrons' self-service, and provide unrivalled online access to your collections."[2] The cloud-based system is targeted at cultural-heritage organisations, with pages on their website dedicated to academic institutions, archives and public libraries.

Recollect logo.

SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Over the past five years, I have helped implement Recollect CMS at Tauranga City Libraries and Rotorua Library, Te Aka Mauri. I was fortunate to lead the project from beginning to end at Rotorua, working through selection, implementation and launch, with the support of my incredible team. A scoping report was our point of departure, in which we compared six systems: Recollect CMS; Vernon CMS; Extensis Portfolio; Collections MOSAiC; Axiell CALM; ContentDM. Each system was scored against our project objectives:

1. To design a site that meets user's needs and engenders confidence.

2. To comply with Te Aka Mauri standards and procedures, and wider ethical/legal frameworks.

3. To collect content from the community: asset uploads, short descriptions, longer stories.

4. To manage our collections: the opportunity to incorporate archival-management processes like accessioning, reporting and bulk updates.

5. To preserve our digital collections.

6. To share our collections/resources through high-quality cataloguing and digitisation.

7. To share knowledge held within our collections/resources through engagement with the community: seamlessly sharing audio and video content and pulling together content in exciting ways to tell stories.

Unsurprisingly, every product scored well in the areas of compliance, collections management and cataloguing. The team found that Vernon CMS and ContentDM also ticked the first box. Both user interfaces were easy to use and looked professional. Recollect CMS was the only product to shine in other areas. We were impressed by its focus on linked data, storytelling and community engagement. Kete Rotorua – one of many examples of the Kete community-repository software supported by the National Library of New Zealand – had been a huge success in our community, until it reached the end of its life. Based on the findings of our report, we felt confident Recollect would support collections management and community engagement.

DID THE REALITY LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATION?

Stepping out of the standards-driven world of Axiell CALM into the build-your-own-templates realm of Recollect was intimidating. I discovered the driving force behind Recollect's implementation process was meeting user needs through a bespoke site. The customer-centric approach was refreshing, but at odds with the description-orientated part of my professional self. I was confronted by an array of archival concerns! What if our metadata templates did not meet standards? How would we make our metadata interoperable? Would in-house guidelines ensure consistency and discoverability?

The good news is that, once I conquered my fears, the benefits of Recollect's flexibility outweighed the rigidity of other systems. At both libraries, we came to realise the key was investing time in creating the template structures and related metadata guidelines. The analogy being: a house is only as good as its foundations. Once these were established, and external standards integrated, we had the freedom to introduce in-house fields that would be of huge benefit to our community. For example, incorporating the Waka Hourua model[3] developed by Tauranga City Libraries colleagues, Elisha

Rolleston and Harley Couper.

Meanwhile, Recollect seamlessly delivered in other areas. User-experience testing revealed customers loved the interface, especially engaging with our digital surrogates. The storytelling aspects have proven to be the most popular feature at Rotorua Library. Every quarter, we launch an on-site touchscreen display and share a related story on our Recollect site, *Pakiaka*. These pages are our most viewed, along with items showcased via social media. The team works hard to align posts with local events, such as anniversaries and celebrations. We are now exploring the possibilities of linked data through authority-like pages for people, places and organisations.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS? HIGH QUALITY METADATA AND A GREAT USER EXPERIENCE.

Yes, if you truly invest in the implementation process. Creating metadata templates is fiddly. There is a good chance you will learn as you go (this is code for "you will make mistakes"!). Getting to grips with the parent/child functionality, to link levels of archival description, is also a challenge. That being said, the friendly Recollect team is always there to help.

A final thought. While working on these implementation projects, I came to appreciate being challenged by a different perspective. That is, focusing on the full spectrum of users, rather than archivists alone. Having supported customers in navigating other content-management systems, the risks of prioritising back-end users are obvious. I will never forget a researcher telling me how they had learnt the theories behind archival arrangement to better navigate an online catalogue. Removing this layer of mystique can only be a positive thing.

ENDNOTES

1. Recollect CMS, 'Recollect Spins out of NZMS', 2019, available at www.recollectcms.com/recollect-spins-out-of-nzms, accessed 23 June 2025.
2. Recollect CMS, 'Recollect for Archives', undated, available at www.recollectcms.com/archive, accessed 23 June 2025.
3. Elisha Rollestion and Harley Couper, 'Waka Hourua, a model', 2021, available at paekoroki.tauranga.govt.nz/nodes/view/53930, accessed 23 June 2025.

BOOK REVIEW

Inclusive Cataloguing: Histories, Context, and Reparative Approaches by Amber Bailey, Elizabeth Nelson and Rebecca Uhl (editors)

Review by Alison Day, Victoria University of Wellington

The aims of *Inclusive Cataloguing: Histories, Context, and Reparative Approaches* are clearly set out by editor Amber Bailey (p. xi) in the introduction, to "document both what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done" with the expressed hope "of inspiring others to take up this work." This book makes a significant contribution to a growing speciality in library, archival, and information science, to address harmful descriptive past practices in collections, policies and classification systems. One aspect worth noting is the plethora of terms in use across the sector to describe 'inclusive cataloguing'. Fox and Gross contributed seven terms, including 'reparative description', which is used by the National Library.

Inclusive Cataloguing is divided into two sections: 'History and Theory' and 'Case Studies'. The first part offers nine background chapters featuring historical overviews and special topics, including Baron et al's. (2024) timely discussion about the controversy surrounding the changing of the Library of Congress Subject Heading 'illegal aliens', and Watson's



chapter on the Queer Metadata Collective and the Name Change Policy Working Group, drawing attention to misgendering and misrepresentation.

The second part focuses on case studies, featuring 19 chapters on a range of practical approaches to inclusive cataloguing.



Inclusive Cataloguing: Histories, Context, and Reparative Approaches by Amber Bailey, Elizabeth Nelson and Rebecca Uhl (editors)

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These projects are varied and include the creation of a university plan to implement inclusive cataloguing across their various libraries and a specific project to rectify the erroneous description of the Haudenosaunee people in a library catalogue. Many of the case studies are project-based, focusing on a specific aspect of the library or special collection catalogue and the processes that were undertaken to rectify harmful descriptions. These are useful for institutions that wish to effect reparative change but are only able to implement small-scale projects.

There is a broad range of contributors, 67 in total, although many are affiliated with research libraries. While libraries are the primary focus, they encompass a range of types, including academic, public, special collections and archives. *Inclusive Cataloguing* was recommended to me by a University archivist who found it incredibly useful, demonstrating its broad appeal. This highly recommended book, therefore, holds value and relevance, not just for libraries but for all institutions seeking to make their collections more inclusive and diverse. One limitation is the American focus, as all the case studies are from the US. However, this could be seen as an inspiration for Aotearoa to contribute its own inclusive cataloguing case study examples in a developing speciality that would welcome such an endeavour.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

EAMONN BOLGER

Eamonn has worked in the information management field since 1988, when he was employed at the then National Archives. Since then, he has worked in a variety of roles including Appraisal Manager at Archives NZ, Archivist at Te Papa and senior information management advisory roles in a number of agencies including the Ministry of Justice.

STEPHEN CLARKE

Stephen Clarke is currently an IM and AI Consultant, ontology nerd, a RIMPA Global Ambassador and J. Eddis Linton Award winner. Stephen holds a Degree in History & Social Anthropology, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Archive/ Records Management. His career encompasses many senior Data & IM roles in the Public Service, serving as the Chief Archivist of New Zealand - a career highlight. Stephen is a strong advocate of standards, and an ISO Working Group Expert, representing both NZ and Australia, since 2010. He has contributed to such publications as ISO15489, ISO13028, ISO16175, and the ISO30300 series.

ALISON DAY

Alison Day (she/they) is a PhD student in the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington. Alison's PhD research explores the collecting, documenting and donating space with respect to Aotearoa New Zealand's queer communities, queer independent archives and GLAM institutions and universities. She has interests in the evolving field of queer metadata and description and was a member of the Queer Metadata Collective research group, which authored *Best Practices for Queer Metadata.*

RICHARD FOY

Richard is an Aotearoa New Zealand-born son of Chinese immigrants, accomplished public speaker, failed comic-novelist and a public servant who's enthusiastically committed to a career of public service and leadership. Richard is a former Chief Archivist of Archives NZ, our National Archives, an LDC (Leadership Development Centre) 2019 Fellow, 2018 Geoffrey Bolton lecturer (State Records Office, WA), President of ARANZ (Archives & Records Association of NZ) and a wannabe Starfleet Officer. Richard is currently Kaiwhakahaere, Pūnaha Mōhio (Knowledge Systems) at Te Puni Kōkiri.

WILL HANSEN

Will Hansen (he/him) is a trans man and historian living in Pōneke. He recently completed his PhD thesis in history, titled 'Queer Activism in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1961-2013', at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington.

Will received a 2025 Judith Binney Trust Writing Award, which is enabling him to spend time transforming his thesis into a book for general readership. He is also a trustee of Kawe Mahara Queer Archives Aotearoa, where he enjoys working to preserve and promote Aotearoa's queer histories - and especially Aotearoa's transgender histories. He can be contacted at will123hansen@gmail.com.

ANNE JACKMAN

After retiring in 2021 from her position as Regional Archivist (Otago and Southland) for Archives New Zealand, a move to Palmerston North coincided with membership of the Palmerston North Heritage Trust, the ARANZ Central Districts Committee, and the Heritage Reference Group, for the Palmerston North City Council. Anne has been a Trustee of The Preserving Local History and Educational Trust since 2022, working with strategic partners National Library of New Zealand and New Zealand Micrographics, to preserve at risk historic newspapers with a focus on the community newspapers. Contact: eajackman@gmail.com

LACHY PATERSON

Lachy Paterson is Emeritus Professor at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka/University of Otago, where he researched Māori history, specifically Māori-language newspapers and print cultures. His works include *Colonial Discourses: Niupepa Māori 1855-1863* (Otago, 2006); *He Reo Wāhine: Māori Women's Voices from the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland, 2017) co-authored with Angela Wanhalla; and *Indigenous Textual Cultures: Reading and Writing in the Age of Global Empire* (Duke, 2020) co-edited with Tony Ballantyne and Angela Wanhalla. In retirement, he serves as a Board member on The Preserving Local History and Educational Trust, which assists in preserving New Zealand's at-risk historic newspaper collections. Contact: lachy.paterson@otago.ac.nz

BRAD PATTERSON

Dr Brad Patterson is an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Stout Research Centre, Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington. He is presently completing a book on the dynamics of settler capitalism in early colonial New Zealand. Having taught at tertiary level in several disciplines, he is the author or editor of eleven books. An Hon Life Member of ARANZ since 1980, he served on Council for over 20 years, 5 as President. Between 1995 and 2002 he edited *Archifacts.*

KATHRYN PATTERSON

Kathryn Patterson is an Adjunct Research Associate at the Stout Research Centre, Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington, working on a study of Irish soldiers discharged in New Zealand prior to 1870. Her career positions

include Deputy Parliamentary Librarian, Director of Information Management at The Treasury, and Director and Chief Archivist of Archives New Zealand. She has been a regular participant in international fora and committees, with contributions to the professional literature in New Zealand and international journals. With Brad Patterson, Kathryn was awarded the LIANZA John Harris award for Biblliography in 2000. She was awarded Hon Life Membership ARANZ 2001.

RAUHINA SCOTT-FYFE

Rauhina Scott-Fyfe (Kāi Tahu – Kāi Te Ruahikihiki, Kāti Māmoe, Ngāi Pākehā) has worked at the Hocken Collections – Uare Taoka o Hākena – since November 2020, and as Māori Archivist since March 2023. They hold a Bachelor of Arts in Māori Studies from the University of Otago – Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka and a New Zealand Diploma in Records and Information Management (Level 6) from the Open Polytechnic – Te Kuratini Tuwhera. They are a member of ARANZ and a volunteer for Kawe Mahara – Queer Archives Aotearoa.

HOLLIE TAWHIAO

Hollie is currently taking a year away from her role as Kaitiaki Mātangireia at the University of Waikato library, Te Iho o te Manawataki, to reclaim te reo. She is deeply passionate about ethical points of connection, care, and engagement with our cultural heritage and has been working in and around this space in varying roles for over 15 years.

SARAH WELLAND

Sarah Welland is Editor of Archifacts and Senior Academic Staff Member in Library and Information Studies at the Open Polytechnic | Kuratini Tuwhera. She has also worked as a public-sector archivist, records manager and records and information management consultant. Her current research explores a variety of aspects around community archives and community heritage information. Sarah can be contacted at sarah.welland@openpolytechnic.ac.nz.

ABIGAIL WHARNE

I joined the team at Rotorua Library in August 2021, making a small jump from Tauranga City Libraries, where I made my "kiwi" debut as a heritage specialist. A slightly bigger leap was made back in 2019, when I moved from the UK to Aotearoa. My career in heritage had an unlikely start. I trained as a primary-school teacher, with grand plans of moving into the museum-education sector as soon as I honed my skills in the classroom. To keep my hand in the heritage world, I started volunteering at my local archives. By the second session, I was hooked. I eventually decided to

re-train as an archivist at University College London. Amazing teams have punctuated my archival career: East Sussex Record Office, University of Sussex Special Collections, Brighton College Archive, Black Cultural Archives, and West Sussex Record Office. I feel honoured to now call Aotearoa my home and have the opportunity to learn from talented colleagues from across the sector.

JANE WILD

Jane Wild is Chair of the UNESCO Memory of the World Aotearoa Trust. She is also a Rare Books Curator at Auckland Libraries.



ARANZ ARCHIVES & RECORDS ASSOCIATION OF NZ TE HUINGA MAHARA

CONTRIBUTIONS

The *Archifacts* Editorial Team welcomes contributions on archives and recordkeeping and related preservation issues. Heritage components of information and /or document management will also be considered.

Contributions can relate to Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific or be of an international nature.

Anyone interested in making a submission to the journal should email editor@aranz.org.nz to discuss their plans. A Style Guide, Templates and other guidelines will be provided for authors to use. These will need to be followed for publication.

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