

**An investigation into the attitudes of archivists towards the use of
social media at Archives New Zealand**

by

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Abstract

Research problem: The purpose of this case study was to identify the attitudes of reference archivists at Archives New Zealand towards the use of social media. Analysis of the results aimed to determine whether attitudes expressed were affecting the organization's current use of social media.

Methodology: Thematic analysis was employed to identify themes of attitudes expressed by the archivists during semi-structured interviews. In turn content analysis was undertaken to determine Archives New Zealand's current use of social media.

Results: Analysis of the data showed that archivists were able to see the opportunities that the use of social media could bring. Although some concerns were expressed the overall impression given that it would be used in future but first a strategic plan need be put in place.

Implications: Although results provide some insight, as a relatively small study it would be beneficial for further research to be undertaken. Additionally, a similar study of user attitudes would provide a more balanced view of the use of social media at Archives New Zealand.

Keywords: Social Media, Archives New Zealand, Archivists, Attitudes

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1. Introduction

The goal of this proposed study is to analyze the attitudes archivists have towards the use of social media in Archives New Zealand reference services and compare this with the way in which such use is being portrayed by the institution online. Previous research has highlighted a general lack of literature relating to the use of such technology within archival institutions. Although there is little material available, existing discussion indicates that even though some institutions are using social media within reference services, it has not been adopted as widely in the archival realm as it has in that of other G.L.A.M institutions, such as libraries.

A brief content analysis shows that Archives New Zealand does have some presence on social networking sites such as YouTube and Facebook. However, these services are not being actively promoted by Archives New Zealand. In addition a report entitled "*Archives 2.0 – a summary of the way Archives NZ could use Web 2.0 technologies and approaches*" written by Julian Carver of Seradigm in 2008, gave suggestions as to how Archives New Zealand could use social media as part of their reference services (Carver, 2008). Evidently, Archives New Zealand have considered how they may use such tools however it seems that little has yet been implemented or built upon.

Much of the material relating to archival institutions and the use of Web 2.0 applications is anecdotal. Few studies have been carried out in an attempt to qualify the attitudes of archivists and users alike. This study aims to determine the attitudes held by archivists at Archives New Zealand and in turn, carry out content analysis of Archives New Zealand's online presence to identify the way in which they publically convey information about the use of such technology. As a result, comparison of the results aims to provide some indication of the synergy, or lack thereof, between the attitudes of the archivists with that of Archives New Zealand's public portrayal of social media.

1.2 Definitions

Social Media: "Social Media is a group of Internet- based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61).

Users: Users in this study are defined as individuals using Archives New Zealand's reference services, either in person or remotely via email, phone and written correspondence.

Attitudes: "A settled way of thinking or feeling about something" (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2011).

Archives: "An organization (or part of an organization) responsible for appraising, acquiring, preserving and making material available" (Archives New Zealand, 2012)

2. Literature review

In the early stages of the research project a literature review was carried out to identify potential areas of research that would possibly add further understanding to the academic literature of the New Zealand LIS community in particular. These readings uncovered issues such as a lack in data on both the attitudes of archivists and their users towards social media, the use of social media by other national archives and local studies of archives use of social media. These findings were used as a basis to formulate the research objectives and questions to be answered in this study.

Web 2.0 and Archives 2.0

Tim O'Reilly coined the concept of Web 2.0 as early as 2005. The rise of interactive websites, such as Flickr and Wikipedia occurred along with the introductions of applications that allowed blogging and tagging. O'Reilly and his colleagues determined that the Internet was moving on towards a new level of interactivity that could in turn be used by businesses to engage with their users and employees (O'Reilly, 2005).

This concept of Web 2.0 applications was picked up by the business world before later being used by librarians as a way to provide better reference services to their users (Maness, 2006; Radford, 2006). As with most discussion of Web 2.0 concepts, Library 2.0 was first discussed among librarians' blogs along with early articles debating what Web 2.0 meant for the library world (Holmberg, Huvila, Kronqvist-Berg and Widen-Wulff, 2009).

The archival community started to follow the librarians' lead and some small projects were initiated early on. Opinion pieces were written at the time discussing the ways in which archival institutions were using social media and how it could be used in the future (Yakel, 2006).

In particular, The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections, set up in 2006, is an example of an early archival project using social media (Yakel, Seth & Shaw, 2007). Elizabeth Yakel, Seth Shaw and Polly Reynolds discussed its initial success, and shortcomings, in the article "*Creating the next generation of archival finding aids*". (Yakel et al., 2007). It is clear that early on social media was seen as a way of improving existing reference services however, in recent years there has been a shift towards a change in traditional archival thought seen as a need to break down previous imbalances in power between archivist and user.

In 2008 Kate Theimer coined the term 'Archives 2.0' on her *ArchivesNext* blog. In her article on the concept of Archives 2.0 she asserts that her intention for the original posting was to argue that the concept represented a paradigm shift for the profession and the way archivists interacted with their users. The article expands on this argument by an interpretative analysis of the comparisons between the two paradigms that Theimer represents as Archives 1.0 and Archives 2.0 (Theimer, 2008).

Archivist attitudes (loss of control v. the need to connect with users)

There are few studies available in LIS scholarship that deal with measuring the attitudes of archivists towards social media and its use. However, there have been some articles written in relation to perceived attitudes and one of the main assumptions being made is that older and more conservative archivists are resistant to the change social media brings to archival traditions.

Andrew Flinn touches on this perception as he asks whether the move towards a new paradigm in archival reference services is “*an attack on professionalism and scholarship?*” (Flinn, 2010). He asserts that some archivists feel threatened by the use of social media as it is seen to be handing over some control of the records to inexperienced users.

He states that there is evidence to suggest that some archivists and scholars are “*skeptical about the need to move towards democratization*” of archives by increased user participation (Flinn, 2010, para. 2). In contrast, Flinn himself argues that such a traditional view undermines the post modernist view, previously articulated by Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz (Cook, 1997; Schwartz and Cook, 2002), that archives should be made up of multiple community voices in order to provide a more balanced view of the past.

This perception of social media bringing new ways of thinking to the archival profession has increasingly been seen in recent articles. It has been argued that such a change in concept is important as it provides a basis for discussion among archivists and may provide the impetus for the creation of a shared set of values. Both Kate Theimer and Joy Palmer agree that it is a shift that needs to be thought through to obtain the optimum benefits afforded by a new way of thinking rather than employing the same way of thinking but using different technology (Theimer, 2010; Palmer, 2009).

Social Media in National Archives

Although relatively few articles have been written on archivists’ attitudes, in the last year there have been a number of articles published by early adopters sharing their experiences of using the technology as part of their reference services.

In particular the Society of American Archivists have compiled a book titled “*A Different Kind of Web: New connections between Archives and our users*”, edited by Kate Theimer. It provides a number of analytical case studies on the way in which archives are using social media to connect with their users. It is the first attempt to collate information about the way in which social media is being implemented within archival institutions and the outcomes of such projects.

Two articles in the book that have informed this study are case studies from two national archives using social media. Although, neither article focus on the attitudes of the archivists towards the use of social media within archives in general, they do provide some idea of the types of projects that have been implemented by national archives and within the context of a government department.

Each author discusses what prompted them to use the technology, how this was achieved, the results of implementation, challenges to the project and lessons learned. Both conclude by considering where their respective projects will progress to in the future.

The first, "*Harnessing User Knowledge: The National Archives' Your Archives Wiki*", written by Guy Grannum, provides an overview of The National Archives (UK) experience in creating and maintaining the *Your Archives* wiki (Grannum, 2011). Grannum explains that feedback from customers expressing their interest in sharing their knowledge of the records drove the archive to initiate the project.

A list of requirements the archives identified for their wiki, including the need for simplicity of use, a registration function and the ability to tag pages, provide the reader with a detailed look at the practical considerations that need to be taken into account. Grannum goes on to report that The National Archives (UK) are pleased with the response to the wiki and there have even been some unexpected uses that have opened up the archives "in a way that wasn't possible before". (Grannum, 2011, p123).

Following on from this article is "*Bringing Life to Records: Mapping Our Anzacs at the National Archives of Australia*", by Tim Sherratt. Sherratt's article follows a similar structure to Grannum's, providing details of how the *Mapping Our Anzacs* project was initiated, implemented and both the challenges and opportunities that have arisen from it.

Like the *Your Archives* wiki, the Australian project aimed to use the knowledge of their users to add richer contextual data to their WWI service records. However, unlike the *Your Archives* wiki, this particular project was also aimed at creating an online community focused around an event that was to be shared by the nation, the ninetieth anniversary of the end of WWI. Sherratt describes the project as a success by praising the quality, rather than the quantity, of contributions being made by users. (Sherratt, 2011, p.132)

User attitudes

Although the attitudes of archivists are important to the uptake of social media, the attitudes of users are equally important, as they will also be affected by a decision to either use, or not use, such technology.

At present the majority of research conducted around the use of Social Media by archives is from the view of the archivists themselves or from the organization as a whole. A general lack in user studies is often identified in LIS scholarship and some have criticized the profession for not being more involved with their users and communities (Conway, 1986; Rosenbusch, 2001).

At present those that have been aimed at determining user attitudes have used content analysis of current archival institutions using social media in order to obtain some idea of the impact they are having. Moreover, others are conducted by interviewing archivists in an attempt to gauge user attitudes through their own perceptions.

Such a method is used by Palmer as she discusses several archival institutions that have created Web 2.0 enabled finding aids and looks at them from a user's perspective. In the article she concludes that there is still a need for set metrics to measure user participation as it seems archivists are setting projects up without first interacting with intended users in order to gauge how useful it will be to them. She argues that instead of adopting such technologies blindly and assuming that they will be used, archivists need to assess how such applications will be used and which ones will be best suited for their users (Palmer, 2009).

A local study that has considered the users of archives is "*Paper and pixel: How will the move towards digital services and collections affect the reading room?*" written by Sean McMahon and Amy Watling from the Alexander Turnbull Library. In order to obtain data they undertook a small survey of their users and their thoughts on digitization and digital services. Analysis of the data allowed them to identify two main themes, mass digitization and the use of Web 2.0 (McMahon & Watling, 2009, p.85).

In their conclusion Watling and McMahon determine that their users expressed the preference to use a mixture of Web 2.0 applications alongside physical material (McMahon & Watling, 2009, p.96). Although the study was relatively small it shows that archivists would be wise not to make assumptions about their users and will need to consider their needs before adopting or dismissing social media.

However, it is evident that there is a growing movement towards higher interactivity between archivist and user. The introduction of social media has further accelerated this changing attitude and is forcing archivists to think more about their users needs. Concepts of user relations with social media range from the use of interactive finding aids to the more radical concept of collaboration with the archivist in areas such as arrangement and description.

In 2008 Isto Huvila built upon the concept of the democratization of archives and used the term 'participatory archive' to describe uses of social media in which the user shared responsibility of curation with the archivist. The main research objectives of Huvila's study were to "address issues of communication and user participation in archival contexts" (Huvila, 2008, p. 15) and looked to provide more data on the use of social media from a users point of view.

Qualitative methodology was used to analyze and compare two case studies of action research by building a working 'participatory archive'. Unfortunately, Huvila's findings were limited as the projects were ongoing at the time and results were being collected continuously. However, Huvila stated that there was an expectation that participation by users would increase over time and consequently, so would the contextual information of the archive.

Recent studies

There have been a few studies undertaken by other Masters students in the LIS realm. Three of which have been undertaken by Victoria University students and look at the adoption of such technology by archives and other cultural heritage institutions. Another, written by an

American student investigates the adoption of social media alongside digitization projects in North America. As each study views the topic of archives use of Social Media either through the eyes of the archivist or the use of content analysis, they provide useful background information for my intended study.

Parul Sharma's unpublished Master's research project is a study that explores how Cultural Heritage Institutions (CHIs) in Australasia and North America have adopted Web 2.0 applications in support of the use of their digital collections (Sharma, 2011). The main aims of the study were to determine whether or not use of such applications had resulted in a paradigm shift to a more participatory approach. Sharma also intended to compare Australasian and North American experiences and provide grounding for further discussion on the use of Web 2.0 applications in CHIs.

Sharma used a mixed methods methodology with quantitative data collected to indicate percentages of adoption and participation by CHIs in both Australasia and North America. In turn, qualitative data was collected by means of analysis of comments made by users of the Web 2.0 applications in order to determine their attitudes towards the objects in the digital collections.

Sharma concluded that the results showed a relatively slow uptake of Web 2.0 applications in digital collections by the CHIs chosen for the study. Results showed that Australasian institutions had adopted more of a paradigm shift than their North American counterparts. Overall, it was shown that those CHIs that had Web 2.0 enabled digital collections were becoming increasingly open to a more participatory approach with their users.

Similarly, Mary Samouelian's Master's thesis investigated the extent to which Web 2.0 applications have been adopted by American archival institutions digitization projects (Samouelian, 2009). In addition, Samouelian aimed to determine reasons for implementation by interviewing those responsible for the use of Web 2.0 applications in a selection of archival institutions.

The research methodology used was qualitative with Samouelian using content analysis of archival institution's websites in order to determine those who had adopted the technology. Furthermore, analysis of interviewee responses by archivists provided qualitative data in relation to reasons of implementation.

Interpretation of the results showed that a relatively large number of archival institutions are adopting social media in order to remain current and viable to their users. Samouelian concludes that such a move towards a more user oriented model shows that further research into the use of such technology needs to be undertaken by the archival profession further supporting the idea of a paradigm shift in archival thought.

Julie Paterson's unpublished Master's research project is a study of how social media is being used by New Zealand archival institutions to connect with family historians (Paterson, 2011). The main research objectives were to determine what types of social media were being used (if any), how they were being used and furthermore how they were being used to

connect with family historians. By answering such questions Paterson aimed to initiate further discussion on how such technology could be improved for future users.

Qualitative methodology was used by Paterson to analyze the results provided by a number of phone interviews with participants selected from archival institutions involved in the Community Archive. In conclusion of her study Paterson found that the main types of social media being used were Facebook, Twitter, Kete and blogging. It was found that they were being used in a variety of ways but were mainly used by archives to “push out information to online users” (2011, p. 23). Paterson concluded that interview results highlighted the view that social media was not actively used by family historians who were viewed as older members of the population with little technological knowledge.

Most recently, George Reid Perkins Master’s research project included the use of an “experimental online digital collection” in order to investigate attitudes towards Archives 2.0. Perkins’ main aims of the study were to determine the extent to which New Zealand archival users and practitioners saw value in developing Archives 2.0 (Perkins, 2011).

In order to have a reference point on which to base the discussion Perkins created an experimental Archives 2.0 website using local cultural heritage resources. Such a method then provided a practical focus for the second phase of his research, the qualitative semi-structured interviews with nine people with professional interest in the subject. Analysed data from the interviews was then split into eleven different themes or categories relating to Archives 2.0 and the prototype website.

Perkins’ concluded that data analysis showed that there exists a certain amount of enthusiasm among practitioners to introduce Web 2.0 tools. His results showed that there is a growing interest in Archives 2.0 that is coinciding with the release of more digital items online. At the same time, Perkins results point to general concerns of misuse of such tools by the public which in turn would create issues around practitioners enforcing terms and conditions. However, one of the main issues Perkins identified as a problem to the establishment of Archives 2.0 websites was resource constraints.

3. Research objectives

The main study objectives are to determine the attitudes archivists of Archives New Zealand have towards the use of social media in reference services and to compare their attitudes with what is being presented publically by Archives New Zealand. As mentioned in the introduction, Archives New Zealand are using some social media tools however, unlike other institutions, from an outside perspective there seems to be a lack in effort to integrate such technology into their existing reference services. The recent movement to an online ordering system, an increased digitization of objects and the Seradigm report (Carver, 2008) show that this use has been considered.

This study aims to determine whether or not this lack of action is part of a shared attitude held by the archivists at Archives New Zealand or whether other factors are preventing the organization from moving towards a more consistent use of social media applications.

Content analysis of Archives New Zealand's website and present social media capabilities will be undertaken to provide an organizational context to the attitudes held by individuals.

4. Research questions

This study aims to answer the following questions through collection and analysis of data:

1) What are the attitudes of archivists working at Archives New Zealand to the use of social media in the organization's reference services?

- What are their opinions on the use of social media by archival institutions?
- What factors do they think are affecting the lack of social media being used in Archives New Zealand reference service?
- How would they like to see such technology be used at Archives New Zealand?

2) How is Archives New Zealand presenting their use of Social Media online?

- How are these services being presented on Archives New Zealand's website?
- How are services presented on websites other than Archives New Zealand's website?

3) How do the attitudes of the archivists compare to what is being presented publically by Archives New Zealand?

- To what extent are the reference archivists aware of the present use of Social Media at Archives New Zealand?

5. Research design

The research paradigm that frames this study is that of Interpretivism. In carrying out a literature review and history of the use of interpretivism in Information Studies research Geoff Walsham notes "*knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors*" (Walsham, 1995, p.376). As this study aims to provide an understanding of Archives New Zealand's use of Social Media through the researcher's interpretation of archivists' attitudes, such a design was deemed appropriate. Although the researcher will aim to be subjective in their interpretation it is accepted that some bias may occur.

5.1 Research method

The study will be qualitative and thematic analysis will be used to identify themes within archivists' attitudes. This will allow for an inductive theory to be built as data is collected and analyzed by the researcher, which will compliment the interpretative stance to be taken. Content analysis of Archives New Zealand's online presence relating to use of social media

will be carried out and a comparative approach will be taken in order to further analyze the two sets of data against one another.

5.2 Organizational setting

A case-study methodology will be used to focus on Archives New Zealand as a unique archival institution within New Zealand. Archives New Zealand is "*the official guardian of New Zealand's public archives*" (Archives New Zealand, About us, 2012). Prior to 2010 they had been an independent government agency however, under a new government initiative to streamline public service, Archives New Zealand became part of the Department of Internal Affairs in 2011 (Guy, 2011). As the public archives and the institution that sets national standards the organization is seen as a leader in New Zealand archival practice.

5.3 Participants

Purposive sampling was used to find participants that worked in Archives New Zealand's reference services. An initial email was sent out asking for volunteers to put themselves forward, to which seven replied. A second email was sent separately to each of those interested. After the second email was sent a total of five volunteers came forward to take part in semi-structured phone interviews during working hours. Of the five archivists two were male and three were female. Three described themselves as reference archivists, with the remaining two being senior archivists.

5.4 Data collection

The first stage of data collection was to obtain information from the five participants. Semi-structured phone interviews were carried out over a period of four weeks with interviews arranged at times suitable to the participant. Each interview lasted between ten to thirty minutes in length and was recorded using a Skype voice recorder. Immediately after each interview was completed the recording was transcribed so that details of the interview were fresh in the researcher's mind.

The semi-structured nature of the interview aimed to make the participant feel as though they were able to say as much or as little as they liked about particular questions that interested them. At the end of the interview participants were given the opportunity to add any further comments in order to capture any information they felt was relevant but had not been included in the interview schedule.

In the second stage of data collection, content analysis of the website and other online social media sites was carried out over two days. Initially, Archives New Zealand's website was searched in order to determine the type of information available via their official website. Once this stage was completed and observations had been noted, the second day was used to search for Archives New Zealand's presence on popular Social Media websites (for example YouTube, Facebook etc.). Notes were taken each day of the content analysis to form the basis of data to later be analyzed.

6. Data analysis

6.1 Thematic analysis

As mentioned previously, thematic analysis was employed to determine themes from the data collected by the semi-structured interviews. As the recordings were transcribed the researcher made note of any emergent themes that occurred to them at the time. Once all interviews had been transcribed two copies of each were printed off for further analysis. The first set of copies were used to identify themes that would specifically answer the research questions and sub questions. Sentences and words were underlined in coloured pen that corresponded with a colour assigned to each question. Once this had been completed the second set of copies were used to identify any other emergent themes that would be of interest to the study. As they emerged, themes were noted and similar colour coordination was used to identify parts of the transcription that highlighted them.

6.2 Content analysis

As a methodology the content analysis of Archives New Zealand's website and presence on social media sites was conducted in a way that reflected thematic analysis. The researcher used the relevant research question and sub question to act as a framework for analysis.

Initially each page of the website was viewed in turn. The webpage, or tab, title was written down and any mention of social media was noted. Once each page had been viewed separately the search box provided by the website was used to search under the terms 'social media' and 'archives 2.0'. Any results returned were then viewed and relevant information was again noted. Once these steps were completed general notes about the website were made regarding the ease of finding information relating to social media and the amount of information provided in relation to the total amount.

The final stage of content analysis was to visit the following social media websites and search for any content provided by Archives New Zealand:

- Flickr
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Twitter
- DigitalNZ

Aspects such as interactivity, regularity of uploads and perceived popularity were made note of if any content was found.

6.3 Delimitations and limitations

Delimitations

- The study is limited to Archives New Zealand as an organization
- Only reference archivists were chosen as participants

Limitations

- Participants may have different understandings of the terms 'Archives 2.0' and 'social media'
- The results will only apply to a specific population of archivists so they will not be generalizable
- Participants may feel as though they cannot talk as long on the phone as they would do in person

7. Results

Content analysis of Archives New Zealand's online presence

The first stage of the content analysis was to view Archives New Zealand's website and determine whether or not there were any documents or links relating to their use of social media. On the homepage there were no visible links to any services that may be currently provided. It was necessary to explore the site further in order to find any mention of such technology being used at Archives New Zealand.

Under the 'About us' section is the link to Archives New Zealand's RSS news feeds. The section provides a clear explanation as to how to use RSS feeds in general and also more specifically on the site itself (Archives New Zealand, RSS News feeds, 2012)

If the user of the website is willing to look further they can find a press release from 2009 which details plans for the *An Impressive Silence* interactive online exhibition, found under the tab 'Publications & Media Releases' (Archives New Zealand, Publications & Media Releases, 2012). This exhibition has since been taken down and a note alluding to this can be found under the 'What we have' tab on the homepage.

Also under 'Publications & Media Releases', and 'Corporate Publications', is Archives New Zealand's Statement of Intent 2010-2013. The report provides some details of the organization's intent to increase their online services. Importance is centered upon the streamlining of services by placing more digital content online. There is no clear mention of social media applications and the focus seems to be on digitization rather than the use of social media to engage with users (Archives New Zealand, Statement of Intent, 2010, Digital Transformation).

A more recent addition to the website is the September 2012 issue of Archives New Zealand's quarterly newsletter, *Nga Tapuwae*, includes an article "*What's happening in the digital space?*" which provides an update on Archives New Zealand's work towards moving

more of its services online. In a bid to become “*more relevant to customers in the digital world*” the organization have developed the Online Strategy to ensure their holdings are becoming increasingly accessible via the web.

The article provides some insight into their plans to increase efficiency and improve customer service. It states they plan to seek feedback from their customers to find out what is working for both them, and the organization. In relation to social media, Alan Ferris explains Archives New Zealand’s current use of YouTube and their aspirations for future use.

“We also make use of the free delivery vehicles that are abound in the online world. We use YouTube, for example our aim is to add a new video to YouTube every day...our motto is: if it can be free it will be”. (Archives New Zealand, Nga Tapuwae, 2012)

The next stage of content analysis was to search for Archives New Zealand’s content on other social media websites. On sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr there was little to no evidence of any present use. However, a search on DigitalNZ uncovered links to the War Art wiki and Audio Visual wiki (DigitalNZ, Current content contributors, n.d.). The latter is still active however, it does not seem to have been updated since 2009 and the former no longer provides any interactive features.

The only website on which Archives New Zealand has an active channel is YouTube. Videos are uploaded regularly and the channel has 339 subscribers with over 190,512 views of the videos (Archives New Zealand, YouTube, 2012). Those that have been uploaded are divided into seven separate playlists in order to add further structure and context for the user. There have been a relatively few comments made by viewers however, they are all positive in tone. Some include viewers asking questions about the further holdings or expressing gratitude to Archives New Zealand for making the footage publically available (Archives New Zealand, YouTube comments, 2012).

Thematic analysis of semi- structured interviews

Analysis of the data uncovered a number of themes that were common to almost each participant. The following section is divided by these themes and each is expanded using examples from the transcripts of the interviews.

Attitudes towards the use of social media

At the beginning of each interview participants were asked about their general attitudes towards social media. This was intended to provide some context around the participants’ attitudes towards its use at Archives New Zealand. In relation to the notion that some archivists are unwelcoming of newer technologies, these questions were included to see whether there was any correlation between the personal use of social media and the positive attitudes towards its use within an archival context.

Analysis of the data shows that three out of the four participants use social media in their personal lives, citing applications such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs as the main types used. Those that did not use it personally were still aware of a number of different types

available and expressed awareness of their popularity. One archivist stated, *"I 'm not a good user of social media myself, I have to say that I don't really see the point but having said that I am well aware that [it] is how people do engage..."*

None of the archivists interviewed used it in a professional setting, as one participant noted that a lack of organizational policies around its use in the work place prohibited professional use. However, two of the archivists described their use of Facebook and Twitter to 'follow' other New Zealand G.L.A.M sector institution feeds. Those mentioned were a mixture of museums, local libraries and galleries. The only other archive mentioned was the Alexander Turnbull Library, which provides a daily Twitter feed. Both archivists expressed positive attitudes towards these particular services.

"I know I follow a lot on Facebook and Twitter. Puke Ariki which is the one in Taranaki, and also the Auckland Memorial War Museum, are really good at publicizing their events and their collections on Facebook"

Although other participants did not actively follow other G.L.A.M. institutions on Facebook or Twitter, all were aware of their presence on such sites. Additionally, four of the five were aware of other social media being used by international institutions, such as tagging, blogs, Wikis and saved searches. Some of this knowledge came from previously working in institutions which had been using such technology or alternatively from attending information management conferences. Their attitudes towards these projects were mostly positive as they were viewed as effective use of the technology.

2. Attitudes towards users

Overall interviewees expressed a need to understand Archives New Zealand's users better before committing to any particular social media. Engagement and connection with their users were concepts expressed as central motives in providing such services.

Three archivists expressed concern that a large majority of their users were from an older generation that would be unfamiliar with social media. One archivist said of their older users *"they are probably late adapters"*. The assumption that the older generation would not benefit from its use seemed to be a central reason for the participants' cautious attitude when it comes to its adoption.

Conversely, the majority of the interviewees indicated that they were aware of a younger generation of users and were of the belief that the use of such technology would be beneficial in attracting and engaging that particular group.

"And that's not to say it's only old people, 59% of our users are old people, but there are lots of younger users too and if your organizational aspiration is to reach out to audiences that you are currently not hitting, like university students or school students, then yep, pour money into that"

"...I work on a public desk and half of the researchers that come in are students who are doing their honours projects and stuff and they're all down with the social Media thing".

“...in terms of who is actually going to benefit from that, that’s probably a generational thing”

One archivist noted that a recent survey conducted for the Archives New Zealand Online Strategy showed that there was more interest in digital objects being made available on the website *“rather than any interest in things like Twitter”*.

3. Attitudes towards the use of Social Media at Archives New Zealand

When asked about their awareness of the past and present use of social media at Archives New Zealand the majority of interviewees felt that it has been inconsistent with many past ventures being abandoned.

There was a mixed response to current awareness of Archives New Zealand’s projects. Two of the archivists stated that they were not currently aware of any use of social media. Of the two, one participant mentioned that there was no use within reference services. The second interviewee commented that they were unaware of current use but did mention the now inactive War Art wiki.

Of the three archivists that stated they were aware of Archives New Zealand current use their responses were again mixed. The YouTube channel was mentioned however, there was the notion displayed that it was relatively unknown even within the organization itself.

“I know we have a YouTube page, if you consider that social media, which is being updated and is used a lot but it’s not really publicized in our own institution. There is only one team who really deals with it and yeah it’s a bit more, it’s not very well known”

During the interviews each participant was questioned about their awareness of any future plans its use at Archives New Zealand. The majority answered that they were aware of Archives New Zealand’s Online Strategy, a plan that is presently being worked on. The remaining interviewees stated that they were aware of discussions rather than any *“concrete”* plans. One interviewee noted that their lack of knowledge might have been because they were not privy to such plans.

4. Perceived opportunities

Whilst discussing the use of social media at Archives New Zealand each interviewee did provide suggestions as to how they thought it would be beneficial to both the organization and their users.

Within an organizational context, one of the main perceived benefits expressed by the participants was the opportunity for increased publicity and promotion of Archives New Zealand. A few of the archivists noted that increased publicity and awareness of archival collections was a way in which other institutions were using social media successfully.

“Like I said with the National Library Twitter feed, it’s a really good way of just getting people to engage...”

“...we have things that I think that are on a par with what they have...it would be nice to have some public way of telling people ‘hey look this is what we found literally just today by opening a box’”.

One archivist in particular relayed an example in which an article detailing the recent move of the Treaty of Waitangi, to the National Library, did not mention Archives New Zealand at all. In light of the merger with the Department of Internal Affairs, and with the National Library, the archivist felt that in the future this was an issue that would need to be addressed. They expressed the belief that Archives New Zealand will need to raise their public profile and social media could be used to achieve this.

“...we were just sitting around looking at it thinking you know, there’s publicity, I think it’s going to be a really big issue for Archives New Zealand in order to maintain that identity in the future...”

Adding to the belief that its use would offer opportunities for greater publicity was the idea that it could be used to attract new users, in particular those who were younger than Archives New Zealand current user demographic. Three of the archivists mentioned both university students and college students in particular. Mirroring the belief that the older generation would be late adopters of social media, the archivists held the belief that younger users would want to use it to engage and it would be a means to draw them in.

Yet another strong theme to feature across each interview were the benefits to be had from user generated content. Each archivist mentioned the potential opportunities in using the knowledge and enthusiasm of their users to add to existing metadata. One archivist felt that the current Archway record listings *“can be very uninformative”* and that social media could be used to enhance those listings.

“In terms of enhancing our descriptions and our metadata...whether that’s in the form of tagging or some other mechanism, but I certainly see a huge advantage in that, using the expertise of, and the time, and the enthusiasm of researchers”.

Those that had previously mentioned the War Art wiki all commented on the benefits gained from allowing users to comment and tag digital items.

“I was really excited about the War Art wiki for a while because it was getting the collection out to people who were using it...but also people were really into it and enjoy doing the tagging and uploading the information”

One archivist also noted that allowing users to add information via a wiki could even save the archivists time in adding extra contextual information.

“I think it will be fun as we are having a lot of customers who are coming and saying ‘oh I found this and this about the record’ and we haven’t got the time to invest into having a look into and describing the records”

Other archivists provided specific examples about how they felt the use of social media would make some of their tasks less time consuming and frustrating. A participant mentioned that they would like to see a way in which digital material could be uploaded to a shared online space so that users could log in to view copies of material. Another archivist stated that they were presently using YouTube as a place to allow users to preview footage before they decided to purchase copies. This allowed archivists to save time copying the footage onto DVD and then posting out to the user before a decision could even be made about whether copies were required. They noted, *“...it was a bit of a hassle so YouTube’s a much better option for that.”*

In connection to this idea, a few of the archivists felt that social media would allow users to build their own online communities via forums and commenting. This would allow them to share their knowledge with others and provide a space for them to engage with one another, not just with Archives New Zealand.

“I think creating a stronger community would be very good”

5. Perceived issues

Along with the aforementioned benefits expressed by the archivists they were also aware of some of the issues that may arise around the use of social media at Archives New Zealand. Although some issues that may affect the users were identified, the majority related to the organization itself.

Some of the issues perceived as barriers amongst all participants were those of funding and staffing. All archivists expressed concern that adopting social media would require extra time and therefore extra funding. It was felt that at the present there is little time for staff to use in order to create or supervise such projects. Instead a number of positions would need to be created so that a team or individual has responsibility for any future projects.

Another issue in relation to staffing was that the people chosen to head social media projects were those who were enthusiastic and felt comfortable using the technology. Leading on from this one archivist expressed concern that like some members of the public, some staff may be excluded through their own lack of confidence in using the technology.

“Some would be much more comfortable with the technology than others, so...make sure that it is preferably something that everyone can interact with and update, otherwise you are missing the point of interacting with your audience via the web”

Another issue that was identified by three of the participants was the need for Archives New Zealand’s plans to comply on the highest level with Government wide policies, and also on a lower level with The Department of Internal Affairs policies. In particular, the majority of

interviewees expressed the belief that there would need to be negotiation with The Department of Internal Affairs, especially around the issue of security.

Additionally, two of the five archivists expressed concern about their responsibility as a government agency to use social media appropriately. As a government agency they stated that would need to be careful about the type of information that could be uploaded and also the way in which it would be used and presented.

Moreover a common theme that was expressed by the participants was the need to make sure any social media ventures were maintained, updated and kept current. The attitude that Archives New Zealand had previously started a number of Social Media projects, on a number of different channels, that had not been maintained, was also present. Three of the archivists interviewed said that they believed this could be more detrimental to the image of Archives New Zealand than the decision not to use social media at all.

Connected to this was the belief that users' expectations would need to be managed. Archivists felt that the very nature of archives means that the immediacy associated with social media would not always be possible. As one participant pointed out, users may expect to receive information quickly however, *"that's not necessarily the case in research"*.

"We might be able to deliver it more quickly, the conversations might happen more quickly, but managing these expectations need to be carefully considered"

An issue that was brought to the fore by one archivist was the possibility of de-contextualizing records. The participant felt that there was a need to be careful to keep the context of records in tact. They felt that the way in which social media provides "chunks" of information to users there is the risk of losing this Provenance. They also felt this de-contextualization may prevent further research.

"...if we just deliver a bit of information, 'that's it', then people are disinclined to delve further or explore laterally, which is the real advantage of contextual information"

8. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to identify the attitudes of five reference archivists in relation to the use of social media at Archives New Zealand. The second stage of the study was to then compare the identified attitudes of the archivists to what is being portrayed publically online by Archives New Zealand in order to identify any synergies or lack thereof between the two. In this section the results will be discussed in order to answer the research questions.

1) What are the attitudes of archivists working at Archives New Zealand to the use of social media in the organization's reference services?

When carrying out an initial literature review regarding the topic of the use of social media it became evident that a number of articles were citing the attitudes of the archivists as one of the main barriers to its use. A number of reasons were given by some of the archivists

against the use of social media, however the most contentious seemed to be the idea that there would be a loss of authority, or control, over the archives.

It was this assumption that formed a foundation for this study. Its aim was to identify whether the archivists' attitudes were reflecting, or possibly influencing, Archives New Zealand's seeming lack of interest in using social media as part of their reference services.

The data provided by the semi-structured interviews have shown that the participants have some concerns over the use of social media. These included issues of funding, staff time, network and computer security and the de-contextualization of records. However, the main theme to come from the results of each interview was the archivists' strong belief that if social media were to be used there would first have to be policies and plans put in place.

Furthermore, the majority of participants viewed Archives New Zealand's previous projects into the realm of social media as inconsistent and potentially more damaging to their reputation as an information management institution. Most of the archivists interviewed saw previous attempts to be spread over too many different platforms with little connection between them all. As a result, there was the general feeling that a well thought out strategy would be needed to ensure that projects were not started and subsequently abandoned.

Yet another theme that came through in relation to planning was the need to first survey users in order to choose the right types of social media applications that would suit both the archives and their users. A number of archivists expressed concern that any projects implemented were going to be beneficial to the majority of their users. This idea also was expressed by a number of participants who felt that Archives New Zealand also needed to decide what their aspirations as an organization were as they would also have a bearing over what types of social media would work best for them.

Analysis of the data seems to suggest that although the archivists have some concerns around particular issues of social media they can also see a number of opportunities for both their organization and their users. The overwhelming attitude displayed by each archivist was one of caution. As a number of the participants noted, there was the need to think carefully about an overarching strategy that would link the use of social media to their 'business as usual' activities. It could not be just a simple tool to satisfy a passing trend instead it needed to be linked closely to the way Archives New Zealand works as a whole.

2) How is Archives New Zealand presenting their use of Social Media online?

In order to provide an organizational context to the study, the content analysis of Archives New Zealand's website, and present use of social media, provided an insight into the attitude towards social media by the organization as a whole.

The data collected showed that the organization's use of social media was fragmented and unclear. There was no clear policy relating to its use that could be found via their website and any information that was found was often hidden under different tabs and page titles. This lack of a coherent message regarding social media suggests that Archives New Zealand are still in the process of deciding how it will fit into their organization as a whole.

This again was demonstrated by the fragmented past and current use of social media by the organization. The War Art wiki and An Impressive Silence exhibition have either been taken down or have had their interactive features removed. Similarly, although the Audio Visual wiki can be accessed via DigitalNZ it still seems to be largely inactive. In contrast Archives New Zealand's YouTube channel is being regularly updated with new videos uploaded at least once a week. It provides some level of interactivity and features positive feedback from users. However, it seems to still be largely unknown with no discernable promotion of its existence on the Archives New Zealand website.

Content analysis of the website showed that the use of social media is something that has been considered by Archives New Zealand however, it is yet to be pinned down as part of a clear message to the public. The 2010-2013 Statement of Intent, the recent Nga Tapuwae article and the current use of the YouTube channel indicate that the organization is aiming to move more services and digital material online however, the fragmented message being portrayed by Archives New Zealand shows that it is an issue that is yet to be solved.

3) How do the attitudes of the archivists compare to what is being presented publically by Archives New Zealand?

When comparing the two sets of data it is clear to see that the archivists' attitudes do reflect what is being portrayed publically by Archives New Zealand online.

Comments made by participants regarding Archives New Zealand's propensity to start projects without maintaining them is reflected in material found on the website. A press release from 2009 provides details about the establishment of the An Impressive Silence interactive exhibition however, current details of how the exhibition has been taken down can be found under the 'About us' tab.

Additionally, archivists' commented on the lack of promotion surrounding the YouTube channel. Although, there is mention of the channel in the Nga Tapuwae article there are no clear links from the website that indicate to the user that such a service exists.

The overall feeling by archivists that discussion and planning is still underway is mirrored by the lack of clear information available online. It is clear that the archivists interviewed are aware of social media and have considered the opportunities it could provide. The presence of present and previous material on Archives New Zealand's website shows similarly that there is an awareness of social media and it has been considered. As a result, it seems as though attitudes presented by the archivists reflect the image portrayed by the organization as a whole via the web. From the outside it seems as though it is not a matter of 'if' Archives New Zealand will use social media but 'how'.

9. Conclusion

The introduction of social media to the archival realm has brought about a new way in which archivists can interact with their users. As a relatively new technology there is little literature relating to its use within archives. This study was designed to determine the attitudes of a small number of archivists at New Zealand's government archive to provide further insight into the topic of Archives 2.0 in a local setting.

Qualitative data has been collected in order to identify common attitudes among participants and content analysis has been used to collect information relating to Archives New Zealand's public portrayal of social media. The concept that permeates some of the literature on this topic in relation to archivists is that some are resistant to the use of social media for reasons such as loss of authority. This study aimed to use interpretive methodology to see whether the attitudes of the archivists were acting as a barrier to a seeming lack of use at Archives New Zealand.

The results showed that whilst the archivists had some concerns over issues such as security, de-contextualization of data, funding and a lack in staff time, they were also able to see the benefits such use could bring to their organization and its users. As a result, they were able to provide ideas of how they felt future use of social media should go ahead at Archives New Zealand. There was a strong feeling that any projects should be thoroughly planned before they were implemented. In this way the participants felt that the needs of their users could be taken into account, along with other issues they had identified, and the right type of social media could be implemented and taken forward into the future.

10. Suggestions for future research

When the research project was started at the beginning of the year the intention was to determine the attitudes of both the archivists and users at Archives New Zealand in order to identify any synergies, or lack thereof, between the two groups. Due to time constraints only data from the archivists point of view was able to be collected. However as there are few studies that consider the point of view of the user, and as more archive collections become digitized, this would still be an avenue of research that would benefit LIS scholarship in the future.

Other suggestions would be:

- Extend to study a larger number of New Zealand archivists using professional mail listings to recruit volunteers
- Investigate user attitudes and compare with those of archivists
- Further study Archive's New Zealand's social media use and compare it within the framework of wider government policies surrounding ICT.

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13. Appendices

1. Archivist's Information Sheet
2. Archivist's Consent Form
3. Interview schedule

Appendix One: Archivist's Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet for an investigation into the attitudes of archivists and users towards the use of Social Media in Archives New Zealand's Reference Services

Leah Johnston: School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Masters student in the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree I am undertaking a research project examining the attitudes of both users and archivists towards the use of social media in Archives New Zealand's reference services. The University requires that ethics approval be obtained for research involving human participants.

I am inviting up to five reference archivists of Archives New Zealand to participate in this study. Participants will be asked to take part in a semi-structured phone interview with myself. Questions will be emailed to participants beforehand. Interviews will last between twenty to forty minutes and will be recorded.

Responses collected will form the basis of my research project and will be put into a written report on an anonymous basis. It will not be possible for you to be identified personally. Only grouped responses will be presented in this report. All material collected will be kept confidential.

You may withdraw yourself (or any information you have provided) from this project before 31st August 2012 without having to give reasons or without penalty of any sort.

Feedback in the form of a summary of the results will be provided. You can choose if you wish to receive them by ticking the relevant box on the consent form.

No other person besides myself, and my supervisor Gillian Oliver will view the information provided in the questionnaires. The final research project will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management at the end of October 2012 and deposited in the University Library Research Archive. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals and presented at professional conferences. Transcripts and recordings of the interviews will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at johnstleah1@myvuw.ac.nz or 027 555 4663, or my supervisor, Dr Gillian Oliver, at the School of Information Management at Victoria University, email gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz.

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Appendix Two: Archivist's Consent Form



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

The use of Social Media in Archives New Zealand's Reference Services: An investigation into the attitudes of users and archivists

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project before 31st August 2012 without having to give reasons or without penalty of any sort.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me. I understand that the recording of interviews will be electronically wiped at the end of the project unless I indicate that I would like them returned to me.

- I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others without my written consent.
- I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.
- I agree to take part in this research

Signed: Name of participant (Please print clearly) Date:

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Appendix Three: Interview Schedule

Archivist's Questions

- 1) Position held
- 2) Time worked at Archives New Zealand
- 3) Do you hold any professional qualifications?
- 4) Do you belong to any Information Management professional bodies?
- 5) Are you aware of the term Archives 2.0?
- 6) Do you use Social Media applications yourself?
- 7) Are you aware of the types of Social Media applications being used by other archival institutions at present? (i.e. tagging, saved searches, instant messaging, Twitter feeds, Facebook pages etc.)
- 8) Are you aware of other New Zealand G.L.A.M (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) institutions using Social Media to connect with their users?
- 9) Have you used any of these services before?
- 10) Have you worked at any other institutions previously that were using these types of applications?
- 11) Are you aware of Archives New Zealand's current use of Social Media applications?
- 12) Are you aware of any plans to use such applications in the future?
- 13) Have you ever had a user enquire about such services?
- 14) Do you believe it would be beneficial for Archives New Zealand to use Social Media within reference services?
- 15) If so how and why? Any suggestions?
- 16) What benefits do you see such use providing?
- 17) Do you think there would be any negative outcomes?
- 18) Do you believe there are any barriers to implementing these types of applications?

19) If you do not think Archives New Zealand should not use Social Media in their reference services, why not?

20) Any further comments?