ICA SAE: Archival research and researchers

A short report by Louise Ray for the
Section on Archival Education and Training:
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Acronyms used in this report:

AERI – Archival Education Research Institute
EBNA – European Board of National Archives
FARMER – Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research
ICA – International Council on Archives
InterPARES - International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems
NAET – Network of Archival Educators and Trainers (North West Europe)
PIAF - Portail International d'archivistique francophone
SAE – Section on Archival Education and Training

## 1.	Executive Summary

Through interviews and desk research this report seeks to **identify current practice** in sharing research within the archive sector, to **explore the benefits of providing an online resource**, and **present the key issues** that the SAE must consider in developing such a resource. The most significant **ways of publicising research within the archive sector** can be categorised under eight areas; journals and publications, conferences and conference papers, information about research projects online, e-lists and e-bulletins, personal contacts and word of mouth, networks, funding agencies, and related academic activity, but use of these methods is described as **currently ad hoc or haphazard**. Interviewees perceived **significant benefits** in the development of a shared online information resource for **researchers, teachers, policy-makers** and **practitioners**.

Based on analysis of current access to research and the possible identified benefits, the key attributes of the resource are identified as being **Inclusive, Accessible, Collaborative** and **Sustainable.** In order to move towards the development of an effective web resource that has these essential attributes, the SAE needs to consider 12 key questions that will inform the design and delivery of the site. These are:

- Should the SAE maintain any level of control over the quality of the content?
- Should the SAE accept flexibility in the level of content provided, with a small number of mandatory fields but the options for a fuller richer entry including uploaded documentation?
- Should the SAE require content to be provided in an ICA language, but enable providers to also include information in their own preferred language?
- Should the SAE create a classification scheme for research?
- Should the SAE encourage user-generating tagging?
- Should the SAE build access enhancement tools like RSS feeds into the website?
- Should the SAE develop addition tools, such as e-digests and if so how will sustainability be built into this development?
- Should the SAE adopt a policy that access to the site should be free of charge?
- Should the SAE harness Web 2.0 technology to enable user comment and discussion between users and content-providers?
- Should the SAE work with other organisations in developing and sustaining the site?
- Should the SAE position this resource as central and essential to their strategic planning?
- Should the SAE opt for a wholly volunteer run model of delivery or seek funding to staff the development and management of the website?

Having considered these questions the SAE committee should discuss the project further with **potential collaborators**, undertake a **wider user survey**, develop and **pilot the resource**, and develop and implement a comprehensive **communications plan**.

2.   Background and Methodology

The Section on Archival Education and Training of the International Council on Archives commissioned this report as part of a wider project entitled 'Archival research and researchers'. The issues that the project seeks to address were outlined in the project proposal to the ICA:

'This project explores the critical issue of sharing and developing knowledge of research in the discipline of archives and records management across national boundaries, as the basis of future research strategies. Individual universities have begun to develop extensive research programmes, with successful grant-funded research, dissemination and doctoral research communities. In a few countries, there are emerging national programmes of research (for example the AERI doctoral project in the USA, the work done on the research strategy in the Netherlands, and the emerging UK educators research framework). ICA is in the unique position of offering a focus for researchers in our discipline working internationally. However the future development of research is greatly hampered by a lack of knowledge of existing research activity: sharing of this knowledge is an essential part of the framework for building future strength in our discipline. Working together with SAE, academics and doctoral students from three countries (Karen Anderson, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Christophe Jacobs), will build some of the essential infrastructure and facilitate future developments.'

An earlier SAE project had developed a prototype database to include information on research projects and this was made available via the Edith Cowan University Western Australia website[1]. This English-language database enabled information to be browsed by project, researcher or publication. Its stated aims were to 'allows researchers in the field of archives and record management to enter their contact details and professional affiliations along with their current research projects and publications. Visitors are welcome to search the current contents of the database, or to register as a researcher and enter relevant projects/publications.' The database did not receive take up within the SAE, or more widely, and this report seeks to consider in part why this might have been the case, and make sure any future resource fully meets the needs of users.

In order to explore the issues around the creation and use of a shared information resource, a small group of 14 stakeholders (academics, practitioners, and policy makers) was identified. 10 of these responded and were asked a series of questions, either through face-to-face contact or via telephone interviews. The sample group was chosen to represent individuals with an interest in archival research, training, practice and policy-making. The group included representatives working across four continents to elicit a range of perspectives, however, it is recognised that these views are not necessarily representative of

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[1] Currently made available at http://pcas23.archivschule.uni-marburg.de/icasae/index.php

the wider archival sector, or indeed the whole archive research community. The views of the sample group have been used to inform the conclusions of this report, but these conclusions will need to be tested with a wider survey (see Section 6.1).

The sample group was made up of the following individuals:
> Karen Anderson - Mid Sweden University
> Luciana Duranti – University of British Columbia
> Anne Gilliland – University of California, Los Angeles
> Eric Ketelaar - University of Amsterdam
> David Leitch – Secretary General, International Council on Archives
> Alibhe McNabola – Head of Research and Evidence, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (England)
> Gillian Oliver – Victoria University of Wellington
> Barbara Reed - Recordkeeping Systems Pty Ltd (Australia)
> Peter Sebina – University of Botswana
> Marian Hoy – University of Canberra

The sample group were asked a series of questions, listed in Appendix 1: Interview Questions. In addition to the interviewees, a number of academic and student delegates to the FARMER/NAET conference in Oxford, UK provided helpful insights that have been incorporated into this report.

This report is also based on desk research focused on the prototype database and on websites containing information about research projects. For a full list of these websites, accessed during June and July 2010, see Appendix 2. These websites were used to identify interviewees, explore good practice in presenting research information, identify models of collating research information, and identify potential partnerships in the creation and promotion of a shared resource.

This report represents 10 days work. It seeks to identify current practice in sharing information about research within the archive sector, to explore the possible benefits of providing an online resource, and present the key issues that the Section for Archival Education and Training must consider in developing such a resource. It does not deal with the technical development and costings of the website as this was outside the scope of this piece of work.

3   Current methods for accessing and disseminating information

Almost all the interviewees referred to their approach to accessing information about research as 'ad hoc' or 'haphazard'. The lack of inclusive structured routes for finding research data means that there are concerns that information relevant to research, teaching, policy-making and practice can be missed even by the most diligent searchers. There is a high level of awareness that current access routes do not effectively deal with language barriers, and these barriers hamper access to the broadest range of archival research. Below are listed the broad mechanisms identified by interviewees as useful for raising awareness of their own research or accessing information about research projects elsewhere.

3.1 Journals and publications

Traditionally practitioners and academics have used journals and professional publications to disseminate information about archival research and case studies of good practice. Although most of the main journals in archival practice, for example *Archivaria, Archival Science, American Archivist,* and *Archives and Manuscripts* are now available online, they are only accessible via subscription services. The cost of these services can be barriers to access for those without institutional subscriptions. Whilst peer-review journals provide opportunities to publish detailed research findings there are concerns that the long lead-in times to publication make their use for teaching and practice less effective and that quicker targeted ways to disseminate information are needed.

3.2 Conferences and conference papers

Another classic route for sharing archival research has been via national and international conferences and attending these is cited as still very important to researchers in learning about, and presenting, research findings. Whilst traditionally conference proceedings might have been published in hard copy some considerable time after the conference, improvements in content management systems have allowed websites not only to provide up-to-date information about conferences, but subsequently to be enhanced with access to presentation abstracts, speaker's presentation notes, or conference reports. For example, information about the 2008 ICA Congress is accessible online[2]. Social networking has also enabled delegates to record their own reflections on papers presented, for example, the blog for the 2009 Society of Archivists (UK and Ireland) conference[3]

3.3 Information about research projects online

Without a single international portal for research projects, access is primarily via the websites of the academic institutions involved in research projects, or their funding bodies. For example, the University of Maryland College of Information Studies lists completed projects in a section of its departmental web pages[4] , with hyperlinks through to individual projects, for example the Multilingual Access to Large Spoken Archives projects[5]. In other instances projects are listed in relation to the academic involved in the project, for example the information regarding Eric Ketelaar at the University of Amsterdam[6] There are an increasing number of collaborative projects that attempt to bring together research and create networks in particular research areas, for example The International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) project[7] and Electronic Resource Preservation and Access Network[8].

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[2] http://www.kualalumpur2008.ica.org/en/sessions, http://www.kualalumpur2008.ica.org/en/reporters

[3] http://soaconference2009.wordpress.com/page/2/

[4] http://ischool.umd.edu/research/#completed

[5] http://malach.umiacs.umd.edu/

[6] http://cf.hum.uva.nl/bai/home/eketelaar/research.html.

[7] http://www.interpares.org/

Interviewees mentioned viewing institutional websites as the most common route to accessing information about websites. However, it is recognised that the quality of the websites and the information provided is variable. Some sites are cited as good in design but not always up to date in content. There are widespread concerns about the long-term survival of these web-based resources, with institutions less likely to invest in the maintenance and development of research pages once funded projects had been completed. The long-term preservation and copyright issues surrounding the retention of research within Institutional Repositories are being explored in a project at University of British Columbia[9] and there is a EU funded project to create a pan-European infrastructure for digital repositories[10]. It might be helpful for SAE to keep a watching brief on these projects and draw on any research findings. The website most frequently cited as an example of good practice was Monash University[11]

Just as Web 2.0 technology has been used to enhance online conference information, there have been attempts to use blogs to generate comment and discussion on archival research, for example Richard J. Cox's blog on Reading Archives[12] and a blog book group specifically relating to Randall Jimerson's work '*Archives Power[13]*'. Both these blogs contain comments relating to the value of this approach from both the creators and reader-contributors.

3.4   E-lists and e-bulletins
Key email lists are identified as ways of finding out about research. Email lists like those of the Society of American Archivists Archives and Archivists (A&A), The Australian Society of Archivists (AUS-ARCHIVISTS) and Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA), UK's ARCHIVES-NRA list, and ICA were identified as important. Whilst some research projects such as PLANETS (Preservation and Long-term Access through Networked Services)[14] use these lists extensively to disseminate research progress, it was noted by interviewees that the usual way to find out about current research via these e-lists is when research posts were advertised or conferences publicised. For policy-makers digests such as e-bulletins and press releases are seen as particularly critical in enabling them to identify relevant research findings, particularly where policy work encompasses a broader cultural area.

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[8] http://www.erpanet.org/index.php
[9] University Institutional Repositories: Copyright and Long-Term Preservation http://uir-preservation.org/index.cfm
[10] Digital Repository Infrastructure Vision for European Research http://www.driver-repository.eu/
[11] http://infotech.monash.edu.au/research/centres/cosi/
[12] http://readingarchives.blogspot.com/
[13] http://readingarchivespower.wordpress.com/.
[14] http://www.planets-project.eu/

3.5   Personal contacts and Word of Mouth

The academics interviewed for the report identified the use of personal contacts as a key way of keeping in touch with current research. Those in smaller research communities, or more geographically isolated, are aware that their physical location can be a barrier to effective use of this type of information gathering and sharing.

3.6   Networks

Over recent years there have been greater efforts to move from this personal contact into more formalised networking groups. For example the four year (2009-12) Archival Education and Research Institutes (AERI)[15] project in the US, the Portail International d'archivistique francophone[16] and the Network of Archival Educators and Trainers[17] set up in 2005. Social networking sites like LinkedIN[18] are being utilised and in some countries there are opportunities to use national research networks or databases across a wide range of research disciplines, such as the Dutch research database (NOD)[19].

3.7   Funding agencies

Most academic interviewees referred to the demands of the project funders as critical in how a research project is promoted and research findings disseminated. Many funding agencies require an online presence for the project and some require open access to the full research findings. Most funding is dependent on the production of interim and final project reports and these are often cited as useful ways of accessing information, for example through funding agencies digest reports or websites, for example the Institute of Museum and Library Services[20].

3.8   Related academic activity

Academics also learn about upcoming research through requests for the expertise in reviewing grant, tenure or promotion applications and requests to sit on advisory panels. This is more likely to occur once an academic has a recognised research profile in a particular area.

4.   Perceived benefits of a shared information resource

As referenced in Section 1, the previous attempt to create a research database by the SAE did not gain purchase with the target group and therefore this research has been undertaken to try to get a greater understanding of what value might be placed on a shared online information resource. A clearer understanding of the proposed benefits and outcomes of the resource will inform both its design and the critical implementation and promotion phase of the project.

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[15] http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/index.htm
[16] http://www.piaf-archives.org/
[17] http://www.naet-europe.org/.
[18] http://www.linkedin.com/
[19] http://www.onderzoekinformatie.nl/en/oi/
[20] http://www.imls.gov/recipients/recipients.shtm

The responses of the academics interviewed as part of this project, outlined in Section 3, back up a recent report on academics in general in the UK. This identified that researchers disseminate their findings through a range of routes and that, 'the choices they make are underpinned by a number of interrelated motives beyond the simple desire to pass on their findings to those who may be interested in them. These motivations include the desire not only to maximise dissemination to a target audience, but to register their claim to the work they had done, and to gain peer esteem and the rewards that may flow from that'[21]. The report goes on to point out that 'in deciding when, where and how to communicate their work, researchers may have to make choices between speedy dissemination to a desired audience, and less speedy publication in a high-status journal'[22]. It is vital to consider the benefits for contributors as well as benefits for users of the resource to ensure its viability. As one interviewer pointed out, as information managers we should be considering this work as a potential model of practice for other research communities to adopt.

4.1   Time

With most interviewees acknowledging their current methods of locating relevant information were haphazard and with a Google search on the term 'archival research projects' attracting 99,300 hits, an obvious benefit would be in reducing the time spent in locating relevant sources. However, if researchers are seeking out this information in an ad hoc way, it is unlikely that they have a clear understanding of how much time is currently allocated to this activity and therefore the perceived benefit in relation to time savings may not be a significant driver in itself to make the resource viable.

4.2   Sustainability

The long-term access to online research resources is critical for the development of research within the sector, and is therefore of vital concern in shaping and delivery of a shared resource. Interviewees were asked to consider how sustainable they felt the information currently held on the research pages of their own institutional websites. Most had major concerns regarding the longevity of these resources, many citing the lack of imperatives for the institution in maintaining the pages, or underlying data sets, once a project had been completed to the satisfaction of funding bodies. Challenges range from the loss of hyperlinks through to the destruction of key research materials. Eric Ketelaar talked of creating a list of around 90 individuals involved in research relevant to his students, and that each year 2-4 of these links no longer worked. The 'Functional Requirements for Evidence in Recordkeeping' project at the University of Pittsburgh was cited by a number of interviewees as an example where research data was lost from the University website and is now only available via the Internet Archive[23]. A shared information resource could

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[21] *Communicating Knowledge: How and why UK researchers publish and disseminate their findings*, Research Information Network, Sep 2009 p.4
[22] *ibid, p.4*
[23] http://www2.sis.pitt.edu/~rcox/FunReqs.htm.

provide an element of back up by providing another entry point for data currently only accessible via institutional websites. This selling point is however predicated on developing a resource that is constructed and developed in a way that minimises concerns about its own sustainability.

There is a whole range of other specific benefits that have been identified through the interviews that could be built into the design, promotion and use of the resource. These are outlined below in relation to four key areas of archival research, teaching, policy-making and practice, although it should be noted that many of these benefits cut across these areas.

4.3   Research
There are clear benefits to those involved in archival research in the development of a shared information resource. A better mechanism for identifying past and current research would significantly improve the ability of researchers to clarify research questions, identify possible methodologies and potential collaborators. The ability to promote and disseminate their research findings to an international audience will not only allow researchers to achieve recognition and improve research profiles but also provide a new mechanism for presenting their research to audiences beyond the academic community. Specific outcomes for the resource might be:
- Helping identify current and future research themes
- Helping identify gaps in research and avoid duplicating research
- Helping identify research collaborators and advisory board members
- Enabling research projects to build on previous research findings
- Providing a mechanism for sharing research with academics and the wider archival community
- Providing the opportunity to gain acknowledgement for research amongst peers
- Providing validation for research, particularly when undertaken outside the academic community
- Providing opportunities to give acknowledgement to funding agencies
- Providing a mechanism for sharing further research questions
- Providing a mechanism for commenting on research findings and methodologies
- Enabling individuals without affiliation to academic institutions to develop research profiles
- Encouraging researchers to share information with policy-makers and practitioners
- Giving a platform for increased engagement in interdisciplinary research
- Providing a mechanism for demonstrating the growth of archival theory and protect key research for posterity

4.4   Teaching
Interviewees were enthusiastic about the added benefits of the resource in improving teaching practice. This would be achieved by supporting teachers in the development and delivery of courses, by providing resources to students, and also by demonstrating to students how research feeds into practice, and

encouraging them to consider a continuing engagement with research either in an academic environment or as practitioners. Specific outcomes for the resource might be:

- Helping archive schools in the construction of syllabi
- Ensuring access to the most up-to-date research for teaching
- Helping archive schools in identifying external examiners and tenure reviewers
- Providing free teaching tools for distance learning
- Helping masters and PhD students identify research topics
- Helping masters and PhD students to gain an international research profile

4.5 Policy-making

Interviewees felt that the resource could have impact on improving the link between archival research and policy making. Academics would welcome the opportunity to present their research through a mechanism accessible to policy-makers. Policy-makers are keen to make better use of research and, if the right dissemination mechanisms were in place, could benefit from the ability to access research from outside their country of operation. Specific outcomes for the resource might be:

- Supporting greater interaction between researchers and policy makers
- Helping to bring policy-makers and grant-making bodies closer to archival practice and research
- Demonstrating the value of theory and theory-based practice to policy makers
- Encouraging policy makers to submit their own research findings
- Helping to keep policy-makers up to date with archival theory
- Helping to direct policy-makers to relevant information through appropriate signage
- Supporting funding agencies in assessing research grant applications and identifying gaps in provision.
- Assisting the ICA in positioning itself as a key broker between policy-makers, practitioners and researchers

4.6 Practice

Supporting, improving and influencing research, teaching and policy-making should inevitably impact positively on improving practice. Interviewees were very keen to ensure that a shared resource should have a direct impact on practitioners and indeed some stated that this should be the primary aim of the resource. Specific outcomes for the resource might be:

- Helping practitioners to gain a better understanding of how research impacts on practice
- Encouraging more applied research
- Providing a mechanism for practitioners to engage in dialogue with researchers
- Encouraging practitioners to identify needs and future research questions
- Encouraging archival organisations to undertake their own research projects or collaborate with academic researchers

- Giving access to research that will support funding bids for cataloguing, digitisation and other elements of professional practice
- Supplementing the guidance resources and standards on the ICA website
- Giving practitioners within small organisations a tool to engage with continuing professional development
- Giving practitioners the opportunity to gain a research profile

It is clear from this discussion that there is an overwhelming positive response to the concept of an online resource to share access to research. The next section of the report considers what attributes need to be incorporated into the technical development of the site in order to maximise its ability to achieve the outcomes proposed in this section.

5.   Proposed attributes of a shared information resource
This section recommends a series of general attributes that might be ascribed to the online resource and the questions that SAE need to consider in order to move towards the practical delivery of those attributes.

5.1   Inclusive
The resource should allow anyone undertaking research to offer content to the site. As previously stated, the consensus view was that the resource should not only provide information about research projects within the academy, but should allow those without academic affiliations to contribute information about their research. These might be policy makers, archival institutions or individual practitioners. SAE needs to consider the level of reach that this inclusive approach might enable and whether the quality of the research presented represents any reputational risk to the group or the host site for the resource. If all content is going to be accepted, the SAE will need to include clear disclaimers on the site. If the content is going to be policed, then the SAE will need to consider how this will be undertaken. Will a single moderator be responsible for accepting content or will a panel of moderators undertake this work? What will be the assessment criteria around quality control and how will the group ensure these do not hamper freedom of expression? Balancing reputational risk with sustainability concerns, the recommendation of this report would be to approach this issue with the use of disclaimers, rather than complicate the moderation of the site.

The type of content required to make a useful and viable resource needs to be identified. Perhaps not surprisingly interviewee views slightly differed when asked to consider this from their perspective as a user of the site, when there was an emphasis on completeness, whereas when asked from the perspective of a content provider, most answers reflected concerns about the amount of time it might take to create entries and/or update content. Those with more confidence over their own institutional websites preferred a light touch minimal content approach with links to content-rich sites, others with less confidence over their own websites or less flexibility in developing web content, favoured options for included more information. There was a general consensus about the

information that would be helpful to have access to, with interviewees aware that some of this might be provided through links to other website and some directly hosted.

1. Project title
2. Name/s researcher / collaborators
3. Project Summary or initiation document
4. Date of project
5. Research methodology/design
6. Costs (funders)
7. Research findings include further investigation questions
8. Information on where research disseminated (web links, conferences, journals etc)

These proposed areas of content are very closely aligned to the previous research database project and so that design could be easily adapted to meet this need. To make the site inclusive it is important to enable content providers to approach the site in a number of ways. For example, those with content on another website might only want to contribute core information, 1-7 above, with a link provided at 8 for users to find additional information. This model corresponds to that used on a number of collaborative sites. Others may want to provide information on all these areas and have the facility to upload documents in addition. For the site to be successfully inclusive in capturing research projects that are being planned or underway, as well as completed projects, it should be possible to change the status of the project and edit entries. This would be possible with a password control for content providers.

Another key issue to enable an inclusive site is how to tackle language barriers. This could be achieved by encourage content providers to include core information (1-4) about their project in their own language and at least one ICA language, i.e. English or French. If providers are unable to do so then the option of trying to attract a group of volunteer translators to support this work might be undertaken, either specifically by SAE, or via the ICA's wider translation call.

Questions for SAE:
- Should the SAE maintain any level of control over the quality of the content?
- Should the SAE accept flexibility in the level of content provided, with a small number of mandatory fields but the options for a fuller richer entry including uploaded documentation?
- Should the SAE require content to be provided in an ICA language, but enable providers to also include information in their own preferred language?

5.2   Accessible
In addition to improving accessibility by reducing language barriers, the SAE needs to consider a number of issues about the development of the site to promote its accessibility.

Firstly, if the aspiration to include a wide range of research information is achieved, then effective searching options are critical. The previous database provided a good model in its browsing option for projects, publications and individuals as well as searching by terms. Interviewees were asked about their views on classification of research projects, and in most cases, they were concerned to reduce the complications of constructing a rigid taxonomy that might hamper searching as much as supporting it. The consensus view seemed to be that there might be a benefit of creating some loose 'clustering' of projects, perhaps via a drop-down menu option for contributors, but that the site should also enable user-generated tagging. This metadata would not only support searching but might give evidence of the focus of user searches, and the way content providers seek to define their own research.

Secondly, if different stakeholder groups are to feel the site is accessible for them how does this impact on website design and enhancement? For example, whilst academics might wish to use a structured search facility to look for individuals involved in particular areas of research and develop collaborations, policy makers may be much more interested in quickly identifying new research. It is therefore vital for SAE to consider not only the content of the resource but also design the site to maximise accessibility. A mechanism for highlighting new contributions on the home page would be useful, as would an RSS feed. The group may also want to consider if the resource could be enhanced by the development of an e-newsletter that would highlight recent research or other issues, drawing new users to the site and encourage repeat users. This would be particularly useful in supporting links with policy makers and practitioners, as the language of the e-digest could be tailored to highlighting relevant academic work. It is strongly recommended that the SAE consider this promotion and dissemination of information on the website as integral to its development. This would avoid some of the problems of the previous database where low profile and lack of promotion resulted in a small number of entries and minimal use. It is recognised that this would not only involve embedding technology within the content management system for the site, but would also require an investment of time by paid staff or volunteers in creating these digests, particularly if the aim were to create multi-lingual versions. Another option might be to create partnerships with either regional ICA groups, or national professional bodies to develop this activity.

Thirdly, SAE needs to consider the issue of free access to the site. In the research there was a strong sense that free access to the site was vital to encourage both content providers and users to access the site. It could help to reduce the economic barriers to accessing archival research that hinder a range of practitioners, students and academics in developing and non-developing countries. However, the ICA has made the decision to make its standards and guidance accessible only via a members-only part of the website. It might be argued that the research site could be another benefit to joining the ICA, which would encourage wider membership and improve the positioning of the ICA in relation to archival research. The alternative might be for the resource to sit

outside the ICA website (it is currently proposed that it be hosted by NAET). Once the SAE has considered its position on this issue, it is clearly vital for the SAE to discuss the impact of its policy on the level of support it might receive from the ICA Secretariat.

Questions for SAE:
- Should the SAE create a classification scheme for research?
- Should the SAE encourage user-generating tagging?
- Should the SAE build access enhancement tools like RSS feeds into the website?
- Should the SAE develop additional dissemination tools, such as e-digests and if so how will sustainability be built into this development?
- Should the SAE adopt a policy that access to the site should be free of charge?

5.3   Collaborative
To achieve benefits to all key stakeholder groups the SAE must foster a collaborative approach in developing the resource. In promoting the web resource it must clearly articulate the benefits for each group. The table below gives examples of the way the resource could be presented to these groups.

What is in it for me?

Researchers
It will enable me to ensure that my research project is relevant and breaking new ground. It will allow me to find appropriate collaborators (and possibly funders) and demonstrate how my work builds on, and supports, an international research community. It will provide me with recognition for my work and will enable me to disseminate findings, as required by funding agencies, in a swift and effective way.

Teachers
It will enable me to develop relevant syllabi, utilising the most up-to-date research to support teaching, and particularly enhance distance learning. It will make creating reading lists simpler and ensure information remains accessible. It will help me to support students in identifying research topics and allow me to identify relevant examiners.

Policy-makers
It will enable me to go to a single source for archival research, providing me with simple summaries of projects to enable me to identify relevant information quickly. I will be able to search on relevant policy terms and be able to see clearly when new information is added.

Practitioners
It will enable me to go to a single source for archival research, providing me with simple summaries of projects to enable me to identify relevant information quickly. I will be able to search on relevant terms and be able to see clearly when new information is added. I will feel included as part of the research community as I will be able to contribute information about my own research and comment on other research projects.

The site should represent collaboration between users and content providers and boundaries between the two should be avoided, if the SAE wants to ensure a wider sense of ownership of the site. One way to do this would be to make greater use of Web 2.0 technology, not just in providing user tagging (see 5.2) but also allowing users to comment on research and to post research questions. It could enable researchers to ask questions about research methodologies to a broader community and attract participants for applied research. Designing the site in this way, as a collaborative resource, would not only help to bring down national barriers to shared practice, but harnessing existing technology would position its relevance to the upcoming generation of digital natives coming through archival education into archival practice.

Section 3 and Appendix 2 of this report refer to some of the other collaborative work that is underway to bring together research in the archive sector. This site could harness these collaborations in a number of ways by engaging with key stakeholders. SAE should use networks like AERI, NAET, and PIAF to promote the site and support the initial content population of the site. Academics in these networks and those identified in the SAE directory or archival education and training institution, should be encouraged to ensure masters and PhD students contribute to the site as a core requirement of their work. For collaborative projects such as InterPARES the transfer of information to the SAE site could provide back up to ensure the sustainability of their web content, if funding is discontinued. By positioning the site as both a portal for international dissemination of research findings and a way of sustaining these types of projects, it may be that some funding towards the site could be incorporated into funding bids to national agencies such as Institute of Museum and Library Services or the Council on Library and Information Research[24].

Questions for SAE:
- Should the SAE harness Web 2.0 technology to enable user comment and discussion between users and content-providers?
- Should the SAE work with other organisations in developing and sustaining the site?

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[24] http://www.clir.org/about/about.html

5.4   Sustainable
The critical attribute of the site must be sustainability. Many of the elements previously outlined could help to support this; such as minimising the moderation or oversight of content, encouraging users to create tags to support searching, and working with partners on funding and populating the development of the site. But the ICA's long-term commitment to the site must be clearly articulated to ensure its viability. Researchers must feel it is worthwhile to provide content, and users must have confidence that the site will be both up to date and provide them access over time to data they have previous used. If the site is sold to content providers and stakeholders as a backup for their research information then this has to be practicable.

The SAE will have to consider carefully the model for oversight of the website. An option might be to go for a completely volunteer supported site, perhaps with volunteering opportunities offered as part of gaining credits for professional development. Alternatively the site could be managed by a paid staff member within the ICA secretariat or embedded in another institution. Or a hybrid model might be developed, with a staff member designated to help in the development and initial promotion of the site until it reaches a tipping point of sufficient content, use and interaction. With the options two and three, SAE would need to work with partners to bid for funding to support the administrator post.

Questions for SAE:
- Should the SAE position this resource as central and essential to their strategic planning?
- Should the SAE opt for a wholly volunteer run model of delivery or seek funding to staff the development and management of the website?

6.   Next Steps
It is recommended that the SAE committee consider if it accepts the findings of this report and considers the questions outlined in Section 5.

6.1   Discussion with stakeholders
If the findings are accepted it is recommended that the next step is to discuss the report and the SAE decisions about the resource with the ICA Secretariat. If this discussion is broadly supportive of this approach, further engagement with other possible stakeholders such as AERI, NAET, EBNA, PIAF about development and funding as well as other SAE members who might be able to provide practical support for the development and funding of the project (e.g. via the InterPARES project), would be possible and advisable.

6.2   Wider user survey
The project 'Archival research and researchers' proposed a wider user survey via the web on completion of this report. Having undertaken this research the recommendation is to delay this wider user survey until further discussion with stakeholders has taken place. The rationale for this is firstly, that although

recognising that the interviewees could not be seen as statistically representative, there was very little divergence in their general positive view about the project. A survey at this stage might simply back up that position but not provide any more useful evidence. By delaying the survey until further discussion with stakeholders has taken place, the SAE should have a clearer view on the model they wish to follow in the development of the site. For example, if a wholly volunteer run model was agreed upon, the survey could incorporate a call for volunteers. If the SAE is able to present a clearer sense of the level of interactivity the site will allow, potential users could be asked if they currently use web 2.0 options elsewhere to test their viability. The detailed evidence gathered at this stage could help with any funding bids agreed with partners in relation to the demand for the site. A suggested list of questions that might be incorporated into a web-based user survey, depending on the results of stakeholder discussion, is outlined in Appendix 3.

6.3   Development stage and pilot
Alongside the technical development of the site, it is recommended that SAE continue to engage with organisations which will be key to encouraging researchers to contribute their content, for example the regional ICA groups and nationally based groups like FARMER.

6.4   Launch
A clear and comprehensive communications plan will be critical to the success of the project and should be an integral part of the project plan. It would be helpful to consider timing the official launch to a key event, for example the International Congress of Archives in 2012. The development of the communications plan should consider how best to use all the mechanisms for information sharing outlined in Section 1 of the report. It should also incorporate an ongoing communications plan that will ensure that recognition and use of the site does not tail off after the initial launch. Any funding bid should ideally include funding towards this essential activity, as well as the technical site development and maintenance.

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

How do you currently find out information about archival research projects? (current and completed)

How do you currently publish / disseminate information about a) current research b) finished research projects?

How confident are you in the sustainability of information published on your own website?

How confident are you in the sustainability of information published on research websites?

How do you think a shared information resource would support archival research?

How do you think a shared information resource would inform policy making?

How do you think a shared information resource would support teaching?

How do you think a shared information resource would support archival practice?

What sort of information would you expect from a shared information resource about individual projects (e.g project summary, contact information, web links, uploaded documents)?

How would you like to use a shared information resource to research across projects?

What language/s do you think the information should be supplied in?

Are there any website that you think represent best practice in presenting archival research information?

Any other comments?

Appendix 2   Examples of online information about research projects

A – wider research portals
B – University sites (esp. Archives schools and projects)
C – personal websites
D – Government, Archive service and professional websites

International
International Council for Science (ICSU) -Committee on Data for Science and Technology http://www.codata.org/ (A)
UNESCO Archives Portal - http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/portals/archives/page.cgi?g=index.html;d=1 (A)

Australia
Monash University - Clever Recordkeeping Metadata Project (CRKM) http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/crkm/ (A)
Monash University - Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics http://infotech.monash.edu.au/research/centres/cosi/ (B)
National Library of Australia - Preserving Access to Digital Information (PADI) http://www.nla.gov.au/padi/ (D)

Public Record Office Victoria - Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS)
http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/vers/vers/default.asp (D)

Belgium
Digital Archiving in Flemish Institutions and Administrations (DAVID / eDAVID)
http://www.expertisecentrumdavid.be/eng/edavid.php (D)

Canada
University of British Columbia's Faculty of Law and School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. University Institutional Repositories: Copyright and Long-Term Preservation http://uir-preservation.org/ (B)
University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) http://www.interpares.org/ (B)
University of Toronto Faculty of Information
http://www.ischool.utoronto.ca/research-labs/projects (B)

Europe-wide
CASPAR - Cultural, Artistic and Scientific knowledge for Preservation, Access and Retrieval - http://www.casparpreserves.eu/caspar-project (D)
DELOS - http://www.delos.info/ (D)
Digital Repository Infrastructure Vision for European Research (DRIVER)
http://www.driver-repository.eu/ (D)
Electronic Resource and Preservation Access Network (ERPANET)
http://www.erpanet.org/ (D)
Digital Preservation Europe (DPE)- http://www.digitalpreservationeurope.eu/ (D)
Network of Archival Educators and Trainers - http://www.naet-europe.org/

France
PIAF - http://www.piaf-archives.org/ (D)

Germany
Archivschule Marburg
http://www.archivschule.de/forschung/forschungsprojekte/ (A)
German National Library, the Niedersaechsische Staats- und Universitaetsbibliothek Goettingen (Goettingen State and University Library), the Gesellschaft fuer wissenschaftliche Datenverarbeitung mbH Goettingen, and IBM Deutschland GmbH - Co-operative Development of a Long-Term Digital Information Archives (KOPAL) http://kopal.langzeitarchivierung.de/index.php.en (D)
Various Partners - Network of Expertise in Long-Term Storage of Digital Resources (NESTOR) http://www.langzeitarchivierung.de/ (D)

Netherlands
Eric Ketelaar web pages -
http://cf.hum.uva.nl/bai/home/eketelaar/research.html (C)

NOD – Dutch Research Database - http://www.onderzoekinformatie.nl/en/oi/nod/search?query=archives&startpos=%2Fen%2Foi%2Fnod (A)

New Zealand
Victoria University of Wellington, School of Information Management http://www.sim.vuw.ac.nz/research/index.aspx#groups (B)

Republic of Ireland
University College Dublin - http://www.ucd.ie/archives/ (B)

Sweden
Mid Sweden University - http://www.miun.se/AIS/Research/ (B)

United Kingdom
Arts and Humanities Data Service - Hybrid Archives Project- http://ahds.ac.uk/about/projects/hybrid-archives/index.htm (B), Service-Oriented Architecture for Preservation and Ingest of digital objects (SOAPI) http://ahds.ac.uk/about/projects/soapi/index.htm (B), Significant Properties (InSPECT) http://www.significantproperties.org.uk/ (B)
British Library and partners - Preservation and Long-term Access through Networked Services (PLANETS)http://www.planets-project.eu/ (D)
Digital Curation Centre (DCC) - http://www.dcc.ac.uk/ (D)
Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) - http://www.dpconline.org/ (D)
Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research http://www.digicult.info/farmer/ (A)
Library and Information Science Research Coalition http://lisresearch.org/ (A)
Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS) http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/research.htm (B)
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council - Research database - http://research.mla.gov.uk/ (A)
The National Archives' Collections Care Department (with Tate and UCL Centre for Sustainable Heritage) - Environmental Guidelines: Opportunities and Risks (EGOR) http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/preservation/research/egor.htm (D)
Northumbria University – The Information Management Innovation (IMI) Research Group - http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/ceis/re/isrc/ (B)
North West Culture Observatory - http://www.northwestcultureobservatory.co.uk/default.asp (A)
University College London - International Centre for Archives and Records Management Research and User Studies - http://www.ucl.ac.uk/infostudies/research/icarus/projects/ (B)
University of Glasgow - An Effective Strategic model for the Preservation and Disposal of Institutional Digital Assets (ESPIDA) http://www.gla.ac.uk/espida/index.shtml (B), Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/hatii/research/currentresearchprojects/#d.en.111626 (B)

USA

Format Curation Service (FOCUS) -
https://wiki.umiacs.umd.edu/adapt/index.php/Main_Page (B)
Georgia State Archives - Preserving Georgia's Historical Data
http://sos.georgia.gov/archives/who_are_we/rims/digital_History/default.htm (D)
Indiana University Electronic Records Project
http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=3313 (B)
Minnesota Historical Society - Preserving the Records of E-Legislature
http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/elegislature/elegislature.htm (D)
New York University - http://aphdigital.org/research/
Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science
http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/about/initiatives/academic.php (B)
Tufts University - Fedora and the Preservation of University Records Project
http://dca.lib.tufts.edu/features/nhprc/ (B)
UCLA - Department of Information Studies http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/cie/ (B),
http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/research/past_projects.htm (B),
http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/research/index.htm (B), Building the Future of Archival
Education and Research - http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/index.htm (B)
University of Illinois and partners - Exploring Collaborations to Harness Objects in a
Digital Environment for Preservation (ECHO DEPository) -
http://www.ndiipp.uiuc.edu/ (B)
University of Maryland College of Information Studies
http://ischool.umd.edu/research/ (B)
University of Michigan – Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social
Research Data Preservation Alliance for the Social Sciences (Data-PASS)
http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/DATAPASS/ (B)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Information and Library
Science - http://sils.unc.edu/research/ (B), Managing the Digital University
Desktop (MDUD) http://www.ils.unc.edu/digitaldesktop/ (B)
University of Texas School of Information
http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/research/ (B)
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
http://www4.uwm.edu/sois/research/index.html (B)

Appendix 3   Sample survey questions

How would you describe your primary role?
- Academic
- Teacher
- Practitioner
- Student
- Policy-maker
- Other

Which of these tools do you use?
- RSS feeds

- Wikis (view/contribute)
- Blogs (view/create/comment)
- User-generated tags (use/create)

How do you currently find out information about archival research?
- journals and publications (please state)
- conferences and conference papers
- information about research projects online
- e-lists and e-bulletins (please state)
- personal contacts and word of mouth
- networks (please state)
- funding agencies
- other academic activity
- Other (please state)

What language/s do you use to find out about research?
- English
- French
- Other (please state)

Do you undertake research?
Y/N

If yes, how do you tell people about your research?
- journals and publications (please state)
- conferences and conference papers
- information about research projects online
- e-lists and e-bulletins (please state)
- personal contacts and word of mouth
- networks (please state)
- funding agencies
- other academic activity
- Other (please state)

Would you contribute to an international site
Y/N
If No – please explain why not?
If Yes –would you also want to upload documents to the site?

NB: Questions below would require soliciting contact information

Would you be willing to translate content on the site?
Y/N
If yes which languages?
From   To

Would you be interested in becoming a volunteer editor/moderator?
Y/N