

From the Editor

Welcome to Issue no.4 of Practical Technology for Archives. This is our first truly international issue, with an article by Theresa Cronk from the Research Centre at the Australian War Memorial.

In this issue we have three articles: two looking at ways of handling born-digital materials and one on bringing the results of a digitization project to the public. Together, I think these three articles speak very well to what many of us are facing in the field. Not only is there pressure to digitize more and more material and make it accessible and searchable on the internet, but there is also a growing need to efficiently and securely ingest more and more born-digital documents.

Many of us have digitization projects that were begun long before the internet is what it is now, and long before the user expectations we now face. While the digital files created may be fine, the metadata may not have been collected or stored in a way that facilitates discovery or display with current platforms. In “ANZAC Connections Digitisation” Theresa Cronk writes about repurposing legacy metadata from past digitization projects to build a user interface presenting the digitized material to the public.

Obsolete and proprietary file formats can make working with born-digital material difficult and like to become more prevalent in the future. How can we maintain not only the information in those files, but also the original context, without maintaining the systems that created them. This was the problem Anthony Cocciolo when he was asked to archive digital architectural drawings. His article “Digitally Archiving Architectural Models and Exhibition Designs” explains how he dealt with archiving born-digital material in less common, and outmoded, file formats. Some of the formats required proprietary software to render them, which made maintaining and using them over the long term problematic.

Another major concern in archiving born-digital material is the possibility of inadvertently altering the files while transferring them from one platform to another. There are write-blockers and other tools we can use to prevent that from happening, but while we may know of the tools we may not have any experience setting the up or using them. Alice Prael and Amy Wichner present an excellent primer in using FRED (Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device) in their article, "Getting to Know FRED: Introducing Workflows for Born Digital Content."

The Journal has seemed to have settled on being Practical "digital" Technology for Archives, but we are still open to articles and tips/techniques which are not digitally based. If you have something you done or used that might be useful to others, maybe you've got an innovative way of housing three-dimensional objects, please let us know. We are here to get that kind of information out. Also, we are open to product/software reviews and grant reports. This journal really is what you, the contributors, make it. Don't hesitate to submit, we look forward to hearing from you.

Happy Archiving,

Randall Miles

Managing Editor