Well, What Came Next?: Selections from ArchivesNext, *2007–2017.* **By Kate Theimer. CreateSpace, 2017. 418 pp. Softcover. $25.00.**

Kate Theimer is the author of the popular blog *ArchivesNext* and a frequent writer and speaker on archival topics including the future of archives. This book is a compilation of and reflection on the blog's 10-year history from 2007 to 2017. As Theimer notes in the introduction, "putting this collection together . . . is a way to celebrate the blog's achievement" (p. xix). The organization of the book reflects Theimer's appraisal criteria in reviewing the content of the blog in that she creates chapters by bundling topics together as they describe specific trends within archival dialogue over the past 10 years.

The initial chapter, "Getting Warmed Up," describes the blog's early stages when, as Theimer explains, "I determined that what I really wanted to do was to explore how archives . . . can take advantage of emerging . . . technologies to broaden their audiences and increase their relevance" (p. 4). Theimer shares blog entries discussing archives' central identity issues and the profession's search for core values including access to "free, open, information" (p. 13). She also includes an argument by a blog commentator that "archivists/librarians should focus more on developing frameworks which ensure people know how to understand history" (p. 13). Quotes from a presentation by David Lankes follow stating that "people need to be active constructors of their knowledge; they . . . want tools that allow and facilitate conversations and participation" (p. 14). This chapter ends with Theimer's delineated "Archivist's 2.0 Manifesto," which lists 17 activities and criteria for archivists to espouse as they conduct their day-to-day operations (pp. 17–18). For example, two of the manifesto's criteria state that "I will educate myself about the information culture of my users and look for ways to incorporate what I learn into the services my archives provides" and "I will be willing to go where users are, both online and in physical spaces, to practice my profession" (pp. 17–18).

Despite Theimer's proposition that the blog focused on identifying ways to use emerging technologies, the critical locus of importance for the book is reflected in the persistent reiteration of blog posts, Theimer's talks and presentations, and comments from prominent archivists delineating a structural formula for archivists to discover and promulgate their identity and the value of their profession. This emphasis on the need to articulate the role of archivists, built on the aforementioned manifesto and reiterated throughout the text, is perhaps the most valuable contribution this volume makes to the profession. Theimer has encapsulated 10 years of scholarly consideration and practical applications in a clear set of guidelines for articulating how and why archivists are mission-critical employees within their institutions and within the international, professional dialogue at large.

In the chapter "Social Media and the Web," Theimer reflects on early attempts to embrace social media as an outreach strategy. The excerpts review changes in interactions with and uses of social media and are best described in a quote from a post by Joshua Zimmerman: "Social media and participatory technologies provide widely accessible spaces where the public can creatively and meaningfully engage with, use, translate, mashup, comment on, re-envision, manipulate, describe, and ultimately add context and value to our collections and repositories" (p. 44). Use cases involving a genealogist,

a journalist, and a local historian are included as examples to highlight the changing nature of primary contacts, interactions, and collection use paradigms.

Chapters titled "The Archival Profession" and "Archives Writ Large" represent the kind of "big thinking" that Theimer claims was "a hallmark of ArchivesNext" (p. xx). In the section "Honest Tips for Wannabe Archivists Out There," Theimer expands on her manifesto concept and defines archivists "as a mixture of teacher/sharer, researcher, historian, curator, preserver, tech guru, #dream job" (p. 69). A blog commentator expanded on this construct arguing, "above all, remember that the professionals you meet generally have a lot of expertise which they are happy to share with you. Never miss out on an opportunity to demonstrate to them how much you value their knowledge and willingness to share their experiences with you" (p. 71). Theimer continues the thread with a 2008 post where she posited, "if I were President of SAA, or even better, if I won the lottery, I'd invest resources in building a coalition of users of archives. I'd harness their voices, and their lobbyists, to help make the case in Washington for archives funding. . . . I would pursue a public relations campaign that shows people how archives support things they care about" (p. 81).

A chapter on "Participatory Archives" provides context for a discussion of motivating and structuring participant interactions with archivists via social media and, vice versa, providing an outlet for them to voice their support for the profession. In a 2014 talk at the Offene Archive 2.1 conference, Theimer proposed that "most archivists . . . would agree that the traditional goal of archives has been to: Collect, preserve, and provide access to materials of lasting value" (p. 145). The new mission that this set forth is that "archives add value to people's lives by increasing their understanding and appreciation of the past" (p. 146). She went on to advocate for the development of tools and opportunities for users to create context and participate in understanding the historical past. This participatory model would allow archivists to develop "new and stronger bonds with their audiences" (p. 158).

In the chapter "Asking Smart People What They Think," Theimer includes blogs by outstanding professionals she asked to reflect on their views of the profession's future. Blog posts by invited archivists such as Richard Cox, Kathleen Roe, Terry Baxter, Christine DiBella, Amy Cooper Cary, and Dan Santamaria reiterate her belief that the profession is at a moment in time where it should argue for its importance and value. Kathleen Roe, for example, states "why NOT change the world? . . . The records we hold, care for, and make available have unanticipated, often untapped potential to truly accomplish change—small or large, parochial or profound. Archives matter" (p. 170). This is a theme Roe would later espouse as president of SAA between 2014 and 2015.

Other chapters like "Our Friends, the Historians" discuss the relationship between archivists and historians, which Theimer describes as "charged with tension" (p. xxi). "Yes, Archivists Have a Sense of Humor, Really" features the Archivists Romance Novel contest and #badarchivists. As Theimer explains, #badarchivists "fix their photos with tape," "disrespect des fonds," "decrease access," and "make manuscript origami," among other bad practices (p. 236). "Getting Personal, Doing Good" includes activities such as the Spontaneous Scholarship program and the Animal Rescue support program,

and covers aspects of the blog that diverge from the professional value narrative but provide interesting insights into archival dialogues and activities.

Theimer returns to the central theme in "Things I Published or Said While Standing behind a Podium," where she presents her professional products including an excerpt from an article published in *American Archivist* as "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?"[1] In the article, Theimer outlines her vision for the evolution to Archives 2.0 and recommends that archives be open, not closed; transparent, not opaque; user-centered, not record-centered; that archivists be facilitators, not gatekeepers; that they attract new users, not rely on users to find them; share standards, not localize practice; produce metrics and measurement, not "unmeasurable" results; support iterative products, not "perfect" products; practice innovation and flexibility, not adhere to tradition; become technology savvy, not technology phobic; value doing, not knowing; and become confident about lobbying for resources, not hesitant beggars (pp. 272–77). At a 2014 Association of Australian Archivists conference, Theimer's keynote speech asked, "What Is the Professional Archivist's Role in the Evolving Archival Space?" In this talk, she summarized the construct of her work as well as the role the blog had played from 2007 to 2017 and challenged archivists to "make our collections more usable," "provide access to rich visual resources," "transform textual materials into usable forms," "make sure our metadata is sharable and shared" and "our archival institutions are platforms for meaning-making," "promote the idea that our archival institutions are places of permanence," and "think about fragility and transience" (pp. 327–29). Theimer went further to argue that "archivists need to serve as visible sources of expertise within the archival space on the areas of our professional knowledge" and "serve as advocates for our professional body of knowledge and our values" (p. 330). She closed the talk with another summary of the roles and requirements for archivists to support, grow, and value the profession. She further summarized this mission in a 2016 Academy of Certified Archivists plenary by including a tweet from McGill University student Nicola Vernon: "It is our duty as archivists to remember what society would prefer to forget" (p. 363).

Theimer's book is recommended for archivists who feel challenged to explain their profession, its mission and value, and the importance of the collections to resource allocators, donors, and legislators. More than one chapter provides quotable defenses as well as a plethora of structural outlines for crafting mission statements and press releases. The contributions of the blog and Theimer's own scholarship also offer a fascinating time capsule of archival thought and discourse over the past 10 years.

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1. Kate Theimer, "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (2011): 58–68.