

Introduction to the themed issue “Fresh insights: student research in records management”

As educators in the area of records management, Donald and I share the experience of coming across student papers that make us think “... this submission is so innovative and so well-argued that it deserves to be read by a wider public”. Offering students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate programs the opportunity to publish their work – that is, original papers based on course assignments, projects, theses or other kinds of research work carried out as part of their education – was the motivation for this themed issue of the *Records Management Journal*, entitled “Fresh Insights: Student Research in Records Management”. We received 41 extended abstracts by the deadline of May 1, 2016, and 20 authors were subsequently invited to submit their full papers. The eight articles included in this themed issue are the outcome of a lengthy, patient, sometime painful, revision process. For most contributors, this was the first time they experienced their work being assessed through a double-blind peer-review process. This selection of articles identifies some of the research topics emerging scholars are engaged with today, and provides some indications of the future directions of records management research and scholarship.

In his article, entitled “Practice theory: A new approach for archival and recordkeeping research”, Asen Ivanov, a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto (Canada), introduces a qualitative methodology based on practice theory for the analysis of organizational activities. Ivanov refers to his on-going doctoral research project on appraisal and preservation practices at a digital broadcasting archives to illustrate this innovative methodology and to explain how it enriches the archival and records management discipline.

Greg Rolan, a PhD candidate in the Monash University Centre for Organisational and Community Informatics (Australia), examines the evolution of recordkeeping metadata and suggests a new metadata model that would allow recordkeeping interoperability between disparate ontologies. Rolan’s article, “Towards interoperable recordkeeping systems: A meta-model for recordkeeping metadata”, introduces an infrastructural approach to metadata modeling that builds on the Australian idea of recordkeeping informatics.

In “The challenges presented to records management by open government data in the public sector in England: A case study”, Katherine Chorley discusses some of the findings of her research conducted at a National Health Service (NHS) hospital trust in the context of her Master’s degree in the Department of Information Studies at the University College London (UK). The goal of Chorley’s study was to identify areas of practice and policy that would need to be developed further to ensure compliance with obligations of open government and open data environments.

Rebecca Grant, a PhD candidate at the University College Dublin (Ireland), offers an extensive overview of contemporary and historical attitudes toward research data and suggests the role that recordkeeping professionals can play in the interdisciplinary area of research data management and curation. Grant’s article “Recordkeeping and research data management: A review of perspectives” is an insightful and up-to-date introduction of the rapidly evolving world of research data.

With “Exploring digital preservation requirements: A case study from the National Geoscience Data Centre (NGDC)”, Jaana Pinnick, a Master’s student in Information and



Records Management at Northumbria University (UK), takes us to the domain of geoscientific and geospatial data. Pinnick's examination of the specific preservation challenges faced by NGDC includes recommendations on how to ensure digital continuity that may be of interest to other organizations dealing with such complex data.

Digital preservation is also at the centre of the next article, "Metadata and video games emulation: An effective bond to achieve authentic preservation?" by Giovanni Carta, who explored this topic in his Master's thesis in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands). Carta's study focuses on the role of metadata in the preservation of complex digital objects, particularly video games, through the emulation strategy.

In "Recruitment of records management practitioners in Jamaica's public sector and its implications for professional practice", Kaydene Duffus draws on her doctoral dissertation at the University College London (UK) to discuss the challenges involved in records management education and training to support records management capabilities in Jamaica's Government. Duffus's analysis of how records managers are recruited and the status of their position suggests that much still needs to be done to improve the qualification of records management practitioners.

The last article included in this themed issue, "Methodology, methods and madness: Digital records management in the Australian Government" presents the findings of a survey conducted by Katharine Stuart in the context of her postdoctoral studies at the University of Canberra (Australia). Stuart used her survey data to examine the suitability of the Australian Government's "Digital Continuity 2020" policy to current records management capabilities in the country.

Fiorella Foscarini

Faculty of Information, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, and

Donald C. Force

*School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Milwaukee,
Wisconsin, USA*