Reading and Publishing within the Archives Community: A Survey

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Abstract

This article reports on a survey of professional reading and publication practices within the archival community and explores the extent to which community members engage with archival literature. Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions on archives-related reading habits and their experience and preferences regarding publishing. Analysis of their responses considers the impact on the profession of archival journals, as well as of emerging forms of professional discourse such as blogs. This article also examines the impact of larger changes in academic publishing, such as electronic journals, open-access publishing, and copyright agreements. While this study suggests that the archival community is subject to these larger trends, it also notes areas in which community members vary from those in related disciplines.

Professional development is expected in many fields, including archives. The official charge of the Society of American Archivists' Committee on Education recognizes that "education and professional development are essential to the continued advancement of the profession."[1] That committee focuses on structured learning, especially through the coordination of workshops offered by SAA and other organizations. Yet professional development includes a wider range of activities—everything from formal coursework to conference attendance to keeping current with the professional literature. The last of these, professional reading, is particularly important as a low-barrier professional development tool. However, it is unclear how fully members of the archival community, including archivists, curators, archival educators, students, and associated professionals and technicians, engage with the available literature.

[1] Society of American Archivists, "Committee on Education," available at http://saa.archivists.org/ Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/committees/SAAC-CEDUC.html?Action=Show_Comm_Detail&Comm Code=SAA**C-CEDUC, accessed 31 October 2008.

Literature Review

Little information is available about the information-seeking behavior of archivists, though recent studies by the Society of American Archivists and other historical records agencies provide some limited insight.[2] Vicki Walch, on behalf of the 1999 National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE), surveyed archivists regarding their preferences for receiving technical information. Her study finds that most archivists prefer to use manuals or handbooks for this type of information; journals rank seventh.[3] The A*CENSUS[4] final report issued by SAA also provides some limited information about archivists' information needs, listing the most desi⁹red topics for further study. These findings demonstrate archivists' interest in training in many different subjects, including digitization, electronic records, preservation, digital/media asset management, and copyright.[5]

However, neither of these studies directly examines the ways in which archivists actually look for information about these topics, nor do they explore the role and extent of reading as a professional development activity. Surveys conducted by the Society of American Archivists primarily focus on the formative training of archives professionals or on continuing education, primarily on structured learning activities, such as workshops and coursework. A*CENSUS finds that the fourth most desirable source of continuing education is self-directed study, suggesting that individual consumption of archives information is high.[6] But no results are available about use of these resources by archives professionals.

While archivists have not studied the impact of professional reading at length, it has long been a concern in the related field of library science. Practitioners of library science have explored their use of library publications for years. In 1967, Elizabeth Stone studied library school graduates and asked them to rank the importance of their professional development activities. The

[2] Although SAA has conducted surveys periodically since the 1970s, survey instruments focused on foundational training and participation in professional organizations rather than on exploring continuing education activities of archivists. See Mabel E. Deutrich and Ben DeWhitt, "Survey of the Archival Profession—1979," *American Archivist* 43 (Fall 1980): 527–35; and David Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," *American Archivist* 46 (Spring 1983): 233–41.

[3] Council of State Archivists, "NFACE Survey of Individual Continuing Education and Information Needs: Part 6: Best Vehicles for Providing Technical Information," Council of State Archivists (1999), available at http://www.statearchivists.org/reports/nface/IndivEducSurvey/indivsurv6.htm, accessed 31 July 2008.

[4] The Society of American Archivists conducted the A*CENSUS survey of archives professionals in the United States in 2004. It included demographic information, as well as questions about current issues in the profession. Reports on A*CENSUS data are available in the Fall/Winter 2006 issue of *American Archivist* and online at the Society of American Archivists' website, Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States, http://archivists.org/a-census/, accessed 31 October 2008.

[5] Nancy Zimmelman, "A*CENSUS: Report on Continuing Education," *American Archivist* 69 (Fall/Winter 2006): 386–87.

[6] Zimmelman, "A*CENSUS," 391.

two groups she surveyed ranked reading library science literature as their first and second activities, respectively.[7] Professional reading continues to be important within librarianship, as demonstrated in more recent surveys.[8]

Of the various types of literature available, the most important is the journal article. In a study of British librarians done by Peter Lynam, Margaret Slater, and Rennie Walker in 1982, professional reading in journals was the preferred means of learning about library research, and the most widely used.[9] In a separate study, S. Nazim Ali found that journal articles are "the most important means of communication in the dissemination process" in both the United Kingdom and the United States.[10] The importance of the journal article, however, is not specific to librarianship. Carol Tenopir and Donald King write more recently that journals and journal articles are considered the most valuable information resources in the sciences, including social science.[11]

The use of library science journals by American librarians directly demonstrates their importance. Various surveys indicate high rates of reading, though these surveys define *use* differently, making comparison somewhat difficult.[12] Stone found as part of her 1967 study that librarians read an average of between 3.5 and 3.6 journals on a regular basis.[13] In a survey of academic librarians done by Robert Swisher in 1975, the majority of the respondents (51.7%) reported reading between one and five library journals, with 44.4% reading more.[14] Gerald Shields reported in a 1979 survey that 34.4% of librarians scan between 3 and 4 journals, while 21.1% scan 6 or more.[15] In an article in 1982, Robert

[7] Elizabeth Stone, *Factors Related to the Professional Development of Librarians* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1969), 143, 145.

[8] Michael Atlas and Melissa Laning, "Professional Journal Reading: A Survey of Kentucky Academic Librarians," *Kentucky Libraries* 63, no. 1 (1999): 18; Susan Weaver, "The Professional Reading Habits of American Librarians," International Federation of Library Associations, available at http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla68/papers/166-118e.pdf, accessed 22 October 2008.

[9] Peter Lynam, Margaret Slater, and Rennie Walker, *Research and the Practitioner: Dissemination of Research Results within the Library-Information Profession* (London: Aslib, 1982), 8.

[10] S. Nazim Ali, "Library Science Research: Some Results of Its Dissemination and Utilization," *Libri* 35, no. 2 (1985): 151.

[11] Carol Tenopir and Donald King, "Reading Behavior and Electronic Journals," *Learned Publishing* 15, no. 4 (2002): 259.

[12] Although many researchers have attempted to measure reading behavior among librarians, definitions of reading vary greatly between studies, at times including reading, scanning, and/or browsing of journals.

[13] Stone, *Factors Related to the Professional Development of Librarians*, 74.

[14] Robert Swisher, "Professional Communication Behavior of Academic Librarians Holding Membership in the American Library Association" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1975), 113. Swisher reports that the mean value of the responses was 5.8 journals read, and a modal value of 5.

[15] Gerald Shields, "The Library Press: National and State Magazines," *Drexel Library Quarterly* 15 (January 1979): 5.

Swisher and Peggy Smith reported that, in their surveys of academic librarians, the average number of library journals read was 5.1 in 1973, and 5.4 in 1978.[16] A survey of academic librarians in Kentucky conducted by Michael Atlas and Melissa Laning in 1998 also found the average number of library journals read to be between five and six.[17] Most recently, Susan Weaver reported in 2002 to the International Federation of Library Associations that "43% of the librarians [surveyed] indicated that they browse or read 3 to 4 journals per month. Another 33% read 4 to 5 journals per month."[18]

While the number of journals read by librarians has remained at about 5 since the 1970s, the expansion of electronic and open-access journals in recent years may lead to increases in readership. During their early development, electronic journals had limited acceptance, but researchers now use them widely.[19] Tenopir and King attribute the rising number of articles read by scientists since the emergence of electronic journals in the 1990s to "the prevalence of electronic journals or electronic sources of articles."[20] The growth of open-access journals and institutional repositories has further expanded access to research articles[21] and may also contribute to greater reading rates among librarians and others.

While reading library science literature is an accepted part of professional development among librarians, the rate of contribution to that literature is not nearly as high. Librarians and other service-oriented professionals have relatively low publication rates. Robert Swisher found in 1975 that only 27.8% of the academic librarians in his study had published, each an average of 2.8 articles.[22] Lynam, Slater, and Walker found that British librarians have a similarly low rate of publication, as only 11% had published an article.[23] More recent studies suggest that pub-

[16] Robert Swisher and Peggy Smith, "Journals Read by ACRL Academic Librarians, 1973–1978," *College and Research Libraries* 43 (January 1982): 53.

[17] Atlas and Laning, "Professional Journal Reading," 18.

[18] Weaver, "Professional Reading Habits," 2.

[19] Erin Smith, "Changes in Faculty Reading Behaviors: The Impact of Electronic Journals on the University of Georgia," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 29, no. 3 (2003): 164; Tenopir et al., "Patterns of Journal Use by Scientists through Three Evolutionary Phases," *D-Lib Magazine* 9, no. 5 (May 2003), http://dlib.org/dlib/may03/king/05king.html, accessed 23 October 2008; King et al., "Patterns of Journal Use by Faculty at Three Diverse Universities," *D-Lib Magazine* 9, no. 10 (October 2003), http://www.dlib.org/dlib/october03/king/10king.html, accessed 23 October 2008. Many other studies also document the movement toward widespread acceptance among researchers.

[20] Tenopir and King, "Reading Behavior," 265; Stephen Harter, "Scholarly Communication and Electronic Journals: An Impact Study," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 49, no. 6 (1998): 507.

[21] Stevan Harnad et al., "The Access/Impact Problem and the Green and Gold Roads to Open Access: An Update," *Serials Review* 34, no. 1 (2008): 37.

[22] Swisher, "Professional Communication Behavior," 100–101.

[23] Lynam, Slater, and Walker, *Research and the Practitioner,* 42.

lication rates among U.S. academic librarians are rising, especially as publication has become a requirement for those with faculty status. A study of Penn State librarians by Richard Hart in 1999 found that these librarians published an average of 3.4 refereed articles between 1990 and 1998, and 85% had published at least one refereed article.[24] In another study by Deborah Henry and Tina Neville, the publication rate of academic librarians in Florida during the period from 1995 to 2004 was 78% for those in tenure-track positions.[25]

Such research demonstrates that librarians are engaged with their professional literature. Yet similar data on archivists remain lacking. While studies like NFACE and A*CENSUS suggest that archives professionals actively pursue training opportunities, to what extent do they read their own professional journals or share their insights with the profession through scholarly articles? The following survey represents a first step in examining these issues.

Background and Methodology

Since 2002, the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists, the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists, the Society of California Archivists, and the Northwest Archivists have discussed the possibility of publishing a regional archives journal in the West. In 2008 this effort was renewed, and a new business plan developed and proposed.[26] Part of the creation of this planning document was the completion of a situational analysis exploring the potential market for a new archives publication. This survey was developed and distributed in early 2008 to gather information for this report.

The survey, shown in Appendix A, was developed using Qualtrics, a Web-based evaluation tool, and made available for responses during a two-week period. A link to the survey was distributed to archival community members through a variety of listservs and mailing lists. These included the Archives and Archivists and the WestArch listservs, along with the mailing lists of the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists, the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists, and the Northwest Archivists. At the time of distribution, these channels included a total of over 3,000 community members.[27] Participation in the survey was voluntary and responses were anonymous.

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[24] Richard Hart, "Scholarly Publication by University Librarians: A Study at Penn State," *College and Research Libraries* 60, no. 5 (1999): 458.

[25] Deborah Henry and Tina Neville, "Research, Publication, and Service Patterns of Florida Academic Librarians," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 30, no. 6 (2004): 444.

[26] J. Gordon Daines III, Cory L. Nimer, and John M. Murphy, "*Journal of Western Archives* Business Plan," version 2.0 (Provo, Utah: L. Tom Perry Special Collections, 2008). Copy in the possession of the author.

[27] Many archives professionals subscribe to multiple listservs, so the total number of potential participants reached though listserv postings may have been significantly less than 3,000.

The survey itself included three sections: a demographic profile, information on reading habits, and publishing rates and preferences. The questions in the demographic section are based on those developed for A*CENSUS to facilitate comparison of the response set with the larger archival community. The section on reading habits includes questions on the availability and use of archives journals, as well as blogs, databases, and preferred format. The final questions on publication ask about the respondents' motivations and frequency of publishing and their copyright preferences. Taken together, these questions sought to explore the saturation level of the market for archives journals and to determine if archivists would be willing to submit articles to an open-access journal.

After the survey period ended, the responses were reviewed and normalized before being analyzed. A total of 330 respondents participated in the survey. While most respondents completed the entire survey, some did not. These responses were included in the analysis to the extent that they were completed, resulting in varying numbers of participants per question in the analysis.

R e s u l t s

D e m o g r a p h i c   C h a r a c t e r i s t i c s   o f   S u r v e y   R e s p o n d e n t s

The respondents represent the archival community in most respects. However, compared to A*CENSUS data, the participants in this survey tend to be younger. Archivists at academic institutions are also better represented in this survey than those in other positions or organizations. These variances may be the results of either the channels used in distributing the survey, or of the self-selecting nature of the sample. Responses from the western United States are more numerous than suggested by A*CENSUS, probably because of the objectives of the western archival organizations and the way in which the survey was distributed.

Respondents were fairly well distributed among the various age groups (see Table 1). Compared to the A*CENSUS data, more community members

Table 1. Age of Respondents

	Survey Percentage	Survey Number (n=330)	A*CENSUS Survey Percentage [a]	A*CENSUS Survey Number (n=4,776)	Percentage Difference from A*CENSUS
Under 25	1.2%	4	1.4%	69	−0.2%
25–34	30.6%	101	14.8%	709	15.8%
35–44	23.3%	77	20.7%	989	2.6%
45–54	23.0%	76	31.2%	1,492	−8.2%
55–64	19.7%	65	21.5%	1,029	−1.8%
65 and over	1.5%	5	10.0%	480	−8.5%
Rather not say	0.6%	2	–	–	0.6%

[a] Victoria Irons Walch, "A*CENSUS: A Closer Look," *American Archivist* 69 (Fall/Winter 2006): 331.

between the ages of 25 and 34 participated than expected. At the same time, significantly fewer respondents 65 years old or older completed the survey.

Of the various employer types, academic institutions are the most heavily represented group (see Table 2). Government agencies are underrepresented compared with A*CENSUS. Other groups do not vary significantly from the A*CENSUS general population.

Archivists and manuscript curators are also better represented in this sample than in the profession as a whole (see Table 3). Other groups, such as archival program managers and professionals from associated fields, are under-represented compared to the A*CENSUS. Significantly fewer retired archives professionals responded to the survey.

The greatest area of divergence is the geographical dispersion of the sample (see Table 4). Because of the objectives of the survey and the methods of distribution, the participants in this survey are predominantly from the West. Although the participation request was made available through a national listserv, it was heavily advertised through a number of channels with primarily

Table 2. Employer Type of Respondents

	Survey Percentage	Survey Number (n=330)	A*CENSUS Survey Percentage [b]	A*CENSUS Survey Number (n=4,987)	Percentage Difference from A*CENSUS
Academic institution	46.4%	153	36.0%	1,793	10.4%
Nonprofit organization	21.5%	71	23.1%	1,151	−1.6%
Government agency	17.6%	58	31.6%	1,576	−14.0%
For-profit organization	3.6%	12	5.4%	270	−1.8%
Self-employed	3.0%	10	1.3%	65	1.7%
Other	7.3%	24	2.7%	132	4.6%
Don't know	0.6%	2	–	–	0.6%

[b] Walch, "A*CENSUS," 329.

Table 3. Position of Respondents

	Survey Percentage	Survey Number (n=330)	A*CENSUS Survey Percentage [c]	A*CENSUS Survey Number (n=5,492)	Percentage Difference from A*CENSUS
Archivist/MSS curator	65.1%	215	52.6%	2,890	12.5%
Associated professional	7.0%	23	13.6%	748	−6.6%
Archival program manager	6.7%	22	8.1%	443	−1.4%
Tech/Support	5.1%	17	5.6%	309	−0.5%
Administration	3.3%	11	2.1%	114	1.2%
Archives student	2.7%	9	2.7%	147	–
Archives program instructor	1.5%	5	0.7%	38	0.8%
Retired	0.3%	1	2.2%	120	−1.9%
Other	7.0%	23	11.6%	635	−4.6%
Rather not say	1.2%	4	0.8%	48	0.4%

[c] Walch, "A*CENSUS,"328.

Table 4. Location of Respondents

	Survey Percentage	Survey Number (n = 328)	A*CENSUS Survey Percentage[d]	A*CENSUS Survey Number (n = 5,443)	Percentage Difference from A*CENSUS
Northeast	15.2%	50	25.5%	1,387	−10.3%
South	18.5%	61	32.8%	1,788	−14.3%
Midwest	15.8%	52	21.9%	1,194	−6.1%
West	46.6%	153	19.7%	1,074	26.9%
Other	3.6%	12	–	–	3.6%

[d] Tabulated from A*CENSUS public use data file, "A*CENSUS Data File," Society of American Archivists, http://archivists.org/a-census/, accessed 10 November 2008.

western audiences. Other regions are represented in proportion with the A*CENSUS. A number of responses came from outside of the United States. Other variations, such as the dearth of government employees and retired individuals, may be caused either by uneven participation in listservs by these groups generally or simply the self-selecting nature of the sample.

Use of Archives Literature

The next section of the survey dealt with the use of archives literature and focused on archives journals. Differences between demographic groups are visible at points.[28] Of importance for readers of *American Archivist,* however, is that analysis of the responses does not suggest significant geographical differences, with one exception discussed below. Generalizing from responses to this question suggests that the national archives community has limited access to archives journals and that it reads even less. The responses also suggest that younger members of the archival community are more open to newer technologies and communications venues, such as electronic journals and blogs.

When asked about their reading of archives journals, most respondents indicate that they read the *American Archivist* and little else (see Table 5). In general, participants only read one title. The Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) publication *Archival Issues* was the second most commonly read title, by 22.3% of respondents, while no other title is read by more than 10% of participants. On average, respondents read 1.26 journals regularly, and a significant number (25%) indicate that they do not read any archives journals. Archival community members from the Midwest read more, perhaps due to the bundling of *Archival Issues* subscriptions with MAC membership, averaging 1.69 journals read.

[28] This was true both of reading and publication patterns. Significant divergences from the average of the responses are discussed on a question-by-question basis in the following pages. Where these differences did not exist, groups may be assumed not to diverge significantly from the average percentage of all respondents.

Table 5. Archives Journals Read

	Survey Number (n = 328)	Survey Percentage
American Archivist	234	71.3%
Archival Issues	73	22.3%
Archivaria	32	9.8%
Journal of Archival Organization	30	9.1%
Provenance	15	4.6%
Other	34	10.4%
No journals selected	82	25.0%

Journals mentioned by respondents through the Other field were varied, but no single title was listed by a significant number of participants.[29]

Archives professionals did not report reading significantly more titles than other members of the archival community. Taken together, archivists, archival program managers, and associated professionals read an average of 1.25 archives journals. Most notably, 22.3% of professionals do not indicate that they read any archival journals.

The corresponding question about which archives journals were accessible, either through personal or institutional subscriptions, yielded similar numbers (see Table 6). Respondents have the greatest access to the *American Archivist,* followed by *Archival Issues.* Respondents have access to an average (mean) of 1.6 journals, though most (mode) have access to only one. Again, participants from the Midwest have greater access to journals with an average of 2.13 titles, while 21% of all respondents reported having no access to archives journals.

The study also sought to determine the extent to which alternative modes of scholarly communication are becoming established and garnering support (see Table 7). In particular, participants were asked about their reading of archives blogs. The results indicate that most archival community members (65.2%) do not read them, though rates were slightly higher among younger age groups. Of the blogs included as options, Kate Theimer's *ArchivesNext* is the most commonly read,

Table 6. Archives Journals Accessible

	Survey Number (n = 328)	Survey Percentage
American Archivist	253	77.1%
Archival Issues	98	29.9%
Journal of Archival Organization	56	17.1%
Archivaria	55	16.8%
Provenance	34	10.4%
Other	20	6.1%

[29] The most commonly mentioned journals included *The Moving Image* (4 respondents, or 1.2% of participants), *Archival Science* (3 respondents, or 0.9% of participants), the *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (2 respondents, or 0.6% of participants), and *Manuscripts and Archives* (2 respondents, or 0.6% of participants).

Table 7. Archives Blogs Read

	Survey Number (n = 328)	Survey Percentage
ArchivesNext	74	22.6%
ArchivesBlogs	49	14.9%
Spellbound Blog	30	9.1%
The Anarchivist	29	8.8%
Archives Issues	21	6.4%
Other	44	13.4%

accessed by 22.6% of respondents. Analysis of the variety of other blogs reported in the Other responses suggests that Richard J. Cox's *Reading Archives* should have been included in the survey options. Survey participants listed 42 different blogs in their Other responses, mentioning most of these only once.[30]

The survey also explored the types of articles typically read by members of the archival community (see Table 8). Most respondents are interested in case studies (70.7%). However, significant numbers of participants indicated interest in each of the other content types as well. On average, respondents read 2.1 types of articles.

The survey also asked participants to indicate which subject areas they are most interested in reading about in archives journals (see Table 9). While respondents are interested in technology-focused topics, such as digitization

Table 8. Types of Journal Content Read

	Survey Number (n = 328)	Survey Percentage
Case studies	232	70.7%
Theoretical essays	162	49.4%
Works in progress	144	43.9%
Literature reviews	140	42.7%
Other	14	4.3%

Table 9. Subjects of Interest in Journal Articles

	Survey Number (n = 328)	Survey Percentage
Digitization	168	51.2%
Reference and outreach	156	47.6%
Archival management	153	46.6%
Description	151	46.0%
Preservation	136	41.5%
Acquisition and appraisal	130	39.6%
Electronic records	130	39.6%
Arrangement	128	39.0%
Ethics	122	37.2%
Other	22	6.7%

[30] Blogs mentioned by more than 1% of the respondents included RLG Programs' HangingTogether (http://hangingtogether.org) and Linda Clark Benedict's Alone in the Archives (http://lcb48. wordpress.com).

Table 10. Databases and Indexes Used

	Survey Number (n = 328)	Survey Percentage
Wilson Library Literature & Information Science	72	21.9%
Google Scholar	71	21.6%
America: History and Life	45	13.7%
Other	22	6.7%

and electronic records, there is also great interest in traditional archives subjects, including reference, description, and archives management. Survey participants express interest in a variety of subjects, indicating interest in an average (mean) of 3.93 topics.

The next question on the survey asked respondents which databases and indexes they used to find older articles (see Table 10). The most common response was the Wilson Library Literature and Information Science database, followed closely by Google Scholar. Databases included in the Other responses were Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and JSTOR. A majority of survey participants (56.1%), however, did not indicate that they use any database or electronic index to locate noncurrent journal content.

Finally, the survey asked how participants prefer to access professional journal articles. Most respondents (52.4%) prefer print over electronic access, with most demographic groups following this general trend. However, some groups appear to favor electronic distribution. Results indicate that a majority of younger archival community members, as well as archives instructors and students, prefer to access journal content electronically. Regional differences also appear, with midwestern and western archival community members preferring print, while respondents from the Northeast and the South are more open to electronic access.

Publication Patterns

The last section of the survey sought information on the respondents' frequency of publication and the distribution channels and methods most commonly used. The results demonstrate a relatively low publication rate, with work distributed in a limited number of venues. Responses also demonstrate the participants' interest in gaining greater control of their work using more liberal copyright agreements and publishing in open-access journals.

When asked whether they had published professional writing on archives or archival work, most participants (65.8%) respond that they have not. Rates are higher among groups that place a greater emphasis on publishing. Archival educators have a 100% publication rate, and respondents from academic

institutions have higher than average rates (42.9%). However, publication rates of academic archivists remain significantly lower than the recent publication rates of academic librarians.[31]

Those respondents who have published were then asked how their work was currently available (see Table 11). The most common venue is archives journals (60.8%), with some additional book and Internet publishing. The responses also indicate that few archivists make their publications available through institutional repositories (13.4%). Many participants (24.7%) reported that their written work is also available in other venues. Of these, two-thirds of authors reported having published in the journals of other professional communities, such as history and folklore, while others reported publication in newsletters and on websites.

The authors were then asked how many publications they have, with somewhat predictable results (see Table 12). Most respondents have 1 or 2 publications, with few reporting more than 5. When correlated with the age of the participants, clearly, younger authors have published less and older authors more.

Beyond the raw numbers, another area of interest was determining what motivates archival community members to pursue publishing (see Table 13). The most common motivation cited is a desire to contribute to the profession (63.7%). The responses also demonstrate that few archivists pursue publishing for financial gain. Among younger respondents (ages 25 to 34), however, there

Table 11. Format of Works Published by Respondents

	Survey Number (n = 97)	Survey Percentage
Archives journal	59	60.8%
Online	26	26.8%
Books or monographs	24	24.7%
Institutional repository	13	13.4%
Other	24	24.7%

Table 12. Number of Publications

	Survey Number (n = 99)	Survey Percentage
1–2	54	54.5%
3–4	30	30.3%
> 5	15	15.1%

[31] Hart, "Scholarly Publication by University Librarians," 458; Henry and Neville, "Research, Publication, and Service Patterns of Florida Academic Librarians," 444. However, differences in demographic categories between the surveys make direct comparisons problematic. In some academic institutions, archivists are classified as faculty librarians, while respondents to this survey who reported working at academic institutions may not be in tenure-track positions. This survey also did not define *publishing* in terms of peer-review, further complicating comparisons.

Table 13. Motivations for Publishing

	Survey Number (n = 278)	Survey Percentage
Contributing to the profession	177	63.7%
Establishing professional credentials	129	46.4%
Tenure or other review process	59	21.2%
Royalties	4	1.4%
Other	14	5.0%

appears to be a greater emphasis on establishing credentials (60.4%), though they also hope to contribute to the profession.

The final questions of the survey dealt with the changing landscape of scholarly publishing and the extent to which these shifts affect the archives community. When asked about their preferences for dealing with copyright, most participants (78.8%) indicated that they would prefer to retain copyright in their work or make it available using a Creative Commons license, rather than cede their rights to the publisher (11.9%). In a corresponding question that asked whether respondents would be willing to contribute to an open-access journal, 90.7% answered that they would.

C o n c l u s i o n s

While the survey findings suggest that archivists and librarians share some characteristics related to their use and production of information, they also reveal significant differences. The data suggest that archivists are reading significantly less journal content than those in the related field of library science and that they are writing at similarly low rates. While we don't know how deeply these trends impact the profession as a whole, it seems that there is a great potential for growth and improvement.

Members of service-oriented professions, like archivists and librarians, are traditionally less effective at acquiring and using new information than those in research-centered fields. Alfred W. Clark identified this problem in his research in the 1970s, concluding that those who define themselves as "service types" are less likely to use new information due to a lack of internal or external pressure, combined with minimal rewards for expanding their knowledge. As a result, "older knowledge and skills are valued, because they allow the person to get on with the job of providing a service."[32] Yet this practicality is not always a positive trait, as it keeps archival practitioners from learning about new techniques or emerging principles that might improve the quality of their work.

[32] Alfred W. Clark, "Information Use: A Professional Strategy," *Human Relations* 32, no. 6 (1979): 506.

When archivists and librarians read professional journals, they are primarily interested in content with a practical bent. Dale Montanelli and Collette Mak found that librarians "use the library literature to obtain practical and technical assistance,"[33] a result confirmed by other studies.[34] This survey reveals similar tendencies within the archival community. For journal content, respondents prefer case studies demonstrating the application of archival principles and practices, and a substantially larger number read them rather than anything else. Survey participants have concrete topics of interest. Task-based subjects, such as digitization and reference, receive high marks among respondents, while less tangible topics such as ethics rank lower.

Despite similarities in outlook and background, librarians exhibit a much deeper engagement with their journal publications than members of the archives community. While librarians consistently read approximately five journals on a regular basis, the respondents to this survey read one-fourth that number. Participants seem to limit most reading on archives to those journals to which they have personal subscriptions: the *American Archivist* and *Archival Issues* for many living in the Midwest. Significantly fewer read commercial or international journals, such as the *Journal of Archival Organization* and *Archivaria*. Alternative forms of access do not have a major impact on the archives profession either. Most participants note a preference for print publications, making it unclear how the *American Archivist*'s and *Archivaria*'s recent transitions to electronic publication will impact archives professionals.[35] Meanwhile, archives blogs go largely unread.

One possible explanation for the low reported reading rates may be that the archival community reads other archival publications instead of journal content. NFACE survey participants reported a preference for manuals, handbooks, and technical leaflets when dealing with technical information.[36] The Society of American Archivists and other publishers produce a variety of books on archival theory and practice that might be referred to in place of journals. Yet, due to the extended production time of books and manuals, relying solely on these resources may leave archival community members dependent on outdated information.

[33] Dale S. Montanelli and Collette Mak, "Library Practitioners' Use of Library Literature," *Library Trends* 36 (Spring 1988): 779.

[34] Melissa Henderson Laytham, *An Analysis of the Professional Reading Activities of Academic Reference Librarians in Virginia,* unpublished master's thesis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina), 10; Atlas and Laning, "Professional Journal Reading," 18.

[35] The Association of Canadian Archivists started its electronic version of *Archivaria* in 2005 and 2006, titled *e-Archivaria.* See http://archivists.ca/publications/e-Archivaria.aspx, accessed 20 October 2008, while the SAA made *American Archivist* available online in 2008. See http://archivists.metapress.com/, accessed 20 October 2008. Both journals provide free access to older content and premium access to current issues for subscribers.

[36] Council of State Archivists, NFACE Survey.

Another possibility may be that survey participants read professional journals from allied fields, which were not included in this survey. Journals produced by the library and history communities often include articles on topics applicable to archival practice. Although any additional professional reading, even in nonarchives publications, might appear encouraging, it may also suggest a lack of focus and identity within the profession.[37] As the 1994 debate between Terry Eastwood and John W. Roberts demonstrates, segments within the archival profession believe that archival work lacks theoretical foundations and is simply a craft or science auxiliary to history and may identify more closely with other fields.[38]

The survey also suggests that members of the archival community contribute to the professional literature at a significantly lower rate than librarians. While the differences in definitions between studies makes direct comparisons impossible, it appears that publication by archivists working in academic institutions lags behind the increases in publication among academic librarians in recent years. The reasons for this are unclear, and further investigations are needed to understand the causes of these differences between the two professions. It could be that not enough opportunities for publication exist and that new journals are needed. It may also be that, as with their professional reading, archivists are publishing in journals for allied fields.

In the end, while this study is suggestive, it raises more questions than it answers. For example, what does not reading archival journals say about the profession, and what is its ultimate effect? Does not reading professional journals impact archivists' work, and to what extent? And what impact does this have on the advancement of the profession as a whole? Similarly, research is needed to determine the extent to which other reading and continuing education activities meet the information needs of archives professionals. A*CENSUS reports that archivists are interested in expanding their knowledge of archival practice through participation in workshops or seminars hosted by national, regional, or state archival associations.[39] Do archivists replace reading with these activities for professional development, or are they supplementary?

To improve the current situation, archival organizations and institutions should explore ways to improve archivists' engagement with professional reading. Clark suggests that reward systems need to be adjusted to encourage reading along with other continuing education activities.[40] This might include

[37] Swisher and Smith's 1978 study of librarians found that their respondents read on average 0.6 titles from outside librarianship. Swisher and Smith, "Journals Read by ACRL Academic Librarians," 53.

[38] Terry Eastwood, "What Is Archival Theory and Why Is It Important?" *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994): 122–30; John W. Roberts, "Practice Makes Perfect, Theory Makes Theorists," *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994): 111–21.

[39] Zimmelman, "A*CENSUS," 374.

[40] Clark, "Information Use," 517–18.

initiatives such as providing continuing education credits for participation in professional reading groups. Publishers and other content producers should also explore ways to reduce barriers to journal content. The current survey suggests that access to journal content is reflected in its use and that authors regard publishing in open-access journals positively. However, it remains unclear what effect the open-access policies of the *American Archivist* and *Archivaria* have had on the archival community.[41] Journal editorial boards should consider the needs and interests of their readers, refocusing content to address a wide variety of topics while concentrating on practical application. Finally, writing on archives should be promoted among archives professionals, for "the intellectual strength of a profession is measured in the strength of its literature."[42]

[41] There are many definitions of open access (OA), and the policies of *American Archivist* and *Archivaria* reflect a common OA business model (David Goodman, "The Criteria for Open Access," *Serials Review* 30, no. 4 (2004): 260). Both journals provide open access to their content, but reserve the most recent articles for current subscribers. For *American Archivist* the embargo period is three years (six issues) and for *Archivaria,* four years (eight issues). Studies indicate that open access results in greater impact (Kristin Antelman, "Do Open-Access Articles Have a Greater Research Impact?," *College and Research Libraries* (September 2004): 376; Harnad et al., "The Access/Impact Problem and the Green and Gold Roads to Open Access," *Serials Review* 30, no. 4 (2004): 311), though no figures are available on the effect of this transition on archives journals.

[42] Irving Yale, "The Intellectual Strength of a Profession Is Measured by the Strength of Its Literature," *Journal of the American Podiatry Association* 58, no. 7 (1968): 310. As president of the association, Yale was encouraging his membership to contribute to their professional literature.

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Demographics

What is your age?

- [ ] Under 25
- [ ] 25–34
- [ ] 35–44
- [ ] 45–54
- [ ] 55–64
- [ ] 65 and over
- [ ] Rather not say

Which of the following best describes your current employer?

- [ ] Academic institution
- [ ] Government agency
- [ ] Nonprofit organization
- [ ] For-profit organization
- [ ] Self-employed
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] Other (please specify) _____

Which of the following best describes your current position?

- [ ] Archivist or manuscripts curator
- [ ] Manager in a program that employs archivists
- [ ] Retired archivist
- [ ] Instructor in a graduate archival education program
- [ ] Student, or otherwise studying to become an archivist
- [ ] Working in an associated profession, with archives-related responsibilities
- [ ] Working as a technical or support staff member with archives-related responsibilities
- [ ] Other (please specify) _____
- [ ] Rather not say

Please indicate the location of the institution in which you work.

- [ ] Indicate the state _____
- [ ] I do not live in the United States

Professional Reading

Which professional journals do you read regularly? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ *American Archivist*

☐ *Archivaria*

☐ *Journal of Archival Organization*

☐ *Archival Issues*

☐ *Provenance*

☐ Other (please specify) [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Which professional archives journals do you have access to, either through a personal subscription or a subscription by your employing institution? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ *American Archivist*

☐ *Archivaria*

☐ *Journal of Archival Organization*

☐ *Archival Issues*

☐ *Provenance*

☐ Other (please specify) [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Which archives-related blogs do you read regularly? (Mark all that apply.)

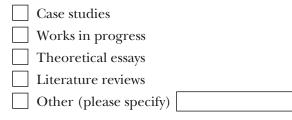☐ ArchivesBlogs (http://archivesblogs.com)

☐ Spellbound Blog (http://www.spellboundblog.com)

☐ ArchivesNext (http://www.archivesnext.com)

☐ The Anarchivist (http://anarchivist.blogspot.com)

☐ Archives Issues (http://archivesissues.org)

☐ Other (please specify) [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

What type(s) of journal content do you typically read in professional archives journals? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Case studies

☐ Works in progress

☐ Theoretical essays

☐ Literature reviews

☐ Other (please specify) [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

What subjects are you most interested in reading about in professional archival journals? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Arrangement
☐ Description
☐ Acquisitions and appraisal
☐ Electronic records
☐ Digitization
☐ Reference and outreach
☐ Preservation
☐ Ethics
☐ Archival management
☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

How do you *prefer* to access professional archives journal articles and other content?

☐ Print
☐ Electronic access
☐ Rather not say

P u b l i c a t i o n

Have you published professional writing on archives or archival work?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you have published on archives or archival work, how is your written work currently available? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Book or other monographic work
☐ Archives journal
☐ On-line (personal Web site, or blog)
☐ Institutional repository
☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

If you have published on archives or archival work, how many publications do you have?

☐ 1–2
☐ 3–4
☐ 5 or more

What is your primary motivation(s) in pursuing publishing about archives or archival work? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Contributing to the profession
☐ Establishing professional credentials
☐ Tenure or other review process requirements
☐ Royalties
☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

What copyright arrangement would you *prefer* when publishing professional writing?

☐ Cede copyright on materials to the publisher
☐ Retain copyright as author
☐ Other (please specify) [   ]

Would you consider publishing in an open access journal?

☐ Yes
☐ No