

Editor's Note

To paraphrase the Czech writer Franz Kafka, "I cannot understand why the young dare to ride their horses. They do not take into account that a life span is not long enough to reach the nearest village". This is not simply scholar rethoric, but, above all, an approach to an increasingly complex reality. Kafka did not know the Internet, the Web 2.0, mobile devices, globalisation, surveillance, political misdeed, cyberterrorism, and so on. Probably most archivists, both practitioners and researchers, would support his reflection nowadays. The same may be said of most information professionals, as well as historians, lawyers, programmers, sociologists, scientists, and all sorts of professionals charged with the responsibility for dealing, in some way, with information. Societies are generating information objects in a variety of ways –some of them new, some of them quite old, but newly discovered or re-thought; and even some others well-known, but subject to new perspectives; and societies are being influenced in diverse ways by these objects. Information, document, record, archive, archives: these are not solid concepts any longer: different disciplines, perceptions and traditions provide them with new meanings, interrelated, open and capable of fostering creative thinking.

The archivist is, in many ways, a new Segismundo, the hero imagined by Calderon, challenged, on the one hand, to revisit his interpretation of a familiar, but not necessarily easy, world; and, on the other, to visit a broad and alien, and necessarily difficult, world.

Diversity of objects, diversity of origins, diversity of perspectives, and diversity of meanings, amongst some other "diversities", have turned an ordinary landscape into an extremely complex aggregate of different components, some of them material, some of them not, but all of them in perpetual interaction. As the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stated: "The centre is an x". This is particularly true in the field of

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information and related areas, such as archives. No single discipline can properly address this permanent vortex, and no single tradition can account for it. In recent years, this statement has become almost an obviousness.

This is the primary reason for launching yet another journal on archival science. Firstly, *Archives & Social Studies* seeks to bring together different archival traditions, all of them rich and capable of suggesting new ideas and new uses for old ideas. Secondly, it aims to integrate knowledge and expertise, derived from different disciplines dealing with information objects. Thirdly, it tries to suggest an imaginative use of knowledge and expertise, derived from social disciplines, as the field is not independent of the society where it is inscribed. Last, but not least, it strives to draw attention of other disciplines towards archival studies, in the hope the profession will be able to contribute relevant insights in a globalised and interrelated practical and academic environment.

When one thinks of the number of collaborative research projects, programs, journals, and other forums, wether still in progress or well-established, this effort may appear quite modest. However, it is our hope that, as a bridge between disciplines and traditions, the journal will do its fair share.

Special thanks must be extended to the members of the editorial board, all of them leaders in archival research, and all of them enthusiastic from the outset. Without their help, advice, suggestions, even their papers, the journal would not have been published. Recognition must also be given to the authors who kindly contributed their articles, in order to improve this first issue of *Archives & Social Studies*. We hope that this inaugural issue will best exemplify the journal's aims and give a clear indication of the perspectives it will be able to offer.