

Archivaria Call for Papers: Defining and Enacting Person-Centred Archival Theory and Praxis

Guest Editors: Jennifer Douglas, Mya Ballin, and Sadaf Ahmadbeigi

A significant portion of archival practice involves working closely with the people who create, use, care for, and are documented in records, but until relatively recently, the archival field has rarely acknowledged in its theories and pedagogies the degree to which it is – or should be – person-centred. This special issue is conceived as part of an effort to highlight and consolidate developments toward a person-centred theory of archival care and to person-centred approaches to archival practice.

We define person-centred theory of archival care broadly, as theory that shifts attention from the record, where it has traditionally been almost exclusively focused, to the *people* that create, keep, use and/or are represented in records. Person-centred approaches are evident in and across recent archival scholarship that explores radical empathy, affect, intimacy, the body, disability, dismantling white supremacy, Indigenization, and ethics of care (and this is not an exclusive list). Person-centred approaches are also evident in archival practices centring the perspectives of individuals and communities, especially those that have historically been harmed by archival work; for example, reparative description and redescription projects seek to address the impact of racism and other forms of discrimination in finding aids and in records themselves; takedown policies on archival websites give individuals and communities some say in what materials are available to which publics; and trauma-informed approaches to a range of archival functions and relationships seek to support and empower people who need to use and/or are documented in records. Person-centred approaches have also begun to acknowledge the archivist/recordkeeper/memory worker as a person; work on secondary or vicarious trauma, on precarity, on systems of oppression within archival education, professional associations, and institutions, and efforts to create safe spaces for IBPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ students and archivists indicate a shift to recognizing that an archivist cannot (and should not) remove their own personhood from their experience of the archives and its many emotional and relational demands.

These projects have begun to develop a language to describe their intentions and foci, using phrases such as “human-centred” and “person-centred” and calling for a shift “from documents to people,” but as yet no common vocabulary has been established to describe what this practice looks like. There has not yet been a concerted effort to draw person-centred projects together to understand the commonalities and differences in their approaches. A key aim of this special issue is to bring together and consolidate person-centred theories and approaches in order to more fully develop and define the concept of a person-centred archival theory and praxis.

Reorienting the archival discipline and profession to be person-centred requires a relational or care-centred perspective and has implications for how archival value is determined; for how archives are organized, used, represented and preserved; and for how archivists and records professionals work with others and each other. We invite submissions on a wide range of topics, including but certainly not limited to, person-centred approaches to or ideas about:

- Agency of records creators and/or records subjects
- Archivist-creator, archivist-donor, archivist-researcher (and other) relationships

- Person-centred approaches to archival functions (e.g. appraisal and selection, arrangement and description, reference, advocacy and outreach, preservation)
- Affect and emotion in archives and records theory and/or practice
- Ethics of care
- Anti-racist, reparative and/or liberatory archival work
- Embodiment: archives-as-body/body-as-archives
- Reflexivity of archivists on their work
- Ethics of access to and use of records
- Consent | agency | autonomy
- Community-engaged, community-based, and/or participatory practices
- Social justice | transformative justice | emotional justice | epistemic justice
- Trauma-informed practice
- Considerations of the concept of 'personhood' and its histories of inclusion and exclusion

Submission procedures:

Expressions of interest:

Anyone interested in contributing a submission to this special issue is asked to first submit an expression of interest that should include: a proposed title for the submission; a 250-350 word abstract outlining the focus of the submission, any research methods and/or theoretical frameworks employed, and the expected contribution the submission will make to articulation of person-centred archival theory and praxis; and a 100-word author biography.

Please submit expressions of interest to Jennifer Douglas (jen.douglas@ubc.ca) by **September 1, 2021**. Expressions of interest will be reviewed by the special issue guest editors and invitations to submit full proposals will be sent by **September 22, 2021**. Please note: an invitation to submit a full paper does not guarantee publication of the paper; every paper will go through a regular peer review process.

Full submissions:

Submissions should be between 5,000 to 8,000 words. Authors are directed to the [Archivaria style guide](#), which provides guidance on citation style, article formatting, spelling, capitalization, etc. We'd especially like authors to review the section on avoiding bias, which also includes references and links to other helpful style guides including Gregory Younging's *Elements of Indigenous Style* and the [Conscious Style Guide](#). The guest editors will be happy to answer questions related to preparing articles for submission and encourage authors to reach out.

Full submissions must be received by **January 31, 2022**. Submit to Jennifer Douglas (jen.douglas@ubc.ca). The special issue will be published in Fall 2022.

Peer mentoring:

To further encourage potential first-time contributors, students and early-career authors, as well as authors whose first language is not English or French, *Archivaria* is introducing a mentored submission process. The purpose of this option is to provide new authors with some additional guidance through

the process of article submission and peer review. This option is **not** intended to provide assistance with *writing* an article, but will provide mentees a friendly space in which to ask questions about and receive support related to the journal's submission procedures, style guidelines, the peer review process, and, if relevant, the revision and publication process.

Authors wishing to participate in the peer-mentoring option will be asked to indicate this to the guest editors when they receive notification that their expression of interest has been accepted and they are invited to submit a full paper for review.

***Peer reviewers needed:**

At this time, we'd also like to invite anyone interested in peer reviewing for this special issue to contact Jennifer (jen.douglas@ubc.ca). In your email, please identify areas of interest and/or practice. Not all volunteers will be called upon to review, but we appreciate your interest in participating in the peer review process. Please note that peer review will take place mostly between February and March 2022, though may start earlier if submissions are received before the January 31 deadline. After agreeing to peer review, reviewers will have three weeks to complete their review.