

Archives 2.0 : the next generation websites for archival holdings

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Declaration

This work is done for the Bachelor diploma in the final review of the School of Business Administration from Geneva (HEG), to obtain the title "Specialiste HES en Information Documentaire". The student agrees, if necessary, to a confidentiality clause. The use of the conclusions and the recommendations in this Bachelor thesis, without prejudging their value, are not binding either the responsibility of the author, nor that of the advisor to the work of Bachelor and the High School of Business Administration in Geneva. (HEG)

"I certify that I performed alone (e) this work, without using sources other than those cited in the bibliography."

Done in Geneva on July 15th 2010

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Summary

The emerging technologies, also known as web 2.0, have changed the online world as we know it. In the recent years, public and academic libraries have made the shift from paper to digital and have affirmed their presence on the web with those 2.0 tools as means of communication, engaging their public and crowdsourcing their collections.

However public and historical archives have been somewhat deficient in this area and remain hidden from sight online. More and more web users and researchers are asking those archives to be made available in an easy and interactive way online. Although it is clear that no mass digitization of archival holdings is possible immediately, this thesis proposes to reflect on how archives can best serve their users needs by employing current web 2.0 technologies.

This report will offer an analysis of the web 2.0 phenomenon in archives and will try to identify key principles to this shift in the profession. This analysis will serve as means to identify a strategy to develop a specific type of website for the Dumfries and Galloway Archive Centre in Scotland. By evaluating the current access to digital resources in Dumfries and Galloway, the proposition will revolve around the use of a collaborative software, also know as wiki, to set up an online local history resource for the region. Several wiki types of tool will be examined as well as good practices will be provided for setting and managing wikis.

Those guidelines will assist the Dumfries and Galloway libraries management into launching a proposal to the local council to provide their patrons and users with a wiki website aimed at restoring access, encouraging cultural as well as scholarly use of archival materials in their holdings.

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Summary	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables.....	v
Introduction.....	1
1. Working strategies	2
1.1 Initial scope statement and readjustments.....	2
1.2 Online Web Tools	2
1.2.1 <i>Social networks.....</i>	3
1.2.2 <i>Wikis.....</i>	3
1.2.3 <i>Powerpoint's and presentations</i>	3
1.3 Review of literature.....	3
1.4 Interviews.....	4
1.5 Visit at the Archive Centre	4
2. State of the art	5
2.1 What is web 2.0 ?.....	5
2.2 Justification of the 2.0 phenomenon.....	5
2.2.1 <i>Library 2.0.....</i>	5
2.2.2 <i>The archives 2.0 manifesto.....</i>	5
2.2.3 <i>The special case of the archives.....</i>	7
2.2.4 <i>Archives and users</i>	7
2.2.5 <i>« What happens if I click on this? ».....</i>	8
2.3 Typology of web 2.0	10
2.3.1 <i>Introduction.....</i>	10
2.3.2 <i>Folksonomy and tags.....</i>	11
2.3.3 <i>Blogs</i>	11
2.3.4 <i>Wikis.....</i>	12
2.3.5 <i>RSS Feeds</i>	12
2.3.6 <i>Social networks.....</i>	13
2.3.7 <i>Photo sharing</i>	13
2.3.8 <i>Mashups.....</i>	14
2.4 Public and historical archives 2.0	14
2.4.1 <i>World.....</i>	15
2.4.2 <i>Europe.....</i>	17
2.5 Cultural heritage 2.0	21
2.5.1 <i>Europe and United Kingdom.....</i>	21
2.5.2 <i>North America.....</i>	22
2.6 Genealogy 2.0	23
2.7 Review of presented features	24

3.	Analysis of the Dumfries Archive Centre	24
3.1	Existing virtual access to collections	25
3.2	Existing Digital resources	26
3.3	Recent developments.....	27
3.4	Technical issues.....	27
3.5	Management and staff	27
3.6	Family history guide.....	28
3.7	Existing classification scheme of collections	28
3.8	Interviews.....	28
	Results of analysis	30
	3.8.1 <i>Opportunities</i>	30
	3.8.2 <i>Strengths</i>	31
	3.8.3 <i>Weaknesses</i>	32
	3.8.4 <i>Threats</i>	32
4.	A local history wiki for Dumfries and Galloway.....	33
4.1	Why choose a wiki?.....	33
4.2	Analysis of wiki tools	35
	4.2.1 <i>Mediawiki</i>	35
	4.2.2 <i>Sharepoint WikiPlus</i>	36
	4.2.3 <i>Twiki</i>	37
4.3	Best practices in wikis	37
	4.3.1 <i>Content and contributions</i>	37
	4.3.2 <i>Structure and classification</i>	38
	4.3.3 <i>Description and finding aids</i>	39
	4.3.4 <i>Design</i>	40
	4.3.5 <i>Privacy and data security</i>	40
	4.3.6 <i>Marketing</i>	41
	4.3.7 <i>Risk assessment</i>	41
	4.3.8 <i>Evaluation</i>	42
	Closing statement.....	43
	Bibliography.....	45
	Appendice 1 Dumfries & Galloway and Archives 2.0	51

List of Tables

Table 1	The online shift of archives in the 21st century	10
Table 2	Digital resources that could be promoted on a collaborative website	29

Introduction

In 2003, the Secret Archives of the Vatican, under the rule of Pope John Paul II, permitted entry to hundreds of scholars and researchers in its walls. It took them 800 hundred years to open their archives to the public: they are presenting digital copies of their most famous documents on their website. On the other hand, public and historical archives have been open to the public for decades but strangely have had a harder time keeping up with emerging technologies and making the shift from paper to digital. And yet, the rise of the popularity of the web has been indisputable in the last decade.

We know archives because they echo many individual stories in the process; as such, archival materials are important parts of our lives. These records, accumulated by organizations and businesses in the process of conducting their daily business, reflect our collective history through them. Except that most web users have difficulties finding them online when they use their favourite search engine: in a world ever more connected an archive without public outreach and advocacy is an empty space and is threatened to disappear either by lack of funding or lack of exposure.

How do we insure that archives are visible to the public and by what channel can we use to promote them? The answer may lie in recent web technologies that have risen in these last years: enabling archivists and users to create content as well as consume it. Although we have seen these changes occur in public and academic libraries, it is still a patient and thoughtful deliberation in the archival community. Between public and private boundaries, copyright management, learning and updating professional skills, project funding and budget cuts : archivists will need to reflect on the need to reach out to new and existing users, navigate through these obstacles and go boldly where no archivist has gone before.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the web 2.0 phenomenon in archives repositories across the planet. It aims to identify key principles and justification to this shift in the profession and the strategies included in this development. The third chapter is centred on the Dumfries Archive Centre in Scotland. The Archive Centre is itself encompassed in the Library, Information and Archives department in the former royal burgh.

The actual management would like to provide its patrons with web tools that will enable them to access information about collections and added-valued services like links to digital images, files and stories. The fourth part will reflect on a proposal to build a wiki for Dumfries & Galloway. A wiki is a collaborative website that presents structured content that users can comment and add specific information on.

While the wiki in itself is not yet built, this thesis will provide good practices in setting them up and managing them. These guidelines are aimed at the archival arrangement and description process and will not involve selection, appraisal or preservation. Although preservation of records in the digital age is a current debate in the archival community, this thesis will specifically reflect on public access to archives via the web and the added value of user-generated content.

1. Working strategies

1.1 Initial scope statement and readjustments

Initially, the scope statement describing the mandate for Dumfries and Galloway included the task of redefining a classification scheme for digital resources displayed on the wiki. After further research and consideration, this part of the mandate will not be addressed in this thesis as the documents that were to be made available were not delivered and, more importantly, because the need for a classification was not the most pressing issue in the conception phase of a wiki.

1.2 Online Web Tools

Since this paper revolves around the use of web 2.0 technologies for archives websites, it was relevant to use those tools to find information on projects, key champions of their use and to gain a more detailed expertise on these new websites. It was noted that most archives and repositories cited in the following chapter promote the use of open-source software and popular 2.0 websites. These are a few examples of the websites consulted during the preparation phase of this thesis. Full records in thematic categories can be found in the bibliography.

1.2.1 Social networks

Social networks websites have increased in popularity over the last two years. They are useful for finding experts and cultural institutions (Libraries, Archives, Museums) advocating new technologies.

- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter¹

1.2.2 Wikis

Wikis are collaborative websites that anyone can modify. They will be presented more in depth in chapter 4. These specific wikis have been useful to identify libraries and archives promoting their use.

- Your archives (UK)
- Bibliopedia (France)
- Library and Information Science Wiki (USA)

1.2.3 Powerpoint's and presentations

The use of slide presentations by professional workers has brought forth websites that allow registered users to share them and therefore advertise current trends in their profession or uphold a particular project. Again, they are relevant when identifying important individuals endorsing web 2.0 usage.

- Slideshare
- Google Documents
- Scribd

1.3 Review of literature

The research of conventional professional literature has been a painstaking process as not many books were written specifically about web 2.0 technologies and historical archives; however the research for scientific and case-study

¹ Although "Twitter" is not a strictly community social networks, it has been noted that more and more archivists and librarians use it to send out information about their projects and their work.

articles has been more fruitful. The exploration of the subject has been done around these themes and keywords :

- Libraries 2.0
- Archives 2.0
- Cultural strategies (*in the United Kingdom mainly*)
- Information on historical archives management in the United Kingdom, Scotland and Europe
- Cooperation between cultural institutions (Libraries, archives, museums)
- Case-studies on wikis
- Case-studies on web 2.0 tools in cultural institutions

1.4 Interviews

A questionnaire was created in April 2010 and sent to M. Graham Roberts of the Archive Centre in Dumfries, endorser of the project. It was to be distributed not only amongst archivists of the LIA² network but also to reference librarians, curators and museum administrators. The goal of the questionnaire was to evaluate the professional's knowledge of web 2.0, wiki technology and gather suggestions and/or reluctances about a local family history wiki. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendixes section at the end of this document. The analysis of the answers received is found at the end of chapter 3.

1.5 Visit at the Archive Centre

Three visits were made in the Archive Centre in Dumfries: in December, April, June 2010. The first one was to determine the scope of the mandate for M. Graham Roberts and to assert his endorsement of the themes of this thesis. The mandate was defined and it was agreed that although official assistance with members and staff of Dumfries LIA was available, the local council could not be made aware of this work. The particular position of the Dumfries local council will be detailed in the third chapter. The second visit in April was to gather material and raw data on the collections the Archive Centre held and discuss with M. Roberts of the implications of a wiki for the region. The proposal to send out a questionnaire was made and approved. The final visit in June revolved on getting the certainty that the project was going in the right direction for Dumfries and Galloway and tie off a few loose ends.

² Libraries, Information and Archives

2. State of the art

2.1 What is web 2.0 ?

Web 2.0 is changing the online world as we know it. The term has been coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2004 during a conference (O'Reilly, 2005). As opposed to "Web 1.0", the 2.0 concept represents interaction and collaboration with the machine. The internet user can share content (images, videos, text) within minutes in an easy manner, manage a social online identity and consume online content. Since 2004, the rise of web 2.0 software has decupled. Because web 2.0 websites are easy to operate and do not need special programming knowledge, there is no way that we can avoid these changes when we go online.

2.2 Justification of the 2.0 phenomenon

2.2.1 Library 2.0

In the aftermath of O'Reilly's conference, M. Michael Casey coined the term "Library 2.0" in his blog LibraryCrunch a year later. He outlines the need for public and academic libraries to put in operation technology services that allow library users to participate and contribute to their collections. Library 2.0 is based on user's interaction with traditional library systems (Opac's and websites), the permission to modify its contents and incorporate new ideas along the way. M. Casey stresses that user's needs have changed in accordance to the rise in the use of the web and, as such, libraries have to examine their products and services and be willing to replace them.

2.2.2 The archives 2.0 manifesto

Archivists are not usually recognized for their ability or desire to implement changes quickly. It is fairly true to say that common stereotypes about the profession are enduring. Although there is still some reluctances in the profession, archivists have been more and more discussing the changes in their profession online. The evaluation of those sources³ finds that, like 2.0 libraries, archivists ought to make the shift from dusty old boxes to online participation and crowdsourcing.

³ Refer to Bibliography, "Archives 2.0 Blogs"

However, archivists and information professionals have been deliberating on these subjects for longer than we may think. The Science and Technology in the Making (STIM) Project began in the late 1990's; its aims were to provide online users with interactive archives by presenting different websites regrouping oral histories and personal recollections.

And so, more than ten years later, in 2007, Ms. Kate Theimer, former American archivist, inspired herself of a recent blog post on "[Library 2.0: An academic's perspective](#)" to produce a blog post titled: "[An archivist's 2.0 manifesto?](#)". She obviously thought that some of the changes occurring in the librarian profession could be adapted in the archives. Her post sparked on many online debates but clearly she felt the need to push her fellow archivists forward instead of staying "out of the loop", web wise speaking. Over the course of the next few years, Ms. Theimer has gleaned support, ideas and comments and wrote a book: "Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections" intended to provide guidance for archivists wishing to conduct a web 2.0 project inside their institution.

She employs the term «natural evolution» (Theimer, 2010, p. 3) when writing about archives 2.0 but it is not a general sentiment felt by all archivists around the globe. Nevertheless, many archivists' blogs⁴ have noted that without the public and visitors, they would certainly cease to exist in their actual function in society. They have also recognized that their users have sometimes more knowledge about their collections than themselves and as such have developed strategies for federating this knowledge in a structured way. Partnerships have also emerged, especially in the new vision of cultural institutions as it is outlined in Anglo-Saxon countries: LAM (Libraries, Archives and Museums). Although there has never been any inkling of reuniting these locations physically, professionals have tangibly agreed that they should work hand in hand to provide web users and patrons with a structured, global and collaborative content online.

⁴ Refer to bibliography, « Archives 2.0 blogs » section

2.2.3 The special case of the archives

Although there are many different sets of recommendations for the description and classification of archives in countries, there was a need for access recommendations. In a European manual, Charles Kecskeméti and Iván Székel outlined policies and proposals to simplify access to public and historic archives. There is a clear need for archival institutions to implement policies that will give free access (Council of Europe, Kecskeméti, Székel, 2005 p.53) to their public collections and remind the general public that the memory of their history and sources is a fundamental right (Ibid, p.44)

These suggestions are in respect with national laws and confidentiality, privacy statuses of archive fonds. However, not every country has the same approach and perspective towards access to public & historical information.

In the last years, archivists and records manager have been working hand in hand with the cultural sector, with library and museum professionals, as well as teachers and educators to reinvent and propose a new concerted effort to provide quality information for their users. Culture is a multi-faceted approach that reminds us of the diversity of national and local histories; it is evident that archives are at the centre of this debate, being the only recognized source of authority when it comes to defining historical events or proving their validity. As such, they are «[...] an essential and irreplaceable element of culture» (Ibid, p.51) indispensable in cultural and educational strategies.

2.2.4 Archives and users

The main responsibilities of archivists are the acquisition, processing (description and arrangement) of records and collections. It also includes preservation of those records in the long-term. Although they are physical objects deposited in a physical space, they are not meant to be preserved only as objects but to be put to use. (Theimer, 2010, p.3)

The realization of this change comes also from a new category of users. Traditional archives (and library) users are researchers, scientists and historians. They know what steps to take in order to gain access to the desired material for their work although they do «expect that in the future everything will be saved from information systems, and access will be provided via networks by some form of query language» (Ross, 2003, p.163)

On the other hand there is also a new category of users, unexperienced, sophisticated and fast-paced, who expect archivists to give them answers on their topic of interest as quickly as you can say: "Google".

As a matter of fact, web users approach archives repositories online, digital collections and archives websites in the same manner as they consume information every day. They want to be able to type in a few keywords (Schaffner, 2009, p.6), retrieve results in an easy and intuitive manner, therefore giving them the answer they require. These users have absolutely no idea what the word "*provenance*" and "*context*" mean. They also do not want to peruse over pages-long descriptions of items if they do not have access to it. When this digital generation learns what it truly entails to gain access to archival material: travelling to a specific location, signing confidentiality agreements in some cases, pondering long hours over boxes and paper, there is a good chance that they will abandon their research.

Hence the questions are: how to keep archives relevant and their users interested in discovering them? How can we use web 2.0 to provide relevant context in an interactive and intuitive way for users?

2.2.5 « What happens if I click on this? »

The best way to promote archives materials and lead users to hidden treasures of repositories is to encourage a discoverability approach. Browsing by discovery is often known as serendipity: developing a concept or achieving a conclusion on facts discovered accidentally (Oxford English Dictionary).

In many ways, emerging technologies in popular culture have modified the search techniques of web users. A recent Jisc study (Williams, Rowlands, 2007) concerning the online behaviour of researchers and teens has made emerge the radical concept **that if it's not online, it does not exist**. Although this seems to be in contradiction with what scientific research is, web users, researchers and historians (Anderson C., 2004) have needs and expectations of finding relevant information online. They validate the truth according to its findability. Users navigate by themselves (Samouelian, 2009), explore and do their own interpretation of what they find. It has also been noted that users feel empowered by finding what they need on the Web because they discover it on their own.

Clearly this has created a gap felt deeply by libraries and archives today when it comes to their specific skills in online research methods. Teens have been especially affected by this phenomenon, they don't seem to feel the need to come to the library anymore: Google will answer everything. Apart from the fact that this behaviour has been analyzed several times, and comforted information professionals in their position as valuable providers of quality content, the anarchic method in which teens use the internet to find information has brought website administrators and content management systems administrators to revise their position on findability and discovery or "**What happens if I click on this?**". Obviously, promoting an archives websites is still about HTML and linking sources together but there has been a call to rejuvenate search catalogs and OPAC's (Schneider, 2006) for some years now. Some of the features of these new catalogs cause them to be more user-friendly by allowing a rating system on sources, supplement text and images with user-generated classification and recommend similar materials. By allowing users to browse freely in a database, without the usual constraints of headings and authority subjects, they might discover material that was previously unknown to them.

But how to conceptualize this on the web? The "[long tail](#)" notion was introduced by Chris Anderson in 2004. It's basically the volume of consumers interested in a relatively small amount of resource (or product); there is a product for every user. This model being essentially a business model may apply to archives repositories in helping them put forward those archival materials, documents and collections that are hidden from plain sight therefore making sure that the people who are looking for those unknown materials can find them.

Table 1

THE ONLINE SHIFT OF ARCHIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Archives 1.0	Archives 2.0
Tangible records (paper, microfiche, photos, audio-video)	Digital records enhanced by online content
Institution leading content, description and arrangement processes	Combination of authority content and diverse audiences in description and classification
Presentation and display to the public by exhibitions and tours	Engaging the public by creating unique content and promoting hidden collections online
Institution leading the way on its own	Collaboration and partnership with cultural institutions
Static HTML website, a single publisher of content	Dynamic website with social activity features.

The previous table illustrates a summary of the changes that have been affecting archivists and their holdings in the last few years. We will now look into types of web 2.0 tools and their application to archives online.

2.3 Typology of web 2.0

2.3.1 Introduction

There are many different types of web 2.0 tools and websites that may be used to promote public and historical archives collections. It has also shaped a specific vocabulary concerning those tools. Each concept will be summarized to provide a better understanding of their use and in which case they can be applied to archives repositories. It is not the intention of this thesis to round up all possible applications of 2.0 tools for archives but instead to point out the most relevant and popular ones. The analysis will be in a later stage centered on the use of a particular type of tool for the archives of Dumfries & Galloway, consequently the part concerning “wikis” will be further scrutinized in chapter 4.

2.3.2 Folksonomy and tags

The word “tag” was one of the first notions introduced within web 2.0 as described previously. It is a decentralized and spontaneous classification based on terms chosen by users. Although information professionals prefer to use the term “folksonomy”; made of “folk” (people) and “taxonomy” (classification by families).

These user generated keywords are utilized to describe digital objects (text, photos, and videos) and published work. They are at the core of the actual practice of the web. They have also provided numerous, heated debates on their usage since “tags” displace the long-established authority of information professionals or providers and gives back the power to web users : describing themselves what they find online.

In the recent years, librarians, archivists, as well as museum curators have pointed towards the risk of letting the public “vandalize” their digital collections with their created “tags”. On the contrary, studies have shown that when placing a web user with the possibility to describe objects and documents as they please, they are respectful and dedicated during the whole process.

As an example, The Library of Congress published a study of their digital images collections made available on the Flickr Commons, they have effectively reported about twenty-five instances of inappropriate tagging (Springer, et al., 2008). Of course, it is safe to assume that some users like to pull pranks on websites when tagging objects, but it remains a small minority which do not usually visit institutional or cultural websites. In that sense, it can be interesting for public archives to permit the public to tag a displayed collection on a website as it will surely provide the archivists, and curators, with a means to revise their classification and gain unique knowledge on the way users interpret their collections.

2.3.3 Blogs

The term blog is a contraction of the words “web” and “log” (or personal diary). They are made of posts published in a chronological order. It was estimated that in 2006 already a blog was born every half-second. (CNET News, 2006) and

more than a hundred million blogs exists.⁵ With as much information distributed, many different avenues of publishing are possible and may help to reinforce a corporate identity or brand of a specific industry. In terms of archives and library 2.0, they represent the window of these institutions and are usually coupled or a part of an official website.

Blogs have an important impact on information professionals and more specifically archivists as they change the way they distribute information amongst themselves. They permit archives to engage in discussions with the users of their collections, gather new audiences and provide archivists with an online space for conversations about current topics of their profession. In the use of web 2.0 technologies by archives repositories, blogs come in first (Bar-Ilan, 2007) as far as 2004.

2.3.4 Wikis

The term “wiki” comes from the Hawaiian language: “*Wiki Wiki*” (Wikipedia, July 2010), which means: “*Fast, fast*”. It has become imbedded in our online culture with the rapid growth and popularity of the website Wikipedia. As the first online collaborative encyclopaedia, Wikipedia remains a reference tool in almost every web user’s habits online. Although there have been copious amounts of debates online on the validity and legitimacy of Wikipedia’s articles, it has inspired many historical archives and academic libraries to expand on their use by either correcting articles in Wikipedia or building a similar collaborative tool. Wikis are also often used by cultural institutions to provide communications, updates and developments on digitization projects.

2.3.5 RSS Feeds

RSS, or Really Simple Syndication, are web feeds used to publish updates such as blog posts or news headlines from a website using XML standards. Although their usage goes back to the late 90’s, the 2.0 version from 2003 has become widespread. These web feeds now allow publishers and content providers the capability to push out content to web users instead of the latter having to visit themselves a website for updates. They can be subscribed to online or sent out periodically using RSS readers or email software.

⁵ Although they do not necessarily have a long-life span on the web

In this particular case, archives can use web feeds to distribute new and updated content about their specific collections, display news and exhibitions information or update contact details. They are an easy and cost-effective way for archivists to inform their users of updates and are already implanted in a majority of online and offline software. The vast majority of web 2.0 tools mentioned in this thesis allow their visitors the possibility to subscribe to web feeds or generate themselves a syndicated feed of items that they find relevant.

2.3.6 Social networks

Social networks are websites where users can register and join online communities based on their location, age, interests and such. They usually include a profile page for members displaying this information and tools facilitating communication amongst online friends or colleagues.

The use of social networks has exploded in the recent years due the popularity of Facebook and Myspace. As such, social networks have been largely ignored by the archivist's community because they seemed to be more of a fun tool to use rather than a serious instrument of communication. However, there are professional social networks like LinkedIn who connect users based on their work experience and qualifications as well as international businesses and companies displaying their corporate profile as a means to recruit qualified employees. In that regard, social networks can truly benefit public and historical archives as they can connect archivists of a region, or country enabling them to engage on current issues of the profession. Furthermore, social connections can allow the distribution of events information, exhibitions and changes to an archives website as well as connecting users of these locations.

2.3.7 Photo sharing

The most popular functionality of web 2.0 is the possibility for users to share their personal (or professional) pictures online. The Library of Congress, The National Gallery of Scotland, the National Archives UK, and many others, have developed the "Commons" on the popular website Flickr. They enable the public to access a rich and diversified collection of public photography, made available freely under the Creative Commons License who provides a flexible range of protections and freedoms for authors, artists, and educators. (CreativeCommons, 2010)

As this is one of the biggest digital collections of images provided by recognized institutions, photo-sharing is one of the simplest practices that archives can benefit from either by joining an online community like the Commons or by building a collection of their own. By making images available to a wider audience, archives can profit from information provided by users, in this instance like tagging images or commenting upon them and also engage in a conversation with their users about their specific archival collections. Some institutions⁶ have even made use of photo-sharing websites to engage the public into gathering facts on a specific collection like identifying a location, a person, a date thus enriching metadata of digital objects.

2.3.8 Mashups

Mashups are online web applications that integrate different data sets and combine them together to offer new services like Yahoo! Pipes. These data sets are often raw input such as web feeds, geographical coordinates, digital collection of sounds and images. By joining this data, an archives website can provide geographical context for records and collections. The most known application used for mashing up data is the Google Maps API⁷: a record can be combined with a geographical location, pulling out images from other sources and offer the user a new and enhanced visualization of data.

2.4 Public and historical archives 2.0

Given that we have caught a glimpse of the types of 2.0 tools used by archives to reach out to their users in the previous pages, we will now focus on past and current projects attempted by various archives repositories online.

These projects have been chosen on the basis of their originality, the types of tool used and particular features of the websites. It is an attempt to publicize the work of archivists/librarians and identify those institutions that can be contacted for further information. Some of the archivists and project managers behind these ventures have also published research articles, presentations and evaluation statistics of their undertakings: this inventory of archives 2.0 could not be complete without the thoughts and ideas behind these projects as individuals are the key factor in launching them successfully.

⁶ The Mapit1418 Project, p.19

⁷ API : Application Programming Interface

In some cases, national archival institutions have partnered with other cultural institutions to enhance their offer, it is the belief of the author of this thesis that no future undertaking in digitization, online participation schemes or crowdsourcing projects are possible without a spirit of collaboration and partnership infusing them.

2.4.1 World

[The National Archives Wiki, United States of America](#)

The NARA has successfully launched web 2.0 technologies to engage their public and audience. They are currently in a website redesign process and are asking their users to vote on the future look and feel of the archives main site.

A different set of tools are used such as the official blog, the head archivist blog, a twitter feed, collections display on Flickr, Youtube channel and extensive use of Facebook for local administrations. As of July 2010, NARA has introduced a wiki in the objective of bringing together historians, citizens, genealogist and researchers to comment and share content about the collections held. The wiki named “Our Archives” invites users to participate by creating pages and editing articles or publish transcription of records.

[The Polar Bear Digital Expedition Digital Collections, Michigan](#)

The Polar Bear collections are a group of personal papers held at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan relating to a U.S military intervention in Russia during the end of the First World War. In 2004, they proceeded to digitize these collections and provide a new and engaging experience for online users. By 2006, the website was launched with chief project Elizabeth Yakel and students from the University of Michigan Information School on the Next Generation Finding Aid Project. Their aims were devising and redesigning finding aids to encourage browsing by discovery with the use of social navigation features.

The website offers an easy and intuitive navigation by location, name of related individuals and organizations. All the entries link to the digital collection of papers assembled by the Bentley Historical Library. Online users can comment through a contact form and, as such, contribute their own personal information and sources to each article.

Since then Elizabeth Yakel has published a series of evaluation and research articles on the use and benefits of social navigation tools for displaying archival collections. She notes that:

« Our design decisions have attempted to balance the need for continued archival authority with a desire to incorporate some of the social aspects of Web 2.0 features. The relative merits of each of these solutions is open for debate. Social navigation, collaborative filtering, and shared authority among archival users and archivists will continue to be controversial topics »
(Yakel, 2007)

[Mapping Our Anzacs, National Archives of Australia](#)

The Anzacs (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) was an army corps formed during the First World War. The National Archives of Australia have decided to make available on this website, the military records of those soldiers, nurses and other members of the army corps. The search tool permits browsing of these records by either birth place or enlistment. The website is also enriched with a mashup of the Google API allowing web user to locate a military on the Australian and New Zealand map therefore providing context for archival materials. Apart from a few empty military records, they are all provided with large-scale digital images. These images and their associated record can be saved on a online scrapbook or shared using bookmarking applications⁸. The website also encourage users to create and post online tributes about service persons, hence the addition of user-generated content which will enrich the records that the National Archives possess.

⁸ Delicious or Digg

[Seeking Michigan, Library of Michigan and Archives of Michigan](#)

In 2008, both the Library of Michigan and Archives of Michigan, with the partnership of the Leota and Talbert Abrams Foundation decided to make available a wide array of genealogical and historical materials through a new website. The collections accessible on Seeking Michigan provide information and context on the state's cultural heritage. The avenues provided by the website revolve around four concepts: **Seek, Discover, Look and Teach**. The collections are accompanied by high-quality digital images with basic metadata for researchers and visitors with the possibility of bookmarking and sharing them through popular websites. In some cases, important documents like official state documents are provided with a transcription. The "Look" features blog entries related to documents and can be commented by users. Other avenues of discovery include links to a Flickr gallery and videos as well as resources for teachers and educators for classrooms. The project is ongoing and planning to include other sets of records such as oral histories and motion pictures.

2.4.2 Europe

[City of Amsterdam Archives, Netherlands](#)

The Amsterdam Archives was voted "Best Archives Website" in 2009 by the community of readers of Ms. Kate Theimer's blog "Archives Next". Though it does not include typical web 2.0 functionalities, it remains a relevant and interesting example on how archives websites can become more interactive and attractive to users. It offers an intuitive and easy way to use navigation, quality digital images and in some cases, English translations of documents. The most important feature that Amsterdam Archives offers to its online visitors is the possibility to scan-on-demand: meaning that any document that has not been scanned yet will be so, at the user's request and for a minimal fee. In this regard, this feature is truly unique as it enable users to find (and get) what they want from archives in Amsterdam as well as providing the institution with a reliable source of funding.

[Archives of Tilburgh, Netherlands](#)

In 2009, the Tilburgh Regional Archives and the Dutch Genealogical Society have successfully launched a wiki celebrating the genealogies of people born in 1809, the year that the city received city rights. The goal of the project was to retrace the steps and life history of the 339 people born this year and invite the public, researchers and genealogists to contribute their knowledge of these individuals. The articles are accompanied by digital images from the archives database, comments and references provided by registered users. By gathering specific information on occupations, migration patterns, family composition of Tilburgh in the 19th century, the key actors of this project hope to enrich their documents with user-generated content therefore sparking scholarly interest in this specific era of Tilburgh's history.

[Mapit 1418, National Archives of Netherlands](#)

The National Archives of Netherlands have joined the Flickr Commons participating institutions by making available digital images from their collections. With the partnership of Images for the Future and the future management of the Spaarnestad Photo collection, they also offer a special collection of photographs, on Mapit 1418 website, from the First World War. With the OpenStreetMap⁹ technology, the visitors are invited to contribute knowledge about the places where the photographs were taken and also to geotag those on the world map. Visitors can also upload modern photographs of these places to create a comparison between past and present.

⁹ Created in 2004 under a Creative Commons Licence, OpenStreetMap is an API that aims to offer open access world maps that anyone can edit and modify.

[YourArchives, National Archives United Kingdom](#)

In 2007, the National Archives of the UK launched a community project using the MediaWiki technology to invite users to share their knowledge about British History. The public is encouraged to edit pages, submit articles about historical themes and records held by the National Archives as well as add (or correct) information on records published on the website. On the presentation page of the project, the institution declares that the website is distinct from the official website and clearly states that this is a research tool for and made by the public.

In addition to YourArchives, it is worth mentioning that the [TNA website](#) is exceptionally well designed and structured for its visitors. By offering in-depth browsing of records by people, place and subjects, the public can also find guidance and interactive tutorials to better understand archives, learn how to read old documents and gain knowledge of British cultural history by participating in online lessons, virtual lessons as well as listen to videoconferences and podcasts.

Another exciting venture from TNA is the [National Archives Labs](#), with the release of open and public data from data.gov.uk, inviting the public to test-drive future implementations and web applications for the National Archives.

By engaging the public into the development of applications and gathering feedback, The National Archives hopes to insure users needs and expectations in the future.

[Archives HUB, United Kingdom](#)

The Archives Hub is a joint project with JISC in collaboration with the universities of Manchester and Liverpool. It is a national gateway to archives collection description held by colleges, universities and archives repositories across the UK.

The website provides a search engine by repositories and keywords (place, name, creators, etc.). The results of the search are linked through the local archive catalogue and retrieve a complete record at the collection level including the scope of the collection, biographical and historical information. A unique subject guide browsing tool completes the website's features.

There are no web 2.0 tools per say on the Archives Hub website, [though a blog](#) by information professionals is maintained and invites archivists to provide information and descriptions for their collections. The vision of archives 2.0 that the participating archivists maintain at the Archives Hub are not only about tools and gadgets, like many of the projects presented in this thesis, but retains its original mindset. In a blog entry, Jane Stevenson states:

« At the Archives Hub our raison d'être is dissemination – we want to improve access to archives through providing an effective cross-searching service. I see 'Archives 2.0' as very much in line with what we are doing – implementing standards, looking at interoperability and taking a collaborative approach. As a community, we are entirely at liberty to shape 'Archives 2.0' ourselves, to make it something relevant to us – the label is, after all, just a label until it has an agreed meaning behind it. It should not be seen as something forced upon us, but as something that we create and progress for our own benefit and the benefit of our users. » (Stevenson, 2008)

She also mentions the seemingly lack of initiatives taken in this direction by UK archives as opposed to UK libraries in participating in the web 2.0 movement, though they are slowly but surely covering the gap as we will see in the following section covering cultural heritage online.

2.5 Cultural heritage 2.0

With the advent of 2.0 technologies, traditional curators and providers of information like libraries, museums and archives have crossed their natural borders and invested time, funding and technical expertise to bring to online users a enlivened vision of cultural heritage. In time, these boundaries between the three professions are bound to disappear (Boyd, 2009) and we will witness a new collaborative model based on crowdsourcing and the creation of online communities. Whittaker states firmly that libraries, archives and museums have converging missions. (Whittaker, Thomas, 2009, p. xiii) and so they should make use of their unique strengths to put forward new web services for their users.

The following projects incorporate many of the different features presented above and aggregate content from museums, public libraries and archives. Although each of these bodies still preserve their original function in the physical world, online display and public access to their specific collections is being presented in a global and structured display. Some of these undertakings either are institution-specific or incorporate content from them all together.

2.5.1 Europe and United Kingdom

Some of the key actors, in the United Kingdom, in these recent developments are significant to mention:

- [The Europeana Library](#) brings together digital collections from all over Europe from libraries, museums and archives. It is involved with many local British projects like Europeana Local.
- [The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council](#) (MLA) in the United Kingdom promotes best practices through these institutions in the objective of providing increased awareness to local and users needs and by enabling them to make a significant contribution in their communities.
- [The Culture Grid](#) created by the MLA, The Collections Trust and European Commission aims to provide information from the museums, libraries and archives across the UK and to ensure its availability through media partners like the BBS or Google.

The Culture Grid is presently participating in a project led by Scottish Universities. The project “Revealing our Hidden Collections” will make available more than 1.8 million items held in major Scottish Universities and will provide collection-level descriptions, item-level records and photographs of the selected objects. At present, the website is not accessible though it is planned to launch in July 2010.

2.5.2 North America

[Steve Tagger Museum Project](#)

The Steve Tagger Museum Project goes back to 2005 and is one of the first concerted efforts from a team of researchers to explore the use of social tagging methods in museum collections available online. With various institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and recently the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the project team are continuing to work on folksonomy and making their data available freely online. They have published [numerous papers](#) and presentations on the subject that may become relevant to any cultural heritage institution willing to undergo the shift from authority metadata to user-generated content.

[Ohio Memory Project, USA](#)

This particular project goes back almost than a decade when the first online scrapbook was launched in 2002 to celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of the state. It was a single access point for historical materials from archives, museums and libraries to provide visitors with highlights of Ohio’s history and reveal treasures from cultural institutions that were previously unknown. The community surrounding the website is still very active today and boasts more than 26,000 primary sources available online. They are continuing to engage the public into volunteering to digitize documents and create transcriptions with also the possibility for online users to contribute their own digital images to the collection.

[Placeography, Minnesota](#)

The Placeography website is a wiki maintained by the Minnesota Historical Society. It provides the public with an online space where they can discover information about a building, natural park, street or unique location of their region. As a wiki, the pages and articles can be modified and enhanced with the knowledge and references of the public. This wiki is truly original in the choice of its subject. By engaging the public into putting together their knowledge of the region, they help to reinforce a sense of citizenship and belonging to a place the inhabitants **know** about instead of archivists/librarians distributing knowledge about what they **possess** in their holdings.

2.6 Genealogy 2.0

While many users approach public and historical archives for genealogy purposes, the recent years have given commercial and non-profit organizations the niche that they were waiting for in offering digital transcripts and images of indexes, parish registers and similar sources for genealogical research. As such, they have engaged very quickly in the 2.0 movement by providing interactive search features, filtering and crowdsourcing. They have acquired archival materials, or the right to display them, and are truly an innovative force in engaging the public in new ways of discovering genealogical sources. The examples¹⁰ provided below are characteristic of this approach but must be taken into consideration as to their authenticity and reliability.

- [Ancestry.com Wiki](#) uses the Wikimedia technology to allow registered users to edit and modify its content. The articles are about archival sources and genealogical records. The wiki is linked to the commercial website ancestry.com
- [Family Search Wiki](#) is part of the Jesus-Christ of Latter- Day Saints Church network familysearch.org. It is one of the most heavily-used family history website. The wiki, allows users to add information about archival materials and provide guidance for genealogical research.

¹⁰ Seeing as this paper does not revolve around the analysis of genealogy sites, the examples given are just to illustrate the opportunities that archives could envision when it comes to collaboration with the public on their materials

- [We Relate Wiki](#) is a genealogy website sponsored by the Foundation for Online Genealogy and in partnership with the Allen County Public Library. As opposed to the previous cases, the goal of the wiki is to invite users into creating the largest, referenced genealogic tree online so, as such, it is mainly centered around individuals and locations.

2.7 Review of presented features

As we have seen in the previous pages, the many projects that were presented are not always strictly about web 2.0 technologies. In fact, it seems as though it is more often about strategic visions from the institution that guides the choice of tools and technologies used to enhance the user's experience online instead of them being "technology victims", instate web 2.0 just for the sake of it. We can also safely conclude that rarely an online project for an archive, or a public library, can meet success without collaboration between cultural institutions that have the same goals. Let's now focus on how these facts can be used to analyse Dumfries and Galloway Libraries needs and priorities in order to achieve their goal.

3. Analysis of the Dumfries Archive Centre¹¹

Dumfries and Galloway region possesses in its libraries and archive centre a rich and diverse collection of resources acquired over the years either by acquisition or private donation. Those documents are available under types such as:

- Maps
- Postcards
- Photographs
- Newspapers
- Indexes of baptisms, burials and marriages
- Parishes records
- Census and valuation rolls
- etc.

¹¹ In order to make the reading of this chapter easier, the Dumfries and Galloway term will be referred as « D&G » and the Library, Information and Archives department as « LIA »

These documents also come in diverse formats: paper, digital indexes, microfiches, glass-plated photographs, etc. Dumfries and Galloway has 24 libraries, an archive centre and a network of mobile routes for delivering books to rural regions.

Before going further in analyzing the D&G' collections, it is worthwhile to explain the specific distinctions and resemblances between archives and libraries in the United Kingdom and Scotland. In the Ewart Library, central library of the region, one can find printed and electronic resources relating to genealogy, family and local history and "archives"¹². Some of those documents are also available in the Archive Centre in Dumfries. Consequently, there are doubles offered on many different sites. At the moment, talks are ongoing in the D&G management to join physically the local history collection in one access point for the public but this has been delayed by lack of space and funding to open a new building. This is where the resemblance stops.

The Archive Centre comprises of original charters, valuation rolls and precious documents for researchers. Though it is true to say that the majority of the enquiries in the libraries reference centres and archive centre are similar, the collection of archives is made of private papers donation, police rolls, ownership deeds. So in this sense, the materials of Dumfries Archive Centre are archives as well in the truest sense of the word. We will scrutinize more in depth how these archival materials and the local history resources of the libraries can be valued using an online tool.

3.1 Existing virtual access to collections

The existing website for Dumfries & Galloway LIA is accessible via [the council's webpage](#).

As we can see, the website is concealed in the local's council site¹³ and there is no way at the moment to develop any corporate and separate online identity for LIA in Dumfries.

¹² Them being physically stored behind the Ewart Library because of lack of space in the Archive Centre

¹³ There are six "clicks" in order to access the library catalogue for example

Although the website answers the five “W” (What, Who, Where, When, Why), there is no form of current or updated information like a feed, recent news or information relevant about exhibitions.

3.2 Existing Digital resources

Some steps have been taken already to promote the D&G region with the “[In The Artists Footsteps](#)” website, publicizing works of art that have made of the region over the last two centuries. The “[Through the Lenses](#)” is a website sponsored by the local council and is composed in part of digitized images of postcards stored in the Ewart Library. The database can be consulted and the images bought directly by users. However, digital images from the website are not linked through the catalogue’s OPAC but provides a call number that users may employ to have access to the original document . These images are not free and are protected by a watermark.

Regrettably, apart from the “Artists” Footsteps, the wealth of LIA’s resources is not accessible through other usual means of searches, like conventional search engines.

Both these websites are referenced under the LIA website. There is also currently two library catalogues. The [first one](#) offers a basic and advanced search form and access to the special library collections¹⁴. As of June 2010, [a new catalogue](#), an Aquabrowser product, is available to users. It filters by location, year, format, etc. It is an interesting alternative for users although there is no formal publicity or promotion of this new product either on the official website or the first catalogue’s webpage.

¹⁴ Audio collection, child and adult-related works, etc.

3.3 Recent developments

A special action plan was drafted last September by the author of this thesis and led the D&G management to try-and-test a few web 2.0 tools. As of June 2010, there is an updated [Facebook page](#) informing subscribers of the latest events and exhibitions.

There is also a collection of images on the image-sharing website [Flickr](#), categorized under themes. The [Twitter feed](#) is made of information also relating to events taking place in the libraries. These web tools serve as a trial to gather indication on how web 2.0 functionalities can bring traffic and public to the D&G libraries.

3.4 Technical issues

The Information Technology department is dependent on the Dumfries and Galloway Council. They have made specific choices regarding software and information security. The proposition to build any website with specific features would have to be vouched for by the IT professionals and with software they approve of.

3.5 Management and staff

The staff and information professionals are aware of the digital shift in libraries and archives. The management of LIA has endorsed the project featured here although they are using this report, and its findings, to present it to the local council officially in the hopes of being funded for the development of a new website. A workaround solution, until the local council approves of the project, would be asking The Friends of the Archives¹⁵ to host it on their server until an official agreement is made.

¹⁵ A group of volunteers assisting the archivists and librarians for transcription of archival materials. They are actually pondering redesigning their existing website for which no URL exists at the moment.

3.6 Family history guide

A lot of effort has been made to produce and print a local [family history guide](#) for library and archives users. It outlines and describes archival sources available in Dumfries and Galloway in the form of a finding aid. The guide is arranged by type of records, theme and a location code. Specifically this guide has been the initial spark in the decision to reflect further on the development of a website for D&G. A guide would have to be reprinted every five years or so to update contacts and sources: in that sense a specific website with the same information available makes perfect sense.

3.7 Existing classification scheme of collections

The classification in the libraries and archive centre is based on the Dewey Decimal System and has been modified to better suit the specificity of the local and family history section. There is a list of local studies subject which are used for cataloguing materials, unfortunately, this document could not be made available in time for this analysis.

3.8 Interviews

The questionnaires¹⁶ were sent to the Dumfries and Galloway LIA staff like librarians and archivists as well as museums curators. While only a few questionnaires were sent back before the delay expired, it is interesting to comment on some of the results. The answers are from a librarian and two museums curators.

On the subject of awareness and usage of web 2.0, only one individual answered that she does not use the web often to respond to patrons' enquiries. On the other hand, they were all aware of popular web 2.0 sites such as Flickr and Wikipedia. Regarding the website YourArchives, one individual was familiar with it and thought that it could be useful for answering enquiries.

¹⁶ Please refer to appendix 1

The second section of the questionnaire was aimed at collaborative websites and encyclopaediae like Wikipedia. While none of the interviewees have ever made any professional contributions to articles on a wiki website, two of them believe that it could be a useful avenue for sharing information about local history resources.

Table 2

DIGITAL RESOURCES THAT COULD BE PROMOTED ON A COLLABORATIVE WEBSITE

Type	Answer
Digital images	2
Index and Censuses	3
Famous individual's bios	2
Archival and finding aids	2
Audio-video records	2
Events and exhibitions	1

Since the volunteers from the Friends of the Archive have already produced a important part of indexes, censuses and registers transcriptions, it could be easy to import them in a website. It is interesting to note that only one individual thought a collaborative website could be used to send out information to users about recent news and events. On the subject of digital images, since the "Through the Lenses" website exists already, it could be easy to link articles with existing digital images thus removing the need to digitize resources right away.

When approached with questions on concerns about online contribution and data security, all the interviewees agreed that they would not permit users to modify any online content on a website. One stated that her main concern was:

"[...]with family histories. The free Familysearch site for example is contributed to and my experience is that it is full of errors." Respondent 1

While another stated that feedback from users would be appreciated, there would be the need for control measures and regulation of modified content. The main concern about the implementation of a collaborative website for D&G remains the security of data as well as the site's ongoing maintenance and funding. Only one person reported "spam" and "privacy" as a worrisome point. As a final comment, one noted that she was:

"Not terribly familiar with the wiki sites and would have to research more fully to assess their suitability within Dumfries & Galloway service"
Respondent 1

The analysis' conclusions in the following pages should be able to address this issue more in depth.

Results of analysis

3.8.1 Opportunities

The local history web page of the D&G Libraries, Information and Archives clearly states the mission of their service:

"The main functions of the service are to ensure the preservation of historic records relating to Dumfries and Galloway and to make these available for consultation by the public." (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2009)

Since this is their mission statement, Dumfries and Galloway Libraries may take this opportunity to be the first archive repository in Scotland to invest time and resources in the web 2.0 movement. In this sense they may also come to be recognized as pioneers and instigators for others to engage in similar projects. It is a unique prospect for Dumfries LIA to promote their brand, as well as their identity outside the influence of the local council (on the web of course) and be recognized as a provider of quality information for their patrons. Recently, there has been the advent of many university campuses in the town of Dumfries and, as a result, new subject areas for student curriculums may be opened for graduate and postgraduate research work. They could certainly benefit from an accessible, structured database of historical and public archival materials.

In keeping with the spirit of Homecoming Scotland¹⁷, there has been a renewed interest in Scottish culture and history. People will come from abroad, or within Scotland, to search for information on their ancestors, local towns and folklore. The Dumfries and Galloway Libraries have made their interest clear to engage with this audience and give them the means to access information and items in their collection. A new audience for the local archives will bring a new usage of collections, new questions from users and therefore will contribute to develop the archives' outreach.

3.8.2 Strengths

The presentation of the Scottish Library & Information Council given in July 2009 at the IFLA conference concludes that:

« As such, SLIC and CILIPS believe that social media have great potential to enhance the delivery of library services and to contribute to the professional development of library staff. As service users increasingly come to expect interactive online services in all spheres of life, libraries must keep pace with developments elsewhere in order to provide a responsive service for the future » (Hanlon, 2009)

It is a solid basis for any local archive and library to strengthen their position when presenting a digitization or website redesigning project to local authorities. The Scottish association makes their expertise and knowledge available to library and archivists who desire to make the shift from paper to digital. In this case, LIA wishes to be part of this change and therefore they prioritize the promotion of culture and local history in their region. This vision is not at odds with the council's local cultural strategy (Dumfries and Galloway Council, Cultural Strategy, 2009).

It is also worthwhile mentioning that the work already accomplished by the libraries and archive centre are due not only to information professionals but also to volunteers, namely the Friends of the Archives (as many others), implicating them in this project would be an admirable way to credit their work and insure that it will pass on to future generations.

¹⁷ Series of exhibitions and special events that took place in 2009 to attract people of Scottish ancestry to come back to Scotland.

3.8.3 Weaknesses

The concept of web 2.0 has been often confused with fame, it's perceived a dynamic movement but it also depends largely with the engagement of the audience. It has been shown, with the projects described in the previous chapter, that for any software, website or tool to be implemented: the participation of the public is essential for their survival. The question for Dumfries and Galloway is: Web 2.0 tools may increase accessibility to archives but will the patrons use these features?

As the summary of the interviews has shown, there is still much to do for information professionals in D&G to engage in this change, there is an underlying desire by archivists to remain in their role of authority, being in charge of conceiving and implementing metadata for documents. As reaffirmed during a discussion with Mr. Roberts¹⁸, archivists and information professionals should retain control over collection-entry level but could reflect on permitting registered users to modify and add information to item-level entries.

3.8.4 Threats

Getting the official stamp of approval by the local council is probably the greatest challenge that D&G will have to face. A successful local history website promoting the regions resources has to be prepared carefully, assessing risks and benefits.

An important recommendation is firstly to advocate how a similar project can affect positively the council's cultural strategy (Dumfries and Galloway, Cultural Strategy, 2009) and reinforce citizens sense of identity by doing so. The educational and social benefits can also be demonstrated by referring to similar or current projects in an either Scottish, British or even European perspective. As it was told before, legal issues may arise when putting content online such as images (through the dgttl.co.uk website) with a watermark on pictures, preventing people from misusing them.

¹⁸ Conversation with Mr. Graham Roberts, April 2010.

By understanding the types of materials that they wish to use and by preparing a careful legal research, D&G could choose to distribute under a creative commons license or simply refer to orphan works guidelines proposed by the [British Library](#) and still undergoing discussion in the United Kingdom¹⁹.

Like user-generated content, the time that a member of staff puts into moderating and creating online content is considerable and should be accounted for. While there is a person responsible for the websites mentioned above, a website and the building of a corporate image across the web for D&G will demand a full-time position or a small team of motivated individuals. It falls to the project team members to vouch for this in front of the local council when coming to ask for a position opening. This will be a key-post for delivering quality content online, asserting staff's participation and motivation and deliver user-training programmes.

4. A local history wiki for Dumfries and Galloway

4.1 Why choose a wiki?

An online search²⁰ in June 2010 using the Google engine with the terms “Dumfries and Galloway genealogy” returned 7'650 results. With the terms “Dumfries and Galloway history”, the search returned 12'300 results.

How can a web user make sense of all those results and find the information he needs? How can Dumfries and Galloway provide an information service, relating to local history and genealogy, that will publish relevant and authentic information about these subjects?

At first, the Dumfries Archive Centre and libraries could contribute to the popular Wikipedia website, expanding and correcting entries on articles. However there exists a strict editorial policy on Wikipedia when it comes to adding references and sources on articles.

¹⁹ For more information, refer to: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE. *Intellectual property office* [online]. Modified July 14th 2010. Available from : <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/home.htm> (accessed July 14th 2010)

²⁰ This search was conducted with the « intitle » parameter to avoid thousand more results but inexperienced web users would probably not be aware of this feature.

The contribution to the content of the article has to be important and significant enough to avoid the modifications being flagged as spam. There is also the possibility of participating in projects online like YourArchives wiki, providing references to archival materials relating to the region. Yet, while both these solutions have merit, they do not engage formally the D&G Libraries and Archives into devising their own niche, their specific and unique content.

The solution : a home-based website that allows collaborative published content. A wiki can incorporate authority information from archivists and librarians, display information from public members and link together relevant websites pertaining to local histories study and genealogy. In addition, contribution from public members, after growth, may significantly reduce the time staff have to take to create content inside a wiki since it will become property of both visitors and professionals.

A wiki does not mean that the Dumfries and Galloway libraries reference desks will be abandoned, it will represent an extension of this service. The reference sections of the different branches could profit from a collaborative tool, permitting them to regularly add content about frequently asked questions, archival sources and add articles relevant to local history. In addition, wikis can be used to engage the public in current or future digitization projects and make suggestions about the scope and materials chosen. At the end of the day, it is all about opening the archive to the public and Lally summarizes it well by stating that :

“Beyond using Wikipedia, archives that are adventurous could implement wiki software to allow researchers to ask questions, and for staff to answer those questions, all in an open format. Privacy concerns notwithstanding (users would not need to add identifying information); this could be an excellent way to promote collections that are often not easily findable, or to allow more casual discovery of a resource. Online finding aids are of enormous value but often function at the collection level; an archives wiki could provide a more “entry-level” look at the resources of an archives and could provide some item-level access to collections.” (Lally, 2009)

4.2 Analysis of wiki tools

With the gradual popularity of Wikipedia, there remains software and applications that can be an alternative to the Wikimedia foundation. Since some of the websites mentioned wiki technology, they have already concluded some published information and review of the tools. The computer science specialists and webmasters have also examined collaborative software and online websites and produced excellent comparison tools to review them²¹. We will review briefly three different types of wiki and provide their benefits and weaknesses. The D&G IT department is oriented with Microsoft solutions so the analysis will not be centred on only open-source software.

Before starting this comparison, one should keep in mind a few criteria when selecting any wiki software:

- Easy installation
- Tracking page changes
- Subscribe to modifications by email or RSS
- Lock pages from modifications
- Store revisions

Wikis are easy to use: there is no need for staff or web users to possess expert programming knowledge. In addition, modifications are made using a basic simplified Html coding. Though it can be frustrating for new users to remember this syntax, the website administrator should in any case make training guides or how-to's available to users not familiar with editing in wikis.

4.2.1 Mediawiki

Mediawiki is a free wiki software developed in 2002 by the Wikimedia Foundation, hosts to the encyclopedia Wikipedia and others (Wikiquote, Wiktionary). It is written using PHP language. Mediawiki is used by more than 2'000 sites ranging from businesses to education.

²¹ Please refer to bibliography, section "Wikis"

Key features include:

- GPL License
- Operating software : Mac OS, Windows, Linux
- Page permissions (but not fine-grained)
- 32 listed commercial support
- Interface supports more than 140 languages
- Preview of pages, summary of changes, history and revision pages
- Supports XHTML 1.0 and CSS stylesheets coding
- Integrates Atom and Rss feeds
- Exporting capabilities through HTML, XML and PDF²² formats

4.2.2 Sharepoint WikiPlus

The KWizcom Corporation has developed a wiki solution for the Sharepoint software platform by Microsoft. It allows use of all the features of Sharepoint together with a collaborative tool. It openly supports standard wiki markup language.

Key features include:

- Proprietary license (fee : 2399 USD)
- Operating software: Windows Server 2003, 2008
- Access control lists for setting permissions
- Commercial Support
- Does not feature mail encryption and blacklists
- Preview of pages, summary of changes, history and revision pages
- Integrates Rss Feeds
- Exporting HTML and PDF only.

²² Available with a plugin

4.2.3 Twiki

Twiki is a free and open source collaboration platform that may be used to run public or internal wikis by companies. Although not initially as rich in features as with other wiki software, developers can however extend functionalities with plugins and extensions.

Key features include:

- GPL License
- Operating software : Mac OS, Windows, Linux
- Page permissions and access control lists
- Mail encryption and spam protection (blacklist, captcha) available through plugins
- Commercial support and preconfigured hosting
- Preview of pages, summary of changes, history and revision pages
- Supports XHTML 1.0 and CSS stylesheets
- All export formats supported (XML and PDF through plugins)

There are many other wiki software available under open-source and proprietary licenses, the right choice of a tool must be made considering the criteria presented briefly above but must also tailored to suit the institutions needs. There are a lot of other features that can be useful such as : sandbox for writing articles, protected virtual workspaces, image editing capabilities, etc.

To review more in depth these features, the comparison tool Wikimatrix presents side-by-side assessment listings for wiki software. Tim O'Reilly presented also a few useful tips (O'Reilly, 2006) in selecting wiki software.

4.3 **Best practices in wikis**

4.3.1 Content and contributions

Determining which content to include inside the site is perhaps the most challenging stage of the project. The archives management and staff ought to have a clear and precise vision of what type of information should be presented.

As a first step, archives should undergo a series of talk with the staff to determine what content shall be used. At this stage, many information professionals could contribute to these discussions like librarians or museums curators and patrons of these institutions.

A wiki can complement information already available on an archive website, like contributing on holdings and materials available. The choice can also be made to revolve around a famous persona, or biographies of important personalities relevant to a locality. Often, important sets of papers are deemed important by researchers because they revolve around all aspects of social, cultural and economic life at a stage in history ; this type of content can be a good starting point to engage in users contributions in a wiki. At last, wikis may be a useful tool in processing a collection with the help of volunteers, staff and students of a particular faculty. It seems that before the popularity of the web, it was the researchers and historians who came in the archives who told the stories about the records that were held, or on a particular subject: it's now up to archivists to build these stories and therefore publicize the intrinsic value of their holdings.

After those decisions have been made, it's important to effectively put some content inside: an empty wiki won't attract anybody. It is also essential to determine who the contributors to the wiki will be and define those roles clearly within the staff. Frequently, archives and libraries have employees that are strong supporters of emerging technologies: the team project should egg on these individuals and support their enthusiasm as they will encourage motivation across the institution. For small organizations, it may be difficult to assign the workload to one person as they have other responsibilities: an alternative way to resolve this issue would be to rotate shifts for staff therefore implicating (and training) them in the creation of content on the wiki. It is imperative that the staff be encouraged to make suggestions, follow the proceedings of the project and share their ideas.

4.3.2 Structure and classification

A wiki is a structured content that allows collaborative work. Most web users today are familiar with the Wikipedia interface so the software presented resembles that type of design. So Wikis are essentially composed like any other website: a structured content with hyperlink and navigation. The structure should not necessarily mirror paper classification available in an archives institution but instead use access points that users are familiar with such as main categories, sub-categories and individual articles. As the site grows, the structure can be updated according to the user's needs and interests (Theimer, 2010, p.138) Since Wikis are easy to modify, a subject classification does not have to remain static.

4.3.3 Description and finding aids

One of the basic principles of archival principles is grouping records and items in bundles attached to a person, organization or company. For most people, when they find this information on the web, it is meaningless (unless they are professional researchers). The question is when putting items and records on a wiki; do we need to include this contextual information? The work has already been done originally so how much do we lose by dropping ineffective information that users do not understand and giving them what they need? As K. Theimer puts it :

The challenge for archivists will be finding the right balance between presenting materials in the context we have traditionally thought was critical to an understanding of them and letting the documents stand on their own on the Web.»: (Ibid, p.222)

The description of the records occur at the collection or fonds level, in this specific case, the item-level entries (articles) may be enriched and commented upon by users or archivists while keeping them free of long pages of description. This information should be included and displayed for users who wish to delve in further research: for example by linking the provenance and description on the existing archives website catalog. The document or record still retains all the authority metadata in the background but is presented in a form that is attractive and easy for users to understand.

Traditional finding aids are in the same situation; they are often overlooked and represent irrelevant information for users. There should be no need for archivists to reproduce all finding aids online but they can be adapted for online use: by adding social navigation features such as recommendations, user's comments and describing what type of information can be found in a collection.

4.3.4 Design

As stated previously, most web users today are familiar with the Wikipedia interface and design. A wiki should then reflect traditional web accessibility guidelines (WCAG, 2008):

- Use stylesheets instead of only HTML
- Provide text equivalents for non-text elements
- Provide keyboard navigation
- Capitalize on compatibility with future technologies

In choosing a template and layout of the content, the institution defines their online identity and it should remain consistent. The logo, tagline and images displayed across the wiki should be chosen carefully as they will reflect on the archives online image.

4.3.5 Privacy and data security

Information security is a main concern for information professionals and webmasters. All entries on a wiki should be integrated with different levels of privacy: for example allowing the users to only comment on item-level entries and webmasters correcting false entries and adjusting the structure of the site. When it comes to moderating contribution the archives institution should create detailed policies and guidelines. The projects cited in chapter 2, especially those using a wiki, have outlined precise guidelines to inform users on the usage that they should make of this website and its content. In the same perspective, archives should display their mission statement and goals on the wiki thus defining the boundaries of their institutional responsibilities as to the content of the wiki.

A second key aspect when publishing online is safeguarding data. When choosing a collaborative wiki tool it is imperative to insure data exporting capabilities. The sets of data on a wiki (or website) are often structured in standard markup languages (HTML, XML) but, online servers can fail, websites can have bugs so regular backups of the database should be made and safeguarded on a separate server. Another alternative is to publish as many attachments as possible : PDF's and images, therefore eliminating the risk of losing all published information in markup language while the original copies are kept separate.

4.3.6 Marketing

A new website, collaborative or not, cannot reach its expected audience if there is no promotion and publicity work behind. Although it is not necessary to pull out important financial resources, the web 2.0 tools described in chapter 2 are excellent communication tools that can be integrated with the wiki. For instance, an existing online databank of images can be linked by displaying images on the wiki thus sending traffic to existing websites.

It is also vital, to survive and publicize in an ever-changing online world to find a specific niche, a product, a corporate brand that is unique for the institution. Archives are especially benefited by this as they are often surrounded by libraries, volunteers and cultural organizations. By creating partnerships and engaging different sets of audiences, web traffic will redirect more easily to a new website. It is worth mentioning that part of the process of finding this niche may be troublesome but the needs of online users change quickly but online services can be adapted quickly as well.

4.3.7 Risk assessment

A lot has been said about web 2.0; it merely being a buzzword, those websites are not safe and even dangerous. Indeed, the websites and tools mentioned in this report might not last but they have profoundly modified our usage of the web and these behaviours are bound to stay (Theimer, 2010, p.17).

Often, access to Facebook or Wikipedia is blocked, within the archive or library by the corporate firewall. It is true that there is dangerous material on the web but it may hinder any future developments if websites that people use are blocked. Archives management and staff should take the time to determine acceptable levels of risk and share approaches that have been taken in that regard.

The main risk that threatens the survival of archives and cultural institutions is funding for projects and qualified staff. There exists the underlying fear that the institution will lose money in providing free access to its resources. An archive may still choose to sell high-resolution images that are displayed within a wiki article to insure the sustainability of the service offered.

Nevertheless, the social and educational benefits that archives may reap from an online collaborative website far outweigh the risks of budget cuts and staff reduction. The more archival materials are made visible and available to the public, the more they will be used therefore justifying suitable financial resources.

4.3.8 Evaluation

Web 2.0 tools are easy to use, but like with every trend, they can fall out of fashion and even users may get bored of some features. They can be outdated in a year or simply abandoned. At this point, archivists and librarians in charge of the website are in a position to discard these services quickly : there are no mistakes in web 2.0, there is always something new to learn from it and therefore refine our specific skills.

As such, any website cannot hope to survive without an evaluation process. By nature, web 2.0 is mainly about sharing information and feedback from users. It is important for the archival institution to periodically survey its users (and staff) about the influence of the website. Traditional pencil writing statistics do not reflect a definite image of what web users want from a local history wiki, nowadays online surveys are easily produced and distributed. By gathering feedback and comments, an archive repository website can collect data on :

- Visitors profile (age, location, education)
- Usage of the collections
- Website design and accessibility
- Suggestions for improvements.

As it was pointed out previously, web 2.0 changes quickly. The best way to avoid being caught in these changes²³, instead of anticipating them, is to conduct research on technology trends regularly. There exists plenty of webtools and bookmarks aggregators that can be used to carry out this technology scouting. By keeping up to date with trends, eliminating unused services quickly, taking users feedbacks into account, a wiki website is bound to subsist in the online world.

²³ Refer to « Archives 2.0 Blogs » in the bibliography, archivists make use of those tools regularly.

Closing statement

It is a safe assumption that public and historical archives will not imitate the Holy See's archives in their careful preparation to open up their holdings through the centuries; we have now seen that archivists and institutions are indeed engaging themselves in opening up their holdings on the web.

We can also note that these projects did not always have a *web 2.0* tag affixed to them: though it is undeniable that emerging technologies have enhanced user's experience. In truth, Archives 2.0 are not just about gadgets or mass digitization of all holdings in repositories across the globe, it's about rising up to several challenges. The first one will be effectively how to safeguard electronic data and documents published by archives and their users: how do we set out to preserve gigabytes, and even terabytes, of data when being a publicly-funded institution?

Another challenge that archives and archivist will have to face is: how to remain relevant in an ever-changing online world even with 2.0 technologies and outreach strategies? There is no guarantee that patrons will use them, there is also no promise that it will bring rapid change in the profession; skeptics are bound to endure for a little while at least.

Still, archives remain relevant even more so today in a world threatened by information overload; where else would we look for solid answers? Edward Burke said that: "*The first and simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind is curiosity*". We are compelled to seek answers, to provide proof for our actions, to define our collective history thus we need to have authentic and reliable data confirming those events. And as such, in our public and historical archives, lies our collective memory and we want to have access to it as much as possible. Many people may not, or cannot, have physical access to archival materials; this is where web technologies and archives meet.

To tell the truth, there are no definitive answers for archival institutions, nor has any tailored or ready-made solution for taking up web 2.0; any online outreach or engagement project has to be adapted to the needs and objectives of the institution. The key to success is not trying to avoid web 2.0 or new technologies but instead to embrace them in the hopes of achieving even greater opportunities.

One of the most profound changes of perspective that archivists have to make today is to recognize that they cannot live in the past anymore. Librarians have been the first to take this step and archivists are following in their footsteps, tracing their own paths. **There is no going back.** The digital branch of public and historical archives will become the most public face of all and will be judged on this by what users and stakeholders expect of them.

Fortunately, there is also plenty of opportunities in the quiet revolution affecting the archivist's profession; we adapt to new skills and technologies quicker, we take risks and we create partnerships with like-minded institutions to offer enriched objects and documents to our users. Archivists, even more than before, are directly implicated in electronic preservation in important organizations and businesses, recognized for their specific information management skills and knowledge and demanded to assist in information technology research as special consultants. The advent of the semantic web, or web 3.0, promises also many changes in the future and is bound to implicate archivists in its development.

At last, an interesting prospect currently debated in the archival world might just prove how much ground archivists have covered in the last few years and why we should continue to follow the trends of the archivist profession closely. The concept of archives commons (Evans, 2007) is a community of records built by archivists and archives users, large groups individuals collaborating on projects and producing the documents they need hand-in-hand with archives institutions. By encouraging this congregation of archivists and the public, we both become more aware of history, of the role of records, of the importance of sharing information. What better way is there to uphold education, access to culture and information for all?

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Web 2.0

Social networks

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Linkedin](#)

Presentations

- [Slideshare](#)
- [Scribd](#)
- [Google Docs](#)

Wikis

Software

- [Mediawiki](#)
- [Twiki](#)
- [Pbwiki](#)
- [Sharepoint Wiki](#)

Tools

- [Wikimatrix](#)
- [Wikipedia's comparison of wiki software](#)

Mashups

- [Yahoo Pipes](#)
- [Google Maps API](#)
- [OpenStreet](#)

Archives 2.0

Periodicals

- [American Archivist Journal](#)
- [Archivaria](#)
- [Ariadne Magazine](#)
- [D-Lib](#)

Case studies and research papers

- [Interactive Archivist](#)
- [Archimuse](#)

Social Networks

- [Archives 2.0 on Ning](#)
- [Archives 2.0 wiki](#)
- [Archives NRA \(Discussion List – United Kingdom\)](#)

Archives 2.0 Blogs

- [ArchivesBlogs](#) (Syndicated feeds from other blogs)
- [Derangement and Description](#)
- [Records Junkie](#)
- [ArchivesNext](#)
- [Sous la poussière](#)
- [Spellbound Blog](#)

Twitter Lists

- [Uk Archives on Twitter](#)
- [ArchivesNext – Archives on Twitter](#)
- [ArchivesNext - Organizations](#)

Appendice 1

Dumfries & Galloway and Archives 2.0

Presentation

This questionnaire is aimed at information professionals, librarians, archivists and museum curators in Dumfries and Galloway. Its intent is to analyse and measure the awareness or usage of the term “Archives 2.0” directly linked to patrimonial archival or museum collections present in the region. It will be used as a frame of reference for an academic thesis in the [Geneva School of Business Administration, Information Science Bachelor](#). All the answers and any private information will be kept anonymous.

Please send questionnaires to marylene.goulet@etu.hesge.ch

Personal profile

Age:

Profession:

Location:

Use and awareness of web 2.0

Web 2.0 describes the shift from presenting Internet content to users as a collection of marked-up text to an interactive environment where users have the ability to create content as easily as they consume it.

1. Do you use the Web often for research for your patrons? Yes No

2. Are you familiar with sites such as [Flickr](#) for image search? Yes No

If you answered yes, do you think this type of website could be useful when answering patron’s enquiries? Yes No

Additional comments:

3. Are you familiar with the online encyclopaedia [Wikipedia](#)? Yes No

If you answered yes, do you think this type of website could be useful when answering patron's enquiries? Yes No

Additional comments:

4. Are you familiar the UK National Archives wiki, [YourArchives](#)? Yes No

If you answered yes, do you think this type of website could be useful when answering patron's enquiries? Yes No

Additional comments:

Online encyclopaedias, wikis and user contributions

Wikis are collaborative websites that are designed to allow users to add or modify content. Users employ their Web browser to access the content and make changes. Wiki platforms typically feature:

- Simplified markup schemes for entering data
- Search capability
- History, or version control, pages for monitoring changes to content

1. Have you ever contributed or contribute professionally to modifying articles in Wikipedia or similar collaborative website? Yes No

Additional comments:

2. Have you ever considered the use of a wiki or online collaborative website for sharing local history resources in Dumfries & Galloway? Yes No

Additional comments:

3. What kind of local history or digital resources would you feel important to promote in an online collaborative website?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital images | <input type="checkbox"/> Archival and finding aids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Index, Censuses or Registers | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-video records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous individual's bios | <input type="checkbox"/> Events and exhibitions |

Additional comments:

Further concerns

This section is aimed at measuring concerns about online contribution, data security and time usage of a collaborative local history website

1. Would you consider permitting to your patrons and/or internet users to modify your online content in a wiki or collaborative tool? Yes No

Additional comments:

2. What is your main concern about implementing a collaborative tool for the Dumfries & Galloway's local history and digital resources?

- Security of data
- Spam
- Privacy
- Budget
- Time usage

Please add any comments you might find useful:

Thank you for your time!