ORIGINAL PAPER

Distrust in the archive: reconciling records

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Abstract This article explores the role of archives in the construction of Australian Indigeneity, past, present and future, with reference to the colonial and post-colonial culture of the archive in Australia, the possibilities for refiguring the archive present in post-colonial thinking, Indigenous ways of knowing, and digital technologies, and the role of reconciling research in that process. It presents the main findings of an Australian Research Council–funded project, Trust and Technology: Building Archival Systems for Indigenous Oral Memory, and draws on Ph.D. research undertaken by Shannon Faulkhead relating to the role that written and oral records play as sources of the narratives of the Koorie people of Victoria in south-east Australia. In conclusion, the article proposes new legal, policy and professional approaches that support Indigenous frameworks of knowledge, memory and evidence. It also discusses the implications of the findings of the Trust and Technology project for archival theory, practice and education.

Keywords Australian Indigenous archives · Archival sources of Indigenous knowledge · Indigenous human rights · Archival principles and frameworks · Post-colonial archives · Archival reconciliation

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Introduction

In this article, we present the main findings of an Australian Research Council–funded project, Trust and Technology: Building Archival Systems for Indigenous Oral Memory. These highlight the need for the Australian archival profession to understand the priorities of Indigenous communities and embrace Indigenous frameworks of knowledge, memory and evidence, including knowledge that is stored and transmitted orally. Drawing on Shannon Faulkhead's Ph.D. research relating to Koorie people (the Indigenous people of south-east Australia), the article also challenges conventional beliefs that the battle for Koorie voices to be heard within the dominant knowledge system of Victoria is a battle between orality and written text. The article argues that in Australia and other post-colonial societies, western representations of the orality vs literacy dichotomy have been associated with views relating to the inferiority of oral traditions that have been an obstacle to mutual respect. It posits instead a continuum of orality and written text, with both oral tradition and written records being accessed and understood in the context of their own knowledge systems and related transmission processes. It points to the implications for archival theory and practice of embracing multiple ways of knowing and archiving, and multiple forms of archival records, including the oral and the written. It proposes new legal, policy and professional approaches that support Indigenous frameworks of knowledge, memory and evidence, and re-position Australian Indigenous communities as co-creators of archival records that relate to them, including government archives. Such approaches acknowledge rights in records that extend beyond access to working in partnership with archival institutions to manage the appraisal, description and accessibility of records relating to Indigenous communities. The article also discusses the implications of the findings of the Trust and Technology project for archival theory, practice and education as they challenge current archival constructs of records creation, provenance, rights in records and the forms the archival record takes.

The article's genesis was a panel convened on the topic of "Distrust in the Archive: Reconciling Records" at the 2010 Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research for the UK and Ireland (FARMER) and the Network of Archival Educators and Trainers (North-western Europe) (NAET) Conference. It merges the presentations and perspectives of three Australian researchers involved in the Trust and Technology project. Although written from an Australian perspective, with reference to the relationship between Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the archives, we hope that the insights presented here might be of relevance, or even set the agenda, elsewhere. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples together with Australian archival institutions are creating world-leading best practice in areas such as access, digital archives and repatriation, supported by engagement in reconciling research which explores the transformation of relationships between Indigenous communities and the archives.

Whilst we were all integrally involved in the Trust and Technology project and our voices are blended throughout this article, we bring different backgrounds,

experiences and motivations to issues of trust and distrust, how records can be reconciled within Indigenous Australia, and the fledgling area of research relating to the role of archives in the construction of Australian Indigeneity, past, present and future, with reference to the colonial and post-colonial culture of the archive in Australia. And so to begin, and again in drawing the article to a conclusion, we share our individual perspectives and aspirations.

Authors' introductions

Fully introducing ourselves in terms of our backgrounds, experiences and motivations is custom in Australian Aboriginal society and is also symbolic of how, in Indigenous oral knowledge, who the record keeper/creator is and where they come from are intrinsic parts of the record itself.

Lynette Russell

I am an anthropological historian who conducts archival-based research. I am a descendant of the Aboriginal people of western Victoria. Over three decades, I have searched, trawled and inched my way through the morass of records that has made up my family's "public archive". In the process of doing this, I have been able to uncover and redefine my heritage and identity. In many ways I could say I found out who I am by visiting the archives. Over this period, my identity has shifted, altered and transmorphed. Today, I can confidently introduce myself as a descendant of the Wotjabluk people, I can speak a few sentences of my grandmother's native language and I can describe in detail the known historical records of the Wotjabaluk and the other western Victorian tribes. In short, as historical practitioner and archival subject, I have been immersed in the archives.

A little over 210 years ago, the 280 different cultural groups that made up Australia were fundamentally and permanently changed when the British established first a penal settlement, and later a colonial outpost. The consequence of that settlement is that Australia is both a colony and a coloniser. As colonial offspring from Britain, we retain a unique colonial identity and are part of the Commonwealth. When Europeans arrived in the continent now known as Australia, it was not an empty space but a land owned, utilised and modified by the Indigenous peoples. The dispossession and subsequent colonisation are key aspects of contemporary Australian society, culture and history.

Over the past decade, I have been involved with numerous historical text-based projects. All of these have had the primary aim of uncovering aspects of Indigenous history or culture. For the most part, the resultant material was from the surveillance of Indigenous people and their cultures. In short, these were archival texts within which Indigenous people were the object (and subject) of the gaze of colonial authorities and "experts," and from which Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and voices were excluded.

Shannon Faulkhead

I am a Koorie woman from Sunraysia, in the upper north-western region of Victoria. According to oral records, I am of Indigenous Australian, English, German, Spanish and African descent. I am proud of my mixed ancestry. However, as I was born and continue to live on Koorie land, I identify with my Indigenous Australian ancestry and am an active member of the Koorie community. Whilst unsure if Sunraysia is the community from which my ancestors originate, it is the community to which my family has belonged for at least three generations.

Sue McKemmish

I am an archival researcher and educator. I am a descendant of the Scots and Irish peoples who came to Victoria in the early days of the colony. Like Lynette, I have been immersed in archives for over three decades, first as an archivist working for the National Archives of Australia and the Public Record Office of Victoria, and more recently as an archival academic. When I worked for the National Archives of Australia, Victorian Branch, records relating to the colonial and post-colonial administration of Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria were transferred to archival custody. For the first time in my life, I began to understand the impact of dispossession, colonisation and post-colonial government policies on the Indigenous peoples of Australia, through the lens of the archives of surveillance. Through my work as an archivist, I came to see the dual role that such archives can play as both instruments of oppression and of redress and reconciliation. As an archival academic, I began to reflect on the role the archival community—the archival profession and archival institutions—might play in the reconciliation movement in partnership with Indigenous communities.

The archival challenge

The 2-day Australia 2020 Summit of April 2008 aimed to "help shape a long term strategy for the nation's future". The Summit was an Australian Federal Government initiative that aimed to harness "the best ideas for building a modern Australia ready for the challenges of the twenty-first century." Over 1,000 people from all walks of life came together in the Australian Parliament in Canberra to discuss ten priority areas relating to Australia's economy, productivity, creativity, prosperity and security; climate change and water; the sustainability of Australian cities, rural industries and communities; social inclusion; and "Options for the Future of Indigenous Australia". Participants in the Summit called for Indigenous culture and knowledge to be placed at the core of our communities and our national education system (Australian Government 2008, 2009). The findings of the 2004–2008 Trust and Technology project point to the role the archival community might play in achieving this aim.

   In recent years, there have been a number of milestones in Indigenous Australian history and the related area of Indigenous human rights. In 2006, the Victorian

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act was passed (Victoria 2006). This was the first piece of Australian legislation to include recognition of the "distinct cultural rights" of Indigenous people. In 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN 2007) declared the following statements:

- Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination and can choose their political status and the way they want to develop (article 3).
- Indigenous peoples have the right to keep and develop their distinct characteristics and systems of law. They also have the right, if they want, to take part in the life of the rest of the country (article 4).
- Indigenous peoples shall be free from cultural genocide. Governments shall prevent: actions which take away their distinct cultures and identities; the taking of their land and resources; their removal from their land; measures of assimilation; propaganda against them (article 7).
- Indigenous peoples have the right to their distinct identities. This includes the right to identify themselves as Indigenous (article 8).

Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America were not signatories to the 2007 UN Declaration. Yet in Australia, the year 2007 marked 10 years since the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's *Bringing Them Home* (BTH) Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (HREOC 1997), 40 years since the "Vote Yes" referendum to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the national census, and 50 years since the first National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Commemoration (NAIDOC). Each of these events highlights in different ways the significance of historical narratives, written and spoken, to Indigenous peoples.

The HREOC National Inquiry sought the testimony of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders removed from their families—the Stolen Generations. The resulting BTH report represents one of the most significant moments in Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian relations as it revealed the startling facts surrounding the removal of Indigenous children from their families and the impact this had on countless generations. For many non-Indigenous Australians, this revelation represented a watershed, placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues at the centre of popular discussion around matters such as health and welfare as well as discourses about national identity. In many ways, the BTH report can be seen as the logical extension of a process that began decades earlier with the National Aboriginal Day of mourning (later to become NAIDOC). In 1938, on Australia Day, which memorialises and celebrates first settlement by the British on 26 January 1788, a large group of protestors, determined to raise the political and popular consciousness about Aboriginal suffering, marched through the streets of Sydney. Led by Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, this moment represented one of the twentieth century's first civil rights gatherings. The momentum that NAIDOC created led to several decades of activism and agitation in which prominent Aboriginal people and their supporters lobbied the Australian state and federal governments to improve their rights. In 1967, the Federal Government conducted a successful referendum in order to change the status of Australia's Indigenous

population and include them in census taking. Hitherto Aboriginal Affairs had been administered by the states. The outcome gave the Federal Government a clear and unambiguous mandate to legislate on behalf of Aboriginal people and to implement policies that would benefit them and future generations. In 1975, the Australian constitution was changed to transfer all responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs to the Federal Government.

In 2008, Kevin Rudd, then Prime Minister of Australia, apologised in the National Parliament to the Stolen Generations, the 50,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had been forcibly removed from their families in the period 1910–1970, finally implementing one of the key recommendations of the BTH report (Australian National Parliament 2008). More recently, Australia also belatedly endorsed the 2007 UN Declaration. The parliamentary apology drew extensively on both official government records and the memories and stories of members of the Stolen Generations. It powerfully illustrated how understandings of the past—the narratives that are told and written, and the manner in which they are conveyed—profoundly shape a community's identity and aspirations and can provide a mandate for action, in this instance around issues of Indigenous well-being. Indeed, the metaphor of "turning a new page in Australia's history" was used repeatedly in the apology itself and in the commentary on it:

> To the Stolen Generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the Government of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the Parliament of Australia, I am sorry. And I offer you this apology without qualification. We apologise for the hurt, the pain and suffering we, the parliament, have caused you by the laws that previous parliaments have enacted. We apologise for the indignity, the degradation and the humiliation these laws embodied. We offer this apology to the mothers, the fathers, the brothers, the sisters, the families and the communities whose lives were ripped apart by the actions of successive governments under successive parliaments…
> I say to non-Indigenous Australians listening today who may not fully understand why what we are doing is so important, I ask those non-Indigenous Australians to imagine for a moment if this had happened to you. I say to honourable members here present: imagine if this had happened to us. Imagine the crippling effect. Imagine how hard it would be to forgive. But my proposal is this: if the apology we extend today is accepted in the spirit of reconciliation, in which it is offered, we can today resolve together that there be a new beginning for Australia. And it is to such a new beginning that I believe the nation is now calling us.

The social movement known as reconciliation, within Australia, began as a ground swell as settler Australians reflected on the dispossession of Aboriginal Australians. The reconciliation movement aimed to end the conflict that has existed between Indigenous and settler Australians within Australian society since the British colonisation of Australia in 1788. In 1991, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established as a statutory authority. Its final report in 2001 "proposed legislation providing a formal framework for advancing the

reconciliation process, as well as the establishment of a foundation, Reconciliation Australia, to continue the Council's work" (ANTAR 2001). Whilst the reconciliation movement is slowly creating ground roots changes within Australian society, many Aboriginal people are cynical or at best ambivalent about it, in part because, as a group, Indigenous Australians still remain disadvantaged on every social indicator available. In the year 2000, hundreds of thousands of Australians walked or marched as part of the *Walk for Reconciliation*, which was partly a response to the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* Report. Vast numbers of people also signed what were called sorry books which were intended to allow settler and migrant Australians to express to Aboriginal people and communities their compassion and their desire for a different, more reconciled form of race relations, as well as their disappointment with the Australian Government's refusal to apologise for past injustices. However, there is a perception amongst Indigenous Australians that once settler Australians marched and said "sorry" they went on with their (mostly) privileged lives. Moreover, it is often felt that the reconciliation process is one where much of the responsibility is upon Indigenous peoples to educate the wider community. It remains to be seen whether recent events have indeed engendered a renewed energy for reconciliation.

The parliamentary apology refocused national attention on the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* Report which had also highlighted the significance of historical narratives:

> The truth is that the past is very much with us today, in the continuing devastation of the lives of Indigenous Australians. That devastation cannot be addressed unless the whole community listens with an open heart and mind to the stories of what has happened in the past and, having listened and understood, commits itself to reconciliation (HREOC 1997, Part 1: Introduction).

The Report devoted a chapter to the important role which records and recordkeeping institutions should play in supporting family and community reunions and the reclamation of personal and community identity. Three of the many imperatives highlighted by the Report were of great significance to the Trust and Technology project:

- The need for Indigenous Australians to reclaim identity by knowing their family background and reconnecting with the places and cultures of their people. This is an issue relevant not only to members of the Stolen Generations, but also to many other Indigenous people who have lost connection with their family and/or community.
- Telling the stories of post-colonisation experience, in particular of separation, within Indigenous communities and beyond the wider Australian community as a means of honouring the experiences of these generations of Indigenous Australians and ensuring their place within Australia's history and memory.
- In the longer term, the need for Indigenous communities to control their own historical documentation.

Although the *Bringing Them Home* Report was the stimulus for extensive efforts at many levels of Australian life to create and support opportunities for reconciliation and redress, several key recommendations, including the parliamentary apology, were not implemented in the first decade after the Report's release. In the years since the National Inquiry, government archival institutions and other record holders, such as religious organisations, have responded to its archive-related recommendations with a range of initiatives designed to provide better access to records and better services to Indigenous people seeking information. These have included the development of name indexes to help Indigenous people find records about themselves or family members, agreements with Indigenous communities regarding access and related services, an awareness of the need for more culturally sensitive description and appraisal practices, efforts to employ Indigenous people and appoint them to advisory or governing bodies, exhibitions that tell Indigenous stories, guides to relevant records and scholarships to train Indigenous record keepers. However, the third recommendation relating to Indigenous community control of their historical documentation has not been systematically addressed. The obstacles to realising this recommendation are practical as well as philosophical, but a renewed national energy for reconciliation may be conducive to exploring the legal, policy and archival challenges involved. The Trust and Technology research points to the need to implement this third *Bringing Them Home* recommendation as a central component of future frameworks for Indigenous archiving.

Within Indigenous communities, expressions of identity and pride have always existed, but the decline of external threats to Indigenous cultures and of the fear of child removal has allowed a more free public expression of Indigenous experiences and cultures beyond their own communities. It seems likely that recent events including the 2008 apology and an associated shift in national sentiment will heighten the determination and sense of urgency amongst many to ensure that the post-invasion experiences of previous generations are remembered and honoured and that knowledge of pre-invasion cultures is maintained and recovered as far as possible.

As Indigenous and settler communities in various countries and regions have jointly reflected on their engagement with archives, there has been a growing recognition that western archival science and practice reflect and reinforce a privileging of settler/invader/colonist voices and narratives over Indigenous ones, of written over oral records. Further, the conventional positioning of individuals as the subjects of the official archival record has had a particularly disempowering effect on Indigenous peoples whose lives have been so extensively documented in archives for the purposes of surveillance, control and dispossession. In Australia, there is, however, recognition of a duality to these records in that, whilst they have in the past been instruments of oppression and the construction of a negative view of Australian Indigeneity, they can in the present and future play an important reconciling role in recovering identity and memory, reuniting families, seeking redress, and in the reconciliation process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Alongside these developments, archivists have begun applying digital information technologies, including projects to establish digital and federated repositories. They recognise, but are only just beginning to explore in detail, the

capacity of digital information and new social networking technologies not only to enhance the accessibility of archives, but also to transform the relationships between archival services providers and their clients.

Against this background, relationships between Indigenous people and Australian archival institutions are not always comfortable. A clear finding of the Trust and Technology project is that there is a strong distrust of archival institutions because they are regarded as repositories of materials seen to be the result of surveillance and oppression. As we have heard often from Elders, state-run institutions, however kindly the staff may be, are still considered to be an arm of the government and therefore "not to be trusted". Two very different, potentially irreconcilable views emerged regarding institutional archival records containing information about Indigenous people. The first is that many Indigenous people view archival records containing information about themselves, family or community as being Indigenous records. As such, it is felt that control and access should be vested with Indigenous people as the owners. On the other hand, archival institutions, in particular government institutions, have received the records as documents of government operations and view the records as belonging to the government. They were generally created as part of the day-to-day operations of government organisations and departments and therefore belonged to that department or organisation, which in turn has handed governance of those records to archival institutions who take custody of the records on their behalf. In other words, the archival institutions are working within the legal frameworks of archival laws that mandate their actions and vest the ownership of the records, their control and custody with the archival institution.

As outlined above, many Australian archival institutions and professionals have begun to grapple with the important part that archives can play in reconciliation. Archival institutions are working towards creating a better relationship between themselves, their collections and Indigenous communities. However, for many Aboriginal people, Australia is a place of transgenerational trauma resulting from the colonial invasion of Australia. Australia's mainstream discourse and collective memory relating to Indigenous Australia have largely been built on the actions of a violent past, utilising systems of remembering and forgetting that have supported a negative construction of Indigeneity within that collective memory. There is a pressing need for Australia's collective knowledge spaces to be reconfigured to be representative of all cultural voices, but as a whole Australia is not yet at a place to recognise all that reconciliation can achieve, let alone share the spaces and decolonise them for the benefit of all. Nevertheless, as indicated above, change is occurring. It is reminiscent of the Kev Carmody/Paul Kelly song "From Little Things Big Things Grow", based on the story of the Gurindji Strike of Aboriginal stockmen. The Gurindji strike began in 1966, when 200 stockmen, house staff and their families walked off the Wave Hill cattle station in the North Territory and demanded housing, control over their finances and their destiny. The strike, led by Vincent Lingiari, lasted 7 years and resulted in fundamental changes to land law in the Northern Territory commencing with the handing back of the Gurindji's land in 1975. This pivotal moment is regarded by many as being foundational in the subsequent development of Native Title legislation. Today, the song is recognised

across the country as the theme of the Indigenous Australian struggle for land rights and justice (Carmody and Kelly 1993).

In their endeavours, it is imperative that archival institutions address not only the concerns and needs of the Indigenous community today, but also the impact of past transgenerational trauma, including its effect on trust in government institutions and records (Atkinson 2002). Not only is there a tendency for archival initiatives to be overshadowed by the legacy of distrust in the archive, so far they have also taken place within an archival paradigm that positions Indigenous people as subjects of records and clients of archival services, rather than as co-creators of records and partners in developing archival systems and services. Archival reconciliation involves a re-conceptualisation of the "archive", amongst other things, a recognition and acknowledgement of mutual rights in records, the development of frameworks for the respectful coexistence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous records, and exploration of the concept of a community or individual as an archive.

Reconciling research and decolonisation

The Trust and Technology project addressed the pressing question of how to build trust between the Indigenous communities of Victoria and archival services so that the security, authenticity and integrity of memory and knowledge captured in multiple forms can be promoted. It is an example of reconciling research in the archival field. A range of scholars have recently suggested that historians need to "decolonise" their methodologies. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Moreton-Robinson (2004) both point out the ways in which academic practice has tended to treat Indigenous peoples as only "subjects" of history and to produce knowledge that animates rather than challenges the categories of colonial rule. As subjects of the archive, Aboriginal people have been defined and described by the Anglo-Australian normative. Traditionally, research has been "about" rather than "with" or "for" Aboriginal people.

Our research practice, however, uses new methodologies, analytical techniques and knowledge production to engage in what we deem to be the process of *reconciled research*. Reconciling research is envisaged as a collaborative, co-creative journey, in this case between members of the academy, Indigenous communities and the archival community. It validates multiple sources of knowledge and promotes the use of multiple methods of discovery, implementation and dissemination of knowledge. By incorporating Indigenous individuals and communities into the development of our research, we hope that we resist the tendency of academic knowledge to ignore the insights of Indigenous peoples. Perhaps equally importantly, this commitment to decolonising methodologies has a substantive impact on the distribution of the knowledge produced. Rather than producing knowledge for a narrowly academic audience, this form of research distributes findings in a range of forms that is accessible to a wide audience, including web pages, community newsletters, posters and face-to-face meetings. As a direct consequence of what we have learnt through the Trust and Technology

project, our work now invariably engages in analytic practices that acknowledge the continuing impacts of colonialism and post-colonial government policies on Indigenous communities today.

Reconciling research as it evolved during the Trust and Technology project was guided by a research philosophy that considers and incorporates the research design and methods of more than one cultural paradigm. It involves a respectful and carefully negotiated partnership between researchers and community; the sharing of control; allowing all voices to contribute to the overall outcomes; self-reflectivity; open discussion of methods and issues specific to the research being undertaken; and consideration of the emotional and physical well-being of all participants, including all members of the research team.

The aims of the Trust and Technology project were developed by bringing together a multidisciplinary team consisting of an historian, archival specialists, Aboriginal scholars, an Aboriginal community liaison officer with expertise in Aboriginal community protocols, and Indigenous and archival community partners. Importantly, although several of the investigators are members of the Victorian Indigenous community, we cannot and do not speak in a unified manner for the rest of the community. Within the team, whilst we quickly discovered we did not always speak the same language (even though we were using the same words), we discovered just how amazingly fruitful truly collaborative and interdisciplinary work can be. A good example of this might be seen in discussions surrounding the integrity of the individual archival record. Some of us felt that amending these or, as Aboriginal people noted, correcting them was vitally important. Others held the view that the records should not be tampered with. However, further investigation and discussion revealed that all of us agreed that the record itself was sacrosanct and what we were really suggesting was value adding through annotation and providing alternative perspectives, rather than amending or correcting. Negotiating the meanings of concepts such as oral record, oral tradition and oral history resulted in much richer understandings of the way in which these concepts have been constructed in the past and the value of distinguishing between them.

The *trust* aspect of the project was developed and attempted through a consistent and sincere effort to consult, co-operate and collaborate with Indigenous communities. It is out of these endeavours that we began to understand the need for reconciled research strategies. It is essential for relationship building that the Indigenous community is a crucial and inalienable part of the decision-making process with regard to how their oral traditions and memories should be handled, the records held about them by government and other non-Indigenous archives, and the interrelationship between them. The comprehensive exploration of the needs of Indigenous users of archival services within a reconciling research framework is essential in order to develop understandings on both sides and enable models for archival strategies and services for Indigenous communities that are driven by their needs. Whilst there have been issues cited about working with community participants (such as time and priority-setting differences between academia and community), our experience is that these difficulties are often due to the inflexibility of western research frameworks and researchers who have not been able/do not want to move beyond them. Whilst this article is endorsing a time-consuming

framework that requires constant self-reflection by all parties, it is a framework that benefits all parties in the longer term.

There is, however, another important and cautionary concern that we should note. Whilst this was fortunately not the case for our project, we are aware that it is possible that in some projects, community participants in particular might be exposed to significant risks. Such risks, social, political, economic, even physical are much more likely to be borne by the community members than the institutionally based academics. However, similar potential risks are encountered by researchers who are also members of the participant community. In this regard, the frameworks we are proposing are not merely about facilitating the research, but intended to protect researchers and other participants. Finally, and as a caveat, as a research team we were often in the invidious position of being expected to arbitrate between competing values or opinions. This was clearly not our role, and wherever possible, the researchers did not choose to privilege one community view over another. This did result in some members withdrawing from the project as was their right.

Trust and Technology: building archival systems for oral memory

Trust and Technology has its origins in a desire to build trust and understanding between the archives community and Koorie communities. It is based on a recognition that Koorie communities rely on sources of knowledge and methods of transmission that differ greatly from the knowledge frameworks of the wider community. The project's goal has been to understand the implications for archives of this fundamental difference in knowledge systems and to enable the development of alternative systems and services which reflect the priorities of Koorie communities. In order to achieve this goal, the project aimed to explore the experiences and opinions of Koorie people in relation to archives—oral and written—to enable archivists and Koorie people to work together to develop archival systems and services which work better for Koorie communities.

The project was the vision of Jim Berg, Chief Executive Officer of the Koorie Heritage Trust from 1985 to 2003. In 2002, Mr. Berg approached the Public Record Office Victoria and Monash University with the proposal for a research project which applied the perspectives of Koorie communities, recordkeeping practitioners and researchers to the challenge of developing trusted archival systems for Indigenous oral memory. This idea formed the basis of a successful Australian Research Council Linkage Project, Trust and Technology: Building an Archival System for Indigenous Oral Memory, which brought together about one hundred Koorie and other Indigenous Australian people, along with researchers from the Public Record Office Victoria, the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce, the Indigenous Issues Special Interest Group of the Australian Society of Archivists and Monash University. Monash University was represented through a unique multidisciplinary partnership involving researchers from the Centre of Organisational and Social Informatics in the Faculty of Information Technology and the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies.

As expressed in the funding application to the Australian Research Council, the project's main aims were as follows:

- To explore what the emphasis of Indigenous people on oral memory implies for the provision of archival services to this group.
- To examine how trust is engendered within Indigenous groups in terms of key issues such as authenticity, intellectual property and access to archives.
- To investigate how well government and other archival services, as these are presently constituted, meet the needs of Indigenous people for access to oral memory by investigating current service models and institutional perspectives.
- To model Indigenous community-oriented archival services.
- To examine how archival techniques and information technology can be used to build trusted archival systems to support archival services that meet the needs of Indigenous people.
- To build a prototype preservation and access system which will demonstrate how the needs of Indigenous communities might be met.

There were three broad and interrelated phases in the Trust and Technology project. Phase One we termed the "user needs analysis" (Ross et al. 2006). It involved semi-structured interviews with 72 Koorie and other Indigenous people covering issues relating to storytelling and story recording, trust and authenticity in oral and written records, trusted custodians for recorded stories, control, ownership, access, privacy and experiences of using existing archival services. Purposive sampling was used to identify potential participants. A community liaison officer, Diane Singh—an Elder known to many in Koorie communities—was appointed to the project team and used her networks and contacts to identify and approach potential participants. The user needs study was based on an interpretivist research methodology with the main aim being to understand the viewpoints of a range of people and the meanings they drew from their experiences. Particular attention was given to patterns of consensus or shared meanings and to points of dissonance.

Phase Two involved a case study evaluating existing archival services provided to Koorie people by two of the Project partner organisations: the Public Record Office Victoria and the Koorie Heritage Trust. Themes and scenarios emerging from Phase One were discussed by 22 people (including Indigenous clients of the services and archivists employed by the two organisations) in individual interviews and focus groups. Their perceptions of the interactions and information flows between clients, communities, mediators and organisations were analysed and modelled to understand the relationships between the goals and priorities of the various stakeholders, evaluate how far existing services meet the needs identified in Phase One, and identify significant gaps and areas for future action.

In Phase Three, Trust and Technology researchers at the Public Record Office Victoria, in consultation with other research partner organisations and Monash-based researchers, developed a specification for a Koorie Archiving System (KAS) to address the high-priority need expressed by interviewees in Phase One to challenge the contents of "official" archives, "set the record straight", and incorporate their stories, memories and other narratives into archival systems in

response to existing written archival records. A Koorie Reference Group was formed to guide the KAS specification.

Finally, drawing on the findings of all three phases, the Trust and Technology project developed a Statement of Principles relating to Archives and Indigenous Knowledge, and a Position Statement on Indigenous Human Rights and the Archives (Monash 2009a, b).

Orality versus literacy

It is an oft-quoted truism that traditional (by which we mean pre-European contact) Aboriginal culture was an oral culture. Children learned from their elders and information, be it secular, sacred, religious, ritual, economic, humorous, medical or other, was passed from one generation to the next by harnessing memories and the songs, narratives, epics and other forms of associated storytelling. This ensured that cultural knowledge was transmitted and younger generations knew what was important to know—this is oral tradition. In the 2003 Massey lectures, Canadian novelist, academic and Aboriginal scholar, Thomas King (2003), explored some of the differences between Native stories—which he deemed to be oral—and the normative stories of the western world—which are largely written. A key difference he observed was that written stories have a way of fossilising the past, of setting it in stone. Ever-changing oral stories, evolving, shifting in ways dependant on both the story teller and their audience have other purposes as well. King reminds us "We tell stories for ourselves—to help keep us alive":

> Stories are powerful. The courage of the telling, and the richness of the content, can move people and communities to rethink their identities, and the meanings and values they assign to their lives. Stories are a fundamental method used by marginalized groups around the world in their efforts to reclaim their history and culture, and assert their place in the world (Dale 2002).

In the introduction to this article, we note that conventional beliefs suggest that the battle for Koorie voices to be heard within the dominant knowledge system of Victoria is a battle between orality and written text. Prior to invasion, Koorie cultures were predominantly oral in that Aboriginal people did not have written text as defined in normative constructs of orality and literacy. Stories, and the protocols, places, roles and rituals which supported their transmission, were the foundation for maintaining relationships, conveying community laws and codes of behaviour, teaching children. It is generally recognised, and clearly evident in the findings of the Trust and Technology project, that despite the impact of colonisation and of colonial and post-colonial efforts to extinguish Indigenous culture, Koorie people continue to express their knowledge and experiences orally to a significant extent. Furthermore, there is a substantial body of traditional Indigenous knowledge extant amongst contemporary Koorie people. This is in the context of a wider society whose systems for making and keeping laws, conveying information, understanding

and transmitting history, and doing business of almost any kind depend on written documents; an environment in which the term "oral record" is contentious or even contradictory.

In Australia and elsewhere, current views relating to orality and oral records are influenced by the ways in which the development of literacy has been used as an indicator by western societies of social evolution and intelligence or societal positioning, with a lack of literacy being linked to lower intelligence or social class. It has been suggested that the development of literacy reflects the development of man—from gestures, speech, images to record events and maps, to iconography, and finally the formation of writing (Grossman 2006, 51). In Australia, this has led to some debate as to whether pre-invasion "art", including graphic representations of identity, place and events used for a range of ritual, social, political and economic purposes, is a form of oral culture, or iconography and therefore a form of text-based communication, a step towards literacy (Muecke 1992). The societal construction of power, status and development indicated by a link between literacy and intelligence was then applied to those from non- and pre-literate cultures, such as Indigenous Australians:

> And because we Aboriginal people came from an oral tradition it is we who always had to conform to the standard of the invaders, and learn the Queen's English so you mob out there can understand what the hell we are on about (Langford Ginibi 1997, p. 19).

As the Trust and Technology research progressed, we found the dichotomy of oral versus written text so often cited in the literature relating to Aboriginal Australia increasingly problematic, especially given its close association with western representations of oral traditions as inferior. Ong and others have posited a continuum of orality and literacy. Ong (2002) explores the differing strategies for preserving and transmitting information in predominantly oral societies, the impact of the introduction of writing on all aspects of life, and the ways new dimensions of orality manifest themselves, coexist and interact with writing in today's society, enabled by new digital technologies. However, orality has in past colonial societies been presented as an inferior form of communication and transmission of knowledge. The orality vs literacy dichotomy, as constructed within hierarchies of power that denigrate and oppress Aboriginal peoples, underpins Australian legal systems today and much of the writing of Australian history. It is also manifest in conventional archival theory and practice. Adele Perry has characterised a similar dichotomy which emerged in Canada in the nineteenth century as "savagery-orality-myth" vs "literacy-civilisation-history", exploring how it is still being invoked in land claim cases today, and is endorsed by the official archive's privileging of written records (Perry 2005). Although at its starkest in relation to Indigenous peoples, the devaluation of oral records can disadvantage many sections of the community whose primary records are oral and therefore not well represented within historical or archival records, or within mainstream discourse (e.g. at various times in history, women, the working classes, migrants and children).

Oral and written records: coexisting on their own terms

In the Trust and Technology project, we grappled with the intersection of written history and oral memory, the way in which written sources are often based on orality and modern orality is itself saturated with writing, and how the World Wide Web's support for multimedia forms of communication blurs the boundaries traditionally drawn between oral and written text-based communications. The acknowledgement of and respect for fundamental differences between western and Koorie frameworks of evidence and memory are at the heart of the Trust and Technology project, which was itself built on the importance of oral tradition that continues to underwrite much Aboriginal culture. But we also came to recognise that the records held in archives, state libraries and other cultural repositories are highly significant to Indigenous communities. They are virtually all written records and not oral. These are the products and consequence of colonisation, dispossession, removal and the relentless surveillance to which Indigenous people were subjected, but they are also potentially valuable sources for the recovery of Indigenous knowledge. The interrelationship flow between oral tradition and written records was quickly recognised within Phase One of the project, and it was explored in depth with reference to Koorie narratives in the Ph.D. research undertaken in association with the project by one of this article's authors, Shannon Faulkhead (Faulkhead 2008).

Decolonisation of the mainstream discourse involves challenging the linked dichotomies of orality–literacy, myth–history, savagery–civilisation and tradition–modernity, and the consequent positioning of Indigenous voices and narratives as inferior. Post-invasion, Indigenous narratives were soon located in both oral memory and written text:

> The written text has been employed by Indigenous Australians as a mode of political and cultural self-representation from quite early in colonial history – it is not a new phenomenon (Anderson 2003, 18).

In Victoria, Koorie people and communities learned quickly how to work and live within western systems to survive. Some experience this as operating within two, often separate, spaces with different rules and structures. This has been expressed as "living in two worlds". In spite of the early adoption by Indigenous Australians of western-style literacy as a form of communication, this is not always recognised within the orality–literacy dichotomy:

> Indigenous Australian life writing is often viewed as a recent phenomenon, a new literary and historiographical form that emerged initially in the mid twentieth century, expanded gradually through the 1960s and 1970s, and eventually proliferated spectacularly in the 1980s and 1990s. However, today's indigenous life writings are part of an older discursive formation that dates back to early colonial times, and incorporates traditional indigenous paradigms and protocols of oral communication. In the discipline of literary studies, this older intercultural body of life writing has remained largely invisible because literary criticism and scholarship have focused exclusively on long narratives published in book form (Van Toorn 2001).

For Indigenous communities today, written and oral narratives are both methods of storage and transmission that enable knowledge to be preserved and passed from one generation to the next. Through the Trust and Technology project, we came to see literacy and orality interacting constantly throughout everyday life in a continuum of oral and written text that celebrates the differences and similarities of cultures and their narratives, and to espouse the coexistence and interaction of multiple, diverse knowledge systems and histories. For Koorie collective knowledge to coexist within, or alongside, Victoria's collective knowledge, there needs to be acknowledgement of equal, but different worldviews, as respect for another culture's knowledge system is vital for competing cultural discourses to coexist. Those who adhere to false dichotomies of the kind we have exposed here suggest that oral records are less reliable than written records because they fail to take into account the different processes and protocols involved in creating, validating, authenticating, transmitting and accessing narratives created in different knowledge systems. The authenticity and reliability of oral records need to be assessed in their own contexts and not from the perspective of a different knowledge system's processes and protocols. Whilst there are similarities between the processes that create, manage, transmit and make accessible oral and written records, there are also very significant differences. For example, most written records are made accessible through rules and regulations governing the institutions that house them and, when access is granted, it is to everyone. Accessing oral records requires personal interaction, where trust and respect are vital, and the knowledge holder makes decisions about who can hear what, and when, according to the protocols of his or her community and the cultural values associated with the knowledge held. Where accessing written records requires perseverance in searching catalogues and series of records, accessing oral records requires a sharing of self. The common factor is time—time spent with the written record and with the storyteller.

Today, in Australia we see oral and written records existing within all communities and flowing from one format to the other, constantly interacting and growing into a living archival continuum. The historically static nature of institutional archives, and their dominant relationship with the discipline of history, can be viewed as antithetical to achieving this vision of what the archive of the future might be. The challenge is to develop systems that can allow the coexistence of multiple knowledge systems and forms of record, enabling records to continue the life they were meant to live, flowing back into people and then into a recorded form again, be it written, imagery, music or song.

The findings of the Trust and Technology project

The Trust and Technology project found that currently archival sources of Indigenous knowledge and history are fragmented and dispersed, in many ways mirroring the dispossession, dislocation and disempowerment of colonialism and the post-colonial period (Russell 2005, Monash 2009a). They are found in the following:

- oral memory contained within people, transmitted and accessed as stories through speech, performance, dance, art and song (e.g. traditional stories, contemporary narratives, family stories, recovered narratives from mainstream collective knowledge);
- records created by and for Indigenous people, communities and organisations (e.g. archaeological reports and reviews of country, business documentation, family records and genealogy, records and artefacts relating to sporting events, artwork, native title claim documentation and research reports, web sites of Indigenous communities and organisations, oral history);
- digital archives—digitised copies of Indigenous records "repatriated" from library, archives and museum collections and accessed via Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations, for example the *Our Story* database in the NT Library's Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) programme; the Ara Iritija Archive of the Anangu people of SA (http://www.irititja.com); and the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive (http://www.mukurtuarchive.org);
- research data archives (e.g. the Indigenous node of the Australian Social Science Data Archive, ATSIDA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Archive), hosted by the University of Technology, Sydney, and the AIATSIS (Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) data archive);
- records in all forms and media created by non-Indigenous people and organisations about Indigenous people, including government records (e.g. archival holdings of the national, state and territory archives relating to colonial and post-colonial administration of Indigenous affairs, health, education, land management; church records relating to Aboriginal Missions; anthropological records and so on).

The project also found that archival sources are currently managed and made accessible using frameworks, rights management protocols, metadata schemas and access policies that do not readily accommodate the high-priority needs of Indigenous communities and individuals to know about records relating to them, to be engaged in decision-making about the records, to add their stories to the official record or to exercise collective rights in the records (Ross et al. 2006, Monash 2009a). Many Indigenous people view all records that relate to them as *their own* records, yet many institutions that house and control these records view them very differently (Ross et al. 2006). Indigenous people have access rights to government records about them, but there are no rights of disclosure, and there is no shared decision-making relating to ownership, custody, preservation and access. Policies, processes and systems in government archives are based on particular constructs and values relating to control, access, privacy and individual but not collective rights in records. These constructs and values derive from traditions regarding knowledge and evidence that are fundamentally different from, and possibly irreconcilable with, the epistemologies within Indigenous communities (Faulkhead 2009).

For example, metadata schemas specify standardised, structured data to describe, contextualise and manage records and archives. They are vital tools, supporting decision-making about managing records, disseminating information about them and administering access to them. However, mainstream metadata standards are not

designed to describe and contextualise records from the perspective of the differing cultural protocols of individual Indigenous communities. Recordkeeping metadata schema and archival descriptive systems built within frameworks that privilege traditional archival science definitions of records creators and records subjects do not include metadata elements or descriptors that can contextualise records as co-created by all participants in the transactions they document. They do not support annotation of the records to represent the perspectives and stories of the other parties to the transaction. Metadata elements and archival descriptors designed to manage ownership, custody, privacy and access as defined in western legal systems can deal with individual but not collective rights in records. They cannot support decision-making shared between co-creators in a participatory model of recordkeeping and archiving. Metadata elements that describe the requirements of managing commercial-in-confidence materials or national security classified records are not designed to express the cultural requirements associated with the handling of secret and sacred material, including requirements that would preclude archivists of a particular gender knowing about or being involved in the management of some records. Classification systems, thesauri and other metadata encoding schemes that are developed within one worldview may not include the concepts and terms needed to classify and name entities within another.

Indigenous cultural institutions and knowledge centres, as well as partnership initiatives, are pioneering frameworks, protocols and processes that address the evolving archival requirements of Indigenous communities, their ontologies, cultural protocols, constructs of collective ownership and privacy, ways of expressing traditional knowledge and needs for differential access. An example is the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive of the Warumungu community in Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory (http://www.mukurtuarchive.org). Mukurtu began in 2005 as a grassroots project of the Warumungu Aboriginal community in Central Australia to create a digital archive that matched their cultural needs. The platform developed has been expanded to meet the diverse needs of Indigenous communities elsewhere, providing customisable features that allow communities to define how their materials circulate and are shared between community members, to other museums, libraries and archives and to the public, and provide granular access controls based on the cultural protocols of different communities. For example, the Plateau Peoples Web Portal customises the Mukurtu archive platform to allow five tribes from the Pacific North-west in the United States to curate materials, share metadata and define traditional knowledge in relation to local, regional and national collections. It facilitates multiple user levels and enables cultural protocol tags for all content.

As yet, there has been little formalisation or standardisation, and no integration of the requirements discussed above or the emergent innovative solutions into mainstream frameworks and standards (Gibson 2009; Nakata et al. 2006, 2008a, b). Addressing these challenging issues involves building metadata and archival system frameworks or meta-systems that can accommodate multiple and plural perspectives on the record and its context, support participatory management models, and enable people and communities, once considered the subjects of the records, to add their perspectives and stories.

Major outcomes of the Trust and Technology project

In order to address the issues discussed in this article, the Trust and Technology project developed a Statement of Principles relating to Archives and Indigenous Knowledge, a Position Statement on Indigenous Human Rights and the Archives, and a specification for a Koorie Archiving System that provides a space in which Koorie oral memory can be captured, shared and linked to archival sources of Koorie knowledge and records about Koorie Victoria (Monash 2009a, b, c, d; Ross et al. 2006).

Australian Indigenous knowledge and the archives

The Trust and Technology project developed a Statement of Principles relating to Australian Indigenous Knowledge and the Archives to guide future archival practice, research and education. Its focus is largely on records of Indigenous communities and individuals created by non-Indigenous organisations, including Australian government organisations, and the relationship between these records and other sources of Indigenous knowledge. It does not include provisions relating specifically to records created by Indigenous organisations and individuals. The Statement of Principles is based on Australian and International protocols relating to Indigenous culture, knowledge and archives (UN 2005, 2007; Victoria 2006; ATSIC 1999; First Archivists Circle 2007; ATSILIRN 2006), the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* Report (HREOC 1997), the findings of the Trust and Technology project (Monash 2009a), research undertaken by Livia Iacovino and Eric Ketelaar for the Trust and Technology project relating to human rights instruments (Iacovino 2010), and the findings of the PacRim Project, Pluralizing the Archival Paradigm through Education (a collaboration involving researchers from UCLA in Los Angeles, Renmin University in Beijing and Monash University; Gilliland et al. 2007).

Statement of Principles: Australian Indigenous knowledge and the archives

Principle 1: Recognition of all archival sources of Indigenous Knowledge

Archival systems and services for preserving Indigenous memory and evidence need to be based on recognition of the breadth and diversity of archival sources of Indigenous knowledge and the significance of oral memory and storytelling

Principle 2: Recognition of rights in records

The rights of Indigenous people should extend to making decisions about the creation and management of their knowledge in all its forms, including knowledge contained in records created by non-Indigenous people and organisations about Indigenous people

Principle 3: Recognition of rights in legal and archival frameworks

The rights of Indigenous people in records need to be recognised in law and archival frameworks

Principle 4: Adoption of holistic, community-based approaches to Indigenous archiving

Community-based, community-controlled archival systems and services, based on a holistic approach to Indigenous archiving—bringing together, integrating, preserving and making accessible to the community, physically or virtually, all archives of value regardless of their source, form or medium—will best meet the needs of Indigenous communities

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Table a continued

Statement of Principles: Australian Indigenous knowledge and the archives

Principle 5: Recognition of need for Indigenous people to challenge "official" records

Indigenous peoples need mechanisms "to set the record straight", i.e. to comment on inaccuracies or limitations, contribute family and individual narratives, and present their version of events alongside the official one

Principle 6: Recognition of need for inclusive education and training for recordkeeping professional practice

A set of principles relating to inclusive, pluralistic and culturally aware recordkeeping education and training should inform course recognition and accreditation and the expectations set by employers and professional associations for ongoing professional development

Principle 7: Reconciling research, rethinking the relationship between academia and Indigenous communities

University-based researchers need to overhaul research methods that position Indigenous communities as the subjects of research, pursue a participatory model of community-based research and avoid approaches that involve a re-colonisation or misappropriation of Indigenous knowledge by researchers. The principles of community-based participatory research need to be embedded in academia

Human rights, Indigenous communities in Australia and the archives

Insofar as archives play a critical role in the recovery of Indigenous knowledge and language, and provide evidence for establishing identity, family link-ups, community regeneration, land claims and redress of abuse, they underpin Indigenous human rights, self-determination and the exercise of cultural rights as human rights The Position Statement (Monash 2009c) developed by Livia Iacovino, Sue McKemmish and Eric Ketelaar for the Trust and Technology project, was based on research undertaken by Livia Iacovino and Eric Ketelaar, funded by a Jean Whyte Bequest Research Grant. It references a range of international Indigenous human rights conventions, human rights instruments and relevant Australian laws which recognise Indigenous communities as having inherent rights to preserve their identity whilst participating to the fullest in the mainstream culture (Iacovino 2010). By far, the largest obstacle to the realisation of Indigenous human and cultural rights related to the archival sources of their knowledge is that Australian legal and archival frameworks (with the exception of the provisions of the Victorian Charter) do not recognise Indigenous cultural rights as human rights, provide for ownership rights for people who are considered to be the subject of records or support principles relating to the rights of discovery and reply.

Possible actions by archival institutions and the profession that specifically address the human right of self-determination, cultural rights and the right of non-discrimination, and the implementation of the provisions of the *Joinet-Orentlicher Principles* (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights 2005) relating to the right to know the truth and the right of reply are proposed in the Position Statement on Human Rights and the Archives and discussed in a recent article in *Archives and Manuscripts* (McKemmish et al. 2010). They include the

engagement of Indigenous communities in capture, appraisal, management, preservation and access to records that contribute to their self-determination and cultural identity; support for the negotiation of rights via the creation of a register of interested persons (descendants of the relevant community) in the ongoing management of relevant sets of records; examination and amendment of archival law and policies to ensure compatibility with human rights instruments; and acknowledgement of the right of Indigenous communities to determine the third-party access to records held by archival organisations on the basis of redressing discrimination. To implement the provisions in the *Joinet-Orentlicher Principles* relating to the right to know the truth, and the right of reply (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights 2005), archival institutions could put in place best practices which routinely identify Indigenous communities or individuals in records; contact them via appropriate representative bodies; disclose that there are records relating to them; and develop procedures to enable them to exercise a right of reply—i.e. "to set the record straight"; make comments upon the inaccuracies or limitations of institutional records; and contribute family narratives which expand upon or give context to institutional records and to present alternative versions of events.

Koorie archiving system

The ability to be able to address the errors or limitations of institutional records—"to set the record straight"—was one of the most loudly and consistently expressed desires of participants in the Trust and Technology project research. Many interviewees see value in differing versions of events coexisting and informing each other. However, interviewees generally place greater trust in the oral versions of events told within their family and would like to be able to record these versions alongside the "official" record. Storytelling is dynamic in nature; there are many versions of events, not simply just one "official" version, one family's version or one oral version. The project concluded that enabling this layering and variety of perspectives to be captured would support the ambit and fluidity of Koorie storytelling. We therefore developed a specification for a Koorie Annotation System (Monash 2009d), a web-based system separate but linked to other system(s) housing the records available to be annotated. The system specification details the following:

- an interface with the records-holding system(s), enabling them to be searched and individual records to be viewed;
- tools for creating annotations and linking them to specific records housed in the records holding system(s);
- a means to control access to annotations, probably involving the ability to provide multiple views, or redactions, of an annotation for various individuals and groups;
- integration into external systems that provide access to the records which have been annotated, so that, where desired, annotations and annotated records are displayed together (Monash 2009a, part 2).

In developing the specification, Public Record Office of Victoria members of the research team and the Koorie Reference Group grappled with a number of

challenging socio-technical and socio-legal issues relating to retention by individuals and communities of ownership of intellectual property in the annotations, the management of complex rights in the creation and management of annotations, the need for moderation and quality control, the sustainability and management of the system, and engendering trust in system users.

Following the conclusion of Trust and Technology project, funding was secured from the State Government of Victoria to implement a Koorie Archiving System based on the specification. This initiative uses web-based technologies to create a shared space for the Public Record Office of Victoria, the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., the National Archives of Australia, the Gunditjmara community in Heywood, Western Victoria, and other Koorie communities and individuals to work collaboratively as equal partners to create an archive that:

- brings together, integrates, preserves and makes accessible existing records relating to Koorie communities, families and individuals from government, community and personal sources;
- caters for content in many different forms and media, including official written records, oral testimony, records of Koorie organisations, family and personal records, photographs, audio and video recordings;
- enables controls and protocols to be negotiated and established that respect Koorie community, family and individual rights in records, and requirements relating to the preservation, storage, accessibility and use of the content of the cloud archive, including requirements relating to differentiated access;
- provides a space in which communities, families and individuals can easily create and add new content;
- provides a mechanism for annotations that interpret, correct or provide context for information content sourced from official records (Public Record Office Victoria et al. 2009).

Action agenda for archival reconciliation

The archival community needs to work in partnership with Indigenous communities to address the priority areas of recovery and re-integration of Indigenous knowledge and history from non-Indigenous archival sources, acknowledge the integral relationship between oral knowledge, community records and institutional records, and develop frameworks for the exercise of Indigenous rights in records.

An action agenda for archival reconciliation is emerging based on the findings of the Trust and Technology project and subsequent research and development work being undertaken by the partners involved in the project. The development of policy, strategy, protocols and rights management that address issues of ownership, custody, disclosure and accessibility of the archival sources of Indigenous knowledge is essential. Major associated challenges relate to reconciling the different ownership, management and access paradigms of the Indigenous and archival communities, and library, archives and museum institutions and supporting implementation. This could be achieved through the development of systems and tools to:

- support both global and local/customised access, enabling sharing of information widely about many archival sources, but also protecting sensitive archival sources and related metadata, and providing for layered or differentiated access by self-defining and self-regulated communities;
- enable Indigenous communities, archival and cultural institutions to work in partnership and exercise mutual rights and responsibilities in relation to archival records in a networked virtual space;
- provide frameworks and mechanisms for the exercise of the human rights as outlined above in the section on the Position Statement (Monash 2009c);
- enable records to be described and contextualised from the perspective of the differing cultural protocols of individual Indigenous communities, as well as the varying needs of general users;
- address the critical challenge of metadata interoperability and the failure of information architectures to support information sharing in spite of the availability of ubiquitous technical infrastructure;
- support emergent digital repatriation processes that return digital copies of Indigenous records held in institutional collections to their communities.

In relation to digital repatriation, current initiatives lack ready access to information about archival sources of relevance to individual communities, well-defined and standardised protocols and procedures, and formal metadata schema. Moreover, future iterations of digital repatriation models need to extend management rights in original records held by non-Indigenous archival and cultural institutions to Indigenous communities.

Building a virtual national archival network that identifies, integrates and provides for appropriate management and access to information about all archival records relating to Indigenous knowledge and history, and yet also supports the matrix of mutual rights and obligations in records relating to Indigenous people and communities, is also a priority goal. It will need to be designed to enable organisations, communities and individuals to share or disclose information about archival sources. The information structures, metadata schemas, management strategies and access protocols for the network will need to be designed to maximise access to records and metadata that can be made freely available, whilst respecting the need to limit access to some records and their metadata to particular communities or families.

Finally, a key component of the action agenda is the design of smart interfaces to archival sources of Indigenous knowledge wherever they are located, customisable to the needs of individual communities, using intelligent technologies and metadata-driven approaches, as well as social networking tools.

This action agenda involves challenging existing archival science concepts, including narrow views of the forms that the archive and record take, and understandings of the principle of provenance that privilege the singular records creator. It looks to a more inclusive conceptualisation of the record and an expanded definition of the "records creator" to include everyone who has contributed to a record's creative process and has been affected by its action, thus re-positioning the "subjects" of the records as co-creators (Hurley 2005a, b), and supporting the enforcement of a broader spectrum of rights and obligations in records.

   The agenda also has implications for archival education and research. Addressing inclusive education issues in accreditation and recognition processes; developing inclusive and culturally sensitive curriculum; and supporting scholarship and internship programmes for Indigenous students are critical to its success. And in research, we need to engage in reconciling research, involving a collaborative, co-creative journey engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, knowledge holders, Indigenous Elders and domain experts from Indigenous and archival communities, (i.e. Indigenous communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous archival and cultural institutions, user communities and research institutions) and stakeholders in government, and the general community, including peak bodies and professional associations. Partnership research of this kind acknowledges multiple sources of knowledge and promotes the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination of knowledge (Faulkhead 2008).

Conclusion

The Trust and Technology project involved a multidisciplinary team made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers working in partnership with Indigenous communities and archival institutions. It built on the experiences of the investigators and their individual engagements with heritage, identity and politics. Lynette Russell hopes that her involvement might enable the production of solutions to some of the issues she has encountered as an archival historian undertaking a range of projects. Shannon Faulkhead's hope in relation to oral and written records is that we can see beyond the dichotomy of ephemeral versus fixity to the myriad ways in which we might create narratives. Palimpsest-like, layered, sometimes diffuse and even ghostly, the stories we tell each other make us who we are, and emphasise who we want to be. Sue McKemmish's hope is that her involvement might contribute to the development of archival frameworks, strategies and tools that work better for Indigenous communities and individuals. A key concern for all of us is the creation of archival systems to which Indigenous people's perspectives and knowledge can be interactively added. Perhaps we might even develop systems that not merely acknowledge the inherently different nature of Indigenous knowledge but celebrate the ontological incommensurabilities of various knowledge systems and enable their mutually respectful coexistence.

   The main beneficiaries of the outcomes of this research are Victorian Aboriginal communities, including those in rural and regional areas, and more generally Indigenous Australians. We also hope that the findings might be of value to Indigenous and archival communities elsewhere in the world. As communities and individuals rebuild family connections and continue to recover from ongoing dispossession and disempowerment, we hope that the results of the Trust and Technology project will play a key role. It is already clear that the impact of the research we undertook for this project continues beyond the confines of the project design and the findings have a life of their own as they expand out of the academy and into other realms. We hope that the project outcomes will enable record-holding agencies to extend their efforts to provide culturally appropriate management of and access to their collections, moving beyond

existing procedures and policies, allowing for the systematic capture and preservation of representations of oral culture, accumulating valued heritage not currently available in the public domain, and supporting the facilitation of access to oral materials and memories for Indigenous people.

In apologising to the Stolen Generations in 2008, the Australian Prime Minister stated: "if the apology we extend today is accepted in the spirit of reconciliation, in which it is offered, we can today resolve together that there be a new beginning for Australia. And it is to such a new beginning that I believe the nation is now calling us". To what new archival beginning are we being called? We hope that the findings of the Trust and Technology project, the principles and human rights statements, the action agenda and initiatives like the Koorie Archiving System will support a new archival beginning, laying the foundation for the development of archival frameworks, strategies and tools that work better for Indigenous communities and individuals, building relationships of trust between archival and Indigenous communities, and enabling records to play a reconciling role. The integral involvement of Indigenous people as partners with the archival community in these endeavours will be critical to achieving archival reconciliation.

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Shannon Faulkhead is a Koorie woman from Mildura, and her Ph.D. thesis from Monash University was titled "Narratives of Koorie Victoria". Shannon's research concentrates on the location of Koorie peoples and their knowledge within the broader Australian society and its collective knowledge as reflected through narratives and records. Whilst Shannon's research is multidisciplinary in nature, to date it has centred on community and archival collections of records, and has been situated within the disciplines of Indigenous studies and archival science. Shannon's recent appointment as the Finkel Fellow, attached to Monash Country Lines Archive, will allow for greater exploration and development in the area of Indigenous ways of archiving. Prior to returning to study, Shannon worked for 9 years at the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., an Aboriginal cultural centre in Victoria.

Lynette Russell Ph.D. holds the Chair in Australian Indigenous Studies at Monash University (http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/cais/). She is Director of the Monash Indigenous Centre and an Australian Research Council Professorial Fellow 2011–2016. She was formerly Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts. Lynette has published widely in the areas of Aboriginal history, archaeological theory, post-colonialism, and representations of race. Professor Russell trained as an archaeologist before turning to historical and Indigenous studies and the application of post-colonial theory. *Savage Imaginings* explored authorised historical and contemporary constructions of Australian Indigeneity, however, *A Little Bird Told Me* presented a more personal account of Aboriginality based on the life of a Wotjabaluk woman imprisoned in a series of mental institutions in the early part of the twentieth century. She has edited *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Interactions in Settler Colonies* and co-edited *Constructions of Colonialism: Perspectives on Eliza Fraser's Shipwreck* and recently completed a book with Dr. Ian McNiven on the colonial underpinnings of archaeology as practised in settler societies entitled *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology* (AltaMira Press). In 2005, *Boundary Writing: An Exploration of Race, Culture, and Gender Binaries in Contemporary Australia* (University of Hawaii Press) was published. She is currently working on a new book on Indigenous workers in the early sealing industry.