

**Assessing the Use of Community Archives**  
**Early Career Grant Proposal**  
**UCLA/ Michelle Caswell, PhD**

Assessing the Use of Community Archives (AUCA) is a three-year (October 2016 to September 2019) \$325,000 Early Career Grant project that seeks to answer the following questions:

- How do members of marginalized communities use community based-archives?
- What is the impact of such organizations on the individuals and communities they represent and serve?
- Does the preliminary community archives impact model (ontological/epistemological/ and social impact) developed by the PI apply to these communities of users or does a new model need to be developed?

More specifically, from the PI, together with a graduate student researcher (GSR), entering UCLA doctoral student Joyce Gabiola, would like to conduct at least ten focus groups (2 at each site) with 6 users each (for a total of 60 users) and 50 in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with users of five community-based archives in Southern California:

- UCI Libraries Southeast Asian Archive (Irvine)
- LAMBDA Archives (San Diego)
- Little Tokyo Historical Society (Los Angeles)
- La Historia Society (El Monte)
- Studio for Southern California History (Los Angeles)

For the purpose of this research, “marginalized communities” will be limited to LGBTQ communities and communities of color in Southern California. Community-based archives will be defined as grassroots efforts by marginalized communities to document their own histories. The aim is to better understand nontraditional, non-academic users such as artists, activists, and community members so that archives of all types may better serve them and so that we have a better understanding of how community archives impact the communities they serve.

The research will result in an open access assessment toolkit that provides the necessary tools (such as focus group formats and interview protocols) for community archives to study and assess their own users that will be made available via the University of California digital scholarship repository. The research will be published in at least 3 peer-reviewed journals such as *Library Quarterly*, *JASIST*, and *American Archivist*. The project will also result in research presentations at seven academic and professional venues including AERI, SAA Research Forum, iConference, ASIST, ALISE, ALA, LA as Subject Archives’ Bazaar, and the National Diversity in Libraries Conference; 5 community forums (one held at each research site); and a symposium on community archives to be held in year 3 at UCLA.

The PI of the project is Michelle Caswell, a widely published assistant professor of information studies at UCLA and the co-founder of a community archives (South Asian American Digital Archive). The GSR is entering UCLA doctoral student Joyce Gabiola, whose work examines how LGBTQ communities of color document their histories.

The intended audience for this project is three-fold: information studies scholars; community archives volunteers and staff; and practicing librarians and archivists in “mainstream” or “traditional” university and government repositories who would like to attract a more diverse group of users.

### **Assessing the Use of Community Archives**

Assessing the Use of Community Archives (AUCA) is a three-year \$325,000 Early Career Grant project that seeks to answer the following questions: How do members of marginalized communities use community based-archives? What is the impact of such organizations on the individuals and communities they represent and serve? Does the preliminary impact model (ontological/epistemological/ and social impact) developed by the PI apply to these communities of users or does a new model need to be developed? In answering these questions, the project will also provide tools for community archives to assess and articulate their own impact.

#### **1. Statement of Need**

Recent research in archives notes a growth in independently operated, community-based archival organizations (Bastian & Alexander, 2009; Flinn & Stevens, 2009; Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009; Mander, 2009; Daniel, 2010; Cook, 2013; Gilliland, 2014). While definitions of community are contextual and shifting, Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) define community as “any manner of people who come together and present themselves as such, and a ‘community archive’ is the product of their attempts to document the history of their commonality” (p. 75). Archival communities can materialize around ethnic, racial, or religious identities (Kaplan, 2000; Daniel, 2010; Caswell, 2014a), gender and sexual orientation (Barriault, 2009; Sheffield, 2015), economic status (Flinn & Stevens, 2009), and physical locations (Flinn & Stevens, 2009).

These community archives are framed as grassroots alternatives to mainstream repositories through which communities can make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them, shape collective memory of their own pasts, and control the means through which stories about their past are constructed. Power is central to this ongoing conversation. The majority of the staff and volunteers of these community archives are members of underrepresented groups. In maintaining independence and encouraging participation, these archives strive to provide a platform in which previously marginalized groups are empowered to make decisions about archival collecting on their own terms. This need to provide a platform for previously marginalized voices distinguishes community-based archives from historical societies based solely on geography rather than identity (Caswell, 2012). Indeed, Flinn, Stevens and Shepherd (2009) found that political activism, community empowerment, and social change were prime motivating factors for those who volunteer at these organizations.

The archival profession is only now beginning to address this burgeoning community archives phenomenon. In the realm of practice, the rise of community archives has meant reframing the functions of appraisal, description and access to align with community-specific priorities, reflect contingent cultural values, and allow for greater participation in archival decision-making (Shilton & Srinivasan 2007; Krause & Yakel, 2007; Huvila, 2008; Caswell, 2012; Caswell 2014b; Caswell & Mallick, 2014). Community input into archives has also led to conceptual challenges being raised in the archival profession itself. For example, Bastian (2003) has suggested expanding the core archival concept of provenance to include descendants of the subjects of records, while Wurl (2005) echoed this theoretical shift by advocating for ethnicity as a form of provenance. The Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG, 2011) called for an incorporation of local and Indigenous ways of knowing and being into archival theory and practice. Cook (2013) declared that the recent emphasis on community constitutes a paradigm shift in the field, akin to previous conceptual guideposts like evidence and memory.

Yet while much scholarly work has been done to understand the growth and function of community-based archives, there is, to date, a large gap in empirical data about who uses such archives, how, and why. Similarly, little empirical data is available on the impact of such community archives on the communities they claim to represent and serve. Much of the work is celebratory in tone or descriptive in nature. More work is needed not only to understand the conceptual impact of these archival organizations on archival theory and practice, but also to formally assess and collaboratively respond to the needs of the users of these repositories. More work is also needed on assessing the archival skill sets of the staff and volunteers at these archives (many of whom have no formal archival or LIS training) and on proposing solutions to address this gap.

Furthermore, little research has focused on such efforts in the U.S. Scholarship has addressed the U.K. (Flinn & Stevens 2009; Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd 2009; Mander, 2009), the Philippines (Punzalan, 2009), Chile (Blanco-Rivera, 2009), Cambodia (Caswell, 2010), Australia (McKemmish et al., 2011), and Canada (Barriault, 2009; Cook, 2013). In 2008-2009, the U.K. Arts and Humanities Research Council funded the “Community Archives and Identities: Documenting and Sustaining Community Heritage” through which three British scholars (Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd) carried out research on community archives in the U.K. While there are notable exceptions (Shilton & Srinivasan 2006; Daniel, 2010), an overview of the literature reveals a gap in the description of American community archives.

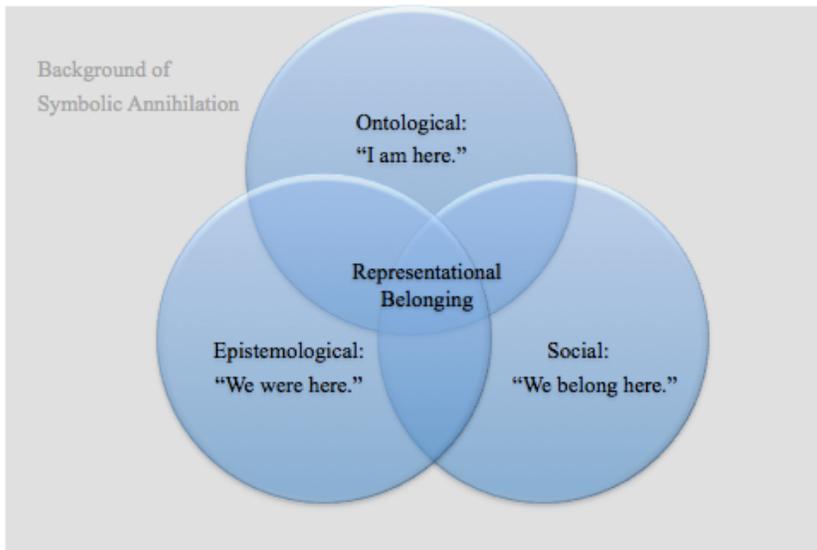
While there is a strong body of literature focused on more traditional archival use and users, these studies largely concern traditional academic user groups, such as historians, university administrators, graduate students, and undergraduates, and traditional university or government repositories (Yakel & Torres, 2003; Trace, 2006; Duff & Cherry, 2008). Explorations of non-academic users have been limited to genealogists (Little, 2011) and non-academic “expert users” such as writers, film makers, and sports enthusiasts who use traditional government or university repositories either in person or online (Conway and Punzalan, 2011). No work has been done in the US that assess how members of marginalized communities such as LGBTQ communities or communities of color use community-based archives.

Similarly, while there is a wealth of work done on assessing archival impact, such work primarily focuses on educational impact (Yakel & Torres, 2003) or economic impact (Yakel, Duff, Tibbo, Kriesberg, & Cushing, 2012). Brophy (2005) has done significant work on quantitatively measuring the personal impact of library services more broadly, while Duff, Flinn, Suurtamm, and Wallace (2013) have started to model the social justice impact of archives, but neither of these models focus specifically on underrepresented communities, affective impact, or community archives.

Archival studies had been remarkably unaware of issues of identity and representation that have become central concerns to other fields in the humanities and social sciences since the 1970s (Kaplan, 2002). Although a discussion of the importance of self-representation often serves as a backdrop to the community archives literature cited above, the importance of self-representation—and the devastating consequences of its lack—are more thoroughly developed in other fields. In media studies for example, feminist scholars developed the concept of “symbolic annihilation” in the 1970s to describe the absence, under-representation, maligning, and trivialization of women by mainstream media (Tuchman, 1978). This absence and misrepresentation has profound and wide-ranging implications for how children perceive gender roles, how girls imagine what is possible in their futures, and how women are treated at home and at work. The concept of symbolic annihilation has since been used by scholars in a range of fields to address a range of contexts, from mass media to museums to tours of historic sites (Merskin, 1998; Klein & Shifman, 2009; Eichstedt & Small, 2002).

The PI of the proposed project has begun to apply the concept of symbolic annihilation to archives (Caswell, 2014a; Caswell, Cifor & Ramirez, 2016) and to investigate the impact of community archives on representation on a small scale. In research conducted in 2014-2015 and soon to be published in *The American Archivist*, the PI and two doctoral students interviewed 12 South Asian American academic users of the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) (<http://www.saada.org>), a community archives the PI co-founded in 2008. This research uncovered that the concept of “symbolic annihilation,” or the ways in which members of marginalized communities are absent, underrepresented, or misrepresented in mainstream media and archives (Caswell, 2014a), deeply resonated with the experiences of members of one ethnic minority in the U.S. as they attempted to seek people who looked like themselves on television and film and in history books and mainstream archives (Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez, 2016). Through this research, the PI developed a tripartite framework for measuring the impact of community archives: ontological impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation “*I am here*”); epistemological impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation “*we were here*”); and social impact (in which members of

marginalized communities get confirmation “*we belong here*”) (Caswell, Cifor & Ramirez, 2016). In 2015-2016, with the support of a \$25,000 grant from the Hellman Foundation, the PI (together with three graduate students) interviewed 17 community archives founders, staff, and volunteers at 12 community-based archives in Southern California to further develop this framework as it pertains to those who work or volunteer for community archives. That research proposed the concept of “representational belonging” to denote the ways in which community archives can empower people who have been marginalized by mainstream media outlets and memory institutions to have the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive to them in a variety of symbolic contexts (Caswell, Migoni, Geraci, & Cifor, forthcoming). It also proposed the following visual model for assessing the impact of community archives on the individuals and communities they serve (*Figure One*).



**Figure 1: The Impact of Community Archives in Response to Symbolic Annihilation**

While this research has laid an important foundation, more detailed work is needed to ascertain if such a framework can be generalized to assess the impact of community-based archives on their *users*. The proposed project, “Assessing the Use of Community Archives,” aims to do just that.

The intended audience for this project is three-fold: information studies scholars; community archives volunteers and staff; and practicing librarians and archivists in “mainstream” or “traditional” university and government repositories who would like to attract a more diverse group of users. As the literature review has shown, there is increasing interest in community archives among IS scholars, but a gap in empirically understanding the users of such archives. Archivists from community archives often function in a vacuum of the needs and priorities of their own communities, without the time to examine potential or possible uses of their collections or to compare practices across organizations. Thirdly, university and government repositories have not historically conducted very many outreach efforts aimed at bringing in members of marginalized communities to use their collections. By providing a thorough explanation of who uses community archives, how, and why at the five research sites, this study seeks to build knowledge about non-traditional archives users, with the ultimate goal of improving services to such users across types of information institutions. For example, the study may uncover that members of marginalized communities use archival materials for the personal affective reasons described as ontological and epistemological impact in the aforementioned model

(Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez, 2016), or for community-building purposes, or for scholarship, or activism, or community-building, or the creation of art, and/or education. Archives may then tailor outreach efforts and services for those kinds of use and users as a result, with the ultimate goal of reaching a much larger and more diverse user base.

Furthermore, understanding the users of community archives from LGBTQ communities and communities of color will have an impact on how we conceive of the materials to be included in and users of a national digital platform. It is important that marginalized communities are an integral component of the conceptualization of a national digital platform so that such a platform fully represents society in all its diversity. By understanding the current needs of archival users from LGBTQ communities and communities of color, we can strive to create more representative archives and a more inclusive national digital platform that includes their histories and meets their specific needs as historical actors and archives users. Without support from IMLS, such research will have to proceed on a small scale, done piecemeal, rather than comprehensively.

## 2. Impact

This research will change not only how archivists at community archives understand their users, but how archivists and librarians at university and government information institutions understand how to best provide services and conduct outreach to marginalized populations. University and government archives as a whole have not historically been successful at collecting materials that reflect and attract users from marginalized communities. By understanding how community archives have done this, this project will provide archivists from university and government repositories ideas about how to successfully build services that meet the needs of and conduct outreach to LGBTQ communities and communities of color. For example, if the research uncovers that artists or activists are key user groups within marginalized communities, archivists at all kinds of institutions can create programs and services that best meet their needs. Or, if the research uncovers that the affective dimensions of representation are important to members of marginalized communities, then archivists from all kinds of institutions can factor those affective responses into appraisal decisions, descriptive practices, and reference services. Furthermore, this research may enable community archives and mainstream archival institutions to create partnerships that better represent and serve communities of color and LGBTQ communities.

From the community archives perspective, community archives often struggle financially and are unable to fully and systematically articulate the value of their work to funding agencies and donors. The proposed project will provide community archives with a way to assess and discuss their impact so that they can communicate their value to funders and stakeholders. The initial research on which this project is based (Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez, 2016), has already been put into use in this way; the South Asian American Digital Archive has employed the ontological/epistemological/social impact model in several successful grant proposals and fundraising initiatives.

This research will produce an open-access toolkit that provides the necessary tools (such as focus group formats and interview protocols) for community archives to study their own users (which will also be distributed at a public forum at UCLA and at events at each research site in Year 3). The materials and models generated by this project will be publicized and made available to community archives across the country representing a diversity of communities who are looking to better understand their users and assess and articulate their impact. Such assessments can be used to create services and policies that best met the needs of specific groups of users (such as artists, activists, and educators) who traditionally have not been well-served by mainstream archives, to create outreach plans to attract more users to archives, and to articulate the value of community archives in grant proposals and reports to funders and stakeholders. Furthermore, archivists from more traditional archival spaces such as university or government repositories may also use the findings to attract more users from communities of color and LGBTQ communities.

## 3. Project Design

This three-year Early Career Grant project seeks to answer the following questions:

- How do members of marginalized communities use community based-archives?
- What is the impact of such organizations on the individuals and communities they represent and serve?
- Does the preliminary impact model (ontological/epistemological/ and social impact) apply to these communities of users or does a new model need to be developed?

More specifically, the PI, together with a graduate student researcher (GSR), UCLA doctoral student Joyce Gabiola, would like to conduct at least ten focus groups (2 at each site) with 6 users each (for a total of 60 focus groups participants) and 50 in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with users of five community-based archives in Southern California:

- UCI Libraries Southeast Asian Archive (Irvine) (community-initiated, university-affiliated, Asian American)
- LAMBDA Archives (San Diego) (independent, LGBTQ)
- Little Tokyo Historical Society (Los Angeles) (independent, Asian American)
- La Historia Society (El Monte) (independent, Latino/a)
- Studio for Southern California History (Los Angeles) (independent, multiple constituencies)

For the purpose of this research, “marginalized communities” will be limited to LGBTQ communities and communities of color in Southern California. Community-based archives will be defined as grassroots efforts by marginalized communities to document their own histories; while such organizations take a variety of forms and may collaborate to varying degrees with mainstream university or government repositories, community members themselves maintain some degree of autonomy over the collections in terms of physical custody, appraisal, description, and/or access practices.

All research sites have agreed to participate (See Partner Letters of Commitment). The sites were chosen because they typify the range of identities (LGBTQ, Latino/a, and Asian American) represented by community archives in Southern California and varying degrees of independence from mainstream repositories. By choosing a range of organizations that cross ethnic, geographic and sexual identities, this research will gain an understanding of the impact of such archives on marginalized communities on Southern California writ large. The PI has IRB approval; we will need an extension and amendment to include the GSR.

In Year 1, two focus groups will be conducted at each site (for a total of 10 focus groups) in order to get a more general sense of each archives’ user base: who the users are, how they use the archives, what materials they find most valuable, and how they conceive of the impact of their use. The focus groups will take place at each archive and each consist of a minimum of 6 users at each site. The PI and GSR will facilitate the groups.

In Year 2, the PI and GSR will interview 10 additional users at each site using the draft semi-structured interview protocol included at the end of this narrative (Appendix 1). The protocol is subject to change based on the findings of the focus groups, but questions will remain open-ended so as to allow the participants to fully express how they view their interactions with the archives in their own terms. Participants may request copies of the transcripts of their interviews.

Participants for both the focus groups and interviews will be recruited in two ways: via flyers at the sites, as well as based on recommendations from archivists at the community archives sites. In order to protect the privacy of archives users (as enshrined by library codes of ethics and California law), the PI and GSR will not directly recruit participants face-to-face as they use the archives. Instead, the staff of each community archives will contact potential research subjects, gauge their interest in participation, and ask for permission to provide their name and contact information to the PI. Community archives will each receive a \$500 stipend for their work recruiting users to participate in focus groups and interviews; given how tight financial resources are for many community archives, this stipend will be necessary to compensate the staff of the participating organizations for their time. While this recruitment process introduces an element of bias to the design, it is crucial for protecting user privacy and is inline with the ways other archives user studies have been conducted

(Conway and Punzalan, 2011). Participants in the focus groups and interviews will each be paid \$15 cash; this compensation is necessary given that these community members are, for the most part, non-academic users who often work multiple jobs, have multiple pressing time commitments, and may be unfamiliar with (or even suspicious of) academic research.

The GSR and PI will record the focus groups and interviews (with the permission of the participants) and have them transcribed using Scribie.com. The names of participants will be kept confidential and separate from the data that is generated. Using NVivo software, the PI and GSR will develop a series of codes using constant comparative analysis and coding procedures developed in grounded theory such as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The PI and GSR will each code all of the transcripts and the codes will be checked for consistency. After all of the transcriptions have been coded twice and the codes checked for consistent application, the PI and GSR will analyze themes that have emerged. The results will be reported in several articles, the topics of which will be determined by our findings. For example, we may uncover details about under-studied user groups such as artists or activists, and report those findings in more detail in different articles, or we may find interesting types of impact across user groups, such as emotional impact or social impact, or we may find interesting commonalities or differences between LGBTQ communities and communities of color and report those findings in more detail in different articles. Data analysis will determine the subsequent themes of the three articles produced, which will be submitted to high-impact peer-reviewed journals in archival studies and LIS more broadly. Preprints will be deposited in the University of California's open access digital repository.

In Year 3 of the project, the PI and GSR will produce an assessment tool kit based on our research with instruments for community archives to measure their own impact, including details on methods for assessing users, such as how to run a focus group and conduct interviews; interview protocols; how to analyze such data once collected; and how to use such data to perform outreach and build services to meet the needs of specific user groups. The tool kit will be made publicly accessible via the University of California digital scholarship repository. It will be publicized on several professional listservs like SAA and AERI, as well as via a network of community archives that is currently being developed with the help of an IMLS national leadership grant (awarded to the Amistad Center, together with a consortium of community archives that the PI is part of developing), and local networks like LA as Subject and the LA Archivists' Collective. Also in Year 3, the PI and GSR will also hold a community archives symposium at UCLA that will publicize the results to the participating community archives as well as other community archives in Southern California. The PI and GSR will also hold sessions at each of the research sites reporting back the findings to community members. Given the distributed nature of both community archives and the communities they serve, these forums will be crucial for disseminating results to the research participants.

#### 4. Diversity Plan

This project is centered on understanding the needs of LGBTQ communities and communities of color, communities that have traditionally been underserved by archives. The PI is the co-founder of a community archives (*not* one of the research sites) that collects materials about and serves a community of color (South Asian Americans). The bulk of her academic research has focused on this community. Furthermore, research the PI conducted in the 2015-16 academic year on founders, volunteers, and staff of community archives representing LGBTQ communities and communities of color in Southern California shows a proven track record of successful research completed at the same organizations that will serve as research sites for the proposed project. The advisory board reflects the diversity of the communities being studied.

#### 5. Project Resources: Personnel, Time, Budget

##### Personnel

The PI is the author of the book *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), winner of the 2015 Waldo Gifford Leland Award for Best Publication from SAA. She has also published more than two dozen research articles on communities, archives, and social justice in peer-reviewed journals such as *The American Archivist*, *Archivaria*, *Archival Science*, *The Public Historian*, *The Journal of Documentation*, and *Library Quarterly*, among others. She is the guest editor of a special issue of *Archival Science* on archives and human rights (2014), and a co-guest editor of a forthcoming special issue of *The Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* on critical archival studies. She is also the co-founder of the South Asian American Digital Archive (<http://www.saada.org>). The grant will fund 3 months of summary salary to provide dedicated time to work on the project. Additionally, the 40% of the PI's academic year responsibilities that are designated for research (as included in her UCLA academic year salary) will be devoted to the project.

The GSR for the project will be entering UCLA doctoral student Joyce Gabiola. Joyce holds a Master's degree in library and information science with a concentration in archives management from Simmons College, where she led an effort to diversify the LIS curriculum. As a queer, gender-nonconforming Filipino-American from Texas, Joyce is driven by the desire to preserve the lived experiences of underrepresented or marginalized communities in a collaborative effort to ensure their voices are heard and documented. Joyce will be funded to work on the project 10 hours a week each year. The budget officer is Judy Miyoshi, who has over seven years experience managing both pre- and post-award funds from both private and public agencies with budgets ranging from \$25,000 to over four million dollars.

#### Advisory Board

A diverse advisory board of community archives practitioners will be assembled to help guide the direction of the project. The advisory board will meet informally online via Google chat once at the start of the grant period, and again at the end of the grant period to provide feedback on the project, and provide feedback on an individual and continual basis throughout. The advisory board will be invited to the UCLA community symposium in Year 3 and the 5 forums at the community archives sites. The advisory board will also provide feedback on how best to publicize the results of the project to diverse community members.

The advisory board will be comprised of the following members:

- Kelly Besser, Co-Founder, Transgender Living Archives
- Jarrett Drake, Digital Archivist, Princeton and Founder of A People's Archive of Police Violence
- Anne Gilliland, PhD, Professor, UCLA Department of Information Studies
- Bergis Jules, University Archivist, UC-Riverside (PI: Inland Empire Memories Project and DocNow Project)
- Samip Mallick, Executive Director, South Asian American Digital Archive
- Rebecka Sheffield, Executive Director, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

#### Timeline

Year One (October 2016 to September 2017)

- Recruit focus group participants with help of staff at each site
- PI and GSR hold 10 focus groups (2 at each site) with 6 users each for a total of 120 users
- PI and GSR develop codes for focus group data and analyze data using NVivo
- Present research design and very preliminary findings at SAA research forum and AERI

Year Two (October 2017 to September 2018)

- Recruit interview subjects with help of staff at each site
- PI and GSR conduct 50 semi-structured qualitative interviews with 10 users at each of the 5 sites for a total of 50 users
- PI and GSR develop codes for interview data and begin analyzing data using NVivo
- Present preliminary findings (based on focus group data) at iConference and ASIST

## Year Three (October 2018 to September 2019)

- PI and GSR finish analyzing interview data using NVivo
- PI and GSR write assessment toolkit with recommendations for how community archives can measure their own impact, which will be made publicly accessible via University of California open access e-scholarship repository
- PI and GSR will publicize toolkit on listservs such as LA as Subject, LA Archivists' Collective, SAA, AERI, and via the community archives network.
- PI and GSR will write and submit a minimum of 3 articles reporting findings to peer-reviewed journals
- Present findings at ALISE, ALA, LA as Subject Archives' Bazaar, and National Diversity in Libraries Conference
- Hold Community Archives Forum at UCLA to share results with community members.
- Hold forums at each research site (5 forums) to share results and solicit feedback.

**Budget** This proposal requests \$325,00, which includes three months' summer salary support for the project director for 3 years (\$108,433 plus \$13,771 in fringe benefits), \$33,594 for a Graduate Student Researcher (plus \$600 in fringe benefits and \$52,106 in fee remission), dissemination of findings in professional and academic venues (\$9,766), travel to the research sites (\$1,000), research supplies and transcription services, including \$500 in stipends for 5 participating organizations and \$15 for each participants (\$10,035), and the negotiated standard UC rate of 54% for indirect cost.

## 6. Communications Plan

The results of this research will be disseminated in the following ways:

1. A freely accessible assessment toolkit that provides the necessary tools (such as focus group formats and interview protocols) for community archives to study their own users. The paper will be published in the University of California's e-scholarship repository. It will be publicized on UCLA'S IS Department website, and on listservs such as those run by LA as Subject list (a consortium of archives in Los Angeles), SAA (reaching professional archivists), and AERI (researching archival academics). It will also be publicized through the advisory board's community-based networks.
2. At a community archives symposium held at UCLA in Year 3.
3. At smaller forums at each individual research site in Year 3. These forums will be crucial in disseminating results to a non-academic audience of community archives users.
4. A minimum of three academic articles published in top peer-reviewed journals such as *Library Quarterly*, *JASIST*, and *American Archivist*. Preprints will be published on the University of California's open access repository.
5. Presentation of research design, preliminary findings, and results at seven venues, including AERI, SAA Research Forum, iConference, ASIST, ALISE, ALA, LA as Subject Archives' Bazaar, and National Diversity in Libraries Conference

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## **Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

### **1. Biographical and Demographical Info**

- What field are you in?
- Would you describe yourself as a member of the community this community archives represents?

### **2. Research**

- Why do you come to this community archives? How often?
- How long have you been using the materials at this community archives?
- What materials have you used?
- How have you used them?
- What is your research about? How did you come to study that topic?
- What is your experience doing research in this community archives?
- Can you tell us a story about something you found in the archives and how you used it?
- How central are the materials you found here to your work?
- Prior to using this community archives, had you looked for materials in other archives? If so, what did you find? Can you describe this experience?

### **3. Community Archives' impact**

- How did you first find out about this community archives? What was your initial response to it?
- Do you feel the records in this community archives are representative of the community you were interested in or apart of? Why or why not?
- How would you describe the importance of this community archives to someone who has never seen it before?

### **4. Conclusion**

- Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like to discuss?



## DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM

### Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded research, data, software, and other digital products. The assets you create with IMLS funding require careful stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and re-use by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. However, applying these principles to the development and management of digital products is not always straightforward. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and best practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer a series of questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital assets. Your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

### Instructions

If you propose to create any type of digital product as part of your project, complete this form. We define digital products very broadly. If you are developing anything through the use of information technology (e.g., digital collections, web resources, metadata, software, or data), you should complete this form.

**Please indicate which of the following digital products you will create or collect during your project**  
(Check all that apply):

	Every proposal creating a digital product should complete ...	Part I
	If your project will create or collect ...	Then you should complete ...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital content	Part II
<input type="checkbox"/>	Software (systems, tools, apps, etc.)	Part III
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dataset	Part IV

## PART I.

### A. Intellectual Property Rights and Permissions

We expect applicants to make federally funded work products widely available and usable through strategies such as publishing in open-access journals, depositing works in institutional or discipline-based repositories, and using non-restrictive licenses such as a Creative Commons license.

**A.1** What will be the intellectual property status of the content, software, or datasets you intend to create? Who will hold the copyright? Will you assign a Creative Commons license (<http://us.creativecommons.org>) to the content? If so, which license will it be? If it is software, what open source license will you use (e.g., BSD, GNU, MIT)? Explain and justify your licensing selections.

I will maintain copyright of any research published as a result of this project, as the publication venue permits. I will favor open access journals as venues for publication. I will also deposit preprint copies of all published research in the University of California's e-scholarship repository, which is open access. The white paper produced in Year 3 will be published in e-scholarship and remain open access.

The anonymized raw data created through interviews will not be copyrighted and will also be made available through the University of California's e-scholarship repository, which is open access.

**A.2** What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital content, software, or datasets and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain any terms of access and conditions of use, why they are justifiable, and how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

The University of California will assert no ownership rights and will impose no conditions on access and use on the anonymized data or published research made available on e-scholarship.

**A.3** Will you create any content or products which may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities? If so, please describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

I will only make anonymized data available, so future researchers will not be able to access personal information about the participants or be able to identify them in order to maintain their privacy.

## **Part II: Projects Creating or Collecting Digital Content**

### **A. Creating New Digital Content**

**A.1** Describe the digital content you will create and/or collect, the quantities of each type, and format you will use.

**A.2** List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the content or the name of the service provider who will perform the work.

**A.3** List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG) you plan to create, along with the relevant information on the appropriate quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, or pixel dimensions).

## **B. Digital Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation**

**B.1** Describe your quality control plan (i.e., how you will monitor and evaluate your workflow and products).

**B.2** Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period of performance (e.g., storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, commitment of organizational funding for these purposes). Please note: You may charge the Federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the Federal award. (See 2 CFR 200.461).

## **C. Metadata**

**C.1** Describe how you will produce metadata (e.g., technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation). Specify which standards you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, or PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

**C.2** Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created and/or collected during and after the award period of performance.

**C.3** Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of digital content created during your project (e.g., an API (Application Programming Interface), contributions to the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) or other digital platform, or other support to allow batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

#### **D. Access and Use**

**D.1** Describe how you will make the digital content available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content).

**D.2** Provide the name and URL(s) (Uniform Resource Locator) for any examples of previous digital collections or content your organization has created.

### **Part III. Projects Creating Software (systems, tools, apps, etc.)**

#### **A. General Information**

**A.1** Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) this software will serve.

**A.2** List other existing software that wholly or partially perform the same functions, and explain how the tool or system you will create is different.

**B. Technical Information**

**B.1** List the programming languages, platforms, software, or other applications you will use to create your software (systems, tools, apps, etc.) and explain why you chose them.

**B.2** Describe how the intended software will extend or interoperate with other existing software.

**B.3** Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the new software you will create.

**B.4** Describe the processes you will use for development documentation and for maintaining and updating technical documentation for users of the software.

**B.5** Provide the name and URL(s) for examples of any previous software tools or systems your organization has created.

### **C. Access and Use**

**C.1** We expect applicants seeking federal funds for software to develop and release these products under an open-source license to maximize access and promote reuse. What ownership rights will your organization assert over the software created, and what conditions will you impose on the access and use of this product? Identify and explain the license under which you will release source code for the software you develop (e.g., BSD, GNU, or MIT software licenses). Explain any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access, explain why these terms or conditions are justifiable, and explain how you will notify potential users of the software or system.

**C.2** Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

**C.3** Identify where you will be publicly depositing source code for the software developed:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository: URL:

### **Part IV. Projects Creating a Dataset**

1. Summarize the intended purpose of this data, the type of data to be collected or generated, the method for collection or generation, the approximate dates or frequency when the data will be generated or collected, and the intended use of the data collected.

Assessing the Use of Community Archives (AUCA) is a three-year Early Career Grant project that seeks to answer the following questions:

- How do members of marginalized communities use community based-archives?
- What is the impact of such organizations on the individuals and communities they represent and serve?
- Does the preliminary impact model (ontological/epistemological/ and social impact) developed by the PI apply to these communities of users or does a new model need to be developed?

The data collected will be digital audio files of focus groups and interviews, which will be transcribed using the transcription service scribe.com. There will be 10 focus groups in Year One (two at each community archives research site), each including at least 6 community members, for a total of 60 focus group participants. In Year Two, there will be 10 interviews with individual users at each of 5 research sites, for a total of 50 interviews. The transcripts will be coded using NVivo software. Data collected will be qualitative. The data will be used and cited in at least 3 academic publications and one freely accessible white paper placed in the University of California's scholarship repository. Neither the focus group participants nor interview subjects will be identified by name.

2. Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

Yes, as the research involves human subjects, it will require IRB approval. I currently have IRB approval from UCLA's IRB to conduct this research; this IRB approval will require an extension, which I intend to request as soon as the current IRB expires in September 2016.

3. Will you collect any personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information? If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect such information while you prepare the data files for public release (e.g., data anonymization, data suppression PII, or synthetic data).

No, I will not collect PII or any proprietary information during the interview. Obviously, participants names and organizations will be collected in my initial recruitment list, but I will not share that information publicly. In publicly available data, participants will be identified by an assigned number.

4. If you will collect additional documentation such as consent agreements along with the data, describe plans for preserving the documentation and ensuring that its relationship to the collected data is maintained.

I will be obtaining verbal consent from the participants, which will be recorded and transcribed as part of the interview transcripts.

5. What will you use to collect or generate the data? Provide details about any technical requirements or dependencies that would be necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, or processing the dataset(s).

I will digitally record the interviews and focus groups using a digital voice recorder or the recording device on my iphone, which will generate an mp3 file. The interviews will then be transcribed and saved as word documents, any identifying information will be redacted, and then I will upload the files to the e-scholarship repository.

6. What documentation (e.g., data documentation, codebooks, etc.) will you capture or create along with the dataset(s)? Where will the documentation be stored, and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the dataset(s) it describes?

I will note the date and time of the interview and include that information in the same file as the transcript. The word documents containing the interview transcripts will be stored on my hard drive, the hard drive of the research assistant, a server at UCLA, and in the e-scholarship repository.

7. What is the plan for archiving, managing, and disseminating data after the completion of the award-funded project?

The material will be stored in the University of California's e-scholarship repository, which is committed to archiving the materials in its stead.

8. Identify where you will be publicly depositing dataset(s):

Name of repository: e-scholarship

(The University of California)  
URL: <https://escholarship.org>

9. When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?

This data management plan will be reviewed at the end of each fiscal year during the 3-year grant period: September 2017, September 2018, September 2019.

# Original Preliminary Proposal

## **Assessing the Use of Community Archives** **Michelle Caswell, PhD/ UCLA/ IMLS Early Career**

### **Project Description**

Michelle Caswell, PhD, an Assistant Professor in UCLA's Department of Information Studies, seeks a three-year, \$332,189 Early Career Grant to answer the following questions:

- How do members of marginalized communities use community based-archives?
- What is the impact of such organizations on the communities they represent and serve?

More specifically, Caswell, with a graduate student researcher (GSR), would like to conduct 50 in-depth qualitative interviews and hold five focus groups with users of five community-based archives in Southern California: Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG), Southern California Library (SCL), Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), The Compton Historical Society (CHS), and ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive (ONE).

The PI has already conducted research at each of the sites and has a professional rapport with staff at each location. Participants will be recruited based on recommendations from the organizations themselves (with respect to patron privacy); organizations will each receive a \$500 stipend for their work recruiting users to participate in focus groups and interviews. By choosing a range of organizations that cross ethnic, geographic and sexual identities, this research will gain an understanding of the impact of such archives on marginalized communities writ large.

Recent research in archives notes a growth in independently operated, community-based archival organizations (Bastian and Alexander 2009; Flinn and Stevens 2009; Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd 2009; Mander 2009; Daniel 2010; Cook 2013). While definitions of community are contextual and shifting, Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) define community as "any manner of people who come together and present themselves as such, and a 'community archive' is the product of their attempts to document the history of their commonality" (p. 75). Archival communities can materialize around ethnic, racial, or religious identities (Kaplan 2000, Daniel 2010, Caswell 2014), gender and sexual orientation (Barriault 2009), economic status (Flinn and Stevens 2009), and physical locations (Flinn and Stevens 2009). These identity-based community archives are framed as grassroots alternatives to mainstream repositories through which communities can make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them, shape collective memory of their own pasts, and control the means through which stories about their past are constructed. Power is central to this ongoing conversation. The majority of the staff, volunteers, and users of these community archives are members of underrepresented groups. In maintaining independence and encouraging participation, these archives strive to provide a platform in which previously marginalized groups are empowered to make decisions about archival collecting on their own terms.

Professional archivists and archival studies scholars are only now coming to terms with this burgeoning community archives movement. Although some research has been done to understand the growth and function of community-based archives, there is, to date, a large gap in understanding who uses such archives, how, and what their impact is. The PI of the proposed project has begun to answer these questions on a small scale. In research conducted in 2014, the PI interviewed 12 South Asian American academic users of the South Asian American Digital Archive to uncover the ways in which a single community archive countered feelings of "symbolic annihilation"—the affective response to the absence or misrepresentation of members of your community-- among its users (Caswell, Cifor and Ramirez, forthcoming). Through this research, the PI developed a tripartite framework for measuring the impact of community archives: *ontological* (changing one's sense of being); *epistemological* (providing evidence of the community's past); and *social* (building a sense of community). In 2015, with the support of a \$25,000 grant from the Hellman Foundation, the PI interviewed 14 staff members of community-based archives in Southern California to further develop this framework as it pertains to those who work or volunteer for community archives. While this research has laid an important foundation, more detailed work is needed to ascertain if such a framework can be generalized to *users* of community-based archives.

### **Potential Impact**

This research could change not only how archivists conceive of community-based archives, but also how they understand the users of such archives, with the ultimate goal of creating partnerships between community-based archives and mainstream archival institutions in order to better represent and serve communities of color and LGBTQ communities.

### **Performance Goals and Outcomes**

#### Year One (October 2016 to September 2017)

- Recruit focus group and interview participants with help of staff at each site
- PI and GSR hold 5 focus groups (1 at each site) with users
- PI and GSR conduct 25 semi-structured qualitative interviews with users at the 5 sites
- Present preliminary findings at SAA and AERI

#### Year Two (October 2017 to September 2018)

- PI and GSR conduct 25 semi-structured qualitative interviews with users at the 5 sites (for a total of 50 interviews)
- PI and GSR code data for themes using NVivo
- Present findings at iConference and ASIST
- Write a white paper with recommendations for how community archives can measure their own impact, which will be made publicly accessible via University of California scholarship repository

#### Year Three (October 2018 to September 2019)

- Write and submit a minimum of 3 articles reporting findings to peer-reviewed journals
- Present findings at ALISE and ALA

#### Estimated Budget

This proposal requests \$332,189, which includes summer salary support for the project director for 3 years (\$108,433 plus \$13,771 in fringe benefits), \$33,594 for a Graduate Student Researcher (plus \$600 in fringe benefits and \$52,106 in fee remission), dissemination of findings in professional and academic venues (\$9,766), research supplies and transcription services, including \$500 in stipends for 5 participating organizations (\$15,703), and negotiated 54% indirect cost.

**PI** The PI is the author of the book *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), winner of the 2015 Waldo Gifford Leland Award for Best Publication from SAA. She has also published more than two dozen research articles in journals such as *The American Archivist*, *Archivaria*, *Archival Science*, *The Public Historian*, and *Library Quarterly*, among others. She is the guest editor of a special issue of *Archival Science* on archives and human rights, and a co-guest editor of a forthcoming special issue of *The Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* on critical archival studies. She is also the co-founder of the South Asian American Digital Archive (<http://www.saada.org>).

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