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CONTROLLING THE POPULAR

*Canadian Memory Institutions
and Popular Culture*

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*T. H. Goode, Member of Parliament for
Burnaby-Richmond:*

*“There are Women Outlaws and True
Mystery. This latter is the most filthy book
that I have ever seen on a magazine stand.”*

An hon. member: “What is in it?”

*T. H. Goode: “The honourable member can
read it after I’m through with it.”¹*

In the last decade, there has been an apparent radical realignment in the attitude of memory institutions towards popular culture. In the past, archives, libraries, and museums aligned themselves with cultural forces that ensured the marginalization, indeed the criminalization, of popular culture. Today they seem to be in a cautious embrace. However, the realignment from guardians of high culture to cautious intermediaries is superficial. As

the manifestations of popular culture gain a patina of respectability through age or nostalgia, items such as paperbacks, comics, or letters may be collected, but they are managed through old forms: “The librarian as gatekeeper between order and chaos, the library as cathedral, the humiliation of the user, and the power of surveillance and the consequences of disrupting the sacred order of texts.”² As well, memory institutions use codified law and ritual to control the products and activities of the emerging digital information world and continue to disregard the discourse and products of popular culture.

This marginalization arises from the alignment of memory institutions with bodies that work to control information and the culture’s uneasy relationship with new forms of discourse or expression. The wish for control is based on a desire to maintain the codified validation of the authority of information, the economic investment in existing models of control such as copyright, and the belief that memory institutions bestow status on information through inclusion.

The rituals of access are shadows of ancient practices meant to control reading and interpretation, keeping these privileges for those who can be trusted to respect the status quo. In 1804, the British House of Commons noted that access to the Reading Room of the British Library should be limited to those already known to a Library trustee or officer.³ In the present, the language of copyright enforcement remains unchanged, and libraries sign licenses with digital information sellers restricting full access to those authorized by the institution. Non-affiliated users visiting the library depend on the scrutiny of institutional gatekeepers for access. These new rituals are manifested in the vocabulary of metadata, login, and password.

In doing this, memory institutions set themselves at odds with the emerging reality of digital information. As this conservatism takes root there is a real danger that Canadian memory institutions will be reduced to unpopulated temples for the validation of group memory, eerie outposts for copyright enforcement, and, for those who tolerate their rituals of meaningless consecration, engines for the generation of tax receipts.

A History of Discomfort with Popular Culture

He spoke, and with his fleshless, diaphanous hands he began slowly tearing to strips and shreds the limp pages of the manuscript, stuffing them into his mouth, slowly swallowing as if he were consuming the host and he wanted to make it flesh of his flesh.

—UMBERTO ECO, *The Name of the Rose*, 480⁴

In 1949, the Canadian Parliament introduced legislation to criminalize the production, sale, and ownership of pulp fiction and comic books in Canada.⁵ While controls had been exercised over salacious adult material in the past, now Canadian youth had disposable income and the temptations of the free market. As well as criminalizing pulp magazines, a Royal Commission, known as the Massey Commission, was established to review the nature of Canadian culture. Ignoring Canadian contributions to popular culture, such as Winnipeg's Harlequin Publishing, the Commission concluded that the bad literature that defined popular culture came from the United States.

Parliament and the Massey Commission believed it was the role of memory institutions to mediate good taste. Today the impact of the Massey Commission is still felt. The belief in the licentious, tainted contagion of pulp fiction effectively led to its destruction not only by individual citizens, but also by Canadian memory institutions, which refused to collect it and thereby legitimize these works.

Popular culture has also been marginalized in memory institutions because society views it as transient and disposable. Popular culture is seen as a tasteless, fleeting, and disposable commodity. A few years ago, a newspaper article lamented the loss of eight years of Johnny Carson tapes because a junior television executive thought they had little enduring value. In a similar vein, children's libraries diligently avoided purchasing series such as the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew. They were not proper forms of literature for formative tastes. Although public libraries now do purchase popular paperbacks, they also discard them when worn or when their appeal has waned. They can be read but not "collected"—that would bestow too much status.

Academic libraries, archives, and museums have been especially careful to keep popular culture at bay, although recently, some American library, archive, and museum associations have begun actively to endorse its collection.⁶ In Canada, as the nature of the nation's literary canon is increasingly questioned, so too are the

collecting policies of its brand institutions. Recently, the decision of the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to acquire the works of an unsuccessful Canadian writer met with some excitement among postmodernist literary critics.⁷ Canada's postwar "juvenile delinquents" (including Margaret Atwood), who read pulp science fiction, crime novels, and comic books with a flashlight at midnight, are now of an age to wish to see validation of their nostalgia through the collections of memory institutions.

However, acceptance of these materials means that they must be controlled by the same codes and rituals that accompany traditional collections. This creates a deep tension in memory institutions. To assign value to materials by accepting them, they must be made to fit into the traditional practices of description, control, and institutional values. Yet these materials are by nature non-traditional in format and readership. In the case of academic libraries, for example, a distinctive collection is generally considered as a candidate for Special Collections. Special Collections units tend to focus on rare and elite materials. Inclusion here confers without question a social consensus of value and worthiness. Without a senior advocate, a popular culture collection stands little chance of entering that rarefied place. Even when a dean, university president, or library director is enamoured of a collection, there will be resistance arising from the materials' patent unsuitability for traditional treatment. Where will the collection be housed? Who will organize it? Where are the extraordinary resources for conservation? A boatload of comic books or VHS cassettes is about as welcome as a plague ship.

When such collections are accepted, they continue to play a peripheral role, often being seen as a cause for embarrassment rather than celebration. Rarely do popular culture collections receive the publicity and curation needed to become established within the academic community. There are examples of activist librarians who have popularized such collections (for example the Judith Merrill Collection of the Toronto Public Library), and there is growing awareness of the web as a dissemination tool. However, for the most part, Special Collections remain institutional backwaters mired in the past.

As Special Collection materials are scanned for digital access, Canadian memory professionals, whether curator, archivist, or librarian, continue to control access by replicating high-culture rituals. In the past, this included legislation criminalizing unlawful copying. Now, misinformed awareness of copyright law serves as an excuse to assume sanctioned rituals to ensure control. These rituals

include controlling who can view digital products, decisions on the suitability of material for digital access, and reluctance to include born digital material. Traditional practices and roles need to be questioned as memory institutions seek to engage with new information technologies and culture.

A New Popular Culture of Information Seeking

The abbot smiled. "No one should. No one can. No one, even if he wished, would succeed. The library defends itself, immeasurable as the truth it houses, deceitful as the falsehood it preserves. A spiritual labyrinth, it is also a terrestrial labyrinth. You might enter and you might not emerge. And having said this, I would like you to conform to the rules of the abbey."

—*The Name of the Rose*, 38

Memory institutions have always been rooted in high culture. Yet today the apparent cornucopia of the Internet is spawning a new popular culture of information seeking that radically challenges the physical and intellectual shape of memory institutions. Institutions are faced with maintaining traditions created to sustain a print culture of information scarcity and sanctity. In the meantime, society is engaging more directly, immediately, and easily with information than ever before. A radical transformation is taking shape. It is marked by the dominance of technology, the dominance of the culture of copying, the dominance of the culture of ease, and the struggle for space. Combined with this is the increasing use of legislation to control access and use of information. Privacy and intellectual property legislation is being used by memory professionals to reinvent their gatekeeper function by reintroducing “criminality” and reasserting their traditional power over information seeking.

Dominance of a New Populist Technology

It was a forked pin, so constructed that it could stay on a man's nose... And on either side of the fork, before the eyes, there were two ovals of metal, which held two almonds of glass, thick as the bottom of a tumbler.

—*The Name of the Rose*, 74

In Canada, memory professionals have been leaders in using new information

technologies. Librarians employed technology decades before the Internet to control content with the automation of the card catalogue. The integration of catalogues across institutions eventually created the OCLC world catalogue based in Dublin, Ohio.

The Canadian Heritage Information Network was the first to use the power of the Internet to popularize history and the country's museum collections. The intention was to put an inventory of the nation's collections online. The metadata fields that would describe these items were to have been of the highest standard and, of course, impossible to achieve with existing resources. Security considerations (it was a criminal act in some jurisdictions to release the location of archaeological remains) precluded some of these first efforts to increase public access. For whatever reason, the anticipated hordes of users did not visit these initial offerings. Over time, inventories were replaced with online exhibits that followed in the museum, archive, and special collections tradition of curated and controlled public access.

The creation of digital surrogates for concrete objects is a surprising source of controversy in memory intuitions. Librarians have been eager to use technology to attach digitized material directly to description, creating a single act that combines discovery and use. Librarians see this as a holy grail and widely seek a complete digital recreation of the print environment.

Archivists, while willing to post samples or the best of a set of letters, are often unwilling to create complete digital versions of holdings. There is a real fear that researchers will stop visiting archives for advice or to use collections. For example, the Hudson's Bay Company collections were prevented from being digitized because it was argued that archive would "lose" any control over end use. The argument was that the microfilms and some of the materials were of such poor quality that the documents required interpretational assistance.⁸ Similarly, the City of Calgary resists digitizing historical bylaws because the archivists believe the public will misunderstand the difference between an historical bylaw and a current one. Surely, this is the role of the researcher, not the memory professional.⁹

In archives, the rituals of access are reinvented and reinforced through provincial and federal privacy legislation, itself a result of the increased availability of personal information in digital environments. In the best circumstance (Alberta), a researcher has to identify their research needs and sign a researcher non-disclosure agreement. At the worst (the federal government), all documents must be vetted,

and costs assigned. Memory professionals have found a new gatekeeper role. Archival documents that were available thirty years ago are now restricted. Indeed documents are subject to such expensive reviews that unfettered research is limited to those employed by governments. Governments and their information specialists now control information more tightly than ever before through the rituals of the memory professionals.

In libraries, technology has also allowed the reinvention of control. Librarians have willingly cooperated in this change as the readers' preference for online access pushes a digital library agenda. But in moving so quickly to the digital frontier, librarians have accepted models of control that will ultimately erode their core values. Licenses, rather than cultural consensus, now rule access and use. Limited budgets mean the range of information gathered contracts. Preservation and the role in sustaining a generational legacy are easily abandoned as too expensive and difficult.

The Changing Culture of Copying

The brightest places were reserved for the antiquarians, the most expert illuminators, the rubricators and the copyists. Each desk had everything for illuminating and copying... Next to each scribe, or at the top of the sloping desk, there was a lectern, on which the codex to be copied was placed, the page covered by a sheet with a cut-out window which framed the line being copied at the moment.

—*The Name of the Rose*, 72

There is a growing tension between the old culture of power derived from controlling the authorized original and the new culture of power derived from participating in shared creation. The old culture demanded acknowledgement of the primacy of ownership. The new culture of copy negates that relationship, transferring power to creative acts.

There are significant questions regarding copies in a digital environment. Is information viewed on publicly posted websites there for readers to enjoy and distribute, or are these postings analogous to the virtual page of a book? Some think the former, while copyright holders argue the latter. The recent focus of post-secondary institutions on plagiarism can be seen as attempting to reinforce

the sanctity of the academic copy culture, which very much aligns with the primacy of ownership of ideas. It can be argued that in a society in which the collective owns memory there can be no concept of plagiarism.¹⁰

There is an existing copy tradition that memory professionals could use to understand these new behaviours. In bureaucratic environments, the practice is to create institutional copies that do not acknowledge an individual creator. For example, Ministers of the Crown regularly sign letters, advocate policy, or deliver speeches drafted by subordinates who rely on many sources of information, including academic materials. There are no footnotes in legislation or policy speeches acknowledging these sources. Bureaucratic cultures rarely use academic rituals of copy and rely instead on their own authority to reinforce argument. The information culture of the vast majority has always been based on this culture of criminalized but approved plagiarism. It can be argued that the culture of the institutional copy is the one that has much in common with digital popular culture.

Most memory specialists work as professionals within the institutional environment. Curators, librarians, and archivists are rarely acknowledged as owners of intellectual property or as creators. Archival finding aids, library catalogues, or museum exhibition texts are rarely acknowledged. Memory professionals are often bureaucrats—part of larger government, post-secondary, or church bureaucracies that understand and legitimize the tradition of information replication. Ideas are not owned by a single individual or an institution but rather by an evolving group of individuals who give and take as needs demand. In the collective academic, authority does not matter.

Information shared on the digital street tends to reference an unspecified authority. What makes this new copy culture powerful is its ability to create a new equivalent of the institutional copy culture. This information does have power, but it is a populist power rather than a result of the power of the state or a legitimized institution. Reliability of the source still matters, but not in a way that memory specialists might find acceptable.

Information-seeking studies indicate that reliable members of an individual's immediate community are often the first point of inquiry. The passing of unauthored but friend-legitimized information is a form of "power sharing" and "power replication." Authority is inherent, not in the information, but in the individual authorizing the information. This authority has now also been given at least in part

to the machine. The machine is the friend—the machine is “they.”

It is critical to note that different information is legitimized in different ways and by different authorities. For example, the Initiatives in the New Economy SuperNet Alberta study, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada found that financial information from friends in the banking industry, not Internet sources, was considered the most reliable. Agricultural market reports from rural radio were considered authoritative. Health information from the Internet was considered as a first source of information. The Internet was considered an acceptable authority for schoolwork. Unless focus-group members were prompted, memory professionals were not mentioned. Libraries¹¹ were considered essential to community life as a place to go for recreational reading.¹²

A culture of group creation could reduce accountability, and the care behind intellectual activity. The Initiatives in the New Economy SuperNet Project, which undertook to study information seeking-behaviours, suggests this is not the case. Librarians, for example, are still considered the keepers of knowledge regarding the best information—however they are no longer seen strictly as gatekeepers. They are one of a number of community authorities that include friends, the Internet, radio, or the press. Each is valued differently depending on the information type. Where memory professionals have authority in the digital world, it is because of the brand of their institutions. As in the past, the institution provides the legitimacy of the information.

Memory professionals remain complicit in trying to control the emerging digital information culture by acceding to criminalization through legislation, and by accepting a role in supporting these rules. For example, a fundamental principle of the new digital age is criminalizing the use of best information if done without the imprimatur of a memory institution or copyright holder. Often the librarian, archivist, or now “disclosure analyst” acts as the intermediary preventing discovery or access. Librarians and archivists become complicit in the high culture’s desire to control access and textual interpretation. They provide the mechanisms to regulate access to information within the context of the new criminality. For example, logins and passwords serve as authorizations to see materials (i.e., manage copyright) and to extract financial tolls for access to knowledge.

Have memory professionals increased the cost of information by using the resources of their institutions to acquire and tollgate information? Have they also attempted to retain control through the intimidation of professional language?

Does a researcher care whether the material they found was through a Google search or was Dublin Core compliant?

This is particularly evident in how memory institutions use ritual and law to continue to regulate and shape the culture of copy. Memory institutions have always regulated copy, whether in the scriptorium or at the Xerox machine. The Internet introduces the potential for information to serve as a universal resource that can be used by anyone. We should expect the rituals around acknowledgment and access to be profoundly changed as archivists, librarians, and curators are no longer required to serve as intermediaries between what is owned and what is public. If memory professionals are no longer needed to guard authority and authenticity, then what is their function? Will fear lead to a too-close alignment with agencies that seek to establish control and to create roles to enforce the legalities of access? Such a development would critically harm the memory professions and institutions. Users have demonstrated a willingness to abandon the traditional culture of control, if an alternative is presented.

Culture of Ease

I don't know. There is something in the library, and I don't believe it is the souls of dead librarians...

—*The Name of the Rose*, 90

Accompanying the culture of copy is a culture of ease that dominates digital information searching. Perhaps the change most difficult for memory institutions to understand is the advent of information plenitude rather than scarcity. Readers are no longer limited in their choice of information sources. Rituals that make access difficult or complex are now readily bypassed. Memory professionals and their institutions are not the first choice for information. Studies of information grounds show that most individuals rank libraries quite low in terms of preferred sources.¹³ Familiarity and ease guide the choice of information source. Friends are preferred over the reference desk, Google over the library catalogue, and digital access over the physical space.

It has been argued that there has been a sharp decline in writing skills and the ability to sustain complex and extended thought. One study shows that only one third of Internet information seekers go beyond the first page. These “flickers”

have short attention spans and visit many sites, but investigate and use few. When they find a web page that is significantly below their skill level or when there are problems with securing access permissions, it is abandoned. It is a culture of ease and play. As more people look for information on the Internet, information professionals focus increasingly on digital access.

This is not without consequence. Recent studies show that the new culture of information seeking is accompanied by a sharp decline in writing skills, in individualized study (group work is preferred), and in classroom and library attendance. The reading culture is disappearing in favour of skimming or browsing. Immediacy is preferred. Friends are considered more reliable sources of information assessment than professionals. Most of these findings are from the Pew Foundation studies and are conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom.¹⁴ But, they were also reinforced by the findings of the SuperNet information-seeking projects in Alberta.¹⁵ It must be noted that these studies were mostly conducted by information professions and tend to focus on the negative aspects of information technology. The ability to educate, to free information from the fetters of the controlling professions, and to revolutionize economies is generally sidelined.

Libraries, archives, and museums have always believed they support a culture of ease. Library catalogues, archival inventories, and museum exhibitions are dominated by the desire (or so their creators argue) to ease the information pathway. However, whereas libraries attempted to ease the pathway to information through bibliographic verification, Google and Yahoo showed the archaic, clumsy nature of this approach by providing a direct link between discovery and use. Now memory institutions struggle to create ever-easier paths to information. Text bites and images rather than complex narratives rule in museums. No text can be longer than eighty-eight words. Information seeking, even for complex materials, is dominated by considerations of ease, only slightly mitigated by frustrations relating to quality. Information seeking is not about the best but about good enough.

The challenge is to continue to serve readers who need complete, rare, or complex information. This is not the same as using rituals to confirm an artificial aura of importance. Rather it is recognizing that satisfying the needs of the majority can lead unwittingly to excluding information that is marginal or specialized. This challenge has at its root many of the same considerations that excluded popular culture materials in the past—an engrained reluctance to engage in risk or controversial

questions and the fear engendered by reliance on external funding. It is far too easy for memory institutions to follow the smooth path.

Physicality and the “Bilbao Disease”

Wherefore it is best that in places like this... not all books be within the reach of all.

—*The Name of the Rose*, 89

Memory institutions have long identified their status within society through iconic buildings: the best of high architecture. In a digital environment, buildings are icons of past glory. Statistics from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) show a steady decrease in onsite reference statistics for Canadian members. From 2000 to 2005, the thirteen Canadian members of ARL for which there are statistics showed an average decline of 64 percent in reference statistics. Only three institutions showed an increase. At the same time, libraries are experiencing an astonishing increase in the use of licensed electronic resources. For example, there were over 2.7 million instances of access to online resources recorded by the University of Calgary in 2006. These patterns are found equally among academic libraries across North America. The culture of ease calls into question the need for physical library space.

In the last few years, museums, libraries, and archives have sought a new relevance through “starchitecture.”¹⁶ If one institution symbolizes high culture it is the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank O. Gehry. The museum’s architecture has become the exhibition. As the *New York Times* pointed out, no one knows what is in the building.¹⁷ The collections are irrelevant—the building is the star. The same argument could be made about the new Royal Ontario Museum, the new Art Gallery of Ontario addition, or even the new Alberta Art Gallery. Few comprehend the content or role of these institutions. What matters is the ability to gain diminishing market attention through the magnificence of space. Canada’s Bill Thorsell, who fully understands the art of communication and is not afraid to borrow a good idea, has led the Canadian revolution by retaining Liebiskin to dream a crystal over Bloor Street. The Royal Ontario Museum building, with its leaking roof and over-abundance of light, has become a popular culture icon in Toronto. The War Museum, the Museum of Civilization, and the National Art Gallery have all done the same thing. Are libraries any different? The

new Vancouver library is but one example of the new information temples. It should not escape anyone that all these buildings were conceived in the digital age.

So what is the role of library, archive, and museum buildings? We are still constructing them but now they are showpieces for the legitimization of information. Is that what the larger public expects out of their memory institutions: Bilbao temples with no objects of worship and no sanctifying priests? Is Jacques Derrida's metaphor¹⁸ that knowledge is controlled by institutionally sanctioned archivists who limit access and space a self-fulfilling prophecy?

These new memory facilities teeter between relevance in a digital age and sanctifying information. Already we see some emerging traditions in the content of these facilities. For example, a new university library must have an information commons. Social interaction is the real intention of these spaces. Social space is replacing space devoted to collections. Now collections are placed in storage buildings to be hauled out as artifacts. While libraries exert control over digital information through authorized login and password, they also increase control over physical collections.

When a Gen-Xer was asked whether his community needed a library, an archives, or a museum, he proclaimed that of course a community needed these facilities. To him they were symbols of civilization or sophistication, although he struggled as to what a librarian might do there.

The Persistence of Tradition and the Challenge of Change

Tradition

The old man was silent. He held both hands open on the book, as if caressing its pages, flattening them the better to read them, or as if he wanted to protect the book from a raptor's talons.

—*The Name of the Rose*, 480

In the past, archivists and librarians required readers to pass through rigorous rituals of access. In the LAC, all research using archives and special collections was done in a secured reading room under the careful eye of a professional. Like Foucault's metaphor of the Panopticon, librarians regulated behaviour through

the organization of space.¹⁹ Academic libraries still contain controlled spaces for the viewing of designated material. In museums, collections that are not on exhibit are locked away from view and very special intervention is required to examine these materials. Consequently few members of the public ever do.

In a digitized environment, everyone could potentially view these collections. There would be no need for refereed access. But then, how would memory institutions control interpretation? Memory professionals could adopt the curator's strategy: provide access through exhibitions. Scholars would still have to come to the institution to examine collections and the status of both the profession and the space would be assured.

Libraries and archives continue to preserve the rituals of access for online collections. To access licensed digital resources, a library issues a login and password. In addition, they hold items back from digitization. Memory professionals find themselves positioned to use copyright laws and licensing agreements to reinvent their gatekeeper functions. It can be argued that archivists, librarians, and indeed curators are redefining their roles from being driven by client service access, to becoming agents of the state, publishers, and rights holders.

For example, the "big three" law publishers (Lexis Nexis/Elsevier; Westlaw/Thomson; and CCH/Wolters Kluwer) have controlled 80 percent of the U.S. legal publishing market in 2005. Since then, the big three have made significant inroads in purchasing small national publishers in Australia, the U.K., and Europe.²⁰ However, despite the precedent of the Supreme Court's liberal interpretations against the big three,²¹ librarians have studiously avoided irritating these publishers. Instead, they listen politely²² to the Big Three's lawyers and impose restrictive access to law materials as a matter of acquiescent principle.

Instead of assuming a role in decriminalizing the sharing of information, library and museum professionals reinforce their roles as guardians of authority by demanding that the public adhere to the academic ritual of authorization. They continue to be rigorous in the enforcement of the Copyright Act. Public and academic libraries are a key source of revenue for Access Copyright in Canada.

If memory professionals acted as advocates for the new popular culture of information seeking, would new economic models for information sharing emerge? Some radical elements work toward this purpose by protesting restrictive copyright laws, digital rights management, and pushing for open access/open source agendas. But in most cases, this is done by individuals with minimal institutional support.

Change

All of this, in any case has been of no avail... Now it is over. I have found you, I have found the book, and the others died in vain.

—*The Name of the Rose*, 480

As libraries are emptied of content and users cease to visit, professionals seek a turnaround by leaving the library and entering into the information grounds of users. Information grounds are the physical and virtual spaces where individuals look for information and research shows that libraries do not rank highly here. Some examples of the trend for information professionals to try to occupy these spaces include setting up virtual libraries in Second Life and projects where librarians situate themselves in campus coffee shops or other public/social spaces. Even more adventurous is the withdrawal from labelled space. Here the library provides essentially unbranded services within the larger information universe. For example, libraries can work with Google Scholar to allow authenticated users to link directly from citations to licensed text in a minimally branded seamless interface.

The exploration of roles outside the physical library space is a proper and reasonable reaction to the fundamentally changing nature of information use. However, it can insidiously carry with it the loss of a role in stewardship and support for the marginal and complex. While academic libraries in Canada are successful in negotiating and purchasing access to large blocks of information from mainstream publishers, such as Elsevier, Springer, or Sage, they struggle to develop meaningful reactions to the burgeoning open access environment of digital information. Like its inhabitants, librarians too easily view this environment as ephemeral, lacking gravitas or lasting value. It is a remarkable continuation of the blind spot to printed popular culture. Blogs, wikis, web pages, open access journals, none of these are seen as suitable objects of the attention of Special Collections. Special Collections as signifiers of cultural value for objects continue to depend on the physicality of these items.

What stands to be lost through this absence of attention is an entire generation's cultural dialogue. We have no collectors hoarding fanzines, comics, letters, or photographs in dusty attics awaiting our eventual appreciation. Digital information requires quick action, not protestations of impotence in the face of copyright, limited budgets, or the needs of the majority.

Notes

1. Canada. Debates of the House of Commons, 2nd session, 6 October 1949, 578.
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3. "Papers relating to Mode of Admission to British Museum and Reading Room, June 1804." House of Commons Papers: Accounts and Papers, Session 1803–1804, Volume VIII, 647, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp-us&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:fulltext:1803-000581 (accessed 14 January 2008).
4. Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983): 480.
5. Michelle Smith, "From 'The Offal of the Magazine Trade' to 'Absolutely Priceless': Considering the Canadian Pulp Magazine Collection," *English Studies in Canada* 30:1 (March 2004): 101–116.
6. Kevin P. Mulcahy, "Science Fiction Collections in ARL Academic Libraries," *College and Research Libraries* 67:1 (January 2006): 15–34.
7. Amy Tector, "The Almost Accidental Archive and Its Impact on Literary Subjects and Canonicity," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40:2 (2006): 98.
8. Conversation with one of the authors approximately five years ago.
9. Conversation with one of the authors last year.
10. See, in particular, Matthew Allen, "Dematerialised Data and Human Desire: The Internet and Copy Culture," In Toshiyasu L. Kunii, Seah Hock Soon, and Alexei Sourin, eds., *Proceedings of the 2003 International Conference on Cyberworlds*, 3–5 December 2003, Singapore (Los Alamitos, California: IEEE Computer Society, 2003): 26–33.
11. Ibid.
12. Library Sub Project, Alberta SuperNet Research Project, 2003–04 Interviews by F. Pannekoek.
13. Studies on information-seeking behaviours were done in 2004–05 in five communities throughout Alberta. These findings were consistent across all non-Aboriginal communities.
14. See, for example, Soo Young Rieh, "On the Web at Home: Information Seeking and Web Searching in the Home Environment," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 55:8 (2004): 743–753. This was also reinforced by the 2003–04 focus groups in the Alberta SuperNet project. See also George Lorenzo, Diana Oblinger, and Charles Dziuban, "How Choice, Co-Creation, and Culture are Changing what it Means to be Ner Savvy," Web publication www.net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3008.pdf (accessed 25 August 2009) in

October 2006 as an Educause Learning Initiative.

15. Carol Twigg is President and CEO of the National Centre for Academic Transformation. Her articles can be found on its website: <http://www.center.rpi.edu/>.
16. Library Sub Project, Alberta SuperNet Research Study, 2003–04 interviews by F. Pannekoek.
17. Denny Lee, “Bilbao: Ten Years Later,” *New York Times*, (Late Edition—East Coast) 23 September 2007: 5.1.
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19. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995): 195–228.
20. Ruth Bird, “A Moveable Feast: Law Librarianship in the Noughties,” *Oxford Legal Studies Research Paper* No. 52 (2006), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=951080> (accessed 25 August 2009).
21. CCH Canadian Ltd. v. Law Society of Upper Canada, 2004 SCC 13.
22. Canadian Association of Law Libraries Conference, May 2004, Quebec City.

