The role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand: A research paper

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1. Introduction

This research covers an area of archives management that deserves more focus across the archival community in New Zealand: community archives. Although collections of community memory have existed for years, the concept of community archives is still somewhat ambiguous. This, combined with few community archives advocates, little professional support and a dearth of New Zealand literature, has resulted in different opinions and gaps in understanding regarding community archives. In particular what community archives are, what they do, and whether they apply good archival practice.

The overall purpose of the research was to address some of these different opinions and gaps in understanding concerning community archives. This was done by looking at different examples of current practice and expert comment and establishing common viewpoints about the role of community archives, current concerns, and factors that may affect community archives’ future development. Findings were obtained by analysing data from two groups: individuals with day-to-day responsibility for managing a community archives (interviewees) and experts who have a broader archival perspective.

Research was carried out in two stages with each stage using different qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Stage 1 comprised of interviews and on-site case notes with five individuals who had day-to-day responsibility for five small community archives. Interviewees were asked about their collection in terms of their day to day work, their concerns, and aspects they would ideally like to change. Stage 2 consisted of three rounds of online surveys with 15 pre-selected archives experts. Experts gave feedback on given statements describing the current state of community archives, as well as factors they forecasted would impact community archives over the next ten years.

This report provides a detailed overview of results and findings. It is intended to help the wider archives profession and other heritage information communities understand more about community archives, how they work and what may impact them in the future. Three other benefits were also identified:

- to help governing bodies, heritage institutions and professional organisations identify areas where community archives may need advocacy, training or professional support;
- to identify opinion that may affect the role and ongoing development of community archives;
- to provide information about community archives in New Zealand that may pave the way for further research.
2. Literature review

This literature review provides an introduction to some of the discourse about community archives, particularly as it relates to what community archives are, the current state in New Zealand, and what guidance exists for those working in them.

In New Zealand collections of community archives have existed for years (e.g., Retter, 2003). There has been some useful literature about them over this time, particularly in local professional journals such as New Zealand Archivist (1990 – 2004) and Archifacts (1974 - ). In this literature specific collections have been championed (e.g., Green and Winter, 2011; Mellsop, 2010), aspects researched (e.g., Newman, 2011), issues covered (e.g., Sullivan, 2012) and solutions explored (e.g., Hamilton, 2009; Love and Hall, 2012). However, the wider story of New Zealand’s community archives remains largely unexplored.

One reason for this is posited in Gillian Oliver’s (2010) article ‘Transcending silos, developing synergies: libraries and archives’. She states that ‘very little research crosses the institutional boundaries of libraries and archives, and there appears to be little predisposition to look for areas of common interest’ (p. 1). Since community archives in New Zealand often demonstrate a hybrid mix of archive, library and museum practice, writers and researchers may not always consider community archives as part of their area, thus contributing to limited published research. While research into the GLAM sector (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) is starting to cross professional boundaries both here and overseas (e.g., Huvila, 2014; Wellington, 2013), this research does not yet specifically address the role and purpose of community archives.

Another possible reason is that the concept of a community archives is not one easily grasped, even by the archives profession. While a key premise of community archives is to ‘give substance to a community’s right to own its own memories’ (Earles, 1998, p. 2), this can be articulated in a variety of ways. As a result, it is harder for practitioners to explain common factors and create an overall definition. (See, for example, Cultural Consulting Network, 2008; Flinn, 2007; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013; Jura Consultants, 2009). The situation is summarised by Flinn, who states that the term:

... has not only been employed to define a potentially disparate range of activities going under many different names (community archive, independent archive, autonomous archive, ethnic archive, oral history archive, local history project) as something resembling a coherent community archive movement, this naming has also often been done without recourse to those involved to see if they recognized the term. It is also worth noting that the term itself can have different meanings internationally. For instance, in Canada and New Zealand, it is generally taken to mean a local archive which may be run by volunteers but may also be considered part of the public archival provision. Elsewhere the usage is closer to the UK approach, encompassing everything from local history archives to archival and historymaking activities reflecting a shared identification such as ethnicity or faith. (2011, pp. 6-7)

Although the term community archives is now commonly used (e.g., Flinn, 2007) few New Zealand-based definitions exist, and overseas examples are fairly nebulous. For example:
...collections of material that encapsulate a particular community’s understanding of its history and identity. The community itself may be geographically based, or relate to a cultural or thematic community of interest. The group may be part of a larger organisation, like a housing or community association, or it may be entirely independent. It might have begun as an activity promoted by a museum, library, or records office. Community archives might be collecting original documents, like photographs or local business records. Alternatively, their main objective might be to create a local heritage archive resource by copying and giving access to copies of records, the originals of which are elsewhere. (Cultural Consulting Network, 2008, p. 3)

The term community archives is also applied to a wide variety of memory keeping initiatives. These can include fully online communities of interest and physical memory spaces for ‘exhibitions, performances and outreach initiatives’ (Earles, 1998, p. 2) and cultural events such as carnivals (Bastian, 2013). As a result community archives have been variously defined as ‘non-public’ (Harris, 1998, p.2), ‘DIY institutions’ (Baker and Huber, 2013, p. 266), free from outside influence (Cook, 2013; Flinn, 2011; Flinn, Stephens and Shepherd, 2009), ‘documenting and recording the lives of those hidden or marginal’ (Flinn, 2007, p. 161), places of political activism (Caswell, 2014; Flinn and Stevens, 2009), and places that can ‘preserve the cultural impact of your intentional community’ (Finnell, n.d.). They have also been characterised as organisations that demonstrate the principles of participation, shared stewardship, multiplicity, archival activism and reflexivity (Caswell, 2014).

Overall the literature raises four defining themes that reflect many of the characteristics of community archives in New Zealand. Firstly, community archives have active community support and participation by a self-defined community (Newman, 2010; Caswell, 2014). Secondly, community archives are places (physical or otherwise) that validate and provide access to community memory and the stories that may be created from it (Battley, Daniels and Rolan 2014; Flinn, 2011). Thirdly, community archives contain not only archives but also a variety of items that traditionally have not been considered archival (Flinn, 2011; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013). Fourthly, community archives often operate without direct government funding and/or control, operating ‘as collections of materials created, held and managed primarily within communities and outside the formal heritage sector’ (ICARUS, n.d., para. 2).

A further theme from literature discusses how community archives can provide a possible answer to many of the tensions facing more ‘traditional’ and governmental archival repositories ‘where materials are collected ‘for communities rather than with them’ (Caswell, 2014, p. 311; emphasis in the original). Flinn (2007, p. 167) states ‘the community archives movement, as it always has done, poses significant challenges for archive services, in particular in terms of professional practice’. As a result some authors view the wider application of community archives concepts as altering established public, custody-based and western archival paradigms. They see community archives as ‘democratising’ the archive’ and challenging ‘the legitimacy of the mainstream sector’ (Flinn, 2007, p. 167) so that there is ‘a shift in core principles from exclusive custodianship and ownership of archives to shared stewardship and collaboration’ (Cook, 2012, p. 115). Cook’s excellent summary of this type of viewpoint suggests that we need to:

stop seeing community archiving as something local, amateur, and of limited value to the broader society and to start recognizing that community-based archiving is often a long-standing and well-established praxis from which we can learn much – this is not about professional archivists jumping to the rescue, but drawing on rich traditions to broaden our
own concepts of evidence and memory, and thus enrich our own identity as archivists, transformed to be relevant actors out of our society’s communities more than proficient professionals behind the walls of our own institutions. (Cook, 2012, pp. 115-116).

Whether this type of paradigm shift is occurring (or even will occur) in New Zealand remains to be seen, as currently there is a large gap between the potential and the reality. Existing research both here and overseas depicts a state characterised by low levels of funding and resources, minimal support and training, little strategic planning, and reliance on the dedication of a small number of people, often volunteers (e.g., Cultural Consulting Network, 2008; Dooley, Beckett, Cullingford, et al., 2013; Newman, 2011; Ray, Shepherd and Laperdrix, 2012).

Newman (n.d.) quotes from New Zealand’s Community Archives Survey Report 2007: ‘40% of archives responding had no paid staff, 35% had no qualified staff, and funding was seen as a major challenge and a priority for 32%’ (p. 2). This is a state reflected in other articles on specific community archives here and overseas. For example, Butterworth (2001) outlined underlying issues with community assumptions about archives and alternative agendas, Graham (2003) described work at the Karori Historical Society at a level that would be recognised by many other community archives today, and Baker and Huber (2013) discussed a range of issues associated with managing the Victorian Jazz Archive (VJA) that many volunteer-run interest group archives here in New Zealand could relate to.

There is a range of overseas information that can contribute to discussion about community archives and the issues they face. For example, Community Archives Landscape Research: A Report for MLA and CADG provides a useful summary of how community archives were perceived in the United Kingdom (Cultural Consulting Network, 2008). The Survey of Special Collections and Archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland (Dooley et al., 2013) delivers a more recent and more detailed overview that includes community archives. The UK’s Community Archives Heritage Group’s website http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/) supplies valuable guidance on nation-wide advocacy, while Archives and Records Association (ARA) UK and Ireland’s Managing Volunteering in Archives (Williams, 2014) and ICARUS UK’s Funding the Archives Sector (Ray, Shepherd and Laperdrix, 2012) discuss two key areas that also impact community archives in New Zealand. The Audience development toolkit (Yorkshire Museums Libraries and Archives Council, 2005) examines concepts from a community-focused perspective that are useful when considering community archives concepts, while other publications contain useful advice that can be adapted to local conditions. More recent examples of these include the UK’s Preserving Archives (Forde and Rhys-Lewis, 2013) and Organizing Archival Records: A Practical Method of Arrangement and Description for Small Archives (Carmicheal, 2012), Australia’s Keep it for the Future! How to Set Up a Small Community Archives (McAdam, 2007) and Keeping Archives (Bettington, Eberhard, Loo, & Smith, 2008), and the United States of America’s Archives for the Lay Person (Hamill, 2013).

Although the number of resources directly applicable to the New Zealand situation are rare, Managing and Preserving Community Archives (National Preservation Office, 2005) and the Toolkit for Community Archives (Archives New Zealand, 2009) are good examples of resources that provide advice at a practical level that recognises the common working context. Finding Funding: Your Resource Guide (New Zealand Micrographics Services Ltd, 2015) also provides guidance on a key area of concern to many community archivists.
3. Definitions and scoping

3.1. The three main areas of research
The purpose and aims of the research cover the three main areas summarised in the research title. Role looks at viewpoints relating to the importance, role and purpose of community archives today, particularly in terms of what community archives do and why they do it. Impact is used broadly, covering the identifiable effects of a range of factors that can affect the role community archives, particularly in terms of what they can and cannot do. Development discusses impacts and viewpoints that may impact community archives over the next ten years.

3.2. Working definition
Newman provides a general definition of community archives in New Zealand that was used as a working definition:

> Community archives are collections of archival records that originate in a community - that is, a group of people who live in the same location or share other forms of community of interest - and whose collection, maintenance and use involves active participation of that community (Newman, 2010, p. 8).

Three of the terms used within this definition (community, collection and archival record) have been defined further to aid clarification.

**Community**
For the purposes of this research, Newman’s definition of community is extended to include communities defined by genetic or social relationships such as family, or communities of individuals who identify with a specific culture, ethnic group or race.

It also includes the concept of ‘self-defined’ community. This is where communities ‘define themselves on the basis of locality, culture, faith, background, or other shared identity or interest’ (Flinn, 2007, p. 153; emphasis in the original). With regards to community archives it covers those with responsibility for overall governance of the collection, staff and volunteers, community users, and people who may not use the collection but may affiliate themselves with the community itself.

**Collection**
The term collection is often used in community archives discourse, but since archives terminology has traditionally not favoured the term (Johnston and Robinson, 2002) and it can be somewhat ambiguous (Muller, 2014) it is covered briefly here. Collection can refer to:

- The entire accumulated holdings gathered by the community archives over time;
- Archival fonds. That is, ‘the entire body of records of an organization, family, or individual that have been created and accumulated as the result of an organic process reflecting the functions of the creator’ (Society for American Archivists, n.d., para 2);
- The sub-sets of the collection (Johnston and Robinson, 2002). In terms of archival repositories, these can cover individual groups, aggregations and/or series of records that share common format, timeframe, content or provenance.
In this research *collection* is used to describe the entire holdings within a community archives that are used to aid community memory. This may include different *fonds* and other sub-sets. *Group* is used to define the sub-sets or individual groups of items within the collection, whether these are archival or not.

**Archival record**
A common definition of *archival record* is:

...records of organisations and individuals that have been selected for indefinite retention on the basis of their continuing value. (Bettington et al., 2008, p. 633)

Most discussions of archival value share a tacit understanding that archival items must have some form of link to the context of their creation or use as records in order to demonstrate value as archives. This value can be historical, evidential, accountable, informational, social or ‘emotional, religious, symbolic and cultural’ (Cook, 2012, p. 115). As a consequence, the term *archival record* assumes some form of value-proving link to the context of its creation and/or use.

**Other concepts**
Some further concepts associated by the working definition were also clarified to aid the scoping of the research:

*Community archives maintain collective memory*
In this research collective memory is based on a definition by Bastian (2009), who said that it is ‘a social phenomenon that refers specifically to a group’s recollection of the past in the present’ (p. 116). Evidence of this phenomenon is treated very broadly, and may include ‘traditionally defined’ archives (such as photographs, files and documents), semi-closed and closed records, physical objects such as artefacts, and other forms such as ‘monuments, parades, websites, books, exhibits, storytelling, or traditional gatherings’ (Bastian, 2009, p. 116).

*Community archives exist within their communities*
A community archives is perceived as existing within the community that forms it, adds to it and participates in it. Therefore a collection is seen as being isolated from the community if it is managed or stored by a third party, or if the community perceives that it does not have any ownership and/or control of their collective memory.

*Community archives exist within a physical place*
Some community archives exist only in a virtual sense, for example, in the form of an online participatory archive (Huvila, 2008; Iacovino, 2015) supported by ‘citizen archivists’. Community archives in this research are stored in a physical place where the memory is clearly linked to a self-defined community.

3.3. Other definitions

*Repository management*
Both preservation and archival practice are covered by *repository management*, a catch-all term that describes the day-to-day processes carried out on the collection that may affect the integrity and evidentiality of the record.

Depending on the community archives, these processes may cover acquisition, storage, arrangement and description and preservation. The term *collection management*, often used by museums and libraries, would also be appropriate in some cases.
Funding

Funding covers a wide ambit that includes the allocation and approval of funding to operate the collection, as well as the provision of funding and other resources for one-off projects and day-to-day work.

Arrangement and description

Arrangement and description covers processes based on the key archival principles of provenance and original order. It also includes core archival practices that ‘cover basic identification and control of records’ (Archives New Zealand, 2011). For example listing and boxing.

Marketing and community engagement

Marketing refers to the processes that community archives employ to encourage community interaction with the collection. Community engagement relates to the level of interaction the community itself has with the archives collection itself.

3.4. Scope

The community archives represented in this research:

- are controlled by a self-defined community;
- demonstrate some form of active community participation;
- are stored within a physical place;
- hold a wide range of items from archival records to reference material and artefacts;
- operate as an in-house repository or collecting institution;
- represent common types of New Zealand community archives. For example iwi archives, local history collections, and heritage collections managed by political, hobby, history, sporting, or other interest groups or clubs;
- have one person with overall day-to-day responsibility for the collection.

The scope of the research has meant that other types of community archives such as private archives, university archives and business archives and digitised collections are not included. Collections under the direct control of any government agency or public sector organisation, and collections that employed two or more staff members are also not covered.
4. Methodology

4.1. Literature review
A literature review was carried out to establish an understanding of the different perspectives that exist on community archives, their role and their day-to-day management. The main source of journal references came from a review of the top 250 results from the EBSCOhost database. The search terms community AND archives were used. The use of these rather than the phrase ‘community archives’ ensured a wider selection of articles from journals that were not specifically archival, for example, journals relating to anthropology, knowledge management, psychology and library and information studies.

Further resources were also sourced through Google Scholar, reviews of article citations, general web searches, and my own collection.

4.2. Ethics approval
Ethics approval for the research was sought from and full ethics approval granted by the Ethics Committee of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. The Open Polytechnic is my employer, and recommended that this be sought as the research contributes to my teaching practice. While this was not a condition of the Scholarship, applying for ethics approval ensured that the research was carried out in the light of appropriate academic guidelines.

4.3. Research method
A qualitative research method was used to provide understanding from the participants’ perspectives (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). It also helped to determine whether the opinions of interviewees and experts matched when it came to the current state and their perceptions of future issues.

Data for Stage 1 (interviewees) was collected through interview transcripts and case notes from a small number of pre-selected case studies. This allowed the interviewees themselves to ‘tell the story’. Data for Stage 2 (experts) was gained through three online surveys based on the Delphi method. This method is ‘a widely used and accepted method for gathering data from respondents within their domain of expertise’ (Hsu and Sandford 2007, p. 1).

Both stages are discussed in more detail below.

4.3.1. Stage 1: Case studies
The aim of Stage 1 was to identify characteristics shared by a small number of community archives in a way that was context-aware and sensitive to ‘interdependencies and system dynamics’ (Patton, 2002, p. 40). Cases were carefully chosen using a subjective sampling method called ‘typical case sampling’. This relies on the judgement of the researcher to deliberately select cases that are representative of the wider range, allowing focus on the ‘particular characteristics of a population that are of interest’ (Purposive sampling, 2012).

Establishing the sample
Five cases provided a sufficient range of shared characteristics, thus enabling a suitable level of credibility. Credibility is ‘the degree to which a description of human experience is such that those having the experience would recognize it immediately and those outside the experience can understand it’ (Baxter and Eyles, as cited in Schuermans, 2013, p. 6).
The selected cases were:
- a local history archives,
- a church archives,
- an interest group archives,
- an iwi archives,
- a school archives.

The selection process took into account collection type, geographical dispersal, and urban and rural location.

Interviewees were initially contacted via email or phone call. Interviewees who indicated their interest in participating were then sent more detailed follow-up documentation explaining the interview process. Consent forms were signed by interviewees prior to the interview. Examples of the documentation can be viewed in Appendix 2.

**Data collection methods**
Two data collection methods were used. These formed a base-line understanding of the current state and created findings that could be compared and contrasted with findings from Stage 2.

In order that a ‘depth of meaning’ [was] gained’ (Newton, 2010, p.1), five face-to-face interviews with the person who had day-to-day responsibility for the collection were conducted over a period of eight weeks. Each interview took between 20 minutes and 180 minutes. The interviews were in a semi-structured format and open-ended questions were asked. Questions focused on the individuals’ own viewpoints about the role, impact and development of ‘their’ community archives.

Interviews were then transcribed. Each interviewee was sent a copy of their interview transcript and associated onsite visit notes for their information and feedback.

**Interview questions**
Questions were distilled into two key themes:
- How do small community archives currently work?
- How do interviewees view ‘their’ community archives?

These themes were addressed through a series of questions covering:
1. Physical context (location/s, storage, preservation, funding, and organisational affiliation)
2. Intellectual context (how items are acquired, arranged, accessed and managed)
3. User context (who the users of the archives were and what items they used)
4. Personal viewpoints of the archives (what each individual thought about their archives and its role)

Questions relating to physical context, intellectual context and user context were covered during onsite visits and documented in field notes. Personal viewpoints were covered in the interviews.

The term ‘archives’ was avoided in all questions that related to the interviewee’s own situation, with other terms (such as ‘collection’ ‘material’ or ‘items’) used instead. This was done to reduce any possible bias on my part in terms of what I thought constituted archival records, and to allow me to establish the interviewee’s own terminology for archival groups and items.

A pre-test of the questions was carried out with a person who had been involved with a small archives. This helped me to review and amend the questions so they were clearer, flowed more...
naturally into each other, and were easier to ask verbally. It also helped me realise that set definitions needed to be provided in some places to establish a consistent point of reference.

See Appendix 1 for a list of interview questions.

**Data analysis**

A key process for data analysis was the division of on-site notes and interview transcripts into ‘conceptual categories’ (Joe, Yoong and Patel, 2013, p. 917). This involved the grouping of interviewee comments and on-site notes under headings that described key aspects of the current state. This process was carried out over three iterations with increasingly precise and specific categories being developed.

The ten categories from the third and final iteration became the basis for the results and findings outlined in this research. At this stage it became clear that while further granularity within categories could be carried out, no further key categories could be identified.

Separate analysis was also carried out by organising relevant interviewee comments into nine categories representing current areas of concern. These were identified through statements that indicated worry, frustration, an awareness of lack, or a desire to change the current state. For example:

- *I really think community archives are not given the support*
- *I don’t think we’re going to have the information in the future*
- *Nobody cared.*
- *A really good example of where we’re lacking is*
- *There’s no money sitting there to do anything*
- *We try and do that all the time. Continuing saga*

These categories were ranked from 9 (the category with the highest number of comments and the most interviewees making comments) to 1 (the category with the lowest number of comments and the fewest interviewees making comments). These results were then compared with categories gained from expert data in Stage 2.

**4.3.2. Stage 2: Expert opinions**

The purpose of Stage 2 was twofold. To establish a set of expert viewpoints from which to compare the results and findings from Stage 1, and to determine areas of expert consensus when it came to the role, impact and future development of community archives in New Zealand.

The Delphi method was chosen as the best way of obtaining this information. It is a method that allows ‘a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem’ (Linstone and Turoff (1975) as cited in Okoli and Pawlowski, 2004, p. 16). It also ‘employs multiple iterations designed to develop a consensus of opinion concerning a specific topic’ (Hsu and Sandford, 2007, pp. 1-2). These aspects helped to distil expert opinion on factors they considered could have significant impact on community archives over the next ten years. Delphi also provides a form of structured group communication (Okoli and Pawlowski, 2004) without participants being identified. As New Zealand is a small country, and the archives industry very small indeed, this aspect of anonymity was particularly valuable.
Contacting experts
A scoping of interest document was emailed to thirty six experts, with sixteen agreeing to participate. A second document was emailed to these sixteen outlining research and interviewee rights in more detail, and asking them to confirm their agreement by emailing back a consent statement. All returned consent statements. Documentation sent out to experts can be viewed in Appendix 2.

Online surveys
Data was gained through three survey rounds using Survey Monkey. Experts were emailed a link at the start of each survey round, along with instructions. Timeframes to complete each round ranged from two to three weeks, with a reminder email sent the week before the round closed. Response rates were high, with thirteen out of fifteen experts completing Round 1, fourteen out of fifteen experts completing Round 2, and twelve out of fifteen completing Round 3. Day-to-day administration of each survey round was done by a third party who had extensive experience with Survey Monkey surveys. This also meant that I could not (intentionally or otherwise) extrapolate who submitted which responses.

After the first and second survey rounds results were summarised and sent out to the experts to inform their opinions for the next round. These iterated as closely as possible overall consensus so that experts could decide whether to continue to agree with the majority or suggest an alternative point of view.

Survey Round 1
The purpose of the Round 1 survey was to gain an initial overview of expert consensus relating to the current state and factors that experts considered would impact community archives in the future. As a result, the survey was in two parts: Part 1: current state statements and Part 2: impact categories.

Round 1 asked experts to give one of three responses (“Agree”, “Disagree” or “It depends”) to each one of sixteen statements describing possible characteristics of the current state of community archives in New Zealand. A mandatory open field was included after each statement for interviewees to explain their rationale. Statements were organised into four topic areas (physical context, intellectual context, user context, general viewpoints) to aid later comparison with interviewees’ responses.

Experts were then asked to list five factors that they thought would have a major influence on community archives over the next ten years. They were then required to rank them from 1 (the factor that they considered to have the highest level of impact) to 5 (the factor that they considered to have the lowest level of impact). An open ended question asking for each expert’s rationale for each factor and its ranking was also included. Once the round was closed initial findings from Round 1 were summarised and sent to experts prior to Round 2.

Survey Round 2
Round 2 provided an opportunity to clarify Round 1 results and gain more evidence of expert consensus or disagreement. It also gave experts ‘an opportunity to make further clarifications of both the information and their judgments of the relative importance of the items’ (Hsu and Sandford, 2007, p3). Like the previous round, the survey was in two parts: Part 1: Impact categories, and Part 2: Current state statements.
Part 1 was a ranked list of 11 impact categories that summarised the variety of impact factors that experts identified in Round 1. The order of ranking for the categories was established by taking into account the rankings each expert gave for each factor within the category, and the number of factors within it. Experts were asked to agree or disagree with each category and its individual ranking in the list, explain their rationale for their decision, and suggest an alternative ranking if they disagreed with it. Experts were also asked to list additional categories if they saw any gaps.

Part 2 consisted of 16 current state statements similar to those in Round 1, but adjusted to incorporate the previous round’s rationale comments. Statements were also amended so that they were positive rather than negative. While these still caused debate in Round 2, they enabled me to scope more clearly the areas of consensus, rather than simply highlighting a variety of points that the experts disagreed with or did not find relevant. As with Round 1, experts were asked to state their rationale for any statement they disagreed with.

Two further open text fields were added. One for experts to add in any extra categories that they thought may be needed and their estimated rank, and another to incorporate any extra current state statements that experts thought of. Once the survey was closed, summarised findings were distributed to experts prior to Survey Round 3.

**Survey Round 3**
Survey Round three was very similar in content and form to Survey Round 2, except that three key changes were incorporated after expert feedback:

- The repository management impact category in Part 1: *Impact Categories* was removed and replaced by the category ‘*Standards*’. Since this was a new category, experts were asked to explain their rationale if they disagreed with the ranking and give their suggestion for an alternative ranking in the free text field provided at the end of the section.
- A number of current state statements from Round 2 were revised and re-scope in order to get a higher percentage of expert consensus.
- Two new current state statements were added so that there were eighteen statements in total. Experts were asked to explain their rationale if they disagreed with either of the new statements.

A free text field was provided at the end of the section for experts to document concerns with all other statements, and suggest any new statements that they thought should be added. Questions from the third and final round can be viewed in Appendix 3.
5. Summary of participants

New Zealand is a small country with a tight-knit archives community. Every effort has been made to maintain anonymity when discussing participants.

5.1. Interviewees

There were five interviewees representing each of the selected community archives: a local history archives, a church archives, an interest group archives, an iwi archives and a school archives. Of these archives:

- Three were from the North Island, two from the South Island;
- Three were urban, two were rural;
- Collection sizes varied from 30 lm to 1200 lm;
- Three operated ‘in-house’ from within a broader corporate structure, two were independently created by the community the collection served;
- Four used volunteers;
- None had any direct government funding.

All interviewees had sole responsibility for the archival material within the community collection. Three used the title archivist to describe their role. The interviewee from the local history archives called themselves a curator, while the interviewee from the Iwi archives was an administrator.

Two interviewees (the interviewees from the church archives and school archives) worked in paid positions as archivists, while one (Iwi archives) was in a paid administration position with archives oversight, and two (local history archives and the interest group archives) worked as volunteers.

Three were employed or volunteered from within the related community, while the other two (church archives and school archives) were employed from outside the community.

None of the interviewees worked in a full-time (40 hours a week) paid position on the collection. The local history archives (a volunteer) and the school archives (paid position) each worked one day a week. The church archives had a full-time paid position, but the role was split between the interviewee, who worked four days a week, and another person, who worked one day a week. The interviewee from the Iwi archives was in full time employment, but had no set hours for the management of the collection. The interviewee from the interest group archives worked as a volunteer for the equivalent of a forty hour week over six and a half days.

Interviewees came from a range of backgrounds and included a former librarian, government employee, and shearing gang hand.

A high-level summary of each collection is in Appendix 4.

5.2. Experts

Fifteen experts from around New Zealand participated. All had demonstrable knowledge and experience in the field of archives or heritage, including:

- ten years or more experience in the archives or heritage industries within New Zealand;
- work oversight or responsibility for archival management processes (for example, consultancy, policy development, or tertiary-level teaching and/or training);
- positions of responsibility within archives and recordkeeping associations.
• contribution to professional conferences, events, literature, websites and electronic mailing lists or forums.

The expert group included:
• Five who had current or past involvement with collections termed ‘community archives’;
• Five who had current or past involvement with information heritage collections or information heritage initiatives within libraries or museums;
• Four who had current or past involvement with public archives at national or local government level.
6. Results and findings

6.1. The current state of community archives

6.1.1. Expert viewpoints
Over a series of three survey rounds, experts were asked to state their agreement or disagreement with eighteen statements that described the current state of community archives in New Zealand and make comments about them. By the last survey round, at least 75% (and in some cases up to 100%) of experts agreed with each of the statements.

For ease of interpretation, these eighteen statements are placed into nine categories to summarise different aspects and aid comparison with future findings. It is recognised that many of these statements could be placed in more than one category.

Role
- Community archives have a key role to play in creating and maintaining community memory. (100% agreement)
- Community archives have a key role to play in managing the evidence of their communities, although some community archives may understand it simply as 'providing information of interest' (100% agreement)
- Many community archives are viewed by trained and experienced archivists as valid archival repositories (that is, the archives are managed in ways that demonstrate suitable awareness of the key archival principles of provenance and original order), but not all. (91.7% agreement)

Governance
- In a majority of cases, the user community (including those responsible for governance) do not really understand the role and purpose of their community archives. (75% agreement)

Repository management
- Acquisition / appraisal
  - Most community archives consider published and reference material as an integral part of the overall collection. (91.7% agreement)
  - Most community archives store a wider variety of material than most other forms of archival repository. (75% agreement)
- Storage and preservation
  - Collection storage facilities range from excellent to poor, with most community archives having at least a couple of on-going issues that could negatively impact the preservation of items, for example, they may have a lack of suitable environmental control or a lack of appropriate boxing. (91.7% agreement)
- Arrangement and description
  - Most community archives use pragmatic description techniques that are often based on decisions made 'in-house' (100% agreement)
  - Many individuals with day-to-day responsibility for community archives demonstrate a good level of awareness when it comes to the archival principles of provenance and original order, but there are also a number who do not. As a result,
not all community archives follow these key principles when it comes to their accessioning and/or arrangement and description practices. (100% agreement)

- **Documentation**
  - Many community archives have some form of supporting documentation in place regarding access, ownership etc., but the currency, depth and breadth of this information depends on the priorities of each individual archive. Some community archives do not have any documentation. (100% agreement)

**Digital archiving and electronic access**

- Most community archives lack the resources and facilities to effectively manage born digital archives. (100% agreement)

**Funding**

- Although most community archives want to meet basic guidelines for storage they do not always have the resources to do so. (100% agreement)

**Marketing and community engagement**

- Many community archives get some form of active support from the communities from which they were created. However, the efficacy of this support depends on the level of stakeholder understanding and involvement, and the level of competition for community funding. (100% agreement)

**Staff**

- Community archives are often dependant on one or two passionate individuals to lead and manage them. (100% agreement)
  - Volunteers in community archives often carry out tasks to do with processing, storage or basic preservation. Results can vary considerably, but most people with day-to-day responsibility for the collection consider this better than no progress at all. (100% agreement)

**Training**

- Most staff who manage community archives do not have archival qualifications, and while their understanding of foundational archival practices (boxing, listing, accessioning etc.) may be sufficient, there can be evidence of a lack of in-depth training or mentoring when it comes to areas such as arrangement and description, appraisal, and preservation. (100% agreement)
  - Community archives are not considered a priority when it comes to industry-based training or collaborative support initiatives. This is mainly due to a lack of resources rather than a lack of awareness. (91.7% agreement)

**Users**

- Most community archives have a range of user groups. Common user groups include genealogists and local history enthusiasts, as well as the community itself. (100% agreement)

These levels of agreement demonstrate that experts were aware of a current state that had extremely varied practices. They also considered it a state defined by the range of material kept as community memory, and strongly impacted by different levels of funding and staff knowledge.
6.1.2. Interviewee viewpoints

Overall, interviewee comments tended to support the current state statements agreed to by experts. They did however raise a number of additional points that provided a deeper perspective.

Role

All interviewees considered that a key role for their collection was the preservation of community history. For example:

- It's their whakapapa, you know, it's telling them about what their people did back in the sixteen, seventeen, eighteen hundreds, whatever. (Iwi archives)
- I add to the community by volunteering to keep something that is precious going. (Local history archives)

All interviewees saw their collection as a growing entity that served as a bridge not only between ‘the then’ and ‘the now’, but also guided community decisions into the future.

- …we are continuing to collect information so... not only ... do we have the past, the far past, but we have the present which will become the past, and we will go into the future. (Church archives)

They also considered the collection’s support of other community functions to be a key role. For three (the church archives, iwi archives and school archives) this was in the form of satisfying the information needs of the wider organisation, while for the other two (the local history archives and the interest group archives) it was usually to generate income from people outside the community.

- We have photocopying and laminating for people, so we’ll do things like that. We make journals and books that have history in them, like various people around the area have written the stories of their history privately, and ... we have the rights to reproduce those books, [and] sell them. (Local history archives)

Three also commented that another role of their collection was to facilitate access between the community and its memory. For example, the interviewee from the school archives said,

- I think [our role is] to provide information... And that's why we need this collection here. We need to have it for when they [users] want photos or when they want things.

For this interviewee it was also about connecting community members with their community history and ‘enlighten[ing] them about what the school’s history is...’

The interviewee from the local history archives had a more prosaic reason:

- It’s something that brings people into our town - it’s something for people to do when they get here, other than... maybe going to a cafe, or... looking in some shops...’.

Repository Management

Interviewee comments regarding repository management have been organised into five areas: acquisition and appraisal, storage and preservation, arrangement and description, documentation, and access and ownership.

Acquisition and appraisal

A variety of material was collected by each community archives. This included records, published and unpublished reference material, artworks, objects, memorabilia and clothing.
Only one community archives had an official collection policy. The others had more informal arrangements where it was left to the archivist to decide what to collect on a case by case basis. Donated material seemed to make up the greatest proportion of newly acquired items, with the interviewees also keeping an eye out for material. Community members too occasionally spotted items on the archivist’s behalf and donated them to the collection.

All had basic acquisition processes in place. This was usually by registering the donation or transfer in some way. For example, by keeping donation correspondence. Three of the interviewees had formal acquisition documentation.

Accessioning processes were carried out to varying extents, although only the church archives had an accession register. None of the interviewees de-accessioned archival material and only duplicated copies of published items were destroyed. Two of the interviewees (the iwi archives and the interest group archives) commented on the value of having a disposal schedule in place, which they saw as having a beneficial flow-on affect.

Storage and preservation

All interviewees carried out storage and preservation tasks. This was usually done through the management of storage rooms and shelving, as well as boxing and packaging. Three stated that they spent a lot of time carrying out storage and boxing projects, which were either done to address backlog, make more space, or upgrade existing boxing and shelving.

Four interviewees also carried out (or planned to carry out) basic forms of preservation practice. For example, placing items in boxes or envelopes, wrapping acid-free tissue paper around objects, flattening maps and plans, and de-framing. The interviewee from the school archives got student volunteers to carry out basic preservation tasks like placing photographs in acid-free envelopes and taking staples, paper-clips and pins out of files. The iwi archives had done very little storage and preservation work, although the interviewee was aware of the need for suitable storage and preservation practices.

Overall the highest area of priority for interviewees was the development and maintenance of storage facilities. Other preservation issues were addressed out of this. As the interviewee from the interest group archives stated, ‘it’s being worked on all the time. It’s progressing gradually anyway, to make [storage] better’.

In terms of their ability to meet suitable storage requirements[^1], the two archives run by volunteers had the best storage facilities. However the interviewee from the interest group archives admitted that ‘temperatures worry me a wee bit... it feels a bit cold and damp down the back [room]’ while the local history collection’s processing area was susceptible to environmental hazards. The interviewee from the school archives had concerns about fire, which they saw as the biggest area of risk. The church archives operated in less than ideal storage conditions, but this was to be addressed in the next few years through the building of a new archives storage facility. Very little storage or preservation was being carried out on the Iwi archives:

> We’ve got no room.... It’s actually become dangerous just walking in there ... sometimes we get stuff so we think ‘oh yeah we can fit that one on there, so we’re putting it up on there,’

and it’s becoming really dangerous. And because of the slant on the roof, it’s like this [moves hand to a sharp angle] and you sort of walk in and you’re like this [hunched over] and you’ve got a box and you’re trying to put it up somewhere...

Arrangement and description

Three interviewees carried out some form of arrangement and description. This was usually in the form of, as the interviewee from the interest group archives said, ‘trying to go through [the items] and ... sort them out’. Processes included organising and processing items, listing them, and describing them in more detail through catalogue entries or index cards.

Four interviewees admitted that they relied primarily on knowledge from their own heads when it came to accessing material from the collection, because they all worked in situations where suitable finding aids were lacking. The church archives and the interest group archives had collection-based finding aids, but these were not complete. The interviewee from the local history archives said that while parts of the museum collection were reasonably well managed, the archives had been neglected to the point where the volunteers no longer knew what they had. All with the exception of the iwi archives reported varying levels of listing and cataloguing being done. However the interviewee from the iwi archives did basic identification such as identifying people in photographs when the opportunity arose. All to greater or lesser extents faced situations similar to the following:

Researcher: do you have a ... way [for] people have to find things for themselves, is there...an access register or a list or a finding aid that people can go to? ...
Interviewee: No, no
Researcher: [So it’s a matter of] go out to the shelves -
Interviewee: -and hunt [Both laugh]. ... No system there or anything, no. (Interest group archives)

A lot of time was spent on retrospective work, identifying and sorting out collections that has been donated in the past. The local history archives and the iwi archives had the most work to do in this regard. As the interviewee from the local history archives said:

...probably my biggest concern is through no fault of anybody's, as or anybody else's – it’s just the way it occurred - we don't really know where most of our stuff is, and what we’ve got! ...that's just how it's played out and how it's worked out... as time has gone.

Four interviewees were still focusing on establishing basic archival practices such as boxing, listing and retrospective accessioning. The interest group archives was the only exception as the collection was already reasonably organised when the interviewee took over the role.

For three the application of arrangement and description principles was a priority. While a key reason was the collection backlog, it was also due to interviewees’ desire to provide better access for community users.

Right from the word go one of my top priorities is been to get a level of documentation of the collection so researchers can decide what they want to see... (Church archives)

In some cases however, interviewees were still able to do ‘workarounds’ because of their overall knowledge of the collection. For example the school archivist had very little written documentation, but this was less of an issue than for other interviewees because of the depth of knowledge they had about the holdings. As they said ‘...it probably could be better organised. ...But at the moment mostly I can find things’. 

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Table 1 outlines examples of common archival documentation for each of the collections interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Table 1: Archives documentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mission / vision statement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission / vision statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archives / collection policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules for users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Only the church archives had a full range of documentation in place.

Two of the interviewees (the church archives and school archives) also mentioned writing formal reports to their governing body. The interviewee from the school archives wrote ‘*a report at the end of the year about what I’ve achieved and what I hope to achieve*’ while the interviewee from the church archives reported on a ‘*six monthly basis to the Board Administration of the things that have been received from the archive*’.

### Access

Better provision of access to the items in the collection was one of the key concerns for all interviewees, who saw it as one of their key duties.

The interviewees from the interest group archives and local history archives stated that they did not hold any restricted material, but if they did, they would manage restrictions on a case-by-case basis. The school archives had no documentation regarding restrictions, but had a number of physical processes in place to restrict access to any confidential information. For example they kept sensitive information in a room that was only accessible to the archivist and the Principal.

Any loans outside of the collections were rare and monitored by the interviewees.

*I do have a loans book but I don’t loan much. Again, I’m a bit of a Rottweiler, and I don’t like people taking things out of here.* (School archives)

In terms of electronic access, only the interest group archives and the church archives had lists of collection material on their websites, but these on represented a small part of the total holdings.
The school archives was mentioned on the school website but it did not have any items listed. The iwi archives and the local history archives had no website. Only the church archives used the Community Archive (http://thecommunityarchive.org.nz/) to list some of their holdings, and there were plans to export descriptions again in the future. Three interviewees (the church archives, interest group archives, and school archives) discussed the importance of putting finding aids online, but all stated that lack of time reduced what could be achieved.

Some of the records are down on computer, but not all. Not nearly all of them, no...we’ve got a couple [of volunteers] working on it, at the moment, but [it will] take them their lifetime to do! (Interest group archives)

Ownership

Only the interviewee from the church archives stated that they had concerns about ownership of the items in the collection, and this related to the absence of custody-related documentation in the past:

Terrible, terrible concerns. My predecessors didn’t bother about any forms of acceptance. There is hardly any documentation of where things have come from, particularly people’s personal items, for example, if someone bought in a photograph. Any ownership or provenance has been lost in many, many, cases. They didn’t bother with accession registers, anything like that ... So yes, there are quite serious concerns around ownership...

The other four considered the documentation of custody as something that could be improved upon, but overall, did not see any major issues relating to the ownership of items within the collection.

Usually what I get is [from] people who are now coming in with their school photos or their school badges or other things, and say ‘the young people of today are not interested in this. I know you have a good archive here you care about. I’m donating it to the archives... Never really had much of an issue over that. (School archives)

Four had, however, instigated some form of formalised transfer process that also addressed the issue of ownership, and all stated that this seemed to work well. Processes varied from collection to collection. For example, the interviewee from the interest group archives filled out documentation upon receipt of the items, while in the local history archives ownership was not always addressed until well after items were loaned to the collection. For the school archives, ownership documentation was dealt with through other means:

... I just write them in my thank you letter. Most people just leave them [donated archives etc.] at the front desk. ...And then I just put on the box, or sometimes I put a letter, like a note in the box as to how this arrived back in the archives. We have special little cards and things we send out, but no, I don’t really have a donation file because they’ve all got their name on it.

The only exception, the iwi archives, was in the process of developing documentation that addressed questions of custody.

Digital archiving

No forms of digital archiving were carried out by any interviewees other than basic processes such as scanning photos and other documents for users, keeping copies on CDs and computers, and planning to provide online access to digital images.
None of the interviewees currently managed or planned to manage born-digital material. The interviewee from the church archives discussed the future digitisation of key groups of paper-based records and microform material to enable online access, but plans to do this were currently on hold.

**Funding**

Resourcing for each of the collections came from one of two main funding sources: fundraising and/or member donations (local history archives and the interest group archives), and payments provided from the governance body. The latter funding can be divided into three types: one off payments as required (iwi archives), funding through the day-to-day operational budget (church archives) and funding allocated from the annual budget allocated to the governance structure itself (school archives).

Three interviewees mentioned that they charged for certain services. The interviewee from the Interest group archives summarised most interviewees’ views about charging:

...there’s a charge made for giving them the material...we’re not free, no. We can’t afford to! Not with ... all the stuff we need anyway.

However the iwi archives did not charge for services:

If someone comes in to do copying for their marae it’s more or less a koha from the Board for them to you know? And that is rightly so, because it was the people that you know, got this established...why would we turn around and charge them...?

Two of the interviewees (interest group archives, school archives) thought the funding that they were given was suitable, although in the case of the interviewee from the school archives, they admitted that it was an unusual situation and contrary to their previous experience.

**Marketing and community engagement**

All interviewees were aware of the value of getting the community engaged and interacting with the collection. As a result, four out of five interviewees stated directly that they were concerned about their collection being underutilised. For example, the interviewee from the church archives said ‘our collection is so underused, it’s unbelievable’, while the interest group archives said ‘[The community] probably don’t know what goes on, no’ and the interviewee from the school archives said ‘a lot of the students come here in Year 13 and they say “Oh I never knew this was here”’. For the iwi archives this lack of community engagement was an on-going source of frustration:

But you know [with regards to] the community I think if we had the resources to do what I believe we need to do...with our archives, and the community knew what was here, they’d be in here more to look at them. I know they would.

Interviewees discussed a number of areas that they are focusing on (or planning to focus on) in order to raise the level of engagement between the community and its archives collection. These included improving user access and developing projects which market elements of interest within the collection. For example the interviewee from the school archives wrote up interesting facts and items of interest from the collection for the school community, held events for other community archivists in the area, and organised group visits for students.

Three interviewees also mentioned creating exhibitions and displays based on the items in the collection to promote, as the interviewee from the church archives said, ‘some of the fantastic stuff we have in our collection’.
Staffing
As stated in Section 5.1, two interviewees (school archives, church archives) were employed from outside the community, with decisions for employment based on experience rather than community links. However, as the interviewee from the church archives stated, this had not always been the case:

...once upon a time ... the archives were run by people who were [Denomination]. It’s only when the decision was ... made to appoint an archivist based on professional qualifications that [this] was lost, and of course you can’t discriminate in terms of employment on people in terms of ethnicity or religiousness or anything. So it was a based on [a] competencies based appointment rather than anything else...

All interviewees worked with volunteers apart from the iwi archives which did not have any. All described a similar volunteer type: people over the age of 50 who were interested in heritage and/or family history. The one exception to this were the student volunteers at the school archives. The church archives and the school archives had all female volunteers, the interest group mainly male, and the local history archives a mixture of both. Three interviewees stated that their volunteers tended to come from within the community, while the interviewee from the church archives said:

...in the past we have volunteers ... who were volunteering for a faith perspective. Now the volunteers that [we] have... come to us because they are interested in family history, or they are interested in history...

In all cases volunteers carried out a range of duties from ‘meeting and greeting’ to photocopying, listing and boxing, re-filing, setting up exhibitions and displays, and fund-raising. Volunteer time was also spent on project work, particularly in the area of basic preservation. Arrangement and description (such as basic catalogue entries, labelling and listing) was another common task.

Training
Three interviewees (the church archives, interest group archives, and school archives) demonstrated awareness of archival good practice within the context of their collection, and two of them had graduate or post-graduate qualifications in other disciplines. However only two of the interviewees had attended professional events such as those offered by ARANZ and Archives New Zealand, and none had any formal archival education or training.

All stated an interest in external training and support, subject to funding and resources being available. The interviewee from the local history archives said:

I think we would need funding, and we would like someone knowledgeable to either do it, put in place systems or advise us very intelligently of what we can do.

The type of training they required varied, based on the gaps and needs they perceived within their own collections. Three did not think that any of the larger archival institutions were able to help, or that the professional associations or educational institutions provided the level of training that either community archivists or their staff required.

The interviewee from the interest group archives demonstrated sound archival knowledge although they were a volunteer. This seemed to be unusual as comments from two of the other interviewees indicated that they had found volunteer archivists on the whole did not have the skill levels required to take on responsibility for managing archives.
Users of the collections
Table 2 shows the top user groups for each archives in order of approximate frequency:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 2: Top user groups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local history archives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Church archives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interest group archives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iwi archives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School archives</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In three cases enquiries were received mainly through emails and phone calls. Actual visitors were rare, around two visitors a month. The local history archives received more visitors than the other collections as it was part of a museum, while the number of visitors to the school archives varied depending on the number of school groups that visited. A key part of interviewees’ time was taken up with providing guidance and advice to users on the collection and the items within it. For most, a common activity was the physical retrieval of items for on-site visitors as well as the answering of written and oral enquiries. The interviewee from the church archives answered the highest number of written enquiries, with ‘over four hundred written enquiries a year’.

Interviewees provided a variety of other guidance as well, from talking about the collection and explaining rules of use, to giving storage advice and explaining terminology.

6.1.3. Current areas of concern: Interviewees
Although interviewees showed evidence of concern about areas such as digital archiving, their focus was mainly on practical day-to-day management issues such as repository management, access, staffing, and funding. Table 3 presents key areas of interviewee concern in alphabetical order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Interviewee areas of concern</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Area of concern</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital archiving</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Areas of current concern were then ranked based on the number of related comments and the number of interviewees making them. The areas of concern in ranked order were:

1. Repository management
2. Access
3. Staffing; Governance
4. Marketing and community engagement
5. Funding
6. Wider environment; Training
7. Digital archiving

These results can be visually represented as follows:
Findings relating to each of the areas above are discussed in more detail under Section 7 Discussion: Role Impact and Development.

6.2. Results and findings relating to perceived future impacts

Categories that experts perceived as having significant impact on community archives over the next ten years covered a variety of areas, only some of which were reflected within interviewee areas of concern.

In all cases, a majority of experts agreed that each of categories in Table 4 could have a major influence on community archives over the next ten years. These categories are listed in alphabetical order, each with a summary of the original scope note.

Table 4: Expert impact categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Scope note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Factors that impact the ability of a community archives to give the community and other users equitable access to the collection and the items within it. This includes physical access to the material, descriptive standards, access restrictions, privacy, copyright and sensitivity of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Factors that impact the ability of a community archives to collaborate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with other agencies. These include the establishment and maintenance of collaboration agreements to achieve an agreed outcome (such as a digitisation project or a collection policy), and collaboration over responsibilities and/or functions (for example the clarification of roles between local government-supported archives and community archives within the same region).

**Digital archiving**  
Factors that impact the collection, creation, management, preservation, access and use of digital content such as born digital and/or digitised records within a collection. Digital archiving can overlap with most other impact categories. However, because of the ubiquitous nature of electronic records today and the strategic importance of managing them as archives, this is considered an impact category in its own right.

**Funding**  
Factors that impact the financing of community archives. For example, what is able to be done (or not done) through funding allocations, fundraising, and applying for funding.

**Governance and strategy**  
Factors that impact the governance of the community archives. These include decisions made by those responsible for the on-going survival of the collection, the level of archival knowledge behind those decisions, and the development of strategy for the way forward.

**Marketing and community engagement**  
Factors that impact the ability of a community archives to promote itself and its holdings, and to educate users and potential users about them. This includes methods of community engagement regarding community use, general awareness, and support.

**Staffing**  
Factors that impact the ability of the community archives to recruit and maintain appropriate numbers of skilled paid or voluntary staff.

**Standards**  
Factors that impact the establishment and maintenance of rules, standards, frameworks, specifications, guidelines etc. relating to the management of a community archives collection. It also includes decisions relating to what should be managed, where it should be managed, to what extent, and the type of guidance.

**Training and professional engagement**  
Factors that impact the training and education of a variety of people associated with community archives, such as staff, volunteers, those interested in working with community archives, users, and community and industry stakeholders. It also covers factors that impact on how agencies such as larger heritage-based institutions, training institutions and professional associations engage with community archives in areas such as guidance and support.

**Wider environment**  
Factors that impact the on-going management of community archives from a nation-wide perspective. For example, social, cultural, political and environmental influences such as government legislation, economic conditions, pop culture, aging population, Web 2.0 and its 'citizen archivists', and diversified and urbanised communities.
The categories of impact in ranked order were:

1. Funding
2. Digital archiving
3. Collaboration
4. Staffing
5. Training and professional engagement
6. Standards
7. Wider environment
8. Governance and strategy
10. Access

However since experts were also asked to state their level of agreement with the approximate location of a ranked category (that is, agreement to its general location within two or three places in the list) there is margin for movement between individual rankings.

These categories and rankings are provided in the following graph:

**Figure 5: Expert impact categories in rank order**

While there was overall agreement about the categories themselves, a number of the experts stated some discomfort with having to rank the categories from the ‘category that will have the most influence on community archives over the next ten years’ to the ‘category that will have the least’. These levels of disagreement are indicated in the following graph.
6.2.1. Ranking analysis

Expert comments suggested three main reasons for disagreement over rankings. Firstly, the large amount of variation in terms of collections covered by the term ‘community archives’ and what they will be impacted by as a result. Secondly, the level of overlap that occurs when defining each of the specific categories. Thirdly, the difficulties that some experts had with interpreting the purpose behind the ranking process. This aspect was summarised by one expert:

…it’s a bit unclear as to whether our answers are meant to be predictive (i.e., these are the factors that we’re all going to be forced to confront over the next decade, whether I personally wish to prioritize them or not), or prescriptive (i.e., these are the factors I believe it will be important for us to prioritize over the next decade if community archives are going to able to progress in an appropriate direction).

1. Funding

Funding was the only category where all experts unanimously agreed with its ranking as the most important category impacting community archives over the next ten years. Rationale comments confirmed that experts considered the provision or lack of funding to be key, underpinning future development in a range of areas including Digital archiving.

See also the note under Staffing.

2. Digital archiving

Digital archiving was the second most important category for 67% of experts. However, 33% of experts disagreed with the ranking, stating that while digital archiving was a key concern, its
success or failure depended on other key factors such as Funding and Training and professional engagement.

3. Collaboration
67% of experts agreed that Collaboration was the third most important category, although 33% disagreed with its ranking as the third-highest area of influence. Many who disagreed stated that they considered lower-ranked areas such as Staffing and Training and professional engagement to have more importance overall. As one expert emphasised:

Staff, funding and training are needed for [collaborative] digitisation, or any archives work.

4. Staffing
Most experts agreed that Staffing will be a key area of influence on community archives in the future, with 75% agreeing with its ranking as fourth most important area. The 25% of experts who disagreed usually considered Staffing as needing to be ranked higher.

However there was indication that some experts considered Staffing, like Collaboration and Digital archiving, to be less of a key category in its own right, and more as a factor influenced by key impact categories such as Funding, and to a lesser extent, Training and professional engagement. I note here that in a survey of special collections and archives in the UK this tension was also recognised by researchers, with the decision being that both funding and staffing were excluded (Dooley et al., 2013).

5. Training and professional engagement
Most (83%) experts agreed that the area of Training and professional engagement was the fifth most important category. They considered it as underpinning a number of other categories such as Digital archiving and Standards, as well as enhancing staff ability to carry out good practice. Experts also viewed related areas such as professional engagement as being closely linked with training. Only 17% of experts disagreed with the ranking, although responses varied widely in terms of whether it should be ranked higher or lower.

6. Standards
The ranking of Standards as the sixth most important category was agreed upon by 83% of experts. Most experts agreed that the development (or lack) of standards would have a key influence on community archives over the next ten years, especially in terms of its impact on training and wider collaboration. For example:

Lack of awareness by volunteers etc to archive material consistently and in line with archival principles could be addressed with training. Perhaps development of an easy to follow standard for community archives that is jargon free and slightly looser than standard archival practice. It needs to be practical. Training like this could encourage more people to take up the work.

However the 17% who disagreed with the ranking usually stated that it should be ranked higher than sixth. As one expert stated, ‘many things flow from standards’.

7. Wider environment
67% of experts agreed with the ranking of Wider environment at 7. 33% disagreed with the ranking mainly because, as one expert noted, it was ‘depending on your perspective’. That is, while some community archives could be impacted by the wider environment, others could be
buffered from it by their position within a parent organisation. As one expert stated, ‘[t]his very much depends on the individual Archives. Some organisations e.g. religious archives are probably sheltered from such factors’.

8. Governance and strategy

Governance and strategy were ranked eighth by 67%, with 33% disagreeing with its overall ranking. Based on expert comments, it seems that disagreement was based on different perceptions about the ability of the governing body to effect change. For example one expert didn’t think governance-related issues were of importance to many community archives:

Most community archives manage very well without considering governance issues - they are usually too small, too strapped for cash and too busy.

Others however wanted it to be ranked higher:

Unsure why governance and strategy has been ranked so low given that it is the cornerstone and framework of any non-profit or profit based organisation. If you don’t have strategic direction which takes into consideration macro context how can you undertake operational planning, apply for funding, justify staffing and resource investment etc.

9. Marketing and community engagement

Marketing and community engagement’s ranking at nine had one of the lowest percentages of agreement, with only 58% agreeing with its ranking overall. As with other categories, comments demonstrated variation in terms of how experts perceived overall value. For example one expert stated:

Good visibility [sic] and use of collections generates advocacy which in turn supports/elevates funding, governance and community engagement. There is no point in having fantastic, well managed collections if no bodies knows [sic] about them and access is compromised.

While another wrote:

If you don’t get the other stuff right marketing hardly matters, unless of course it is associated with funding.

10. Access

The 10th place ranking of Access also had a low percentage of agreement, with 58% of experts agreeing with its 10th place ranking and 42% disagreeing. Disagreement tended to focus on the level of its ranking, although when all expert suggestions for alternative rankings were taken into account, they averaged out to the same rank.

Most experts however agreed that access influenced a number of other factors. For example:

I think access is ... becoming more difficult as people become more sensitive about privacy, intellectual property, and traditional knowledge.

I think that improvements in the accessibility of community archives will be a major driver behind their increased public profile and, hence, impact on funding and marketing opportunities, levels of professional engagement, etc.
6.3. Comparison of impact categories with interviewee areas of concern

Figure 7 compares eight impact categories with corresponding interviewee areas of concern.

Figure 7: Comparison of expert future impact categories with participant areas of concern

This comparison should not be viewed as a direct 1:1 correlation of data, but as a form of comparison between two sets of viewpoints. It shows that interviewee areas of concern often do not line up with the categories experts perceive as having a significant influence on community archives over the next ten years.

There were only two areas where interviewee areas of concern and expert categories of impact were similar. These were Staffing and Wider environment. Digital archiving, Marketing and community engagement, Governance and strategy, and Access showed wide disparity in emphasis between the two groups. For example Digital archiving and Governance and strategy were ranked by experts in the top five categories of impact, while these were areas of less concern for interviewees. On the other hand, interviewees considered Marketing and community engagement, Governance and strategy, and Access as key areas of concern, while these were ranked by experts as areas of lower influence overall.

Three areas were not included in the comparison graph: Repository management, Standards, and Collaboration. While Repository management was the area of high concern for interviewees, it was removed from the final Delphi round after expert feedback. As one expert stated:

Repository management is obviously an important part of any community archives and I see it remaining so. However I don’t see issues directly arising from collection/storage/A&D as having, per se, a major impact on community archives theory and practice in the next decade.
Standards and Collaboration were not included as there was not enough interviewee comment indicating them as areas of concern to warrant meaningful comparison.
7. Discussion: Role, impact and development

We now consider what the findings in this research indicate for the role, impact and development of New Zealand community archives today and in the future.

7.1. The role of community archives

Experts and interviewees identified three key roles for community archives: to preserve evidence of the history of the community, to enable and encourage the community to access its memory, and to support other broader community functions.

The role of archives in preserving memory is a key theme in archival literature (for example Bastian, 2009; Battley et al., 2014; Cook, 2012; Earles, 1998; Flinn, 2011; Ketlaar, 2001, 2009) and one that experts also agreed with. For example, all agreed with the statement ‘Community archives have a key role to play in creating and maintaining community memory, and community archives have a key role to play in managing the evidence of their communities, although some community archives may understand it simply as ‘providing information of interest’. They also commented:

*The institution of the community archive can play a key role in providing a community focus, providing access to the records, and bringing the past to life.*

*...how could centenaries of schools, sports clubs, districts, special interest groups, clubs and families be celebrated without archives?*

Expert comments indicated that they saw the role from a top down perspective, one that was tied up with the role and importance of archives generally. Community archives were often seen as part of the wider institutional spectrum that enabled different facets of society memory to be collected, preserved and remembered.

*If it wasn't for people working away in their local communities we wouldn't have much history to remember.*

*They provide a sense of: Community Identity History Social inclusion Authenticity Accountability* (punctuation and capitalisation as in the original).

Because of this some experts considered that one of the roles of community archives was to preserve memory in areas outside the scope or remit of other archival or heritage institutions. They noted:

*Non community archives just can’t do it all! Government archives focus on government records, collecting archives can do some collecting of community archives but rarely have the resources to be comprehensive in collecting all community archives from their communities of interest.*

*NZ was founded on the grass-roots approach rather than the top down approach. There are things which professional archivists can do to help but there are never going to be enough of us to look after everything out there...*

These types of viewpoints often contrasted with those of interviewees. Although interviewees also saw that one of the key roles of community archives was to preserve evidence of community memory, they did not view it like the experts did through the wider lens of society-based memory. Instead they saw it through a narrower lens that focused on the community itself. The archives...
existed to tell the story of community for that community, rather than as something that plugged memory gaps across wider society. For interviewees there was no back-stop for their community memory: if they didn’t keep it, memory would be patchy or even lost completely.

As a result all demonstrated a sense of the collection being on the front line as they worked to save evidence that others may have viewed as inconsequential or dross, but that interviewees perceived as having significance within the community they served.

...that’s why we gaily accepted it from [organisation] in the first place, cos if we didn’t save it, nobody would’ve saved it. It would’ve been gone... Lost. (Interest group archives)

I have records here that other schools don’t even bother to keep, like we’ve got... every student card back to when the school started, and that sort of thing. ...people say ‘does anyone ever use it?’ and I say ‘yes’. (School archives)

Often this thinking lead to a much broader collection mandate than in many other institutions. This is discussed further in section 7.4.1 Repository management: Acquisition and appraisal.

The role of archives in enabling a community to have equitable access to its memory (whether it is to remember or forget) is another common theme in archival discourse (for example Bastian, 2013; Harris, 2014; Iacovino, 2015; Thorpe, 2014). While this aspect was not specifically covered by expert comment to any current state statements within the survey, it was an area of clear focus (and also concern) for interviewees. Their viewpoints were summarised by the interviewee from the local history archives who stated, ‘without visitors we are nothing’.

For interviewees, the role of enabling and encouraging access was closely tied with educating the community itself about the collection. Interviewees talked about the importance of helping individuals to understand their heritage so that the individuals use that knowledge for the community’s benefit. As the school archives interviewee stated:

I think it's to provide information, to store information... for the future, and for the old girls, and it’s to try and integrate the history of the school with the present day school, because ... history is very important to the school...

The interviewees saw this role as being manifested in different ways according to their workplace context. For example setting up processes (such as suitable organisation and description procedures) that enabled community members to use and interpret the collection for themselves. The interviewee from the school archives also discussed the importance of making different versions of history available so that users could gain a clearer idea of documented ‘truth’. For the interviewees from the church archives and the iwi archives, access was something that was better provided through a centralised repository. The former saw this as helping disparate collections come together for the benefit of community researchers. The latter viewed this as creating an opportunity for the more appropriate storage of memory relating to people and place.

Four interviewees considered that one of the key roles of the collection was to support other community functions in areas such as education, research, or administrative support. For example the church archives provided information to aid the administrative office, while the school archives provided plans that helped with facilities maintenance.

None of the experts in their rationale comments indicated awareness of the role of community archives in supporting broader community or in-house functions. This is perhaps not surprising
considering the overall trend by experts to focus on a broader society-wide perspective, and the lack of a current state statement covering this viewpoint.

7.2. Governance and strategy
Governance and strategy was an area of focus for both experts and interviewees. Experts identified it as one of the key areas impacting community archives over the next 10 years, with 75% agreeing with the statement ‘in a majority of cases, the user community (including those responsible for governance) do not really understand the role and purpose of their community archives’.

Interviewees also discussed a range of concerns relating to governance. These were often to do with perceived levels of interest by the governing body and its resultant ability to provide suitable levels of resourcing.

... whoever's in charge needs to learn more about respecting history... It doesn't come into their way of thinking ... A lot does depend on the management of these things. (School archives)

Interviewee comments indicated that they perceived a knowledgeable governing body to be a more supportive one when it came to affecting what was able to be done. For example:

...the school management are interested in the history of the school and see the value in storage methods, caring, spending money on archives, having a budget - I mean I've got a budget here most archivists would die for. (School archives)

The interviewee thought a key reason for this was that the current Principal used to be the teacher with responsibility for archives at a different school. The interest group archives also reported a similar situation, possibly due to the governing body demonstrating a culture of heritage awareness that made ‘talking archives and archival needs’ easier. On the other hand, the iwi archives and the church archives did not have people within their governing bodies who were knowledgeable about archives. Both interviewees saw this as affecting levels of on-going support when it came to funding: something that was particularly evident with the iwi archives:

Those people out there that are interested in the Treaty claims, they know the value of what's sitting up there. I don't believe the Trustees around this table do. Because they would never leave that stuff sit there idle, gathering dust. They'd want to protect it for as long as possible, and yet, I've been here... seven years next year, and they're still sitting there... I don't believe that the people that sit around this table realise what they've got up there.

The situation at the iwi archives may be a familiar one for many other community archivists as well. For example the interviewee from the school archives discussed a range of issues in other schools that they considered were often caused by having a less supportive governing body.

Interviewee comments indicated that there was also a tendency for the governing body to see the archivist as the person who deals with ‘anything historical’, resulting in them carrying out a much wider range of tasks than archivists in larger institutions. Because of this, a lot depended on the attitude, conscientiousness and persistence of the archivist in their interactions with the governing body. Success or failure was often based on the archivist’s own level of knowledge, their confidence in it, and their ability to communicate that knowledge to others. Even in the volunteer-run collections that did not have a formal hierarchy in place, day-to-day management and advocacy seemed to rely on the dedication of a few individuals, with archives-related funding requests only getting approved if those individuals were knowledgeable or persistent enough.
7.3. Funding
Experts considered funding as having a vital influence on community archives, both in terms of getting things done, and their future direction. All experts also considered funding to be the biggest influence on the development of community archives over the next ten years. For example they agreed with the current state statements that said ‘most community archives lack the resources and facilities to effectively manage born digital archives’ and ‘although most community archives want to meet basic guidelines for storage they do not always have the resources to do so’. Expert comments also indicated that they saw the provision of suitable funding as the key factor behind better training, more staff, and consequently, the ability to get things done. As one expert said in response to digital archiving:

*Digital archiving is important, but I don’t think its [sic] the number one priority for community archives. It really links more to finding [sic] and resourcing. If community groups had more funding and available resources and expertise and guidance from leaders, digital archiving issues should be addressed by that.*

Overall experts tended to share a view that community archives were, as one expert said, ‘woefully under resourced’ to manage to evidence of their community. This was a viewpoint that was supported by archival discourse. For example, Newman (2011, p. 41) wrote that ‘funding was found to be critical to the maintenance of many of the factors which contribute to the sustainability of community archives [in NZ] … as money purchases skilled staff, preservation and other essential requirements for archives maintenance’, while Flinn stated:

*It is hardly surprising … that most [UK] archives face a number of challenges relating to both their current activities and perhaps more gravely to sustaining these activities into the future. At the heart of these challenges lies the question of access to resources (financial, human, physical, skills, and expertise) and how a lack of resources hinders the archive’s growth and ability to develop in the future.* (2011, pp 13 – 14)

Interviewees tended to agree with both these and expert viewpoints. The interviewee from the church archives provided a good overview of the situation, stating:

*Many community archives are working for organisations, and the [denomination] church is a very good example [where] archives are not the core business of the organisation, so consequently, the funding, well if we look at the money side of things, there is never going to be money … the archives are a side issue and so consequently, [to] again use our example, we get the hand-me-downs and discards. We get a very low level of commitment of funding because the funding within a church environment [goes to] other priorities …*

All interviewees gave examples of how lack of funding resulted in reduced training and working hours, restricted facilities, and delayed or frustrated plans in areas such as description, community engagement, preservation, and retrospective work. These, combined with a ‘community-centric’ focus, tended to result in a reactive rather than strategic workplace. It also resulted in a culture where ‘the demands of the now’ outweighed opportunities for strategic planning. An extract of the interview with the interviewee from the interest group archives summarises the situation well:

*Researcher: If you were given… lots of money… would there be any changes you would make here, and what would they be?
Interviewee: I am sure there would be some things. But no… I haven’t thought on that side of...*
it at all, because I've been too busy with the day-to-day things without thinking about the future ...

This viewpoint is supported by the fact that top interviewee areas of concern (Repository management, Access, Staffing and Governance) focused very much on fundamental, day-to-day, in-house demands. This was in contrast to the wider strategic, developmental or environmental concerns often identified by experts. However, comments from two interviewees showed that some community archivists were aware of the importance of a more strategic focus, even if they were not yet able to put it into practice. For example, the church archives ensured that volunteers were made aware of the ideal standard to be worked towards (the National Preservation Office’s Managing and Preserving Community Archives).

There was also a beneficial characteristic caused by restricted resourcing, and that was the ability by interviewees to think outside the box. Key evidence of this was in a variety of low-budget solutions to everyday issues. For example, large registers at the church archives were covered in bubble wrap if archival boxes were not affordable, while the interest group archives used donated filing cabinets, and the school archives had some shelving made out of unused timber from earlier building projects.

7.4. Repository management
Issues with repository management seemed to sum up many of the areas of most concern for interviewees. These have been grouped into three categories: acquisition and appraisal, storage and preservation, and arrangement and description.

7.4.1. Acquisition and appraisal
All collections had a broad collection mandate that included archives, published items, objects, memorabilia and artefacts. As Flinn states:

Certainly most community archives collect traditional archival documents, such as individual and organizational records, but also a wide variety of other things including artefacts, artworks, clothing, oral histories, photographs and film, leaflets, badges, newspapers, books, grey literature—all items which individually, and more importantly when viewed as a collection, are perceived as reflecting significant aspects of the community’s life. (Flinn, 2011, p. 6)

This was something that most experts were aware of, and summed up by an expert comment:

[Community archives] often pick up material that is missed or ‘out of scope’ for professional libraries and archives.

Over 90% of experts also agreed that ‘most community archives consider published and reference material as an integral part of the overall collection’. Some experts however questioned the effectiveness of such a mandate, especially in terms of how community archives were able to manage the wide variety of material in their care in ways that did the collection justice. For example:

They [community archives] have the greatest incentive to do so [create and maintain community memory] regardless of an overly ambitious approach [emphasis added].

...some [community archives] are impeded by a lack of focus, and a clear collection mandate [emphasis added]
One expert went further, questioning whether published and reference material should even be considered part of the collection mandate in the first place:

\[
I \text{ do not see the rationale }\ldots [a s] \text{ such material, is in general, peripheral to a[n] archives collection which [has] gone through appraisal via a logical collection policy.}
\]

Interviewees were also concerned about their ability to manage the collections. This was usually framed by their community focus and resulting desire to address memory gaps as much as possible. For example:

\[
\ldots \text{we have to be careful that we keep everything so that people can then ascertain what the truth is themselves'} (\text{school archives}).
\]

This viewpoint was supported by interviewee comments about the term ‘archival record’. Only two covered the more standard concepts relating to archives being retained indefinitely because of their continuing value (Bettington et al., 2008, p. 633), and no-one made any distinction between archival records and everything else: a distinction that is created almost by default when the standard definition is applied. This was a situation also recognised by Gilliland and Flinn, who stated ‘in the case of the community-based archive it is better to consider the subject of the material and the significance or value that it has within the community rather than its type or format’ (2013, p.8).

While none of the community archives showed evidence of fully documented and consistently practiced acquisition and appraisal processes, four interviewees did not state any major concerns relating to their absence. This lack of concern could be due to a lack of awareness on the part of the interviewee, or else it could be due to the collection mandate itself. That is, the scope of the collection mandate (if it existed) was either very clear or else so broad that it resulted in the collection of anything that told the story of the community, regardless of source.

For some community archives the lack of documented acquisition and appraisal processes may also be due to one of two reasons: the lack of awareness of the benefits of these processes, or the lack of resources to get the processes underway. The perceived lack of authority by some archivists when it comes to making these types of decisions may also play a part. For example interviewees who did not have defined job description (as in the case of the iwi archives) or worked in a voluntary capacity (as in the case of the interest group and local history archives) did not always seem confident about making acquisition decisions.

7.4.2. Storage and preservation

In four of the five community archives storage and preservation practices were adequate. Interviewees demonstrated understanding of basic requirements for storing archives\(^2\) and were able to identify key storage and preservation issues in their collection. However, due to limited resources, they were not always able to address all of them. For example storage and preservation conditions at the iwi archives were highly inadequate, and there was some evidence of varying storage and preservation issues in the other four. These included restricted storage space, few suitable acid-free storage boxes, and lack of suitable shelving and climate control.

These storage and preservation gaps were recognised by experts too. All agreed with the statement ‘although most community archives want to meet basic guidelines for storage they do not always have the resources to do so’. Some experts however also indicated awareness of cases where basic storage standards were lacking due to a lack of staff knowledge. This was something that two of the

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\(^2\) For example, Archives New Zealand’s Instructions for the storage of local authority and public archives (2014).
interviewees also mentioned with regards to other community archives. For example one of them mentioned ‘one school archivist here in [the area] who’s been sticking all the photos on cardboard’. While this is not the case for all community archives, it was clear that a lack of essential preservation knowledge could cause on-going issues unless staff and governing bodies were made aware of knowledge gaps.

7.4.3. Arrangement and description
Most experts agreed that arrangement and description was important. However, as with other areas (such as acquisition and preservation) there was doubt as to how well it was being carried out in community archives. That is, most experts questioned whether arrangement and description practice was achieved at a level that benefitted community archives, or even whether core archival principles were being applied to archival items.

All experts agreed with the statements:

- Most community archives use pragmatic description techniques that are often based on decisions made ‘in-house’
- Many individuals with day-to-day responsibility for community archives demonstrate a good level of awareness when it comes to the archival principles of provenance and original order, but there are also a number who do not. As a result, not all community archives follow these key principles when it comes to their accessioning and/or arrangement and description practices.

Over 90% of experts also agreed that:

- Many community archives are viewed by trained and experienced archivists as valid archival repositories (that is, the archives are managed in ways that demonstrate suitable awareness of the key archival principles of provenance and original order), but not all.

Experts agreed that the archival principles of provenance and original order needed to be applied to all archival records, a viewpoint that tended to be shared by interviewees. All interviewees considered arrangement and description practices to be important. For example, the interviewee from the school archives said ‘Well I’m very fussy about [provenance], cos that’s one thing the previous archivist queried me over…’ However, recognition of the importance of provenance and original order did not always equate to suitable standards of descriptive practice. In two archives (the local history archives, and the iwi archives) no archival arrangement and description had ever been done. Even in the church archives, which had the fullest description practices, volunteers often missed out key information such as the name of the collection because to them this information was assumed and obvious.

Varied arrangement and description practices within the collections seemed to be caused by three factors: levels of staff knowledge, the amount of arrangement and description carried out in the past, and the resourcing available. In three of the cases however, any gaps in arrangement and description practice did not necessarily correlate with a lack of access for users. This was because the content and context-based knowledge of the archivist filled many description gaps.

Overall expert and interviewee viewpoints often reflected ‘the tension inherent between a custodial instinct to control context and authenticity, and a desire to share access and promote usage’ (Eveleigh, 2014, p. 212). That is, experts assumed the need to ‘control context and authenticity’ based on their own experiences, while interviewees focused on the need to ‘share access and promote usage’ within their own working context. This is something that is clearly seen when it
comes to interviewee discussion in other sections, for example 7.1 Role of community archives, 7.5 Access and 7.11 Marketing and community engagement.

7.5. Access
The ability of a community archives to give the community equitable access to the collection and its items was one of the key areas of concern for interviewees, being the second most discussed area after Repository management. Experts also included it as one of the top ten impact categories affecting community archives over the next ten years, although the majority of experts agreed with its tenth place position, indicating that experts may see little point in focusing on it when funding was not available to do it justice.

All interviewees considered that the collection belonged to the community, with the community having full access to it as much as possible. If restrictions were applied, these were carried out by the archivist on a case-by-case basis and based on the archivist’s own understanding of the community context, rather than any community-led directive. As a result, more restrictions seemed to be placed on items in collections where there was less perceived community engagement than on items in collections where there was more. As the interviewee from the school archives explained

   I don't have any concerns here at this school ... with people accessing and taking things... Not like the other school where I work at.

All interviewees saw access in terms of developing suitable arrangement and description processes. This was a key area of focus for all three of the collections applying some form of arrangement and description practice, as they were aware of the consequences of unintentional restriction caused by inadequate indexing or description. The two interviewees who had no clear practices in place did not mention it.

Only one interviewee considered custody and copyright to be a concern. Other access-related aspects such as security levels, privacy, and sensitivity of information were not mentioned at all. This suggests that interviewees’ concepts of custody and ownership were more fluid than those of other archives, where transfer in nearly all cases equates to transferring all custody rights and ownership to the repository.

Collection items were viewed by interviewees as being held ‘in trust’ for the community, with concepts of ownership understood in terms of ‘ownership by the community’ rather than ‘ownership by the archival repository’ itself. This is summarised by Flinn (2007, p. 161): ‘...community archives remain firmly the property and in the ownership of the community that created them, at least until that community decides otherwise’. Three interviewees believed that items could be returned to different community members if there were reasons for their return, with a good example provided by the school archives:

   I had one thing I put out on display at the school centennial, somebody spied and discovered it was her workbook thing. It was like a clothing workbook thing and they had swatches of material and drawings and ... she asked if she could have it back, and I thought well it's actually her property, you know, its ended up here in the archives, so I have no right - I did take her name and address, but for some reason I don’t expect to ever see it again. I don’t think it will come back to the school.
However most of the interviewees also agreed that part of their role was to protect the uniqueness and integrity of the archives. As a result, two saw themselves as guardians of the collection on behalf of the community that owned it. This form of guardianship can include making access decisions that benefit the community rather than the collection as a whole. For example the iwi archives told the story of one woman who came in with pebbles she had collected near marae she had stayed at on a hikoi. These were offered to the collection but one of the staff had concerns about them and ended up putting them in a cupboard. The interviewee was not happy with this decision, so

A couple of weeks later I saw [the donor] in town and I said to her... ‘You need to come into work and pick up your taonga’... Because for me, she gave something to the Board and they just cast it aside and put it into a dark room...that wasn’t good enough you, know? ...She said ' I appreciate you telling me girl.' She said ' I never gave my taonga to them to put away in the cupboard.' I said 'I know that, which is why I am telling you. Come and get your taonga.' So she did. She turned up here one day ... and then she went over to [Manager] and she goes ' ... my taonga was in the cupboard up there. I didn’t like it being in there. I’m gonna take my taonga home.' And [Manager] said 'Kai te pai ... You do that.'

Interviewee focus on open community access and subsequent case-by-case restriction decisions raise a number of questions regarding how public access will be managed in the future, particularly when it comes to digitisation and online access. Yakel provides a good example of what may come with Web 2.0:

For archives, Web 2.0 connects communities with collections or, maybe even more conceptually, communities with their history and identity. What is more, it invites collaboration about that history: what it means, how it should be presented, and what we know. Shared authority and distributed curation are the point. Yet Web 2.0 technologies can be implemented and the community can be integrated in many different ways. This raises questions about how much authority we as archivists are willing to share and how to manage the voices of all those distributed curators.’ (Yakel as cited in Eveleigh, 2014, p. 213).

As a result, community archives will need to decide what information they are willing to share online, in what form, and how they will manage ownership (if such a concept exists in the community). They will also need to decide how they will manage the processes that provide or restrict access, and, in some cases, determine whether they allow or restrict aspects of crowd-sourcing with regard to ‘their’ memories.

7.6. Digital archiving

The management of digital and born-digital material was minimal to non-existent in all interviewee collections, with little evidence of this situation changing in the future.

Most experts seemed aware of this state, with most considering digital archiving as a key area of influence over the next ten years. However there was also evidence of expert debate as to whether this was actually the case. Some saw digital archiving as being superseded by other areas such as funding and training, as these impacted the ability of community archives carry it out. As a result digital archiving was often a case of ‘now, but not yet’.

Interviewee responses indicated three key reasons for the current state of digital archiving within community archives.
Firstly, collections are not receiving born-digital items from their communities. While this could be due to the lack of a collection policy, it is more likely due to an incorrect perception of community archives by community stakeholders. For example they may assume archives ‘are old’ and not think about offering born-digital records to the collection, or else they may not understand what digital archiving is and what it involves. This problem can be exacerbated by a perceived lack of understanding by those within the governance body. For example it can impact funding for projects that would increase engagement through electronic means, such as the creation of websites or digitised copies of items.

...so much is becoming digital and I find that kind of recordkeeping doesn’t connect with a lot of other people in the staff... (School archives)

Secondly, the collections themselves are simply not equipped to manage born-digital items. A key reason is lack of funding, as ‘having access to adequate resources means being able to address pressing concerns about digital sustainability and preservation’ (Flinn, 2014, p. 14). When faced with limited funds, community archives often need to focus on basic storage and repository management processes rather than on strategic plans for the possible future management of digital archives. This is supported by UK findings, which state that ‘lack of funding was the most-often cited impediment to implementation of born digital materials management ... closely followed by lack of time for planning and lack of expertise.’ (Dooley et al., 2013, p. 75). For example, only two interviewees (the church archivist and the school archivist) were planning to look into the management of born-digital archives, and this was at a very high level.

Thirdly, there is a lack of specific training in basic digital archiving processes. Community archivists are hindered by a lack of straightforward information on how to manage electronic records in ways that are suitable for small collections. Most current information is at a high level and lacking practical ‘how to’ solutions, or designed for larger organisations. A good example is Archives New Zealand’s Digital recordkeeping (Archives New Zealand, 2015).

In the case of the volunteer archives and the iwi archives, this issue seemed to be exacerbated by a lack of awareness of what can be achieved even with minimal funding. This was a situation that contrasted significantly with findings from special collections in the UK, which stated that ‘perceived pressure to digitise collections comprehensively seems to be ubiquitous’. (Dooley et al., 2013, p. 18). A possible reason for this is that UK archivists have backgrounds that make them more aware of opportunities in this area, something supported in this research by the fact that the two interviewees with graduate qualifications demonstrated greater awareness of the wider environment and its potential issues. However, it could also come down to UK community archivists having a greater number of opportunities for training and support.

Any future solutions that address digital archiving issues within community archives in New Zealand will therefore need to consider not just the availability of funding for software, hardware, implementation, and staff training, but also how stakeholders understand the impact of digital archives, and what can be done to raise their levels of awareness.

7.7. Collaboration
Experts considered that collaboration will have a significant effect on community archives in the future. This is backed up by archival literature, which states that collaboration can bring a range of benefits such as reduced isolation for staff, lowered costs (for example through shared premises and
storage facilities), enhanced strategic focus, and shared archival knowledge and experience (Flinn, 2011; Johnson, 2012; Newman, 2011).

There is a way to go however before collaboration involving community archives in New Zealand becomes the norm rather than the exception. Although there are exceptions (e.g., Kete Taranaki Reo (Love and Hall, 2012)), most community archives in New Zealand do not tend to actively collaborate with other heritage institutions, and this is a situation reflected in interviewee comments. A key reason seems to be that collaboration possibilities are not high on community archives’ radars. For example, none of those interviewed had any formal collaboration agreement in place for shared storage or acquisition practices, nor were they considering formal collaboration in the future. Although the church archives and the iwi archives noted that another collecting institution held a small part of their holdings, this was a result of historical necessity rather than any planned collaboration.

There seemed to be three main reasons for a lack of collaboration. Firstly, there is a tendency for community archives to be more reactive than strategic in focus, making it less likely for them to be aware of the opportunities that could be made. Secondly, the lack of staff awareness of any ‘success stories’, many of which are not documented in industry journals. Thirdly, the high level of existing wariness by staff when it comes to possible collaboration initiatives: a situation supported by Newman, who stated in her own research that ‘none of the community archives studied had effectively collaborated with other archives or heritage organisations, possibly because of the strong parochialism felt by community archives’ (Newman, 2011, p. 42).

For the interviewees, this wariness tended to be more practical than parochial. For example, the interviewee from the church archives stated that any storage based collaboration would need to ensure that they didn’t lose ownership, and even if they retained ownership, the likelihood of storage-based collaboration was unlikely, because when they tried to transfer the collection some years ago, the region’s museum, public library and university library would not take it due to its size.

Interviewees were open to the possibility of collaboration when it came to training and professional guidance, but considered that there was a lack of support from larger archival institutions to help make this happen.

I really think community archives are not given the support, and the museums have stepped ahead of the archives profession in terms of the support that [is] given... (Church archives)

This is representative of the other interviewees’ viewpoints as well. However, it is usually beyond the mandate and resourcing of larger institutions to provide practical support and resources to community archives, no matter how much they might wish to do so. As a result, any future collaboration may come down to collaborative training projects with professional associations such as the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ) or Museums Aotearoa. However, as with so many other factors, this would be dependent on resourcing.

There is evidence that community archivists are already collaborating in the area of professional engagement, although this tends to be at a very basic level. For example the interviewee from the church archives took volunteers to visit other community archives, while the school archivist was part of a local school archives group. Project-based collaboration was not specifically covered by any

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3 A local exception is Looking out and keeping the gate open: Wairarapa archive, New Zealand’s greatest little archive (Green and Winter, 2011).
of the interviewees, and therefore it is assumed that very little is done in this area. The one exception was the interviewee from the church archives, who discussed attempting to organise a shared scanning and digitisation project with another small archival repository.

Overall, interviewees demonstrated a cautious support for collaboration between them and other organisation(s), as long as it was done appropriately over the long term. As Flinn states ‘...relationships should be seen not as short-term one-off exercises but as sustained ones in which trust and mutual respect are fostered not just between individuals (who will eventually move on) but also between institutions’ (2011, p. 15).

7.8. Staffing

Experts considered staffing as being one the ‘top five’ areas of influence for community archives over the next ten years, particularly with regards to the ability of community archives to recruit knowledgeable and skilled staff. They also agreed that ‘community archives are often dependant on one or two passionate individuals to lead and manage them’:

Community archives are generally run by people with strong ties to that community and they therefore generally have the right kind of understanding and commitment to apply archival practices to this end. (Expert)

Staff were considered by both experts and interviewees to have great influence on how the collection is managed and how the collection was perceived and used by its community. This level of influence had both good and bad points in terms of a collection’s future development, with the situation well summarised by Gilliland and Flinn:

The personal sacrifice and drive to document that many of these central figures exhibit is both crucial to the initial growth and survival of these archives but also represents a potential problem in terms of identifying equally committed successors to take on the archive. (2013, p. 9.)

This was a situation recognised by interviewees, with all stating their concern about would happen to the collection if they left or retired.

While interviewee comments showed they were aware of the importance of archival knowledge regarding areas such provenance and original order, appraisal, and archival storage, this was not always the case in other community archives. For example the interviewee from the school archives commented that some school archivists lacked knowledge of basic archival principles or preservation techniques, and even awareness as to why they were important. As a consequence, some of the school archivists carried out or condoned practices that were detrimental to the ongoing management of archives. My own experience backs this up, having witnessed examples of photograph collections rearranged from their original order and organised by subject, original paper-based items displayed in direct sunlight, and documents laminated. Training is key to address this problem:

In my experience training in archival practice is one of the most important factors in ensuring that community archives are managed appropriately. (Expert)

This viewpoint is backed up by Newman (2011, p. 41) who stated ‘a basic level of archival skill and knowledge should be an accepted requirement’. However, while archival training is essential, there is also the issue of how to get people with a different understanding or motivation to accept it and apply it.
Examples of this were given by both the church archives and the school archives. Both worked closely with a number of volunteers, and both were concerned by the lack of knowledge some volunteers displayed when it comes to fundamental archival practices. They provided examples of how these could lead to gaps in description, inappropriate handling of archives, and misfiled documents. While this can be due to a lack of suitable training by the archivists responsible (a factor recognised by the interviewees when they discussed other community archives), it can also be caused by other reasons. For example, the interviewee from the church archives stated that volunteers tended to join for the social interaction, and so ‘their reasons for volunteering [are] different to what I necessarily want’. This resulted in volunteers who were keen, but did not understand the value of learning or applying archival processes and practices.

Volunteers ... have all gone through an archives training course, but none of it sticks because they are not interested in being archivists. ...there have been training opportunities that have come up, and they don't want to go. They are not interested. ...They’re happy with what they are doing. (Church archives)

As a result, this interviewee found that they needed to make compromises when it came to their expectations of volunteer work. They kept processes simple ‘because our volunteers struggle with even using an Excel Spread-sheet’ and spent a lot of time reviewing completed projects to ensure a basic standard was met.

However both the church archives and the school archives reported occasional exceptions. These were volunteers who were interested in archives management or professional development. Interviewees saw this type of volunteer as an asset, with the interviewee from the school archives stating that:

I could probably do with a volunteer that actually had some training and knew what they were doing, and [if this was the case] I could probably whistle up all sorts of stuff and get it a lot better sorted a lot quicker.

7.9. Training and professional engagement
The area of training and professional engagement was considered important by experts. Most experts agreed that it was in the top five categories of influence over the next ten years, while over 90% agreed with the statement that ‘community archives are not considered a priority when it comes to industry-based training or collaborative support initiatives. This is mainly due to a lack of resources rather than a lack of awareness’.

Most experts also considered that archival knowledge in community archives varied widely, with a majority agreeing that ‘most staff who manage community archives do not have archival qualifications, and while their understanding of foundational archival practices (boxing, listing, accessioning etc.) may be sufficient, there can be evidence of a lack of in-depth training or mentoring when it comes to areas such as arrangement and description, appraisal, and preservation.’

Interviewee findings and comments backed up these expert viewpoints. For example, two admitted their own lack of archival knowledge when it came to areas such as appraisal and arrangement and description, and this seemed to be a common scenario in other community archives as well.

A key reason seems to be the fact that the archival skills of most community archivist come solely through on-the-job experience. This is only one of four areas of knowledge that community
archivists ideally need to gain deeper understanding of archival practice. The other three are base knowledge (knowledge of foundational guidelines and practices), specialist knowledge (in-depth applied and theoretical knowledge of specific areas of archives management), and professional knowledge (knowledge not only of the ‘why’ behind different practices, but also knowledge of the gaps and opportunities for enhancement). (Joe, Yoong and Patel, 2013).

Interviews demonstrated that while participation in formal education was not always essential for a community archivist to do a good job, lack of suitable training was often a key reason behind inappropriate or missing archival practices. It also reduced awareness of broader issues affecting archives management, the result of which can make it hard for community archives to develop strategically. These issues are also compounded by the fact that the staff themselves may not always be aware of the areas where they need further training or support.

*People think it’s a nice little thing they could do in their spare time, and they don’t realise that they need to gather up some knowledge and learn and read things online and use the information from Te Papa, and use all the information from Archives or ARANZ or something like that. People think it’s just a little bit of paper sorting they can do. To fill in and be kind and help a community.* (School archives)

A good example of this can also be applied from the interviewees’ comments about digital archives. While two of the interviewees indicated a general awareness of the area, none had any electronic archives in their collection or met up with others who did. As a result interviewees did not have much awareness of how issues around electronic archives were being addressed in the wider archives profession, or, more particularly, how these issues and solutions applied to them. This contrasts with a UK survey of archives staff that stated that the most frequently selected area for professional development was the management of born-digital materials. It also stated that there was a ‘strikingly high correlation’ between this finding and the ‘marked increase in staff activity in technology and/or digital services’ (Dooley et al., 2013, p. 80).

The lack of governance body funding for staff training and professional development may be a key reason for the low numbers of trained staff working in community archives. Reduced or non-existent resourcing for professional development made it difficult for most community archivists to attend training, even if suitable courses were available. The interviewee from the church archives, who managed the biggest collection, had a training budget of a few hundred dollars a year, while the others did not mention having a training budget at all.

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that community archivists have a variety of training needs. Even within a small group of community archivists working in the same area, a range of skill levels exist from excellent to poor. The interviewee from the church archives gave a good example:

*I remember going to a session [where] people who worked in denominational archives got together. And there was such a great big gulf of level of training and professionalism within that group …*

Most interviewees did not consider that larger archival institutions were able to help with suitable training or provide it at a level that community archivists and their staff require. For example, the interviewee from the church archives stated:

*I [have] been involved with the archives world for … over twenty years now, and … there’s a real down the nose approach to community archives. [Laughs], and … there seems also to be
a real lack of comprehension from those who are working in well-funded, dedicated institutions ... all they do is archives.

I went to a training session [at Archives New Zealand] about [number] years ago where I met somebody who told us how to put things on the Community Archive [website]... [T]hey have never rung me up and said "Hi, how's it going?" ... Why isn't [there] any of the... bigger support from these really well resourced (even though they don't think they are) organisations like the Alexander Turnbull within the National Library, and Archives New Zealand?

The interviewee from the school archives also stated that didn't think that professional associations always provided the right level of training for community archivists:

I mean I’ve been to the school, small archives ARANZ meetings in [city]... We’ve given up on that. We just decided we’re not learning enough from those days ...

These types of viewpoint are supported by Newman, who states that '[t]he inference is that the type of assistance offered is not required or desired, that it is not sufficient; or that it is not delivered in a way which makes it accessible to most' (Newman, 2011, p. 44). However, there is also evidence that the larger archival institutions and professional organisations have little traction to promote collaborate forms of training involving community archives in the current environment. As one expert stated:

I don’t thing [sic] the issue is with community groups engaging with professionals, I think its [sic] more of a top down issue. Why engage when the guidance and support for community isn’t a priority in the wider industry [?].

The disbanding of the Archives New Zealand’s Responsiveness to Maori and Community Archives Group in 2014 as part of Archives New Zealand’s integration into the Department of Internal Affairs is an example of how difficult it is for larger organisations to provide professional support to community archives in the current climate. While some functions such as the maintenance of the Community Archives website (http://thecommunityarchive.org.nz/) were taken over by the Recordkeeping Capability Team, both interviewees and experts report very little activity within the community archives area, and little ongoing maintenance of the Community Archives website. So it is not surprising that the interviewee from the church archives stated:

I really think community archives are not given the support, and the museums have stepped ahead of the archives profession in terms of the support that [is] given... There is no equivalent liaison officer as there is with the Museums Aotearoa, oh sorry the museums ... where [there are] are four liaison officers that go up and down the... country ... who come in and talk. Now I’ve had a talk to the person who covers [region], and she’s been great. [B]ut I’ve had to go to a museum person about a question, because there isn’t the equivalent in the archives world

This is supported by expert comment:

As far as I can tell currently the only professional engagement that occurs regularly is te papa’s [sic] regional services. Turnbull apparently does not want to know, Archives NZ has a

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4 For example, initiatives include the Kaitiaki network, regional forums and the Emerging Museum Professionals (EMP) group. (Museums Aotearoa Annual Report, 2013).
community archivist but goodness only knows what they do except attempt to fix The Community Archive, which in my view Archives NZ does not want the responsibility for. ARANZ tries but it is a voluntary organisation that can only do so much without the engagement of the major institutions.

However a comment within the 2013 Annual Report for Museums Aotearoa indicates that the provision of professional guidance to the smaller more independent museums may not be as clear cut as it seems:

'We have a much smaller proportion of the 300+ volunteer-run museums as members, and this is a possible segment for increasing MA membership. However, many of these smaller museums operate very much locally, and do not feel the need to engage with a national organisation' (Museums Aotearoa Annual Report, 2013, p.6)

Although further research needs to be done, the issues associated with providing training and guidance to smaller, more independent heritage institutions may need to be shared between the museum and archives communities, possibly because of similar workplace cultures within volunteer museums and community archives.

Neither experts nor professionals discussed the provision of training from independent training organisations, institutes of technology, polytechnics or universities. Courses\(^5\) that are at least partially relevant to community archives exist in the postgraduate Information Studies qualification with specialisation in archives and records management at Victoria University of Wellington’s School of Information Management. They also exist in undergraduate Diplomas and Bachelor’s degrees at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

Although these courses can be studied by distance and are therefore more accessible to community archivists, they require a substantial financial commitment that is often more than most can afford. The qualifications also cover a wide range of aspects relating to higher level and more theoretical aspects of archival practice that may not always be specifically applicable to a community archives.

As a result, even though these qualifications provide an opportunity to gain knowledge, ‘there is still a qualification gap for those interested in the management of smaller and community-based heritage collections’ (Cossham, Wellstead and Welland, 2013, p. 230).

Any solutions may therefore need to be provided through a collaborative pooling of resources from the archives, museum and library sectors. These need to balance respect for key archival principles with the unique nature and user needs of community archives. Training support and guidance needs to be provided in ways that do not lose ‘the passion and connection to the community brought by enthusiasts’ (Newman, 2011, p. 41). It also needs to respect and draw upon the level of knowledge gained over the years by people who are skilled community archivists.

Interviewees suggested similar options for training. They saw advantage in peer to peer support backed up by expert guidance, as long as it can be provided in ways that recognises that many archivists are sole charge and have little opportunity to attend group training or professional development events. For example the interviewee from the school archives saw advantage in a more basic level training programme for people working in small community archives:

\(^5\) Course here means a one trimester paper of 15-20 credits. Multiple courses make up a qualification such as a bachelor’s or master’s degree.
If you’re going to set up a training programme or something, it needs to be a more basic, daily sort of thing... Ask another archivist. Ask somebody who’s been in it for longer who is obviously doing well at it. Ask for help. You [also] need some sort of group, organisation, ways and means of people contacting each other. So that if they are new in the job they can ask questions and find out and not make mistakes... People don’t need the in-depth - I mean I belong to that mailing group that talks about records management and things. But most I just delete, delete, delete delete because of it’s of absolutely no use to me. I think they need a more basic level of people just getting together and somebody says 'how do you do this?' or 'how do you do that?' or even a day thing where people can actually ask questions instead of being faced with speakers who bore you to tears, you know, just sit around and ask questions in groups and share ideas and things - would be far better than the formal, either online or in person course, for just community archivists who need to look after quite small collections.

7.10. Wider environment
When they identified criteria that could have a significant influence on community archives over the next ten years, experts listed a range of factors from the wider environment that could impact community archives. Examples included government legislation, economic conditions, and an aging population. However there was also evidence that several experts considered that some community archives may be sheltered from such effects. As one expert stated:

*This very much depends on the individual Archives. Some organisations e.g. religious archives are probably sheltered from such factors*

Overall it seemed that interviewees were aware of wider environmental impacts, even if only at a high level. For example, the interviewee from the school archives outlined a number of particular concerns ranging from younger people’s lack of interest in history to the issue of electronic records.

For three of the other four interviewees, concerns were centred on the number and/or increasing age of volunteers. For example, the interviewee from the local history archives stated ‘we have a heck of a job getting volunteers, and we are slowly dwindling away’. While interviewees were aware of other possible wider environmental impacts, solutions were not extant as awareness was couched more in terms of ‘this is the way it is’ rather than in terms of ‘this is what we are going to do about it’.

7.11. Marketing and community engagement
Marketing and community engagement was an area of focus for both experts and interviewees. A majority of experts agreed that this area would have significant impact on community archives over the next ten years, while all interviewees considered that it played a key part in their role to make the community aware of the collection. This viewpoint was well summarised by interviewee from the school archives, who wanted to ‘make them realise that I am up here and I have a lot of things that they never dreamt that I’ve got up here’.

It was clear that all interviewees saw themselves as a key marketing tool when it came to the collection and what it held. Therefore they were concerned about how their services were to be best used. This level of concern reflects findings from a survey of special collections and archives in the UK. This stated that ‘outreach was selected as [the third highest] area for staff development’ (Dooley et al., 2013, pp. 80 - 81). It is also backed up by Green and Winter:
...it’s our job to keep the gate open. Returning information to the community is an important part of the job and the success of the archive depends more on what you return to the community rather than what you keep. (2011, p.27).

All those interviewed stated that they were doing a number of things to market their collections within the resources they had available. All considered that their collection lacked visibility and was under-used by community users. They also thought that most people in the community did not really understanding the role of community archives. For example, the interviewee from the Iwi archives said ‘I know that there’s a lot of people, even just here in a little place like [name of town], they don’t know anything about archives’, and all interviewees gave examples of community response to their collections that ranged from the blithely unaware to the cavalier. For example, the interviewee from the school archives said:

...people wander through and other staff sort through for photos and stick them back in the wrong files, and then they want to a particular photo and of course they’ve put it in something else, and people just take things, and they never come back ... I used to work at a third school - and we had a centennial there, and they lost whole photo albums because people just - they went. Nobody cared.

As a consequence, these community attitudes can contribute to a range of issues that affect the ongoing development of community archives, from the possibility of closing the collection due to lack of interest, to on-going challenges associated with funding, handling, storage, and access.

This was something that a majority of experts seemed aware of as they agreed with the statement ‘many community archives get some form of active support from the communities from which they were created. However, the efficacy of this support depends on the level of stakeholder understanding and involvement, and the level of competition for community funding’. The interviewees considered that these issues were not always easy to fix within the time and resources available, and that it was not easy to communicate these issues to the wider community. As the interviewee from the church archives stated:

A lot of people have [asked] things like ‘oh, what do you do at the archives?’ ...there is actually a lot of hard work that it is very hard to communicate to people...

This was a viewpoint that was also shared by most experts, who agreed that ‘in a majority of cases, the user community (including those responsible for governance) do not really understand the role and purpose of their community archives’. However, there was also evidence that some experts questioned whether this perception was actually true in some cases. For example:

I think in practice the ‘community archive’ can be a bit disconnected from the community it purports to serve.

[This statement] may be true for some community archives, but I doubt it is true for the majority given that most community archives are likely to be managed within a broader institution such as a library or local museum.

I think that users generally do understand the role and purpose of their community archives but their understanding may not be the same as the professional view or understanding. In other words users consider the community archives are there to help them with their enquiries.
Whatever the interpretation, all comments indicate awareness that a lack of community engagement may be due in part to the community’s misunderstanding of archives. While the community viewed heritage material as rightfully ‘theirs’, it often misunderstood what an ‘archive’ was, how it differed from other heritage items, and how it needed to be managed. This can lead to archival ‘misuse’ by the community, particularly when it came to access and handling. The school archives gave a good example:

We have had some concerns about a certain staff member ... coming up and taking plans and things like that. Although all these rooms are basically locked when I’m not here, she can access keys and things, and she was coming and taking plans and I didn’t know they’d gone...

To a certain extent examples of misuse can be due to a sense of individual entitlement to or ownership of the archives, with individuals considering archival practice as restricting them from ‘their’ records. However with the interviewees it was clear that all wanted to provide the widest possible access to community members. (See under Section 7.5: Access.)

Lack of engagement also had an impact on how the role of the archivist was perceived. For example, the interviewee from the school archives had worked on collections in a number of different schools, and was able to comment in-depth on how others in the community saw the role of the archivist.

They reported that lack of engagement can affect opinion on what the archivist does, which can have a roll-on effect on what the archivist is allowed to do, and how much they are funded in order to be able to do it:

This other school I work [at] ... they don’t take me seriously... I was just in a back room all day, with very little contact with anybody ... one of the others treats me like 'she's just the lowest of the low'. And when she queried why I was sending a letter the other day, I thought well, 'excuse me, you’re younger than my children, and you’re querying why I’m sending a letter’...

Another possible reason was that many of the staff were not natural advocators of their role or their collection. That is, they often preferred to ‘get work done’ rather than ‘stir things up.’ As Edmonson states:

[Archivists] are typed as “guardians”: dependable, process-driven, methodical managers of goods and services, reliable back-room people, intuitive and introverted. We are among the best educated but the lowest paid. We resist change. We fail to obtain the resources and status needed for our work, because the studies suggest that we are poor advocates for our own causes. We rate three times lower on the advocacy scale than the general population. We have a low self-image. We are not political animals and we shy away from confrontation. (2013, pp. 39-40)

While this was written with the broader profession in mind and based on the Australian situation, it also applies to many community archivists here in New Zealand. A supportive governance body can help raise community engagement, particularly through its support of the collection’s main (and sometimes reluctant) marketer– the archivist – through different forms of profile-raising initiatives.
8. Recommendations

The recommendations below are made in light of the findings of this research and address some of the key issues covered in the Discussion section of this report. These recommendations are purposely high-level in scope in order to generate wider discussion about community archives and the issues they face. They are also designed to help initiate a framework of collaborative support from which community archivists can identify and apply more specific solutions.

While these recommendations assume on-going involvement by community archives, for a variety of reasons (many of which are covered in this report), community archives are not always able to initiate them. The archives profession needs to recognise this and with the input of stakeholders from other heritage information communities, work with community archivists to determine where priorities actually lie, and who is most able to help address them. As a result, these recommendations have been created with the wider archival profession in mind.

These recommendations are listed in order of priority, although many will overlap.

1. **Develop a broadly applicable definition of the term ‘community archives’ for New Zealand archivists**

   Currently there is no working definition of community archives in New Zealand. This contributes to varied opinion about what they are and what they do. It also creates gaps in awareness that can lead to lack of understanding and support. A working definition of the term community archives needs to be developed for professional associations, archival institutions, archivists and researchers when the topic of community archives is discussed.

   This definition needs to:
   
   - identify the range of community archives in New Zealand, including ones that have no direct government or local government funding;
   - determine whether the term community archives includes collections stored and managed separately from their originating communities;
   - recognise that while there is commonality in key principles, there is extensive variation in terms of role, practice and terminology.

   An Online Working Group facilitated by a larger heritage or academic institution would be a good way to create a suitable definition. This could include representatives involved with community, in-house, collecting and government archives as well as representatives from the library and museum communities, professional associations, and various stakeholder and user groups.

2. **Establish a Community Archives Advocate Group that supports community archives and their ongoing development**

   Because of the current environment in which they operate, community archives cannot be self-sustaining in certain areas (e.g., training) or else they have restricted potential in others (for example, marketing and community engagement). As a result, a centralised voice is vital to act in an advocacy role for community archives and their future development.

   The Group should:
be supported by current professional associations from within the archives, library and museum sectors;
• have advocacy of community archives as a key role;
• maintain an on-line presence to cover the wide range of locations in which community archives reside.

Advocacy may take various forms, and include the championing of:
• community archives support groups and special interest groups in professional associations that cover community archives interests;
• strategic planning initiatives for community archives;
• research, publications and other information about community archives;
• training and education for community archivists;
• standards and other guidance-based information that specifically supports community archivists in their work;
• scholarship and funding opportunities.

The UK’s Community Archives and Heritage Group (http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/) provides a useful blueprint.

3. Develop a formal statement about the role and purpose of community archives that is recognised by New Zealand professional associations

In order for community archives to continue to develop as collections of community memory, there needs to be formal recognition of the role and purpose of community archives by all professional associations that are connected with the management of heritage information in New Zealand. This includes The Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ), Library and Information Association of New Zealand (LIANZA), Records and Information Professionals of Australasia (RIMPA) The New Zealand Historical Association (NZHA) and Museums Aotearoa.

A formal statement could be incorporated into key association documents and include:
• a broad definition of community archives (see Recommendation 1);
• a summary of the role and purpose of community archives in New Zealand;
• recognition of the value of community archives when it comes to collecting and maintaining community memory.

This statement could be developed by the Online Working Group or the Community Archives Advocate Group. It could then disseminated to the different associations for discussion and feedback.

4. Develop voluntary base-line standards of practice for community archivists

The development of standards specifically for community archives would help address questions about what should be managed, where, and how, and who should manage them. Standards would also:
• help reduce the variety of processes and practices across community archives
• enhance good practice;
• relieve anxiety about the current state;
• engender a more strategic focus;
• aid the identification of risk and risk management solutions;
• provide reasons for increased funding and support.

This would also lead to greater confidence in the management of cultural heritage materials.

Standards could initially be developed by the Online Working Group and/or the Community Archives Advocate Group with support from other community archivists and industry representatives who are considered best suited to address each standard’s area. For example, standards relating to the management of publications would be addressed by librarians, standards relating to arrangement and description by archivists, and standards relating to the management of artefacts by curators.

Standards development needs to determine:
• the breadth and depth of coverage;
• what information already exists that can be adapted and what standards need to be created from scratch;
• what processes, checks and balances need to be put in place to ensure that a majority of community archivists agree with the standards.

Standards would not be mandatory, as there is no way of enforcing such a status. However it is anticipated that professional associations and large cultural heritage institutions such as Archives New Zealand and National Library of New Zealand would endorse them.

5. Develop a Community Archives Toolkit for community archivists

Although community archivists are usually aware of what they don’t know, there is a lack of easily accessible information available to help them address this situation. A Toolkit would provide a centralised place where current resources, articles, standards, guides and other ‘how to’ documents can collected and disseminated. This Toolkit would ideally be:
• available online;
• widely promoted amongst community archives and professional associations;
• easy to use, with printable content.

The Toolkit for community archives (Archives New Zealand 2009) was an initial development in this area. This and other sources such as the Storage standard (Archives New Zealand, 2007), Archive principles and practice: An introduction to archives for non-archivists (The National Archives, 2011) and Managing and preserving community archives (National Preservation Office, 2005) are initial candidates for inclusion. Elizabeth Charlton’s Toolkit for digital records management in community archives, which will be a product of her 2015 Ian McLean Wards Scholarship research, would be another useful addition.

Initial development of the toolkit should be carried out by a nominated group of individuals from the Online Working Group or Community Archives Advocate Group, with additional support from training and education institutions, other heritage information organisations and professional associations. The Toolkit would be maintained by the Community Archives Advocate Group or its nominated representative.

6. Provide a communication space for individuals involved with community archives

Community archivists see great value in opportunities for peer-to-peer communication and guidance. It is recommended that an online communication platform such as a Wiki is created to
enable community archivists and stakeholders to discuss issues on online forums, provide webinars, and share information. This needs to be:

- consistently managed on an ongoing basis so it remains current;
- easy to use;
- able to be accessed by people on low band-width networks;
- able to be self-moderated;
- linked to other online information and communities dedicated to community archives.

An administrator would be chosen to manage the space on a day-to-day basis.

7. **Champion a qualification suited for those who are working with community archives**

It is recommended that groups such as the Community Archives Advocate Group specifically champion qualifications that are suitable for community archivists. Encouraging greater uptake of qualifications would help to reduce the qualification gap between community archivists and archivists in other institutions.

The New Zealand Certificate in Heritage Information Level 4 is currently being approved by NZQA as a recognised New Zealand qualification. It is recommended that groups support its uptake and subsequent development by an educational institution as this qualification is best suited to address the needs of a range of people who require more fundamental guidance on how to manage heritage information.
9. Conclusion

While there is not yet a formalised description of what community archives are, and there is great variation in how they are represented, four themes exemplify the characteristics of many community archives. These are: active community support and participation by a self-defined community; places (physical or otherwise) that validate and provide access to community memory and the stories that may be created from it; the storage of archives and a variety of other materials; and a lack of direct government funding and/or control. All of these themes existed within the archives interviewed. Interviewees were passionate about what they did and worked hard to make sure that ‘their’ community memory was preserved in the best way possible within the resources available.

Both experts and interviewees considered that New Zealand community archives have a vital role to play in collecting and maintaining community memory that may otherwise be lost. They saw this demonstrated in three ways: by preserving evidence of the history of the community (experts and interviewees), by enabling and encouraging the community to access its memory (interviewees), and by supporting other broader community functions (interviewees). These roles operated in an environment that had:

- A strong focus on the community the collection served
- Varied archival practices ranging from excellent to non-existent
- A culture of pragmatic decision making
- Less than adequate resourcing in many cases
- Little professional support from, and few collaborative initiatives with, other heritage institutions and professional associations
- Communities and governing bodies that do not always understand the role and purpose of community archives and the archivist
- Staff who often had no formal archival training and who may have very little knowledge of fundamental archival principles and practices
- A broad collection mandate that included a range of material kept as community memory

Interviewee comments demonstrated that many of these factors strongly affected how community archives operated. This was both in terms of the current state and its future development, and the collection’s ability to articulate the role of the community archives so that others (both within and outside the community) could understand it. For the interviewees, everything was underpinned by a clear community focus that affected how information was acquired, described and accessed. This focus had both benefits and drawbacks for any potential future development. It allowed collections to be a lot more responsive to user requirements and to think outside the box, but it also made it harder for them to plan for factors that could impact the collection over the next ten years.

Interviewees, as champions of the collection and making it available to the community, were often cognisant of the wider issues, but did not see the point in pursuing them in an environment where they were sole-charge and there seemed to be little resourcing or support for planned future development. Apparent unwillingness by interviewees to address anything other than current needs was often the result of practical choice rather than lack of awareness.
As a consequence, it is important that the viewpoints of both experts and interviewees are heard and understood by both sides. This will help to determine more informed priorities for the ongoing development of community archives over the next ten years, as well as establish how they are to be carried out.

In order to make key changes however, there also needs to be recognition by the wider archives profession of what issues exist within community archives, how they should be prioritised, and who is most able to help address them. This is something that can only really be solved through wider collaboration with community archivists and input from stakeholders such as heritage information institutions and associations.
10. References


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11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Stage 1 onsite visit topics and interview questions

TOPICS

1. Topic 1: The physical context
   - Location of collection
   - Location of work areas
   - Location of research rooms
   - Storage facilities, boxing etc.
   - Annual income

2. Topic 2: The intellectual context
   - Collection content
     - Original and unique items
     - Do you have any published, copied and reference material
     - Electronic material
     - Other items of interest
   - Collection documentation
   - Disposal

3. Topic 3: The user context
   - Number and types of enquiries
   - Types of user
   - Most popular groups of records for research
   - User facilities and services

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions relate to your OWN point of view about different aspects of the collection in terms of how it is useful, and what you would like to change about it if you could.

To start with, I’d like to ask four questions about how you see the role of the collection, and your own role.

1. If you had to explain why the collection is important, for example to get funding, what would you say?
2. Can you explain to me what you personally think the role of the collection is? (Or in other words, why you think the collection exists?)
3. Can you give me an outline of what you do, day-to-day?
4. Now, can you give me an outline of what you think your wider role is in terms of the community you work within?
Now I want to move on to getting your personal viewpoints relating to how you would define two terms to do with archives.

I am going to read you a definition of the term ‘community archives’. Newman (2010) provides a general definition for community archives in New Zealand:

“Community archives are collections of archival records that originate in a community - that is, a group of people who live in the same location or share other forms of community of interest - and whose collection, maintenance and use involves active participation of that community”.

5. Do you think this definition describes your collection? Why?

6. I am going to mention one of the terms mentioned in the definition of community archives above - archival record. Is it a term you are familiar with? If yes: How would you describe it to someone who has never heard it before? If no: Can you tell me what you think it means?

The next four questions relate to your own personal concerns about the collection and its management. I just want to confirm that these questions are not for audit purposes, they are here to gauge whether people's concerns are shared across a variety of different small collections.

7. Do you have any concerns about how the collection is stored? If yes, what are they? How would you fix it?
8. Do you have any concerns about how the collection is accessed? If yes, what are they? How would you fix it?
9. Do you have any concerns about how the collection is organised? If yes, what are they? How would you fix it?
10. Do you have any concerns about ownership of items in the collection? If yes, what are they? How would you fix it?

Finally, I want to finish off with four different 'what if' questions:

11. If you were able to rescue three groups of material from the collection before disaster struck, what would you take?
12. If you had free reign and lots of money, are there any changes would you make to your collection in terms of buildings, storage, user access, resources etc. - anything that you haven't mentioned so far?
13. What do you think are the key things the collection will need to do in the future to ensure information is kept for future generations? Why?
14. What do you think would happen to the material if the collection no longer existed?
15. Finally, are there any other viewpoints or comments that you would like to share about your collection, your role, or about keeping and accessing historical material generally?
Appendix 2: Information sent to potential participants

STAGE 1: INTERVIEWS

Document 1:

Invitation / Information Sheet: Participating in research:

The role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand.

Hello,

My name is Sarah Welland and I am conducting research about ‘the role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand’ as a result of gaining a scholarship from the Ian McLean Wards Memorial Trust in 2013.

You have been sent this invitation because your collection seems to be a good representation of one of the many different types of community archive, and I would like to invite you to participate in my research.

I have included some further information below, including more about the research, what you would be expected to do, and your rights as a participant. Please read this in full. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact me at the details below.

Thank you,

Sarah

Sarah Welland

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School of Social Sciences Open Polytechnic | Kuratini Tuwhera
Work: 0508 650-200 ext: 6952
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Work email: Sarah.welland@openpolytechnic.ac.nz
https://openpolytechnic.academia.edu/SarahWelland

Researcher background

My name is Sarah Welland and I am conducting research about ‘the role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand’ as a result of a scholarship from the Ian McLean Wards Memorial Trust in 2013.

I have been working with archives and records since 1988. I have a post-graduate diploma in Information Management (Archives Administration) from the University of New South Wales, and currently work as a co-director and consultant for Lindisfarne Information Consulting Ltd as well as a lecturer in records and archives management at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. I am a member of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand, and also manage my community’s local history collection on a voluntary basis.

The aim/purpose of the research

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My research aims to address gaps in understanding across the wider heritage community about the role, impact and development of community archives. It will do this by identifying and analysing a range of viewpoints about community archives from two key groups - people who represent five small community archives and archival ‘experts’. I will compare and contrast these viewpoints to establish whether there are key areas of consensus or contradiction that affect how community archives are perceived today, and whether these perceptions will affect the role, impact and development of community archives in the future.

**Possible benefits**

This research is designed to help people in heritage and other information communities understand more about community archives by identifying the different opinions about them. This may help readers to understand whether these opinions affect not only the development, definition and role of community archives within the broader information landscape, but also archival theory and practice. It may also help to pinpoint specific areas where small community archives may need advocacy or training support.

**What does the research involve?**

There are two phases of research. You will be participating in Phase 1, which involves looking at how workers in small community archives see the role, impact and development of ‘their’ archives. This is done through an onsite visit, followed by an interview.

*On-site visit*

This involves showing me your collection and answering some questions about how the collection currently works. These questions are designed to help me obtain an understanding of the collection. They are not intended to audit specific practices.

*Individual interview*

This involves participating in a face-to-face interview on the same day as the on-site visit.

Questions will focus on your viewpoints as they relate to the role, impact and development of the collection. For example, how you would define the collection and its role in the community, what you think are the current concerns and future priorities for the collection, and your opinion on factors that influence day-to-day practice. If time allows, specific issues such as access, ownership and copyright may also be covered if these do not arise in the interview.

**How much time will the research take?**

Both the on-site visit and the interview will take about an hour each and no more than three hours in total. These will be carried out within one morning or one afternoon.

**Inconvenience / discomfort / risk**

There is no foreseen inconvenience or discomfort for you as a participant. Any information gained during the visit and interview will be published in a way that does not specifically identify you as an individual, while the collection will be identified by its type rather than its specific name. The research seeks to identify the range of understandings held by all participants across Phase 1, not the understanding of any particular individual. You will not have to answer any question you consider too personal or intrusive.
Personal risk is minimal and relates to areas such as possible non-completion of planned work activities, and Health and Safety. It is recommended, if you are not the person in charge of the collection, that you confirm your participation with your manager before agreeing.

**You can withdraw from the research**

Agreeing to be involved in this research is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to participate. If you give me your consent to participate, you have the right to withdraw your consent up to the time of the on-site visit and interview. You are also able to withdraw your consent for me to use the data gained up to five days after my visit.

**Confidentiality**

All data collected will be treated as confidential. Data gained from individual participants and from on-site visits will not be specifically identified with any particular individual or collection in any published or unpublished reports, publications or presentations arising from this study.

**Storage of data**

Any data that specifically identifies you will be stored in a safe location (that is, on a password protected computer or in an office that is locked when not in use). It will be held for five years from the date of last research use, and then destroyed.

**Results**

If you would like to be informed of when aggregate research findings are published or presented, please contact me using the details below.

**Ethical approval**

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. If you have any ethical questions about this research please contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, Roger Dowling. Email: roger.dowling@openpolytechnic.ac.nz.

**What next?**

If you are willing to participate in this research, please let me know either via email or phone call. I will then organise with you a date and time for the on-site visit and interview that suits you. When I visit, I will get you to fill in and sign a consent form before we start. The consent form will ask you to consent to all of the following points:

| - I agree to allow the researcher on-site so she can gain an understanding of the collection and how it works |
| - I agree to allow responses to research-related questions made during the visit to be documented by the researcher |
| - I agree to be interviewed by the researcher |
| - I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped |
- I agree to answer any follow up questions from the researcher by phone or email.

If you have decided not to participate, please let me know this so that I will not contact you again about the research.

Thank you.

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Document 2:
CONSENT FORM
Phase 1
Research project: The role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand.
Researcher: Sarah Welland
I have been asked to take part in the research project specified above. I have read and understood the Invitation / Information Sheet (which I will keep for my records) and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

- I agree to allow the researcher on-site so she can gain an understanding of the collection and how it works
- I agree to allow responses to research-related questions made during the visit to be documented by the researcher
- I agree to be interviewed by the researcher
- I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped
- I agree to answer any follow up questions from the researcher by phone or email.
Role, impact and development of community archives in NZ: A research paper

I consent to all of the points listed above YES / NO

Name of Participant________________________

Participant Signature __________ Date __________

This form will be given to you to sign before the on-site visit and interview.

This consent form will remain with the Researcher for her records.

STAGE 2: SURVEYS

Document 1:

Initial scoping of interest:

Invitation to participate in Phase Two of research into the role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand.

Hi there,

My name is Sarah Welland and I am conducting research about ‘the role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand’ as a result of gaining a scholarship from the Ian McLean Wards Memorial Trust in 2013.

You have been sent this email because I would like to gauge your level of interest in terms of participating in Phase 2 of my research, which involves an invited group of experts responding anonymously to three rounds of questions in the form of an online Survey. It would be valuable for me to access your knowledge and experience in the areas of archives and/or heritage.

Each of the three rounds of questions will take between half an hour to an hour to complete once a month for three months starting September 2014. After Rounds 1 and 2 you will get a summary of the findings for the previous round which you can use to inform your responses for the next round. Any responses you submit are anonymous. This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

If you are interested in participating and wish to know more, please let me know, and I will send you fuller information on the research, what you would be expected to do, and your rights as a participant. If you are not able to participate, please also let me know this so that I will not contact you again about the research.

Thank you.

Sarah Welland

Lecturer, Programme Leader (DipRIM)

School of Social Sciences Open Polytechnic | Kuratini Tuwhera
Document 2:

Participating in Phase Two of research:

The role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand.

Hello,

My name is Sarah Welland and I am conducting research about ‘the role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand’ as a result of gaining a scholarship from the Ian McLean Wards Memorial Trust in 2013.

You have been sent this information because you have indicated your initial interest in participating in Phase 2 of my research, which involves an invited group of experts responding anonymously to three rounds of questions in the form of an online Survey.

I have therefore included some further information below. This includes more about the research, what you would be expected to do, and your rights as a participant. Please read this in full. Once you have done this, please officially confirm your interest in participating by emailing me and cutting and pasting the consent statement that appears at the end of this document as evidence of your consent.

Thank you,

Sarah

Sarah Welland
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Work: 0508 650-200 ext: 6952
Cell: 021 216 8845
Work email: Sarah.welland@openpolytechnic.ac.nz
https://openpolytechnic.academia.edu/SarahWelland
Reseacher background
I have been working with archives and records since 1988. I have a post-graduate diploma in Information Management (Archives Administration) from the University of New South Wales, and currently work as a co-director and consultant for Lindisfarne Information Consulting Ltd as well as a lecturer in records and archives management at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. I am a member of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand, and also manage my community’s local history collection on a voluntary basis.

The aim/purpose of the research
My research aims to address gaps in understanding across the wider heritage community about the role, impact and development of community archives. It will do this by identifying and analysing a range of viewpoints about community archives from two key groups - people who represent five small community archives and archival ‘experts’. I will compare and contrast these viewpoints to establish whether there are key areas of consensus or contradiction that affect how community archives are perceived today, and whether these perceptions will affect the role, impact and development of community archives in the future.

Possible benefits
This research is designed to help people in heritage and other information communities understand more about community archives by identifying the different opinions about them. This may help readers to understand whether these opinions affect not only the development, definition and role of community archives within the broader information landscape, but also archival theory and practice. It may also help to pinpoint specific areas where small community archives may need advocacy or training support.

Why did you ask me?
You are invited to participate in Phase 2 of the research, which involves determining how a number of archival ‘experts’ in the wider archival community see community archives. You have therefore been identified as someone who has a demonstrable knowledge and / or experience in the field of archives and / or heritage management, and who I think would be capable of articulating your viewpoints when it comes to the development, definition and role of community archives.

What does the research involve?
Phase 2 of the research involves a research method called The Delphi method. This means that there are three carefully managed rounds of online survey questions. These three rounds will take place between September and December 2014 and each round should take between half an hour and an hour to complete once a month.

After each round a summary of the findings will be provided so that you will have a good idea of the range of responses across the whole group before you are asked to respond to the next round of questions. You will be notified about these by email.

• Round 1 will require you to state your agreement or disagreement with a number of given statements about community archives and outline your reasons for your decision. You will also be asked to list five factors that you think will impact community archives over the next ten years, and explain your rationale.
• Round two will consist of similar information to Round 1, but updated to take into account findings from the previous Round. You will be asked to identify and comment on any amended statements about community archives that you disagree with, and also to comment on the list of priority factors that was compiled from participants’ previous suggestions.

• Round three will provide you with an opportunity to provide any final feedback on the findings from Rounds 1 and 2. This round will most likely be in the form of one or two open ended questions.

How much time will the research take?
Preparations for the first round will begin in September 2014, with all three rounds completed by December 2014. You will have a week to respond to each round. It is estimated that each of the rounds will take between half an hour and an hour to complete, excluding any associated background reading (for example, the summary findings of the previous round). Each round will be approximately a month apart to allow for the findings from the previous round to be analysed and reported back to you.

How do I do the survey rounds?
Information on how to complete each round will be emailed to you. The summary findings from the previous round will also be emailed to you before you are asked to complete the next round.

Inconvenience / discomfort / risk
There is no foreseen inconvenience or discomfort for you as a participant. All submissions are anonymous, personal risk is minimal and you will be kept fully informed of the process. You will also be given the contact details of people you can talk to if you are having technical issues, or questions about the research content or process.

You can withdraw from the research
Agreeing to be involved in this research is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to participate. You are able to withdraw your participation at any time, although we would prefer you to withdraw prior to the first round if possible, and to let us know of your decision.

Please note that if you submit answers to one or more survey rounds, the anonymous nature of the data collection means that it will not be possible to remove your data once it is submitted.

Confidentiality
All data collected will be treated as confidential. Your submitted responses will be anonymous. No data will be specifically identified with any particular individual or collection in any published or unpublished reports, publications or presentations arising from this study.

Storage of data
Data will be stored in a safe location (that is, on a password protected computer or in an office that is locked when not in use). It will be held for five years from the date of last research use, and then destroyed.

Results

© Sarah Welland, 2015. Contact: Sarah.Welland@openpolytechnic.ac.nz
If you would like to be informed of when aggregate research findings are published or presented, please contact me using the details below.

**Ethical approval**
This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. If you have any ethical questions about this research please contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, Roger Dowling. Email: roger.dowling@openpolytechnic.ac.nz.

**I am willing to participate: What next?**
If you are willing to participate in this research, please email me, cutting and pasting the consent statement below into your reply. Due to the anonymous nature of the questionnaire rounds, cutting and pasting the consent statement below into your email will be considered evidence both of your consent and of your agreement with the points outlined in the consent statement.

*Please cut and paste the following statement into your reply email if you are willing to participate in the research.*

**Consent statement:**

I am willing to participate in Phase 2 of the research titled ‘the role, impact and development of community archives in New Zealand’. I accept that this consent statement:

- will be considered evidence of my consent, and
- documents my agreement with the following points:

  - I agree to participate in up to three rounds of questionnaires relating to small community archives in New Zealand.
  - I agree to submit my response within the week required to respond, and to notify the Researcher if I am not able to do so.
  - I agree to my anonymous responses to these questionnaires being used in any published or unpublished reports, publications or presentations arising from this study.

You will then be contacted before the first round with the information you will need to successfully complete all three rounds of surveys.

**I am not willing to participate: What next?**
If you have decided not to participate, please let me know so that I will not contact you again about the research.

Thank you.

Sarah Welland

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Appendix 3: Third round survey questions

A summary of the questions asked to experts in the third and final survey round has been provided below. Note that guidance information, check boxes and open text fields have been removed.

Round 2 Part 1 Question 1:
Each of the ten categories below summarises a possible priority area for New Zealand community archives over the next ten years. They are listed in rank order from 1: highest impact to 10: lowest impact.
Do you agree or disagree with the ranking of each category?

1. **Funding**
   Scope note:
   This category covers all factors that impact the financing of community archives. For example, what is able to be done (or not done) through funding allocations, fundraising, and applying for funding.
   Some overlap exists with wider environment (for example, the impact of less funding being available in the current economic climate) and governance and strategy (in terms of the decision-making behind the provision and / or allocation of funding).

2. **Digital archiving**
   Scope note:
   This category covers all factors that impact the collection, creation, management, preservation, access and use of digital content such as born digital and / or digitised records within a collection.
   Digital archiving can overlap with most other impact categories including funding (in terms of financing for resources and digitisation projects etc.) training (up-skilling staff to manage the issue), standards (how digital archiving can / should be done in community archives), governance and strategy (for example, decisions relating to how the issue is going to be managed in the future), marketing (enabling holdings to be accessed by a wider audience), collaboration (for example, agency collaboration on digital projects such as the provision of online access) and wider environment (for example, general expectations regarding access to online heritage). However, because of the ubiquitous nature of electronic records today and the strategic importance of managing them as archives, this is considered an impact category in its own right.

3. **Collaboration**
   Scope note:
   Factors that impact the ability of a community archives to collaborate with other agencies. These include the establishment and maintenance of collaboration agreements to achieve an agreed outcome (such as a digitisation project or a collection policy), and collaboration over responsibilities and / or functions (for example the clarification of
roles between local government-supported archives and community archives within the same region).

Some overlap exists with training (for example, collaboration over the development and provision of training and education) and funding (for example, the development of collaboration projects or functions to reduce costs).

4. **Staffing**

Scope note:

Factors that impact the ability of the community archives to recruit and maintain appropriate numbers of skilled, paid, or voluntary staff.

Some overlap exists with funding (that is, the ability to pay or train staff), wider environment (in terms of the availability of volunteers) and training and professional engagement (for example, the provision of suitable training for staff and volunteers).

5. **Training and professional engagement**

Scope note:

This category covers factors that impact the training and education of a variety of people associated with community archives, such as staff, volunteers, those interested in working with community archives, users, and community and industry stakeholders. It also covers factors that impact on how agencies such as larger heritage-based institutions, training institutions and professional associations engage with community archives in areas such as guidance and support.

Some overlap exists with funding (in terms of ability to fund / provide training), staffing (that is, the development of skills and knowledge for staff) and collaboration (for example, collaboration initiatives between agencies to provide training / education).

6. **Standards**

Scope note:

This category covers the establishment and maintenance of rules, standards, frameworks, specifications, guidelines etc. relating to the management of a community archives collection. It also includes decisions relating to what should be managed, where it should be managed, to what extent, and the type of guidance.

Some overlap exists with digital archiving and access (that is, how to manage and make items accessible) training (for example, training in standards based skills) and collaboration (that is, collaboration of agency ideas, personnel etc. to develop and / or maintain standards).

7. **Wider environment**

Scope note:

This category covers nation-wide influences that can impact the on-going management of community archives. For example, social, cultural, political and environmental influences such as government legislation, economic conditions, pop culture, aging
population, Web 2.0 and its 'citizen archivists', and diversified and urbanised communities.

8. **Governance and strategy**

Scope note:

This category covers factors that impact the governance of the community archives. These include decisions made by those responsible for the on-going survival of the collection, the level of archival knowledge behind those decisions, and the development of strategy for the way forward.

9. **Marketing and community engagement**

Scope note:

This category covers factors that impact the ability of a community archives to promote itself and its holdings, and to educate users and potential users about them. This includes methods of community engagement regarding community use, general awareness, and support.

10. **Access**

Scope note:

Factors that specifically affect the ability of a community archives to give the community and other users equitable access to the collection and the items within it. This includes physical access to the material, descriptive standards, access restrictions, privacy, copyright and sensitivity of information.

Some overlap exists with marketing (in terms of enhancing access to aid community engagement) and standards (that is, standards to help with the development and on-going management of equitable access).

**Round 3 Part 1 Question 2:**

Taking into consideration the ten impact categories above, do you have any concerns, or any new categories to add?

**Round 2 Part 2 Question 1:**

Each of the sixteen statements below summarises a different aspect of the current state of community archives in New Zealand. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

These statements are in no particular order.

1. Collection storage facilities range from excellent to poor, with most community archives having at least a couple of on-going issues that could negatively impact the preservation of items, for example, they may have a lack of suitable environmental control or a lack of appropriate boxing.

2. Most community archives consider published and reference material as an integral part of the overall collection.

3. Most community archives lack the resources and facilities to effectively manage born digital archives.
4. Although most community archives want to meet basic guidelines for storage they do not always have the resources to do so.

5. Many individuals with day-to-day responsibility for community archives demonstrate a good level of awareness when it comes to the archival principles of provenance and original order, but there are also a number who do not. As a result, not all community archives follow these key principles when it comes to their accessioning and/or arrangement and description practices.

6. Most community archives use pragmatic description techniques that are often based on decisions made ‘in-house’.

7. Most community archives store a wider variety of material than other forms of archival repository.

8. Many community archives have some form of supporting documentation in place regarding access, ownership etc., but the currency, depth and breadth of this information depends on the priorities of each individual archive. Some community archives do not have any documentation.

9. Most community archives have a range of user groups. Common user groups include genealogists and local history enthusiasts, as well as the community itself.

10. Most community archives get some form of active support from the communities from which they were created. However, the efficacy of this support depends on the level of stakeholder understanding and involvement, and the level of competition for community funding.

11. Volunteers in community archives often carry out tasks to do with processing, storage or basic preservation. Results can vary considerably, but most people with day-to-day responsibility for the collection consider this better than no progress at all.

12. Most staff who manage community archives do not have archival qualifications, and while their understanding of foundational archival practices (boxing, listing, accessioning etc.) may be sufficient, there can be evidence of a lack of in-depth training or mentoring when it comes to areas such as arrangement and description, appraisal, and/or preservation.

13. Community archives have a key role to play in creating and maintaining community memory.

14. Community archives have a key role to play in managing the evidence of their communities, although some community archives may understand it simply as ‘providing information of interest’.

15. Community archives are not considered a priority when it comes to industry-based training or collaborative support initiatives. This is mainly due to a lack of resources rather than a lack of awareness.

16. Many community archives are viewed by trained and experienced archivists as valid archival repositories (that is, the archives are managed in ways that demonstrate suitable awareness of the key archival principles of provenance and original order), but not all.

17. New Statement 1: In a majority of cases, the user community (including those responsible for governance) do not really understand the role and purpose of their community archives.

18. New Statement 2: Community archives are often dependant on one or two passionate individuals to lead and manage them.
Round 3 Part 2 Question 2:
Taking into consideration the eighteen statements above, do you have any concerns with any of these statements, or can you think of any further statements that should be added?

Appendix 4: Summary of each community archives interviewed

The following sections provide a summary description of each community archives involved in the case study.

Local History Archives
This had the smallest collection with around 50 linear metres of records. It is held within a rural community museum in a building with a sprinkler system and fire alarm and a recently built and thermostatically controlled archives storage area with compactor shelving, as well as a workrooms and a fireproof safe. Other published material is stored in bookshelves in the display areas of the building. The collection is managed solely by volunteers. Most of the archival collection is heavily underutilised due to the fact that nearly all of the archival material is not documented, and key volunteers who knew about the collections’ content have retired or passed on. One volunteer is responsible for curating the collection, and by default, the archives as well. The main emphasis is on museum artefacts which relate to the local area as well as other ‘items of interest’ relating to farming and house management in the past. There is a range of supporting local history information in the form of archives from local businesses and organisations and other heritage information such as published histories, oral histories, self-published pamphlets, magazines, newspapers and copied reference material.

Church Archives
The church archives had the largest collection with around 1200 linear metres of records. With a collection mandate to collect and store original material relating to the church denomination, it is the main repository for the denomination. The collection had one paid archivist who worked four days a week, as well as volunteers. The archivist has a range of duties, from managing volunteers and answering enquiries to carrying out tasks associated with collection management, cataloguing and project management. Although there is an expectation from users that all services should be free of charge, some things such as research carried out on behalf and photocopying are charged for, although the archivist has discretion over this. Nearly all the collection was stored in a location that meant that the archivist had to consider how to deal with issues associated with cold, light, dust, pests and security. Archives are mainly paper-based in form and include plans and photos, framed pictures, video cassette tapes and objects and ephemera. The collection also stores published archives from within the denomination, such as old hymnbooks and church publications. The main source of enquiry is from ‘in-house’ users from the church community, although a number of enquiries also come from genealogists and a smaller number from people interested in local history or church history.

Interest Group Archives
The interest group archives is approximately 359 lm in size, not including publications, card cabinets or plans. The collection originally started after the community of interest was formed into a Society. The current storage location was built on land bought by the community and contains a number of
storage areas with compactor shelving and static shelving as well as a variety of map and card cabinets. The collection is managed by one volunteer archivist who focuses on arrangement and description, answering enquiries, and collection management. The collection stores mainly physical items, the majority of which are unique records relating to the area of interest shared by the community of users. There are also a number of donated photo collections, paintings, objects and memorabilia.

Iwi Archives
The iwi archives is the smallest collection at around 75lm in size. The collection is part of an Iwi Trust Board and is stored in the roof space and mezzanine floor of a building located within a smaller town. There is also a library containing published and reference materials. The collection consists mainly of accumulated records and in-house publications documenting the Trust Board's operations, as well as donated material and objects from people in the community. There is very little digital material and no born digital material. The collection is managed by the administration assistant who has records and archives responsibility. Duties are mainly related to records management, with some day-to-day maintenance carried such as filing, basic organisation and description, and boxing. Whakapapa researchers are the main type of user, such as students researching their pepeha. Occasionally the collection also gets enquiries from people interested in local history.

School archives
The school archives is around 100lm in size, not including plan cabinets and objects. The collection is housed within an older building with a fire-proof safe for storing items of high value different types of shelving. The school archives collection consists mainly of original and unique items collected about the school. The school pays for one part-time archivist, who works one day a week. Duties vary from week to week, but can include answering enquiries, filing, managing volunteers, and preservation, arrangement and description and project work. The main type of enquiry from outside the school are people researching ancestors who may have gone to the school. The collection also receives requests for information from within the school, for example, requests for information on buildings from staff or contractors. Archives mainly relate to the documentation of school activities such as sports, music and arts. Information on past students is the most heavily used group of archives, followed by, photos of teachers and other groups. Some digital material exists, but there is nothing born digital.