



What are Archives?: Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: a reader

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This collection of essays breaks new ground in archival studies in the UK where professional archival texts have traditionally concentrated on the how, not the why, of archival work. Studies of the theoretical role of, for example, the archive and the text or the archive and political power, have meanwhile been undertaken in other academic disciplines where there is an established forum for the discussion of related issues. This book invites the archivist to join that arena of debate, whilst appealing to all those interested in archives from other disciplines; the authors encourage archivists to step away from the practicalities of keeping archives to consider what it is they actually do in the cultural context of the early 21st century. The wider context of technological innovation and the internet form the backdrop to this collection. The book explores change and continuity in the archival paradigm, the textual nature of archives and asks if views of manuscripts and personal papers are changing; it looks at specific developments in community archives, at concepts of identity and culture in archives and it presents the fruits of innovative studies of users of archives. Taken together, these essays, written by leading experts in the field, provide a new understanding of the role of the archive today.

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