

Remembered History, Archival Discourse, and the September 11 Digital Archive

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Abstract: The research reviews the archival context of the September 11 Digital Archive and looks for a new archival discourse that would exert an appropriate archival control over records generated as a result of documentation of remembered history, especially in the digital age. The inquiry places traditional archival theory and practice in a record-making reality different from where it was originated more than a century ago. The new reality necessitates a new archival experience to safeguard the evidential value of records of the remembered past for the sake of future generations. The case study demonstrates an example of such a new archival experience, summarized as follows:

- The action of soliciting voluntary contributions to a theme-based collecting repository is archival. Such a collecting effort may involve collection theme development, contributor community construction, submitting mechanism, and long-term preservation strategy.
- The action of recording recollections and reflections of personal experience in the past is archival. Personal recollections and reflections can be immediate and spontaneous. They can also be refreshed and reinforced by commemorative activities. Modern recording tools generate multimedia records.
- The action of organizing and representing collectively-contributed, memory-based records in the light of their originating context is archival. The principle of provenance can be pursued by combining a central theme and multiple collecting sources. The focus of archival order may be shifted from the series level to the item level, especially, in a digital repository.

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