

# **‘Where the Wild Things Are’: Researching and Archiving Community on the Web**

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**Abstract:** Primary sources that have always been taken for granted in historical research are being increasingly created in digital formats, while others (for example, family letters, diaries) have nearly become obsolete and morphed into new forms (e.g., e-mails, blogs, tweets). Particularly, communities (diasporic, ethnic, religious, racial, subaltern communities) create vast archives of already digital records through the use of freely available online tools that instill illusions of immediacy and proximity, and help them transcend distance and alienation. At the same time, humanities scholars employ new, computational methods in order to make sense of vast amounts of data. Usually, archival literature explores social media in the context of archival outreach or user interaction with collections, but research on archiving, curating, and including such new primary sources in humanities scholarship is nascent.

The poster presents research on the ways ethnic institutions in the U.S. employ in order to collect and curate social media output of their communities, especially examining the tension between the ideas of the ephemeral and of ‘fixity’ in archival settings. It also explores the notion of ‘recordness’ and the possibilities that a post-custodial approach offer in the context of community research. Finally, the poster assesses the challenges and opportunities that new kinds of records and digital humanities methods engender for archives in the context of humanities cyberinfrastructure.

## **About the author:**

*Amalia S. Levi* is a third year Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland’s College of Information Studies. She holds a Master’s in Library Sciences, and an M.A. in History, concentration in Jewish History, both from the University of Maryland, College Park, and an M.A. in Museum Studies from Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul, Turkey. She has worked in museums, developing exhibits, and conducting archival research. Her research focuses on the changing nature of humanities scholarship, and the interdependence of archives and scholarly communities of practice. Amalia has presented extensively on the intellectual underpinnings of augmenting historical scholarship on diasporas and minorities through linking and enriching dispersed collections, both in institutions and in the hands (and memory) of individuals. She is currently exploring the role of Linked Open Data towards this end.