



**SEEING ARCHIVES AS DATA:  
EXPLORING THE EMERGENCE  
OF A DATA PARADIGM IN  
ARCHIVAL THINKING**

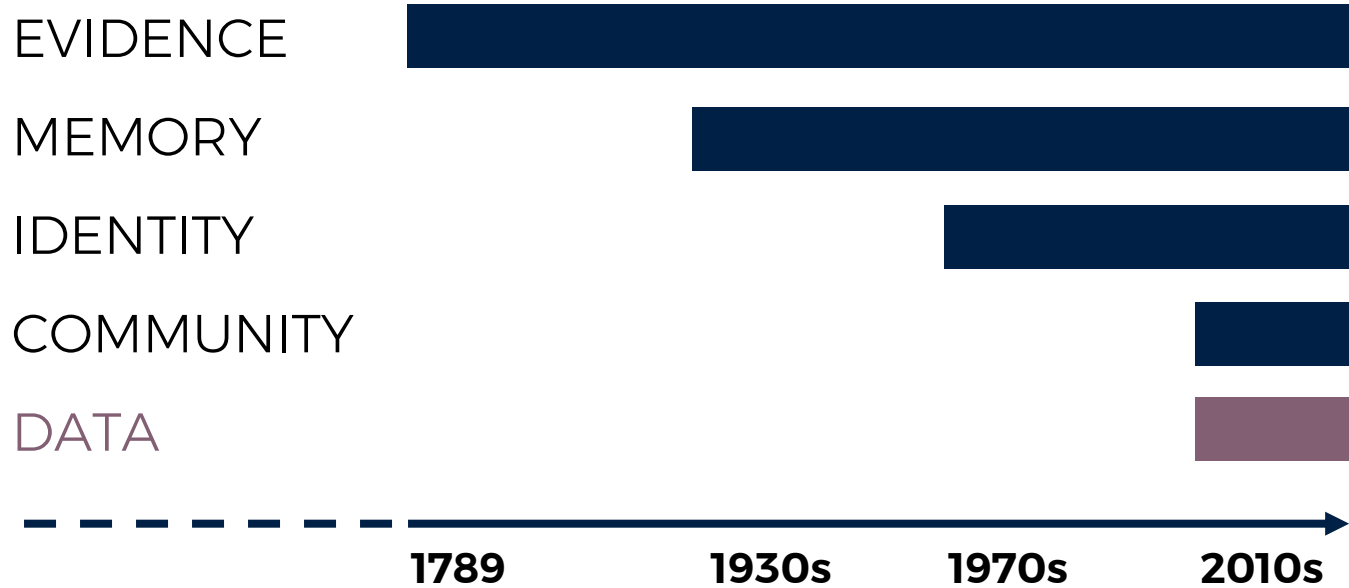
ACA 2020 | SEEING ARCHIVES DIFFERENTLY | JUNE 12, 2020

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DEVON MORDELL, DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP & ARCHIVING LIBRARIAN  
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

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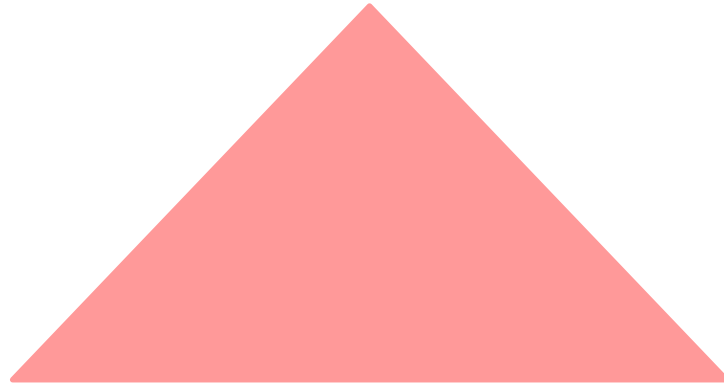
# ARCHIVES AS...



1. IMAGINING ARCHIVES AS DATA
2. ARCHIVAL IDENTITY
3. EXPANDING THE PARADIGM

# WAYS OF IMAGINING ARCHIVES

ARCHIVAL  
IDENTITY



ARCHIVAL  
PROCESSES



“[the memory] paradigm was distinctively concerned... with appraising records as historical sources, with the historian-archivist subjectively creating a cultural memory resource”

(Cook 2013, 109)

## ARCHIVES AS MEMORY – modern archiving

“the historian-archivist selects the archive”



A diagram consisting of a horizontal red line. From the left end of this line, a vertical red line extends downwards to the word 'role'. From the right end of the horizontal line, a vertical red line extends downwards to the word 'function'.

role

function

# ARCHIVES AS DATA – algorithmic archiving

“the \_\_\_\_\_ the archive”  
(role) (function)



## ARCHIVES AS DATA – algorithmic archiving

“the \_\_\_\_\_ renders the archive  
(role) amenable to computation”

DATA AS... raw material

(unrefined) natural resource

“[Data as natural resource metaphors] provide a frame of meaning for corporate data practices, steering the attention of the business world to a perception of valuable information (e.g. business insights) as some kind of inherent property of data, just as oil already contains an economic value even when still locked between layers of rock deep within the earth”

(Kerssens 2019, 3)



- data *mining*
- entity *extraction*
- metadata *processing*
- etc.

What does an archives as data paradigm  
require the archivist to **become**?

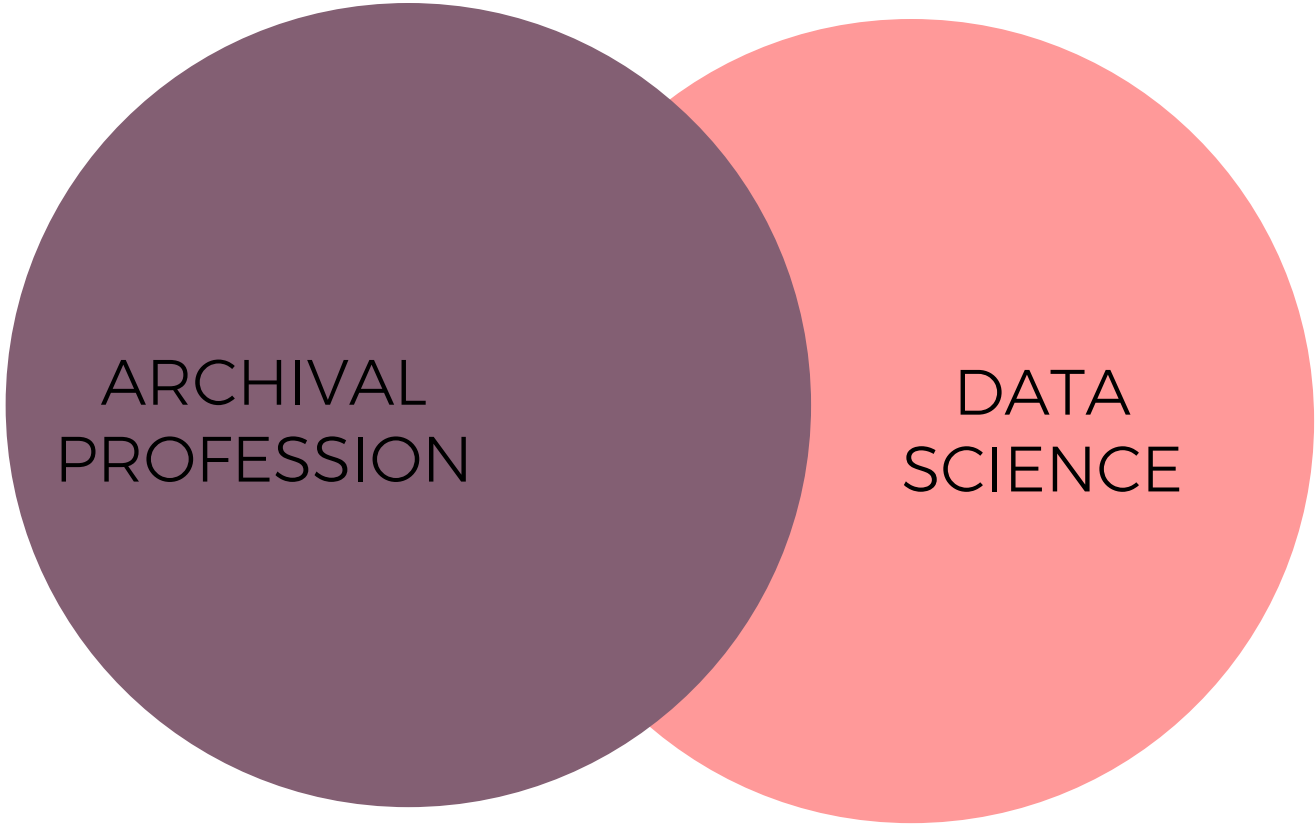
*“Developer stewards* are web archives, community archives, or institutional repositories who leverage APIs to collect social media data for preservation purposes and future use”

(Acker & Kriesberg 2019, 114)



ARCHIVES AS DATA – algorithmic archiving

“the developer steward renders the archive  
amenable to computation”



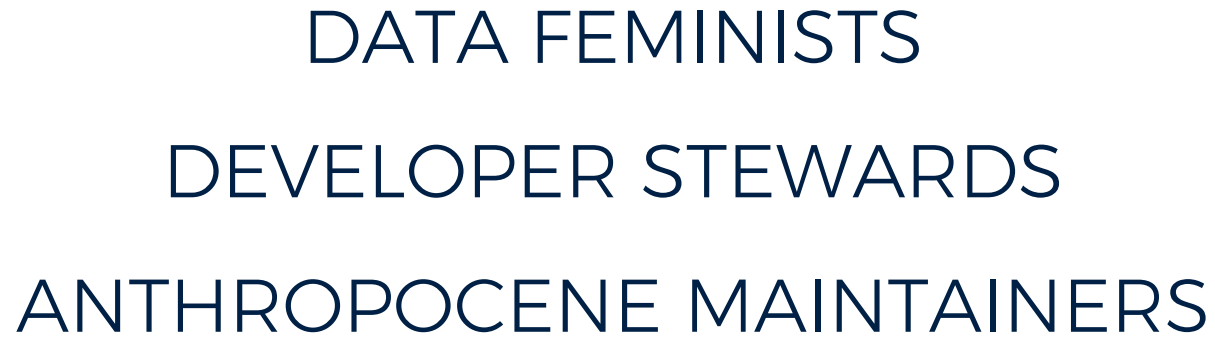
ARCHIVAL  
PROFESSION

DATA  
SCIENCE



“When all these [administrators] are looking around for the folks who are going to do cutting edge work, the last folks they think about are black folks”

(Gallon 2016, 45-46).



DATA FEMINISTS  
DEVELOPER STEWARDS  
ANTHROPOCENE MAINTAINERS  
...

“While equitable representation—in datasets and data science workforces—is important, it remains window dressing if we don’t also transform the institutions that produce and reproduce those biased outcomes in the first place”

(D’Ignazio & Klein 2020, 32)



DATA AS... “a record of human activity”

(Stark & Hoffmann 2019, 7)

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**THANK \*YOU\*  
FOR ATTENDING!**

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