

A global repository as the focus of our movement

Key elements needed to create a new level of generative synergy among the players in our network

By David Dunn, 2010 (I think big)

The purpose of this talking paper. This talking paper is the "first of three papers that I hope will stimulate conversation about the future of EI-OE-ICA. I started writing the paper in early June after the May Archive Sojourn month to share rejections and proposals that arose from my experience. I'm championing an expanded image of the role and function of the Global Archive as a *repository* dynamic with ongoing publishing, communicating and community building activities. I found it necessary to focus my attention on ICA USA's relationship to the Global Archive, but a more inclusive discussion is critically needed.

A sojourn that was more than advertised. Terry and Pam Bergdall, Marge Philbrook, Doug Druckenmiller and the ICA Board, particularly the board members with a special interest in the archive, had very concrete hopes for the Archive Sojourn month. Terry had preparation for the conference with Oklahoma City University on his mind and a vision of the eighth floor of 4750 N. Sheridan as a retreat center for movement colleagues. Doug saw the month the archive sojourn as a foray into the data preparation needed for a digital the Global Archives. I don't believe that any of us anticipated the teamwork, the intense around sorting and organizing, the energy level, the story telling, the singing, the feeling of pride in ourselves and the sense of a shared, future-oriented mission that everyone experienced. The May Archive Sojourn Month was unexpected and full of portent.

The rediscovery of treasures. Perhaps it was the suggestion of an interesting partnership that was the catalytic factor. Perhaps it was simply noticing the face of mortality in the mirror. Whatever got the ball rolling, the May sojourn began to bring some of the future into focus. We are part of very tangible community of colleagues who continue to live remarkable lives. Both within and related to that community are untold numbers of individuals and groups with certifiable expertise and formal or informal communities of practice. We see ourselves now formally related to two institutions of the historic church: a United Methodist seminary and a university with Methodist origins. And we have the very tangible contents of a basement storeroom in an eight-story building with an interesting history and a noteworthy identity in Uptown, Chicago. The so-called Global Archives turns out to be a surprisingly effective excuse to convene colleagues for what is arguably a very unattractive project: transporting, scanning, arranging, culling, labeling and cataloging our past. The journey from the basement to the sixth floor at 4750 N. Sheridan Road is a metaphor for the life-giving exercise of organizing our common memory and offering it up to the future. It seems that the common mission of being useful to our children and grandchildren's generations has shifted the identity of the basement from storeroom to treasure trove. We should hang a new sign above the archive door: Story Room.

Embracing two pasts. The experience of value and delight in working with our past was the first surprise of the May sojourn. The second was the expansion of the concept of "archives. The word archive (from the Greek *arkheia* 'public records') carries the connotation of "civic

asset. That simple enlargement of the sense of the word suggests that an archive's reason for being is to become a civic asset. The noble possibility raises two questions: 1) How much of our past needs to be included in any civic asset we might wish to create? And necessarily, 2) How much past do we have to share? We have two pasts: the first 35 years from Austin to Oaxtepec and the last 25 years that bring us to the present. Our deep past gets us only to chapter seven, with at least five chapters to go. Through the work of the last 35 years is what made the work of the last 25 years possible; only a fraction of the experience of the last 25 years has entered our common memory. Without extending our common memory into the present, the trail ends abruptly, without explanation, in the middle of the forest. It would be a scandalous omission if the work of the last 25 years were not captured as thoroughly as the work of the next 35 years. If you buy the premise, the archive project must necessarily grow. We need to clear the "les out of the basement *and* we need to document the life and work of hundreds of colleagues during the last 25 years. A global repository as the hub of our movement

The Global Archive as the heart of an emergent community project. A new and expanded role for the Global Archives requires a whole new set of working relationships among individual colleagues, communities of interest and practice, the partner organizations of which ICA USA a the prime mover and the evolving cadre of archive champions and leaders. What might these new or enlarged relationships look like? The May sojourn offers some clues. The four-week event and the work with a new set of "les each week were emergent processes. Each evolved over time as a new gestalt emerged. Completing the record of our past could become an emergent project in which we explore and document the 25-year transition that led from our deep past to the present and the near future that are upon us. Here are some caveats and some essential elements. A storeroom with 170 "le cabinets could be a black hole from which no light can escape. That dismal image is transformed by enlarging the context of the Global Archive project. The Global Archive becomes a source of energy, pride and collegiality if we approach it with young people and the question of what *they* need for *their* future at the front of our minds. I want to describe four ways of thinking about EI-OE-ICA, all overlapping pieces of one large pie, and speculate on what might happen if we created an emergent repository project that involved our whole movement. The first way of cutting the pie comprises an interested and attentive *colleague network*. The May event attracted nearly 48 people—from an hour to a month. It drew sufficiently wide attention and appreciation that colleagues are asking if they can come to work on special projects of personal interest, like caring for audio-visual materials. The second way of cutting the pie comprises *generative partnerships* like the ToP Trainers' Network, WTS in Washington, DC and OCU in Oklahoma City. "Generative partnership" suggests a future-oriented use of our common memory and a collaborative effort to reinterpret and merge that heritage with other wisdom for use in a 21st Century context. The third way of cutting the pie comprises the *communities of interest and practice* whose expertise is related to our common memory. The ToP® Trainers Network, the Imaginal Education practitioners, Resurgence Publishing, the Repository team, the listservs and ad hoc study groups are the tip of the iceberg of formal and informal networks of colleagues with shared interests and experience in a wide variety of fields. The fourth of cutting the pie comprises the *emerging archive leadership cadre*. Marge Philbrook has taken the reins held by

Betty Pesek and others for many years. Pam Bergdall has a passion for Town Meeting records and a gift for recruiting volunteers. Jan Sanders and Richard Sims are key players with the content depth needed to lead the file processing work and the inventiveness to catalyze the unique spirit eventfulness suited for each new group. Terry Bergdall and Doug Druckenmiller represent a set of champions among ICA staff and board members. Rosemary Albright and Sally Fenton in Chicago volunteer weekly to do data entry and are key informants in developing the archive database. Beret Griffith has a passion for order and rationality and is part of the brain trust that will be critical in developing our cataloging scheme. I'm a source of creative services and technical support for using and developing the Filemaker Pro database, design and desktop publishing and electronic communication. Add the technical backup of Christina Wolf, the Archivist at Oklahoma City University, and Ken Gebhard, ICA USA's IT support person in Chicago, and we've got a highly functional team. It's helpful to spell out some of the assets and vulnerabilities that further describe these interrelated constituencies.

Constituencies' Assets

- Colleagues represent the broadest and deepest pool of undocumented experience.
- Partner organizations represent a variety of interest groups acquainted to one degree or another with the body of knowledge based in our shared experience.
- Communities of interest and practice represent broad connections, evolving practices and depth knowledge.
- The archive leadership cadre represents longevity of experience, familiarity with our network, relationships with archive professionals, intense interest in the archive project and a unique set of specialized skills related to organizing resources, community building and communication. A global repository as the hub of our movement—

Constituencies' Vulnerabilities

- Colleagues do not have any easy way to access current information about the work of others in our network over the last 25 years that might support or complement their own work.
- ICA USA, as the core partner, lacks current, depth knowledge about many members of our colleague network, the nature and impact of their work, and the role our common memory has played in their lives and endeavors.
- Communities of interest and practice — may not have easy access to or regular interaction and joint work with members of our network with shared interests, complementary knowledge or relevant experience — may not have access to depth knowledge of the origins of their practice — may not have access to current information about work related to their own that could be referenced in support of their own bona fides
- The leadership cadre's level of experience and interest in the archive is not matched by the wherewithal to sustain a significant level of effort on behalf of the archive or the constituencies interested in the archive.

The potential for synergy among these four constituencies. Each of these interrelated networks has something one or more of the other constituencies lacks and needs.

The colleague network and the communities of practice have the stories that ground everyone's need for current information that corroborates their value propositions and complements their credentials.

The generative partnerships create a future-oriented program that requires the participation of both colleagues and communities of practice and a context in which our historical and

contemporary

experience is an essential input.

The ICA is the one organization related to the entire network, the official keeper of the Global Archive

and the institutional sponsor of archive- and network-related activities. It has the physical facilities and internal mechanisms to house, oversee and manage a people- and communication-intensive project.

The leadership cadre has the interest and capacity to foster eventfulness and participation, and provide continuity of leadership for archive-related volunteers. The informal leadership core is positioned to mobilize members of these several constituencies for relevant practical projects, to share personal information and to contribute needed materials from their own, personal archives.

These four constituencies—colleagues, communities of interest and practice, generative partnerships and the EIOE- ICA Global Archive leadership—are the primary holders of our common memory and guardians of our intellectual property. Finding ways to underwrite activities that engage and document the legacy of these primary wisdom holders is essential if the ICA USA and ICAI are to meet the challenges of succession and capacity building and if we are going to play a meaningful role in society as elders of a significant historical movement.

Expanding our context and extending our vision. ICA USA has been attentive to these challenges for at least a decade and has at least three active arenas of initiative today—servicing resource communities (exemplified by the TTN and Imaginal Education networks), organizing the Global Archives (exemplified by the May Archive Sojourn month) and developing generative partnerships (exemplified by the work with WTS and OCU). Expanding our context and extending our vision of the Global Archives could introduce the elements of interchange, sharing approaches that work, online access and collaboration among additional members of these several constituencies to ICA USA's present work. At least three images shifts are needed to promote future development of the Global Archive.

- Re-image the Global Archives as a repository—an interactive interchange dynamic for an entrepreneurial network of networks
- Imagine all of our networks as sources for innovation, project development, service delivery and income generation a global repository as the hub of our movement.
- Imagine the challenges of succession and capacity building as an emergent decade-long community project that engages all of these networks

Taking this train of thought one step further, the May Archive Sojourn demonstrated three key strategies that are essential to a modern-day implementation of the repository dynamic we envisioned in the late 1970s. These are the three core strategies needed to unlock the potential of an emergent project for an entrepreneurial network of networks.

- *Community building*: organizing corporate events with a shared common life and multiple, approachable roles for a diversity of people
- *Asset development*: facilitating the involvement of subject area experts, documenting field experience, supervising volunteer activities, developing needed procedures and capturing lessons learned
- *Creative and technical services*: supporting online communication and virtual participation, publishing relevant materials and providing technical support for database and system development

The tasks required. The practical roles needed to support the engagement of a widely dispersed, creative network come to mind with renewed clarity in light of the experience of the May Archive Sojourn. Here are several catalytic roles whose absence or under-emphasis in the past 25 years created an unintended “learning disability” that thwarted the potential power and impact of connections and synergy among EI-OE-ICA constituencies. In some cases we already have these roles in one form or another, in other cases they need to be invented or reinvented.

(Names in parentheses indicate people playing these or similar roles today.)

- Organize and facilitate “sojourn initiatives,” not limited to Global Archive projects (Marge, Pam, Jan, Richard, David, Terry)
- Manage and supervise the Global Archive project (Marge, Pam, David, Jan)
- Provide technical support and creative services for the Global Archive project (David; Ken Gebhard [ICA’s IT tech support person])
- Identify, convene and facilitate the work of subject area experts (“curators,” conveners,) to spearhead high priority archive projects, including sojourn initiatives (?)
- Cultivate, develop and manage generative partnerships, including partnerships that include financial support (Terry Bergdall, Doug Druckenmiller)
- service and debrief members of the resource communities (Anne Neal w/ TTN; Imaginal Education network?), generative partnerships (Terry Bergdall, Doug Druckenmiller) and our colleague network (Michael Tippett— Directory; Wegner, Harper, Hockley, Dunn—listservs)
- publish for and communicate with our various audiences (ICA USA; ICAI; ICA UK; Gordon, et al—Repository; David [archive sojourn])
- Document our networks’ experience and impact (Wiegels’ and Mays’ video interviews; ICA’s *Initiatives* and colleagues’ publications list)
- Compile and publish a directory of colleagues who are available and actively delivering services active “in the marketplace” with their credentials, publications, areas of interest, availability and contact information (Anne Neal for TTN)
- Development, maintain and facilitate online collaborative project, teaching learning and community Meeting spaces (?)
- Describe, market and seek funding and/or fee-for-service projects involving members of this creative network (?)
- Support follow up by ICA colleagues for the July “Peace, Poverty, Planet Earth” conference. (Jan Sanders)

Concluding reflection. We have every reason to trust our recent experience: when we create a futuristic context for work related to our common memory, link it with the interest of new partners with whom we share a sense of mission, and engage colleagues in implementing practical projects with a shared common life, we release passion and creativity among participants and thoughtful interest among distant observers. A global repository as the hub of our movement— Talking Paper 1

(Post-May archive sojourn— There are many possible implications and intriguing questions. Might this experience with archive sojourn events become a collaborative program involving members of our colleague network, including the communities of practice and the generative partnerships? Are congregations, denominational bodies or religious orders with archives to

process and missions and operations to reinvent, interested in supporting our archive development, our unique practices and our ability to facilitate their program development, common life and mission, and archive-related succession and capacity building processes? This is an essential, underlying question and challenge. How can we be sure that enough people will become involved to fulfill these possibilities? What economic model allows us to apply our collective resources to offer stipends and reimbursement for travel and out of pocket expenses to colleagues needed for this work that are still Obligated to work to earn their daily bread? Two additional talking papers follow that explore the relationships among us and the practical work required to be present to our times.

EI-OE-ICA

Global Archive

As a repository dynamic

“Making a movement’s memory accessible”

Colleague Network

“Grounding common memory in living experience”

Generative

Partnerships

“Harvesting a legacy, creating new wisdom”

Resource Communities

“Connect, convene, learn, train, design, publish, communicate, resource, manage”

Key question: How does a movement that fostered human transformation in the late 20th century ‘create the shoulders’ on which the first generations of a dramatically new and rapidly evolving 21st century world can stand and build? e.g., Archives, Repository,

JWM@WTS, Sojourn

Initiatives, ei-oe-ica site

e.g., ICA Board and

Staff, OCU July

Conference, OIKOS

e.g., listservs, Springboard,

Book studies, PJD & ToP®

Trainer’s networks

Reinventing how we serve the world together

Visualizing a movement. “EI-OE-ICA”* has always been a dynamic, living puzzle—fluid, a little messy, somewhat ad hoc—working in the arenas of personal, organizational and social transformation. These graphic bits suggest some ways to describe our movement today. It’s time to experiment with new projects and relationships that help us serve the world in this dramatic period of rapid evolution.

Futuric challenge. *The Ecumenical Institute, Order Ecumenical and Institute of Cultural Affairs are a dynamic, integral system. Imbalances impede its effective service in the world. The “Transforming the Legacy” Symposium, Archive Sojourn month and the ICA-OIKOS “Peace, Poverty, Planet Earth” conference demonstrated the new engagement and energy that can be released when these dynamics function as a whole system. EI-OE-ICA has an

essential role to play in the 21st century and new leadership roles are required to foster creative synergy among the potential players in a newly emergent movement.

David Dunn, July 30, 2010

e.g., authors and

Publications; Wiegels' and Mays' video oral histories Decentralized, autonomous teams; professionalization of expertise Under-attended and out of focus during the "reshuffle" of the last two decades Undocumented partnerships & learning's without a public narrative Invisible gifts, unsung victories, untapped wisdom and undocumented achievements

Key

- Examples
- Constituencies, "roles"
- Contradictions

?

A global repository as the hub of our movement— Talking Paper 1

(Post-May archive sojourn—July 30, 2010)

Page 5 of 5