Participatory Digital Archives and Issues Relating to Their Contextualization: A Dialogue with the Archival Discourse
参加型デジタルアーカイブスとその文脈化に関する諸問題
―アーカイバル・ディスコースとの対話―

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Unofficial archiving projects that embrace user-contributed material as the main content are not a stranger these days. As the outcome of these archiving projects, the participatory digital archives (hereinafter referred to as PDA) approach diversifies narratives and democratizes archives by allowing common users to contribute to archival collections. However, the practice of managing these archival materials from over-dispersed provenance does not loyally follow the core principles of traditional archival science such as the principle of *respect des fonds* and the principle of provenance. Admittedly, from a postmodern perspective, the primary goal of collecting archival materials in PDA projects is to diversify the narratives. However, from a traditional archival science perspective, the gathering procedures and organizing methods of PDA result only in fragmented narratives and a lack of contextual information, leading to difficulties in proving their authenticity and erratic evidential value.

Through case studies of several PDA projects and literature review of participation within archival discourse, this study explores the effects the PDA projects' activities have on archival materials, including patterns of participation, personnel composition, composition and presentation/visualization of contextual information, etc. The research findings affirmed the advantages of in-person activities in mobilizing participants and gathering contextual information. The research also acknowledged archivists' value in the archiving activities and concretized archivists' efforts in enhancing the evidential value of archival materials. A critical issue identified in this study is that the administrators in participatory digital archiving projects perceive archival materials' provenance in a different manner, because all those responsible for recording/archiving, collecting/solicitation, and digitization may be seen as creators. This problem affects the organization of archival collections and causes difficulties for users to understand archival materials. The author suggests that the archiving projects' administrators formalize the collecting procedures and take responsibility for and only for the authenticity of the archival materials, in order to promote the evidential value of the archival materials. Furthermore, inspired by the practices in the case studies and by the postmodern archivists' discussions, the author argues that it is necessary to broaden the scope of contextual information in PDA to encompass the entire archival process, as well as all the management, curation, and reuse activities.

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