

This issue develops my idea, expressed in my previous editorial, to include a mix of articles mainly drawn from our conferences but reworked for publication. You'll notice that it contains fewer articles than usual. They are longer papers, however, where the authors have based their articles on presentations delivered at the IASA conference in Sydney in 2008, but have taken the opportunity to expand their arguments and to provide more detail. For example, David Nathan's paper, 'The soundness of documentation: towards an epistemology for audio in documentary linguistics', was delivered in an early form in Sydney. He then spent several months rethinking, reworking and conducting further research, presenting again in Hawai'i in April 2009. It's thus hot off the press, thinking on the move, and is illustrative of the "never static" situation we find ourselves in in the audiovisual archiving world in the 21st Century.

I have also tried to gather articles loosely into themes so that we begin to witness new thinking on particular strands of our work. In the last issue I drew on papers dealing in some way with "connecting with communities". In this issue the pieces highlight the increasingly important issue of collaboration – not so much on a project by project basis, but as a central component of building sustainable working models for audiovisual archiving into the future.

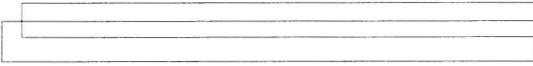
Alan Burdette's paper on 'Collaboration and the EVIA Digital Archive project', broaches the issue head on. "Working with technologists, software developers, scholars, publishers, university administrators, lawyers, librarians, other institutions, vendors, editors, and other archives; the project is addressing the most fundamental concerns of archives as well as reaching towards new modes of archival action" (p6). He lists a range of benefits of collaboration and concludes that they help an archive's mission to preserve and make, let's face it, sometimes esoteric, information available to far-flung places, thus increasing usership: which is, of course, attractive to future funders.

On a similarly over-arching level Chris Clark's contribution on 'Scoping IASA's training brief for a changeable world' recommends the adoption of an open organisation design principle that focuses on fulfilling our mission WITH people rather than TO or FOR people. Such an open model, he argues, is necessary for our work to remain viable and relevant – and, indeed, for it to be sustainable.

There is that word again – 'sustainable'. Sustainability is an interesting word that is cropping up increasingly in a range of disciplines. It enters our discourse from the world of "sustainable development" as applied commonly to food production, urban development, forestry, business, energy and water supplies, etc. By searching for "integrated solutions" (cf. Lars-Christian Koch in this issue) and accepting collaboration as standard practice, we are perhaps edging towards a clearer understanding of what "sustainable audiovisual archiving" might look like.

Chris's paper links on another level. You will notice his title refers to a 'changeable' world rather than to a 'changing' world. This presupposes that the world has already changed from the more stable, closed model we've all been used to, but that it has changed to something that we should expect to continue changing. Robyn Holmes's article on Music Australia provides a perfect example of our need for adaptability in this changeable world in her word of warning about remaining sure-footed as collaborators come and go and circumstances beyond our control change. She delivers a mantra we might all do well to note: "be alert to strategic opportunities; catch these early; align goals with partners who can build capacity; exit if necessary; find alternative business solutions" (p26).

In short it becomes clear, reading the articles in this issue, that no single institution has the staff, facilities or funds to carry out the large-scale digitisation accepted as essential in the audiovisual archiving world today. Collaboration by outsourcing parts of the process is thus essential as both Lars-Christian Koch and Beth Robertson point out in their papers. Sometimes these collaborations seem obvious, such as the State Library of South Australia's arrangement to work with the National Film and Sound Archive to reformat nitrate film. Other's seem less so – such as their working with a "a local businessman with a lifelong interest in video



formats, who collects and maintains obsolete equipment” (p65) to assist in counting, identifying and visual inspection processes, processes that Koch sees as the first steps of any preservation programme. We all know these individuals with a “lifelong interest” and it would be nice to think that all our institutions might find ways to learn from their expertise as part of a fully open organisation design principle.

Thinking about collaboration with individuals, one large category of experts with whom it is essential we collaborate consists of the researchers who make the recordings we acquire. Alan Burdette’s paper describes summer institutes during which researchers learn to annotate and document their collections – archives provide the systems and the training while the researchers provide the specific subject expertise. David Nathan, on the other hand, suggests that collaboration with these researchers should begin before the archival enterprise even begins. His quite substantial paper promotes the view that fieldworkers need to think of the purposes of making recordings well before they ever actually press the record button. (He talks about documentary linguistics, but my own research within the field of ethnomusicology leads me to suggest his arguments would pertain for most fields of study.) Without such prior consideration, Nathan observes that

field recordings were poor in quality as a result of equipment choices (such as using inbuilt microphones of recorders), recording methodology (microphones far from speakers, or not aimed at the speaker), and an elicitation genre that might be useful for recovering lexical or grammatical information but otherwise containing limited content useful for teaching or attractive to listen to. (p50)

Drawing on lessons learnt in offering training to prospective recordists at the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project Archive (ELAR), Nathan hints at a time when field recordings acquired will be “made in order to be experienced by a human listener” and will have “metadata about the recording and the recording setting” to enable fuller interpretation. Advantages of such an approach feed through to research, respect afforded to the performers/community recorded, and through to our archiving mission.