

Strength Below & Grace Above : the Structuration of Records



**“Thus all below is strength,
and all above is grace”**

John Dryden (1631-1700)

Epistle to William Congreve

**“The voyage of discovery is not in seeking
new landscapes but in having new eyes”**

Marcel Proust (1871-1922)

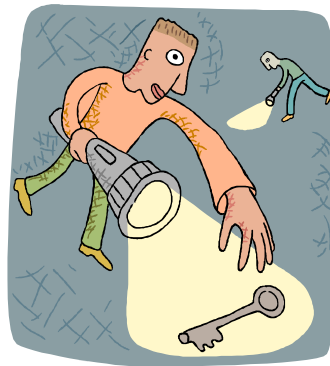
Who are our users?

What goes on in an archives?

Reading

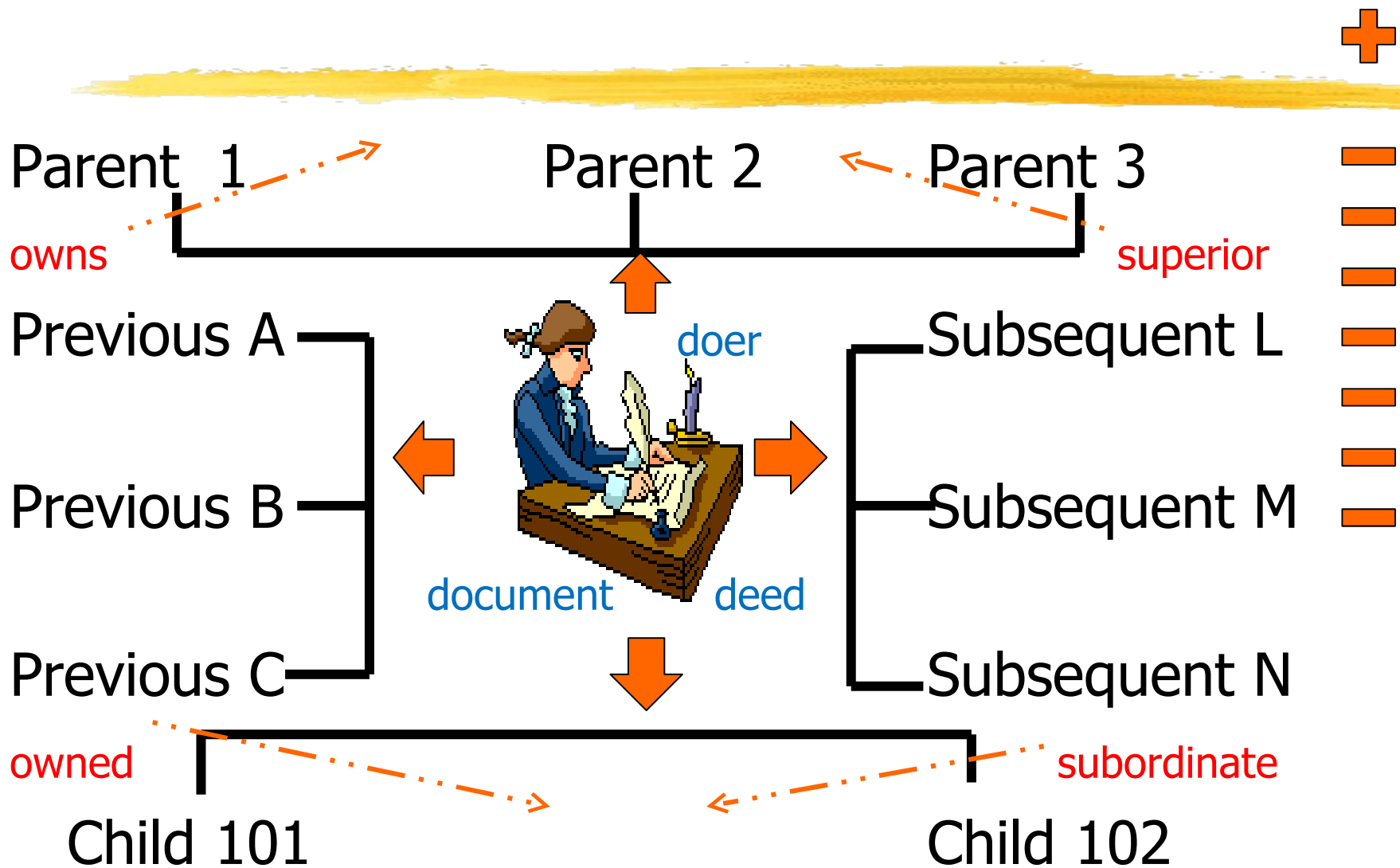


or



Searching

What is archival discovery?



“structuration”



“the interrelation of parts in an organised whole” (1925)

Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary

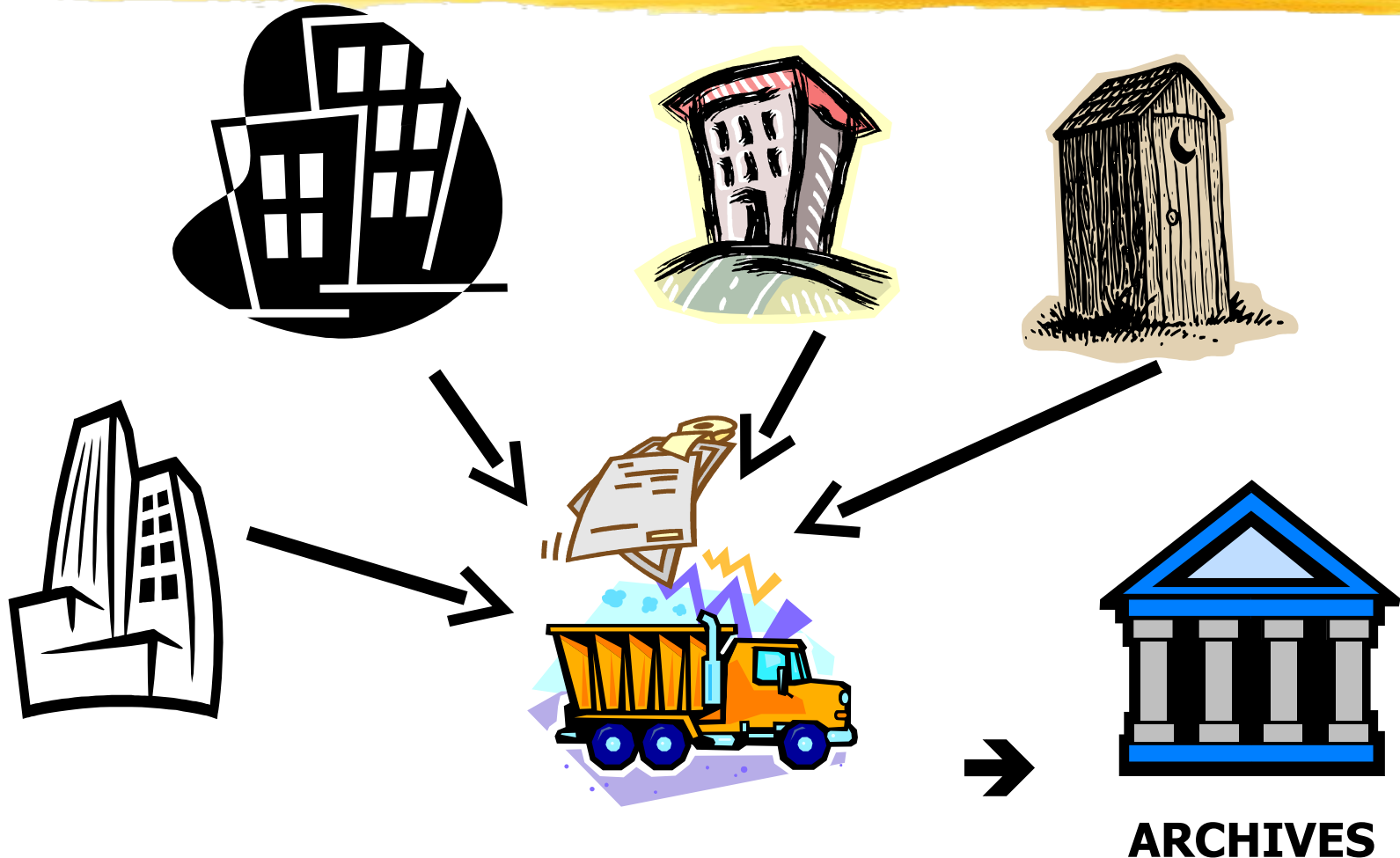
Many people don't care if their data is unsourced. But apart from opinion and imaginative work, anyone can legitimately be asked : “What is your source for that?” Whether they like it or not.

How to do that on-line?



- **We used to construct search pathways based on contextual frameworks. You found the records you wanted through context.**
- **On-line, we first find the records you want, then contextualise them by filtering the results.**

The custodial model



Digitisation- consequences?

- **Redefinition of services**
on-site access vs on-line access
- **NAA closures**
: Darwin, Hobart, Adelaide
- **Amalgamations**
 - **Canada (2004)**
 - **Tasmania (2009)**
 - **Northern Territory (2010)**
 - **New Zealand (2011)**

Amalgamations not allowed!



The merger of archives into conglomerate heritage collections with libraries and museums “ must be resisted”.

David Leitch

**ICA Secretary-General
ASA Brisbane 2009**

Internet presence



- **Few archival resources**
- **Documents or links to repositories with their own search engines**
- **Collective approaches :**
 - **British Register of Archives**
 - **TROVE (Australian Nat. Library)**
 - **Austrian Register**
 - **Archives Canada**

Web-based tools

- Results shaped by “signals” from both user profile and target resource
- You don’t have to know what you’re looking for
- Internet moves the power to shape the narrative from the provider to the user
- Bright Sparcs
<http://www.esrc.unimelb.edu.au/ohrm/index.htm>

Data Re-use



**Australian Information Commissioner
(2011) urges -**

- **Improved records management in support of seamless service-delivery**
- **Greater “re-use” of Government data**

**British Report (2010) on re-use of
Public Sector Information (PSI)**

Data Re-Use



- **Distributed access**

only 1/11 Australian examples involves the Archives.

- **Gateways (Digests)**

access across institutional boundaries and we must contextualise more broadly.

- **Reference Sites**

We must provide or source authority sites for contextual knowledge.

Too much trouble?



- **An archivist's gotta do what an archivist's gotta do (get over it)**
- **You can only do your best**
- **Share the load**
- **Let someone else do the work**
- **Be part of the recordkeeping continuum**