TURNING KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS INTO SCHOLARLY ARTICLES
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Special collections are the hidden gems of library collections. Precious and fragile archival material, rare books and ephemera lie dormant in safely restricted stacks, while their creation, acquisition and content bear rich stories and documentary material for scholarly research. Many libraries have special collections, and librarians are often curious about their history and content. Some collections are more significant than others, but all enrich cultural understanding.

The paper outlines the necessary ingredients and methods for turning our curiosity and knowledge of our special collections into quality research, and identifies some of the pitfalls that prevent us, as librarians, from becoming scholars. The main argument is that new graduates have the advantageous combination of sound research skills, coupled with inside knowledge and ready access to special collections. These are important prerequisites for scholarly research.

The discussion therefore illuminates various aspects of the research process and their correlation with information management practice: the originality of research ideas and the wealth of special collections; discovering existing knowledge and information skills; critical analysis and collection evaluation; communication of new knowledge and training skills; dissemination of new knowledge and scholarly publishing. Supporting evidence is drawn from previous research as well as from the personal experience of the presenter, who completed her library qualification in 2007 and has used her research background to reveal in recent scholarly papers two heritage collections held at the State Library of Victoria: “Treasured ephemera: chronicles of the early history of professional chamber music in Melbourne”, *La Trobe Journal* 84 (2009) 92-103 and “The Gustav Holst and British Music Society of Victoria collections at the State Library of Victoria”, *Fontes Artis Musicae* 55 (2008) 170-179.