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Zhang, J.

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Preface

The cover of this book is titled *Empty Archives*, and is a photo shot by Hanny Breunese in Leiden. We see a picture colored in orange with empty cupboards. Orange is the national color of the Netherlands. The research in this dissertation centers around the evaluation of online archival access to, with as case study, the National Archives of the Netherlands. Empty cupboards imply in a best case scenario that all the materials are in use. Or from a pessimistic perspective, that absolutely nothing can be found. Or in a (distant) future scenario, that everything has been digitized. It is all in the eye of the beholder. Besides the symbolism, it is in my humble opinion just a beautiful picture.

I am grateful and lucky that I have been part of the *Retrieving Encoded Archival Descriptions More Effectively* (README) project, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, for four years, and could contribute to it. This dissertation is based on substantially revised and extended peer-reviewed publications, and I appreciate the comments of the anonymous reviewers. I also thank my doctoral committee for their exhaustive feedback on the first draft of this dissertation.

The work has been supervised by Jaap Kamps. I am very fortunate to have worked closely with him, and he has not only been very generous, but also very supportive in every aspect. I am proud to be a direct academic descendant now.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Henny van Schie of the National Archives of the Netherlands for providing the archival finding aids in EAD, the e-mail correspondence data, and the search log files. Without this valuable data, this book would have consisted of mostly blank pages.

I also received a lot of (mental) support from Nisa Fachry, we had many open and honest talks about life, and she is absolutely one of the nicest persons I know. And Rianne Kaptein, my companion at numerous courses, and for giving me the last-minute tip on the printing company which frees up more money for more fun! If I forgot anyone else, I thank you too.

Finally, I thank my brother, my dad, and my mom.