A recipe book is not just a book that contains sets of instructions for preparing a dishes. Recipe books can tell us the stories of the author(s), their knowledge and discoveries as well as the historical context that can be derived from these recipes. Several pieces of work have focussed on examining how recipes tell the stories of people and communities.

In the paper Cookbooks As A Social And Historical document – A Scottish Case Study it focusses on Scottish cookbooks published between 1890 and 1990 and how these recipes act as historical markers of major events and record technological advances in society. The results from the paper validated the claim that cookbooks are a social historic and cultural document stating that “although cookbooks might not record events in the society as historical facts nevertheless their contents are often a response to historical events.”

Intensifying Taste, Intensifying Identity : Collectively Through Cookbooks this paper was a study into whether community cookbooks implicitly rebuke a social order that devalues women’s work. In the paper some interesting points were made about the benefits of community cookbooks when the author observed the Lutheran church women developing their cookbook then took on a corporate process that gave a voice to the community through building the cookbook by organizing it, discussing experiences and producing and selling them. The cookbook developed by the Lutheran church women is not just a way to raise money for the church but it was also a way recognise each of ladies knowledge and experience of cooking and to share it with others that were interested.

Recipes For Reading is a collection of essays that demonstrate the different stories available in cookbooks and in particular community cookbooks. Several scholars contributed towards the book and with reference to recipes the book states that “the work of scholars in the arts, history, literature and woman’s study we have increasingly come to see them as readable with great benefit to our knowledge of women’s experiences and discourses.” The author explains from examining cookbooks that the “cookbooks tell stories – autobiographical in some cases, historical sometimes and perhaps factious or idealized in other instances.” And that within community cookbooks “women present their values wittingly or unwittingly”. Recipes for reading is evidence that cookbooks tell the stories of people and communities and is proof that this should be maintained into the 21st century in a modern format.

Eat My Words : Reading Woman’s Lives Through The Cookbooks They Wrote that focuses on cookbooks and the stories they tell with particular focus on 17th and 18th century cookbooks. Within Eat My Words I found a quotation that showed the benefits of community cookbooks which is “modifications and modernizations of old recipes and the invention of new dishes in a woman’s cookbook represent the combined effort of many people. Contributions may come from past generations and from individuals living side by side in small communities, connected to larger social circles, sometimes from one or more cultures and they come from an array of print media. And while we tend to think of cooking as a delight to our senses, the relationships formed through these culinary compositions are social, cultural and economic.”

The Meaning Of Cooking And Recipe Work For Older Thai and New Zealand women is a study that took place in 2000 and its findings were drawn from a collaborative and interpretive study. Focus groups were used to gather narrative data and in this context the researchers observed women engaging in and gaining pleasure talking about recipes. Within the paper there is focus on recipe work and in particular discussion of people sending in recipes and they noticed “accompanying the recipes, the woman submitted stories that provided temporal, generational and cultural makers. The stories told of treasured recipes devotedly prepared and passed down from one generation to the next.” In the paper they found the recipes and stories that went with them “suggests the potency and ubiquity of women’s recipe work”.

In the paper discussed above they also mention Meyers (2001) study of 412 women shows how recipes have become part of ensuring continuality of traditions across two or three generations of American and Canadian women. **Look into this study and references from papers discussed above.**

Recipe work has made it into the 21st century with websites like bbcgoodfood and pinterest being different ways to represent and share recipes on the web as well as several modern computer and phone applications to help manage your recipe box and share your recipes with others. Below I will explore the modern day applications and websites for recipe management.

All The Cooks is a social cooking application where you can browse all the recipes in the application by categories as well as add recipes, create shopping list and have a profile. The application is social you can view others recipes where you can read the recipe, the story behind it, write reviews, add photos or ask questions for recipe. The application has neat features like adding recipes to shopping list, conversion features and nutrition facts. The application is image – oriented on the main page. All the cooks is available for android, iphone and windows.

Yummly is an application that enables you to discover new recipes. It has a really nice interface, easy ability to share as well as add recipes to a shopping list. Within the application you are able to find new recipes and save but not able to add your own. The application is a recipe inspiration which takes recipes from many different websites. Has a neat feature to find recipes by taste ( savoury, salt etc ), by ingredients, dietary requirements and many more filters which makes it easier to discover new recipes. Yummly is an ios application.

My Recipe Book an application where you can add a recipe manually or import recipes from the web. You can edit any of the recipes in your application, make recipes kitchen friendly with zoom or font adjusting and use the range of kitchen tools in the application like timers or conversion tools. The application also has a grocery list feature but lacks a social aspect. Simply a tool to manage recipes. My recipe book is an ios application.

Personal Cookbook is a recipe book manager to import or manually insert recipes. Enables you to group recipes, make changes to recipe and do basic share functionality. This is a very basic application to back up your recipes with little search features. Personal cookbook is an ios application.

What’s 4 dinner is a recipe manager which does enable you to import recipes but is unsophisticated. What’s 4 dinner has a basic recipe manager.

Basil is another application with a nice interface with the ability to organize recipes and import recipes.

Pepperplate is a basic recipe manager with no import feature or social aspect. It does enable you to manage menus and set timers. Pepperplate is available for windows, android and ios.

BigOven import from websites, take an image of recipe and convert to recipe or manual typing as well as browse other recipes such as nearby or popular recipes. Strong application but for some features involves purchasing. Ability to plan menus, create grocery lists and strong sharing features.

Paprika is an application which enables recipe management with imports. Although imports are unsophisticated from unsupported websites. Features grocery list and menu planner management.

Evernote allows you to explore and clip recipes from websites.

The applications often appear to enable recipe management or social aspects but none of the applications seem to make it work well for both. The applications do not enable multiple contributors which was one of the core aspects of recipes, the ability to pass on recipes, accept alterations, gain new recipes which all make up a good recipe book. Recipes For Life aims to enable this collaboration between friends, families or strangers with a similar interest to create a recipe book for life.

Links

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1046/j.1471-5740.2001.00002.x/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14427591.2002.9686499#.VDrqMPldV8F>

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=vjK2olmZMCMC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=cookbooks&ots=wEb7jocaOE&sig=T8UJaZ5JpYo2XozGs4geHh9IeiE#v=onepage&q=cookbooks&f=false>

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=JF0RQ3MVudcC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=cookbooks&ots=XXRCMwKQMw&sig=0cMAeLKLP0z1L_MK-eBXG_8bLNw#v=onepage&q=cookbooks&f=false>

<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.1086/662697?uid=3738032&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21104900879693>