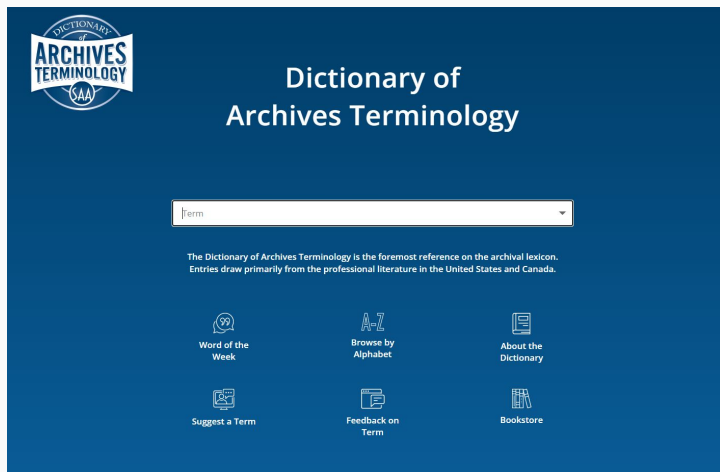


Session two: Archives, archivists, and histories of archival practice

INFO 7401 Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access



SAA Dictionary of Archives Terminology



The screenshot shows the homepage of the SAA Dictionary of Archives Terminology. At the top left is the logo, which consists of a circular emblem with 'SAA' in the center and 'ARCHIVES TERMINOLOGY' around the perimeter. To the right of the logo is the title 'Dictionary of Archives Terminology'. Below the title is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Term'. Underneath the search bar is a short introductory paragraph: 'The Dictionary of Archives Terminology is the foremost reference on the archival lexicon. Entries draw primarily from the professional literature in the United States and Canada.' At the bottom of the page, there are six icons with corresponding text: 'Word of the Week', 'Browse by Alphabet', 'About the Dictionary', 'Suggest a Term', 'Feedback on Term', and 'Bookstore'.



Categories

[Digital Records](#)

Cross-referenced terms

Broader Terms

[archives](#)

Related Terms

[access](#)
[archive](#)
[CLOCKSS](#)

Distinguish From

[dim archives](#)
[gray archives](#)
[light archives](#)

dark archives

n. (also dark archive)

1. a repository that stores archival resources but is accessible only to its custodian [\(Hide Citations\)](#)

† (Moore 2006, 152) A security data grid (dark archive) can be implemented that reproduces all of the logical attributes and digital components, while restricting any access by the public.

† (Danner, Kauffman, and Palfrey 2009, 155) There is also at the very same time an ongoing effort for permanent preservation of the printed object from which these things were digitized if they were not born digital, and for preserving the born-digital copy at some point too. There will be light archives and dark archives of all this information should anything ever need to be replicated if it's destroyed.

† (Dow 2009, 91) If a repository only stores content but does not allow user access to it, we call it a dark archives; if such a repository provides access to its holdings, we refer to it as a light archives.

† (Martin 2011) So, what is a dark archive? It is, simply put, an archive of information that is not used for public access. Most often it serves as a failsafe copy of a light archive, i.e. a publicly available version of the information, for use in disaster recovery operations. Dark archives need not be a fully operational copy of an information system, rather just the content behind the information system. This is an important distinction because maintaining an exact operational copy of an information system is a much more complex and expensive undertaking than maintaining only the content the information system operates on. Metaphorically, at its base definition, a dark archive will require more than a flip of the switch to make a light archive.

† (Marks 2015, 24) Access is a critical function of the OAI model—even in so-called dark archives where only the Producer may use content—and an archives that has acquired content without the right or ability to provide access may find itself in a difficult and costly position.

† (Williams and Berilla 2015, 93) In the case of administrative records, we were given a large set of documents with the proviso that the records be set in a dark archives for twenty years. The library's archival unit placed these records in a separate, password-protected dark archives with limited access.

† (Cline 2016, 7) From that computer we succeeded in creating disk images, and transferred them to networked storage for subsequent metadata creation and ingest into the dark archive.

† (CDL 2020b) Dark Archive ¶ An archive that is inaccessible to the public. It is typically used for the preservation of content that is accessible elsewhere. See also dim archive, light archive.

Notes

When resources in a dark archives become accessible, they are no longer considered dark. In some cases, records in a dark archives are also accessible to their creators.

The term *dark archives* is also used in libraries for collections of online serial publications and databases that are held by an organization other than the publisher and kept in case they are no longer available from the publisher.

Word of the Week

SUBSCRIBE

**extensible
processing**

Terms trending now...

[archival silence](#)
[isopleth map](#)
[cataloging](#)
[archives](#)
[record](#)

What are archives?

1. Concept: “the archive”
2. Materials: “archival matter”
3. Practice: “archiving”
4. Institution: “an archives”
5. Profession: “archivists”
6. Discipline: “archival science”
“archivy” “archivistics”

What is a record?

Data or information that:

1. Has been fixed on some medium
2. Has content, context, structure
3. Is preserved as evidence of an individual or institutional activity

As recordkeeping proliferated historically, *meaning* from records emerged from the **whole** rather than from any one **part**

Three fundamental aspects of a record:

CONTENT

The intellectual substance of a document, including text, data, symbols, numerals, images, and sound.

STRUCTURE

The manner in which elements are organized, interrelated, and displayed.

1. Internal structure: the relationship of content within a record
2. External structure: places a record in the context of an order, a series, and a collection

CONTEXT

1. The organizational, functional, and operational circumstances surrounding materials' creation, receipt, storage, or use, and its relationship to other materials.
2. The circumstances that a user may bring to a document that influences that user's understanding of the document.

Characteristics of recorded information

1. Records are abundant
2. Making records has become decentralized and democratized
3. Records and recordkeeping institutions are interrelated and interconnected
4. The social nature of records is evident (we keep records to use records)
5. Significance and meaning of records is collective
6. Records have shifting usefulness



Where are archives?

(incomplete list)

- College and university archives
- Corporate archives
- Government archives
- Medical archives
- Historical societies
- Community archives
- Museum archives
- Religious archives
- Special collections

Stuff in archives: Records

Institutional records, or archives.

Broadly, these are items created by the institution itself, the parent institution.

Stuff in archives: Fonds

The entire body of records of an organization, family, or individual that have been created and accumulated as the result of an organic process reflecting the functions of the creator.

Stuff in archives: Papers

Records created and originally kept by an individual or a family.

Although “papers” is the term commonly used to identify the private papers of individuals and families, such papers may include any manner of documentary materials, including even objects/digital material retained as part of such a collection.

Stuff in archives: Collection

Materials assembled by a person, organization, or repository from a variety of sources; an artificial collection.

Special collections

A cohesive collection of non-circulating research materials held together by provenance or by a thematic focus.

Also the administrative unit of a library responsible for managing materials outside the general library collection, including rare books, archives, manuscripts, maps, oral history interviews, and ephemera.

Stuff in archives:

Manuscript

1. a handwritten document
2. an unpublished document

Any text in handwriting or typescript (including printed forms completed by hand or typewriter) which may or may not be part of a collection of such texts.

Examples of manuscripts are letters, diaries, ledgers, minutes, speeches, marked or corrected galley or page proofs, manuscript books, and legal papers.

What is an archivist?

1. a professional with expertise in the management of records of enduring value
2. an individual responsible for records of enduring value

What do archivists do?

- **Save and acquire records:**
 - Identifying records
 - Deciding which should be preserved or discarded
 - Transferring to archives
 - Preserving physical integrity
- **Organize records:**
 - Intellectual order
 - Physical order
 - Archival description
- **Make the records accessible:**
 - Publication and databases
 - Reference
 - Restriction
 - Programs

What do archivists do?

- APPRAISAL
- ARRANGEMENT
- ACCESS

How are archivists different than other information workers?

Librarian

An individual responsible for acquiring, providing access to, and managing collections of published materials.

While the title connotes work with published materials, many rare books and special collections librarians also work with unpublished materials that range from handwritten inscriptions in books to collections of personal papers.

Curator

An individual responsible for oversight of a collection or an exhibition. The administrative head of a museum or collection.

Often carries the connotation, especially in museums and galleries, of an individual who selects items based on artistic merit or connoisseurship.

Records manager

An individual responsible for the administration of programs for the efficient and economical handling, protecting, and disposing of records throughout their life cycle.

Historian

(not an information worker!)

An individual who researches, analyzes, interprets, and writes about the past by studying historical documents and sources. They *produce* knowledge.

Fundamental archives principles

Provenance

- ORIGINS
- CUSTODY
- OWNERSHIP

Materials by a creator (broadly defined) should be kept together.

This principle holds that that significance of archival materials is heavily dependent on the context of their creation, and that the arrangement and description of these materials should be directly related to their original purpose and function.

Archival bond

The interrelationships between a record and other records resulting from the same activity.

“The creation and accumulation of archival records is always the creation of the reciprocal relationships, since records take part in, are the results of, a flow of activity.”

Original order

- ORGANIZATION/SEQUENCE
- Keep materials in record creator's order/organization
- Artificial arrangements should be avoided

Respect des fonds

By maintaining both provenance and original order,

- “The original organization of the records in the creating institution would correspond in its main outline with the organization of the administration which produced it”
- The organization of the records reflects the organization and working of the creator

Some archives idea(l)s

Value

The usefulness, significance, or worth that determines a record's retention

Authenticity

The quality of being genuine, not a counterfeit, and free from tampering, and is typically inferred from internal and external evidence, including its physical characteristics, structure, content, and context.

Impartiality/ Neutrality

What role does the archivist play in determining value and authenticity of records?

Is neutral the same as passive or objective or impartial when thinking about records acquisition, preservation, description, and access? Was it ever?

Histories of archival practice

Shifting archival paradigms encompass changes in:

1. nature of records
2. record-creating organization
3. record-keeping systems
4. records uses
5. the wider cultural, legal, technological, social, and philosophical trends in society

“Across the chasm of [archival science are] the *guiding principles and ideas* on one side and their *actual implementation in archival institutions* in the other.”

Institutional origins

- Archives for centuries act as explicit agents for **legitimizing power** and for marginalizing those without power (consciously or unconsciously).
- Who has the time/labor/money/authority to keep records? Why?
- How many records are there? How hard is it to keep track of them?

Roman archives:

- Perpetual memory, public faith ([x](#))

Medieval archives:

- Collected, weeded, reconstructed to keep legal and business transactions
- Serve historical and sacral/symbolic purposes

French revolution:

- Respect des fonds
- Who are archives for?

The Dutch Manual, 1898

- *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, by Samuel Miller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin
- Written in cooperation with the State Archives of the Netherlands
- **Is about government, public, corporate records, not private or personal archives**
- Codifies European archival theory
- Sets out a methodology for archival practice

Major contributions to archives practice:

- Provenance
- Original order

First paradigm: evidence

“...guardianship of “Truth” in records through unaltered and unmediated and unbroken context. Archives thus became defined as a descriptive science whose purpose was to illuminate that contextual origin of records, so that their properties as evidence would not be tainted.” (p. 106)

Evidence: custodian-archivist

- Sir Hilary Jenkinson, 1882-1961
- *Manual of Archives Administration*, 1922
- Worked in the Public Record Office in London in 1906
 - British Civil Service
 - World War I bureaucracy
- **Anti-appraisal**
- Archivist as “keeper”

Major contributions/lasting impacts to archives practice:

- Archives are places of impartial evidence
- Archivists are the guardians of that evidence
- Administrator (record creator) is the final say on appraisal, not archivist

Second paradigm: memory

“The resulting archive, retained by archives, was no natural residue therefore, but a deliberate and conscious creation by the archivist, who made that critical selection decision...Trained in academic history, the archivist tried, following Schellenberg, to reflect in the records chosen as archives their actual or anticipated uses for academic research, primarily by historians.” (p. 107)

Memory: historian-archivist

- T.R. Schellenberg, 1903-1970
- *Modern Archives: Principles & Techniques*, 1956
- Creator of **appraisal** theory
- American archivists working at the time of the creation of NARA (National Archives):
 - Exploding bureaucracy
 - Emphasis on efficiency
 - New Deal to WWII

Major contributions to archives practice:

- Primary and secondary value of records
- Record group
- Use-defined archives
- Records life cycle
- Records management as separate from archives

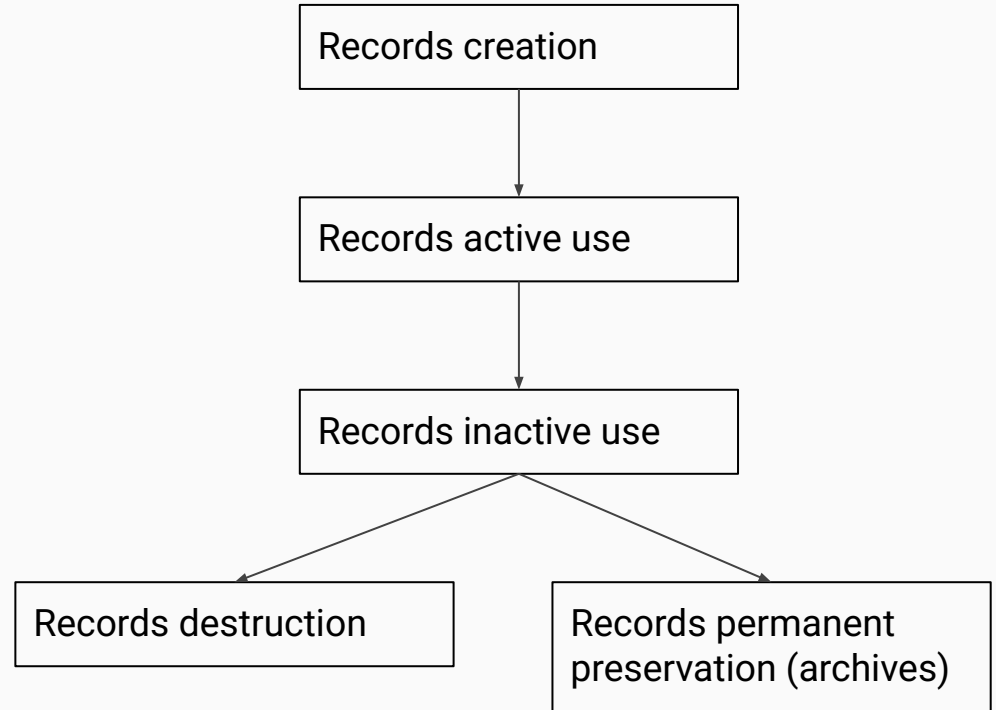
Appraisal

The process of determining whether records and other materials have permanent (archival) value.

Records life cycle

The distinct phases of a record's existence, from creation to final disposition.

Different models identify different stages. All models include creation or receipt, use, and disposition. Some models distinguish between active and inactive use, and between destruction and archival preservation.



Third paradigm: identity

“...archival holdings and activities, as well as the profession itself, came to reflect society more directly, in all its pluralism, diversity, and contingent nature. There was no “Truth” to be found or protected in archives, but many truths, many voices, many perspectives, many stories.” (p. 110)

Identity: mediator-archivist

Identity meaning two things:

- Diversity in representation (new identities or awareness of identity(ies)) in archival holdings
- Identity of archivist as a distinct profession

Instead of historiography trends, archivists shifted focus to the functions of records to guide appraisal and arrangement

- Macroappraisal
- Documentation strategy
- Institutional functional analysis

Fourth paradigm: community

“In this new digital, political, and pluralistic universe, professional archivists need to transform themselves from elite experts behind institutional walls to becoming mentors, facilitators, coaches, who work in the community to encourage archiving as a participatory process shared with many in society, rather than necessarily acquiring all the archival products in our established archives.” (p. 114)

Community: activist-archivist

- Archivists are grappling with the idea of their own power and whether/how we are needed as professionals
- Reconciling the roots of the profession with the needs and realities of records-generating institutions and individuals
- Imagining and implementing a way forward
- [Total archives](#)
- [Postcustodial archives](#)
- [Community archives](#)

- Which aspects of each paradigm remain?
- Which ideas still influence archivists today?
- How do we decide which ideas to keep and which to jettison?

