

Session three: Archives building

INFO 7401 Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access



Why have an archives?

The people who create archives/start records programs are very rarely archivists.

Documentary goals

Documentary goals answer the questions:

- Why does the archives exist?
- What purpose does the archive serve?

Appraisal

“What are we selecting for?”

Determining whether records or other materials have **permanent** (archival) value.

Can be done at any level of records keeping

“What are we selecting for?”

1. Institution
 - a. Umbrella organization
 - b. Archives within organization
2. Archivist
3. Source of materials
 - a. Donor
 - b. Institutional department/record group

Value

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

Primary value

- Administrative
- Fiscal
- Legal
- Operational

The usefulness or significance of records based on **the purposes for which they were originally created**

Secondary value

- aesthetic value
- associational value
- continuing value
- evidential value
- exhibition value
- genealogical value
- indefinite value
- intrinsic value
- long-term value
- reference value
- symbolic value
- archival value
- artifactual value
 - enduring value
- evidentiary value
- fiscal value
- historical value
- informational value
- legal value
- permanent value
- research value

The usefulness or significance of records based on purposes **other than that for which they were originally created.**

Informational value

The usefulness or significance of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value

Evidential value

The usefulness of records that provides information about the origins, functions, and activities of their creators

Getting stuff into an archives

Acquisition

The process of seeking and receiving materials from any source by transfer, donation, or purchase.

Accession

In many contexts, this is the “official” version of acquisitions.

Will include legal processes like deed of gift, copyright transfer, etc.

Best practices will include an accession record (a consistent and normally internal set of data detailing an archives’ acquisition, documenting legal and physical transfer, and supporting description).

Reappraisal

The process of identifying materials that no longer merit inclusion in an archives and that are candidates for deaccessioning.

Deaccession

The process by which an archives, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings, intellectual and physical custody.

Institutional archives vs. collecting repositories

Institutional archives vs. collecting repositories

Institutional archives:

- Exist to document the organization that created them
- Documentary focus is **internal**, the institution itself

Collecting repositories:

- Founded to preserve information regarding some activity **external** to the organization that founded and maintains the archives
 - Geography
 - Subject
 - Specific individual, group, event, era
 - Media
 - Can be a combination of the above

Mission and charge

An organization must sanction a department or repository to collect (usually).

Institutional archives = from the tradition of government archives

- Traditionally chartered by formal documents or laws

Collecting repositories = more leeway

- Chartered by parent organization

Mission and charge

Founding mandates of institution and repository are original source of and continued reference for selection criteria

BOTH models (institutional archives and collecting repositories) are almost always outlined by non-archivists

Institutional archives

Records management

The systematic and administrative control of records throughout their life cycle to ensure efficiency and economy in their creation, use, handling, control, maintenance, and disposition.

Institutional archives: Records management

Records management principles often guide institutional archives in selection.

- Anything designated as “permanent retention” (final stage of records schedule/life cycle) ends up at the archives
- Guided by resource allocation

Focus of records managers is often different than that of the archivist

- Archivist should be involved in the creation of records schedule

Functional analysis

A technique for appraising and processing materials based on the **relative importance of the activities performed** within an organization.

Macroappraisal

An analysis of the **functions** of an organization to determine the **relative importance of those activities** and set priorities for documentation.

Collecting repositories/special
collections

Collecting policy

Guidelines outlining the scope and selection of materials that support a repository's mission.

Defines the scope of existing collections and also describes processes such as deselection, retention, preservation, and storage. It provides guidance for archives staff, organizations and individuals interested in donating, and other collecting repositories.

Collecting repository: Collection policy

Criteria of a collecting policy:

- Institutional statement of purpose
- Types of programs supported by collection
- Clientele served
- Resources available to archives
- External environment (other collecting repositories)

Documentation strategy

A methodology that guides selection and assures retention of adequate information about a specific geographic area, a community, a topic, a process, or an event that has been dispersed throughout society.

Records transfer vs. donations as operations that influence collecting strategy

Institutional archives: records transfer

- This is the end of the records life cycle/continuum, and records are mandated to be moved to archives or destroyed
- No deed of gift or similar; records already belong to institution
 - Accession record is required, sometimes a transfer form

Collecting repository: donations

- Requires:
 - identifying collecting areas
 - Identifying donors who might have corresponding material
 - Persuading donors to donate material
- Physical and intellectual custody must be reviewed and agreed upon

Archivist values

Archivist code of ethics

- Professional relationships
- Judgment
- Authenticity
- Security and protection
- Access and use
- Privacy
- Trust

Archivist core values

- Access and use
- Accountability
- Advocacy
- Diversity
- History and memory
- Preservation
- Responsible stewardship
- Selection
- Service
- Social responsibility
- Sustainability

Donor values

Donor values

- What to donate
- When to donate
- Why donate
 - These materials
 - This repository

