

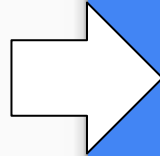
# Session four: Making the appraisal decision

INFO 7401 Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access



## **Appraisal for acquisition**

Does the potential acquisition fit into the institution's collecting priorities?



## **Appraisal for selection**

Which parts of the acquired collection do you keep and which parts do you not keep?

# Loan

The temporary transfer of an archival resource from an archives to another entity.

# Purchase

The repository uses dedicated funds to buy physical ownership of materials for archival holdings; purchases do not confer intellectual property rights.

# Transfer

The process of moving records as part of their scheduled disposition, especially from an office to a records center, or from a records center to an archives.

# Donation/gift

The voluntary transfer of ownership of archival resources from a donor to an archives without compensation.

# Deed of gift/donor agreement

A legal agreement that serves as the formal expression of the terms of a gift to a repository, including the terms of the transfer of ownership of records and/or intellectual property rights.

A “gift” transfers title to an archival resource without monetary recompense to the donor.

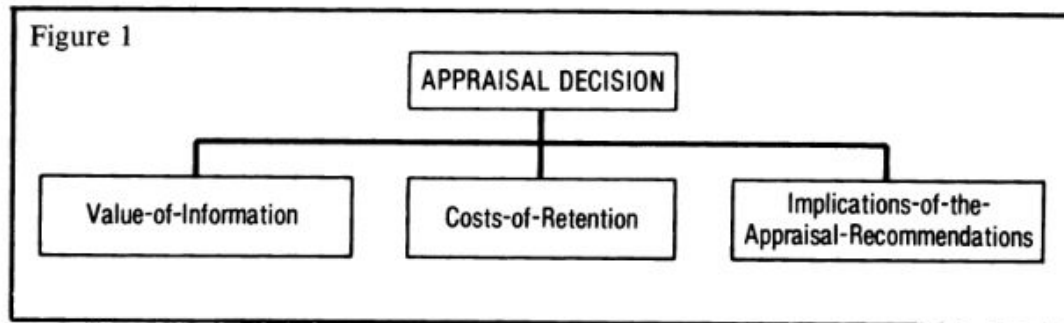
# Accruals and accretions

- Each accrual to an existing collection needs a new accession record.
- Unless accruals are detailed in the original deed of gift (usually in a schedule), new donor agreement/deeds are needed for each accrual.

# Boles and Young “Black Box” appraisal methodology

# “Black Box” appraisal decision

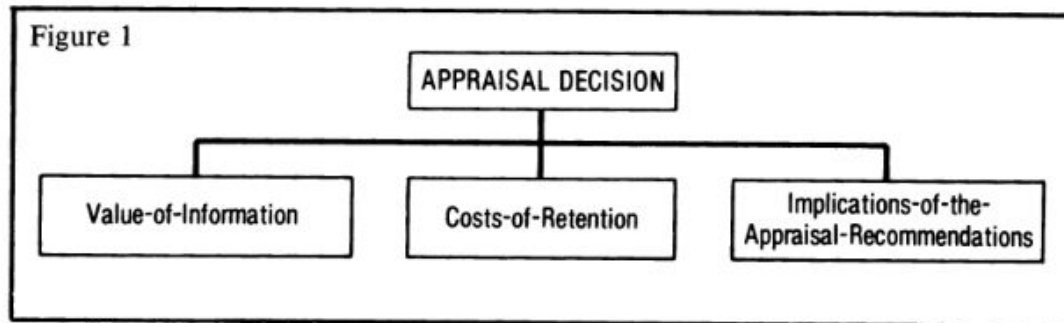
1. Value-of-information
2. Costs-of retention
3. Implications-of-the-appraisal-recommendations



# “Black Box” appraisal decision

Each node in Boles’ appraisal flowchart is a **point of evaluation**: he does not give us metrics to *do* appraisal for selection.

Question to keep in mind: how would you determine those evaluation metrics?



Value of information

# Value of information

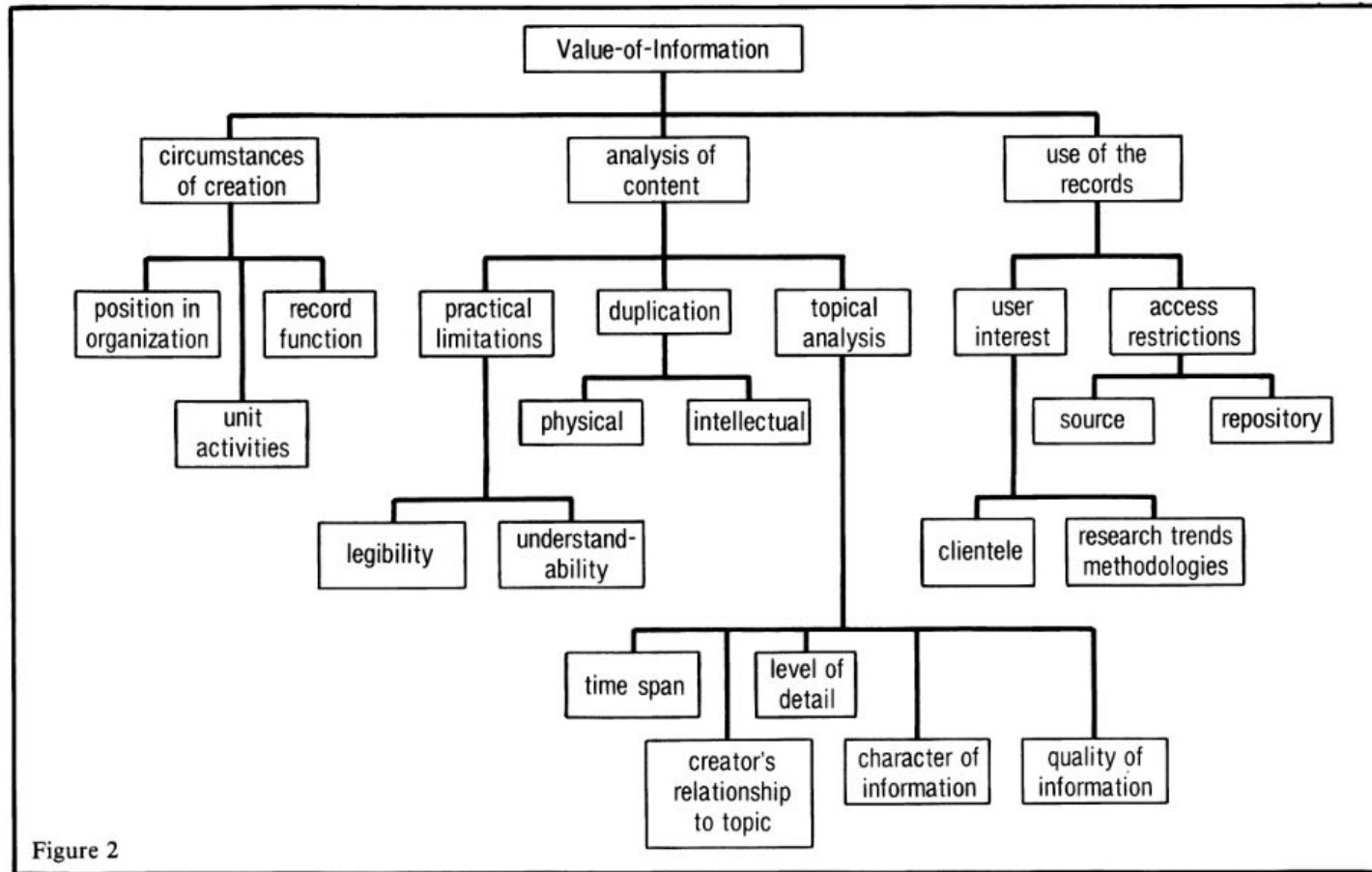


Figure 2

# Circumstances of creation

Who created the records?

In what capacity did they create the records?

What is the function of the record? What functions of the record-creator does the record document? What activities are performed in the record-creating unit?

What was the relationship between the records-creator and the larger records-creating institution? Where did the creator belong? Where did the records belong?

# Analysis of content

Practical limitations: Can you understand the content of the record? Is the handwriting legible? Can you determine what is in the record even if it is extremely jargon-heavy?

Duplication: Does this material exist elsewhere, physically or intellectually?

Topical analysis: What is the quality of information in the record? What dates does it cover? What is the records' creator's relationship to the topic of the record (is this an expert, a collaborator)?

# Use of the records

User interest: Who will use these records in the future? How?

Access restrictions: Is some or most of the material restricted for security/privacy for many years? Does the technology the records' creator used to create the records still exist to extract/read the records?

# Costs of retention

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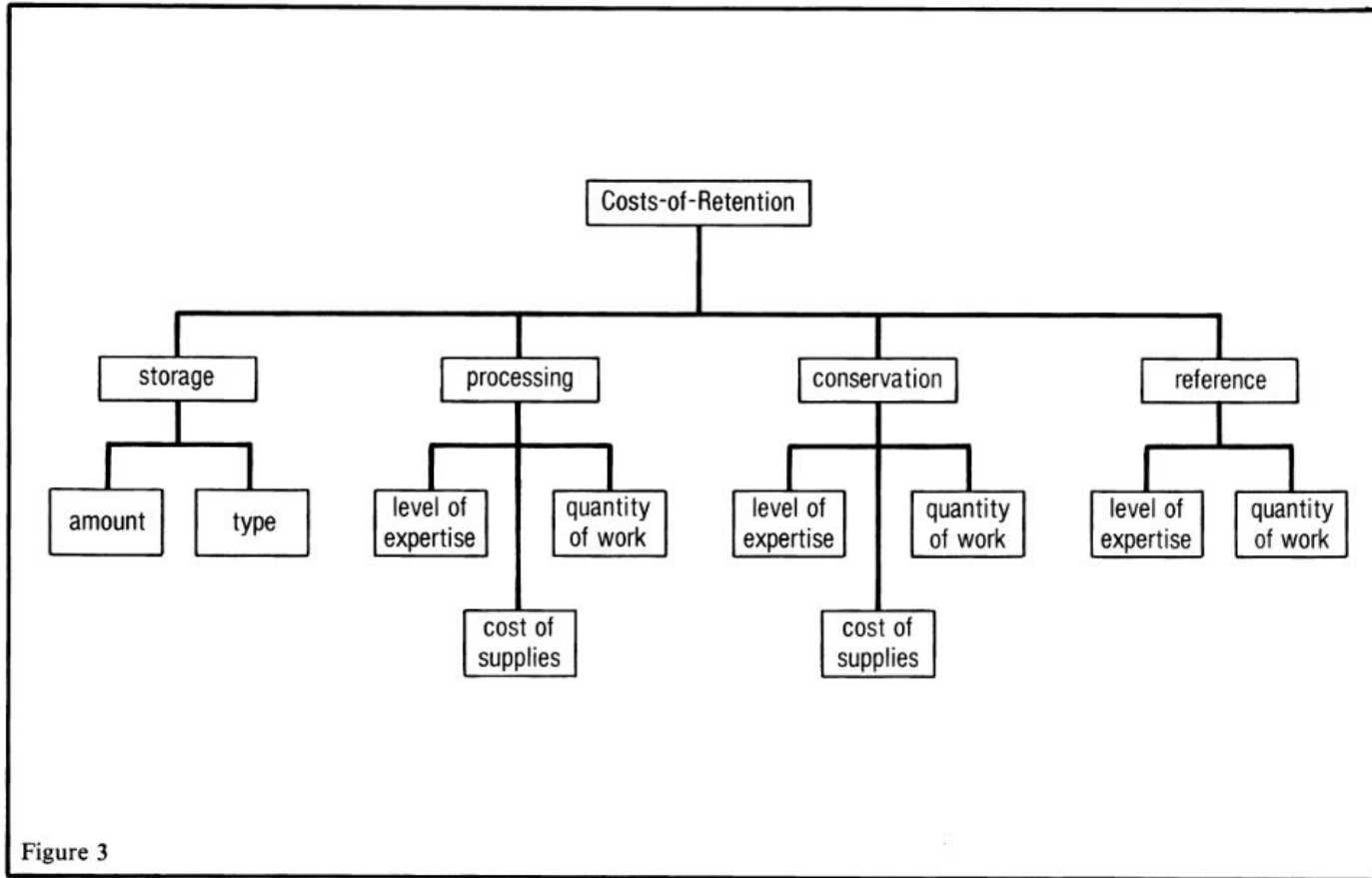


Figure 3

# Storage

Do you have enough space to store the materials?

Do you have the right kind of space?

If the answer is no to either, do you have enough resources to get the amount/kind of space you need?

# Processing

Will you need to hire a processing archivist?

Do you need a processing archivist with particular or advanced skills?

How long will it take to process the collection?

What supplies do you need to process the collection?

# Conservation

Do you need specialists to process/make accessible this collection?

Are the materials moldy? Falling apart? Shedding red rot? How will you fix these things? Can you?

# Reference

Do you have an archivist on staff who is *not* temporary, as most processing archivists are?

Does that archivist need to have special skills to provide adequate service? (if the materials are in Arabic, must the archivist speak/read Arabic?)

Do you anticipate heavy use? Do you need an archivist to serve use for just one collection/collecting area?

# Implications of the appraisal recommendations

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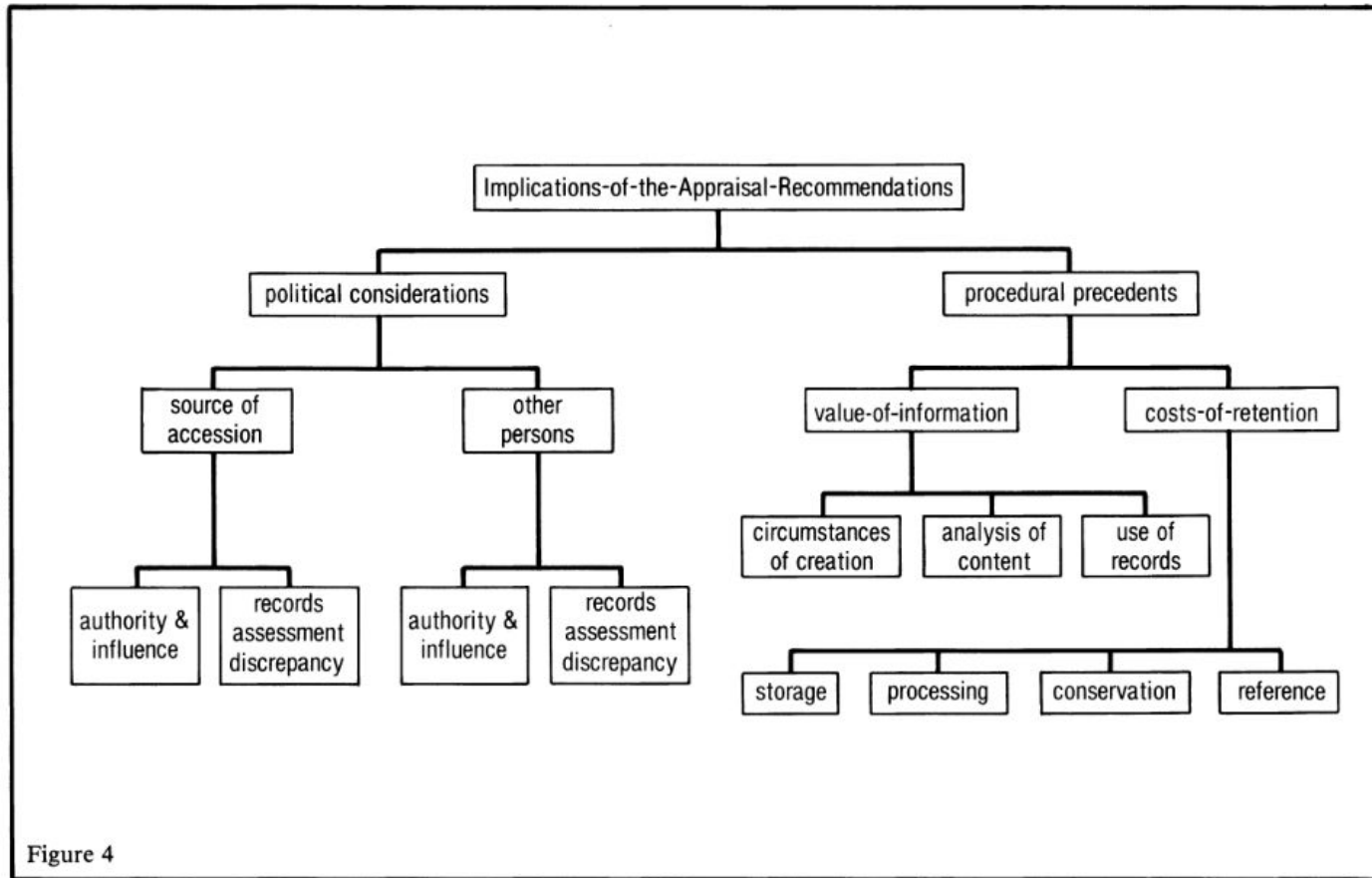


Figure 4

# Political considerations

Source of accession: Does the source have authority/influence within the collecting institution? Outside the repository? Do the materials seem doctored, altered, otherwise shady?

Other persons: Do other authority/influential figures want you to take the records? Did they consult you? If you say no, what will happen to your relationship with this person/department? If you push back? If you say yes?

# Procedural precedents

Value-of-information: by accepting particular records, does that then make you an institution that collects those records?

Costs-of-retention: by accepting particular records, are you creating opportunities to continue collecting similar records?

Is appraisal an art or a science?

Practicing the  
*science* will make  
the *art* easier to do

Science:

- Understanding of:
  - the methodology of selection
  - the tools used
  - institutional policies and aspirations

Art:

- Inspiration/intuition
- Conversation/connections
- Selection

