

An Archival Glossary for the Millennium

Acquired archives: Collections created by an organization as a routine part of doing business but removed from the physical custody of the originating institution and now in the physical custody of a second organization. These intact collections maintain their provenance and original order and are still referred to as archives, although legally severed from their creator.

Active records: Official records needed and used for current business by organizational staff.

Administrative value: Refers to the archival material's usefulness for management, as in the case of architectural drawings and plans useful for building repairs, maps necessary for landscaping or rescue, or, in a park, other records that indicate how an ecosystem or cultural resource has been affected over time.

APPM: *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts* is an archival style manual for description.

Appraisal: (1) The act of assessing an archival or manuscript collection's value—including informational value, artifactual value (uniqueness and physical qualities such as process, media, or techniques used), evidential value, associational value, administrative value, and monetary value—using criteria such as age, subject content, contextual documentation, condition, quality, quantity, legal restrictions, filing organizational problems, public relations concerns, and associational nature. (2) The act of determining if a collection contains official or non-official records by consulting the records schedule. (3) Used in society as a whole to refer strictly to establishing the monetary value of an item.

Archival assessment: Evaluation of an organization's total archival and manuscript collection management needs incorporating surveys, the production of collection-level survey descriptions, collections evaluations, and recommendations for action. Assessments facilitate records management and the care of archival collections in organizations that have little experience with these issues.

Archival collections: (1) Records created or accumulated by an organization as a natural part of conducting business. Archival collec-

tions have a common provenance and a shared internal order original to the collection. (2) The total archival and manuscript holdings of an organization including audio-visual, electronic, and textual records. See **holdings**.

Archival masters: Refers to the first generation of source materials, such as manuscripts, photographs, or original electronic files. When speaking of digital copies, this term (archival master) is also used to refer to the large and high quality preservation and/or duplication digital surrogate file that is kept off-line.

Archival quality: Refers to permanent, durable, and non-destructive storage or copying materials or equipment suitable for use with archives. Also refers to long-lived (100-year-plus) documentation formats such as silver gelatin emulsions.

Archives: (1) The permanently valuable non-current records of an organization, with their original order and provenance intact, maintained by the original organization. (2) The organization that created and holds the records. (3) The physical building/room in which the records are held.

Archiving: Refers to the act of transferring an electronic file from active to inactive memory in an automated system.

Archivist: A professional knowledgeable in archival theory and practice, who is responsible for the administration or management of archival and manuscript collections.

Artifactual value: Refers to the collection or item's intrinsic value as unique or rare examples of material culture. This value relates to the age, format, process, media, condition, and quality of the material. In a photograph, for example, the artifactual value might be due to a combination of rare process (calotype negative or carbon print), good focus and composition, special format (oversize stereograph or *carte-de-visite*), exceptional vantage point (birds-eye view or satellite image, or a particular genre (a fine portrait, seascape, market scene, or landscape). These characteristics of artifactual value can help archivists attribute an unsigned work to a particular creator, date an item, and discover other contextual information.

Assembled collections: Accumulations of documents, most often gathered from multiple sources by a collector, generally unrelated by provenance. The documents frequently are in the same format or related to the same topic. Assembled collections are sometimes referred to as “manuscript collections,” “artificial collections,” or “special collections.”

Associated records: All documentation generated by the activity of collecting or analyzing artifacts and specimens needed to effectively manage those related objects.

Associational value: Refers to the archival material’s relationship, usually by ownership or use, to an eminent individual, group, event, or similar activity or organization. The association may be to the records creator, owner, user, or individuals or groups who appear as subject matter, such as in anthropological records.

Authority files: Published or unpublished lists of data value standards (e.g., subject terms/names) selected for use in description. The lists may provide definitions, occupations, cross-references from variant versions of names or terms, and dates.

Cellulose nitrate film: A flexible film base used for motion picture film and photographic negatives between about 1890 and 1955. This film base self-destructs over time going through five stages of deterioration. The film should be handled with gloves, foldered in buffered sleeves, boxed, placed in Ziplock bags and removed to off-site (non-museum storage) cold storage in a freezer.

Certified Digital Archives: Refers to a potential process described by the Task Force on Digital Archiving of the Commission on Preservation and Access and the Research Libraries Group to monitor and record the authenticity and veracity of digital data maintained by organizations. Some institutions might be selected to serve as digital time capsules to hold and migrate electronic records until their copyrights and privacy concerns have expired. A repository might apply for certification and be subject to rigorous inspection or, alternatively, participants might be expected to meet a set of standards and customers might evaluate the veracity and completeness of the data.

Collections: (1) An accumulation of manuscripts, archival documents, or materials having a shared history of creation and ownership. A collection may be audio-visual, electronic, or textual in format (e.g., personal papers, organizational records, or assembled collections).

(2) The total archival and manuscript holdings of an organization.

Context: The circumstances of creation and history of ownership and usage of an archival collection, as well as the collection’s original arrangement or filing structure. A clear context gives a collection enhanced legal and research value as it indicates that the collection’s integrity was respected during a continuous chain of custody (ownership). The evidence in the collection remains intact. The collection was not rearranged or inappropriately added to or weeded. Historians may depend upon the inferences they draw from the collection’s authentic filing structure. See also **original order and provenance**.

Client/server: Refers to systems architecture in which one computer supplies information to another. Often such systems are developed so that tasks can be divided up between several machines for efficiency’s sake.

Data: Refers to simple facts and easily quantifiable and repeatable observations that may be quickly captured on machines, structured, and transferred to other machines and interested parties. Data is the lowest level of information and the easiest to manage, while information and knowledge are increasingly complex and difficult to abstract and automate.

Digital archives: Refers to the long-term preservation and research accessibility of digital data in an institutional setting. Digital archiving is achieved by following selection criteria for what will be archived, managing intellectual property rights, following open system standards, migrating and refreshing data regularly, maintaining sufficient software and hardware, and developing target scanning resolutions for different materials. On a national basis, digital archiving also involves developing a registry of digital archival master files and determining a basic economic model for sharing long-term retention costs.

Digital watermarking: Refers to the use of encoded patterns in electronic files, such as the Digimarc™ package, which allow the material’s creator or owner to indicate ownership and contact information and track down uses of the material on the Web.

Document: The smallest complete unit of record or manuscript material accumulated to form a file (e.g., a letter, photograph, or report). A document may consist of multiple sheets or may have a recto (front) and verso (back), both of which carry information in a fixed form. Documents are also referred to as

papers, records, and manuscripts. Documents are most clearly described when referred to by their specific formats and processes (document types), such as albumen stereographs, outgoing correspondence, diaries, ink drawings, or field notebooks.

Durable Naming Conventions: Refers to registering and recording permanent and durable names and locations for long-lived electronic objects (documents, images, and other files) found on the Internet. Sometimes called URN or Universal Resource Names and numbers, durable naming conventions are viewed as the natural successors to URLs. Durable naming conventions are storage system independent.

EAD: See Encoded Archival Description.

Encoded Archival Description (EAD): A non-proprietary text encoding standard for archival finding aids (guides, registers, indices) which preserves the hierarchical relationships between levels of description, while allowing for element-specific indexing and retrieval. The standard uses Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) as tags embedded in electronic documents. These tags identify and establish relationships among finding aid parts and suggest an appropriate ordering to the data elements found in a finding aid.

Ephemera: A broad category of documents originally created for temporary or short-term use, such as advertisements, invitations, posters, programs, schedules, and tickets.

Evidential value: Refers to the collection's ability to serve as historical or legal proof of an activity, event, procedure, or process since the record(s) are byproducts of these activities.

Federal Records Centers (FRC): Regional records centers of the National Archives used as off-site storage records centers for federal agencies. See page 39.

Finding aid: (1) A broader term for any format of textual or electronic tool that assists researchers in locating or using archival and manuscript collections. Basic finding aids include guides (for example, repository, collection, and subject guides), descriptive inventories, accession registers, card catalogs, special lists (for example, shelf and box lists), indexes, and (for machine-readable records) software documentation. (2) The file guides, indexes, registers, and aids produced by the records creator, usually referred to as "control records" or "contemporaneous finding aids." (3) The specific type of descriptive tool described in the text above. See page 28.

Format: Refers to the document type or form, such as the document's size and shape or the configuration of the media and support. For a fuller description of document types or formats see the Getty Information Institute's *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*, 2nd edition, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1994) for a full hierarchical list of terms.

Genre: Refers to the document's style, content, and form, including the document's purpose (e.g., advertisements, presentation album), the document's viewpoint (e.g., panoramic view), broad topical category (e.g., landscape, still life, portrait, or street scene), method of representation (e.g., abstract, figurative), circumstances of creation (e.g., amateur works, student works), or function (e.g., dance cards, death certificates). For a full list consult the *Thesaurus for Graphic Material II: Genre and Physical Characteristic Terms*, 2nd ed., 1993, Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, Washington, DC 20541.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): Refers to data maintained and linked to physical coordinates (spatially referenced), such as precise mapping data. Since the entire database incorporates precise physical descriptors it may be displayed in ways not easily possible previously.

GIF: Refers to the Graphic Image File format, a digital file format used for still images. GIF files are extensively used on the Internet.

Historical documents: See **assembled collections, documents, manuscripts, and personal papers.**

Holdings: The sum total of all archival and manuscript collections held in physical custody by an organization. See also **archives, collections, physical custody, and repository.**

Holographic documents: Documents handwritten in the script of the individual who created or signed them.

Information: Refers to data that has a clear link to a purpose or context, which requires a clear definition, a unit of analysis, and a layer of human interpretation or mediation. To be useful in a computer environment, information requires clear agreement on definitions and communications standards.

Information ecology: Refers to the science of understanding and managing whole information environments, primary, secondary, and tertiary sources as well as data, information, and knowledge.

Information ecosystem: A metaphor that refers to the entire information environment in a

group, organization, agency, or body. The ecosystem includes all those individuals and units involved in creating, managing, using, and adaptively re-using primary, secondary, tertiary information sources. In an effective information ecosystem data, information, and knowledge are all viewed as organizational resources.

Information Resource Management (IRM):

Generally refers to the use of technology (hardware and software) to manage data.

Informational value: Refers to the subject content of the archival collections, such as the people, groups, places, activities, events, objects, projects, and processes documented.

Integrity: Refers to collections whose provenance and original order are intact and whose documentary context is complete.

Intellectual control: The mastery or command established over the informational, evidential, and contextual content of archival and manuscript collections resulting from discovering and describing their provenance and original order and from the processes of arrangement and description.

Intellectual Property Rights: Refers to copyrights, privacy rights, and publicity rights found in original works created by human intelligence.

Inventory: (1) A structured guide to an archival or manuscript collection that includes a brief history of the collection and a list of the materials arranged in series. Inventories function as a type of finding aid. (2) A physical count of a collection conducted for accountability purposes. See also **survey**.

Items: Refers to individual documents or manuscripts. An item may be composed of multiple sheets or may have both a recto (front) and a verso (back) with writing or images on both sides.

JPEG: Refers to a digital file format for use with still images created by the Joint Photographic Experts Groups.

Knowledge: Refers to information that has been judged valuable, synthesized, analyzed, and reflected upon by humans. Knowledge is difficult to structure, transfer, and capture, and may be difficult to express in symbols as it requires some consensus on what is relevant, what the data means, what the proper unit of analysis is, and what the purpose of the knowledge acquiring activity is.

Knowledge-based economy: Refers to Richard Lanham's premise in the *Electronic Word* (1993) that in a knowledge-based economy,

the scarce commodity is human attention, not information. Human attention is labor, which gives information structure, usefulness, and value—in effect making it knowledge.

Information technology as a means to the end of capturing the interest of students and scholars. Technology democratizes access to information, leading to expanding markets for knowledge workers and consumers.

Leaves: See **sheets**.

Life expectancy: Refers to the length of time data will be usable in a system housed at 21°C and 50% relative humidity.

Lossless compression: Refers to any process for compressing an image file that ensures that the file once uncompressed will look identical to the original such as the TIFF file format.

Lossy compression: Refers to any process for compressing an image file that causes the file, once uncompressed to differ (not necessarily substantially) from the original appearance of the image file.

Manuscript collections: Groups of documents that have been assembled due to their individual literary or historical values. Manuscript collections are frequently contrasted with archives, which have a shared creator, a shared history of ownership, and a shared original order. See also **manuscripts**.

Manuscripts: Individual documents, primarily textual, that have literary or historical value. Manuscripts include a wide range of document types from correspondence, book drafts, and diaries to personal papers and resource management records. Manuscripts are often paper-based textual records.

MARC: Machine Readable Cataloging format refers to a electronic communications format for the transmission of library cataloging data, later adapted and adopted by archivists.

Metadata: Refers to documentation about data, such as descriptions of electronic files that effectively tell you the format, structure, contents, and authority of the materials. Metadata standards, such as the Dublin Core and the Encoded Archival Description Standards, are developed and being adopted or adapted.

Monetary value: Refers to the dollar value placed on rare or collectible manuscripts such as autograph letters or photographs. Monetary value is affected by all of the other values listed above.

Museum records: Official records generated by museums, such as accession, catalog, inventory, and loan records.

National Union Catalog of Manuscript

Collections (NUCMC): NUCMC is a valuable ongoing program of the Library of Congress that helps smaller archives distribute archival collection descriptions over national bibliographic utilities such as the Research Library Information Network (RLIN).

Non-official records: Non-official records are assembled collections of copies and duplicates created for reference purposes; acquired collections of manuscripts from non-federal sources; resource management records; permanently active records; and materials acquired for reference and exhibition that don't fall under the definition of being federal records materials.

Non-records: See **non-official records**.

NUCMC: See **National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections**.

Official records: Collections of organizational records that document the creation, development, organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other routine activities of the organization. Known as "records" by the National Archives, official records are made or received by federal offices while transacting business and preserved as evidence of the offices' actions or functions or because of the records' informational value. They may be active, in which case they are retained by the agency or inactive, in which case they are appraised via NARA records schedules and either disposed of or sent to a federal records center.

Online order fulfillment services: Refers to organizations which post non-publication quality electronic text, images, sound files, and moving image files on the World Wide Web to facilitate browsing and ordering these items for purchase. Ordering and payment may take place in an encrypted (safe) environment.

Original order: The functional filing arrangement imposed on a document collection by its creator. The original order of collections can provide information not found elsewhere, such as when the creator received a communication, who reviewed a document, or what the sequence of an administrative activity was. Original order should be preserved in a collection as it allows for rapid arrangement, accurate contextual research, and additional insight into the record creator's methods and activities. If a collection has no order because of mismanagement or disaster, a decision to impose an order may be made only by an experienced archivist.

Personal papers: The records created or accumulated during a lifetime by an individual or family. They have an intact provenance and an original order. Personal papers differ from archives in that they are routinely removed from the custody of the collection creators and placed in external archival repositories, but they function as the archives of individuals and must be treated with the same respect as all collections. Parks may collect the personal papers of individuals related to the park, such as founding fathers, formative staff, or eminent individuals associated with the history of the site.

Photographs: A fundamental document type found in all categories of records from museum records to assembled collections. Photographs come in many formats (for example, from cartes-de-visites to stereographs), in a wide variety of vantage points (for example, bird's-eye-view, microscope images, satellite images), genres (for example, landscapes, still lifes, portraits), and processes (for example, silver gelatin, carbon). Photographs are formed by the action of radiation (usually light) upon a sensitized surface. While often thought of as a single process, photography is many hundreds of related chemical processes on a variety of supports, such as metal, paper, plastic, or glass.

Photomechanicals: Multiple copies of images made in ink from photographic printing plates. These permanent images include chromolithographs, duotones, halftones, offsets, photolithographs, photogravures, photoengravings, silkscreens, and Woodburytypes. Photomechanical reproductions were most commonly used for postcards and for illustrations in books, magazines, and newspapers.

Physical control: See **physical custody**.

Physical custody: Either temporary or permanent custody of an archival or manuscript collection. Physical custody does not entail intellectual (cataloging and description in finding aids) control or copyright (the right to exhibit, publish, or prepare derivative works). This is particularly true for previously unpublished personal papers, organizational papers, or other historic manuscript collections. In general, the creator of the records holds the copyright.

Primary information sources: Refers to original digital, textual, and audio-visual records including documents, photographs, motion picture films, videotape, and electronic records.

- Primary value:** Refers to the value that records have to their creating organization, their original usefulness.
- Provenance:** (1) The entity (for example, person, family, organization, or office) that either created the records or accumulated them in the natural course of activity. (2) The history of physical custody of a collection or item.
- Provenience:** Museum curators and archeologists use the term “provenience” to refer to the source or origins of objects and to the exact location where the object was found or made.
- Quality control:** Refers to various inspection techniques and adjustment mechanisms used to ensure that the copy of an original document meets the standards required by the contract. In microfilm and photography quality control includes chemical, densitometric, and visual tests. With digital media, quality control focuses more on systems calibrations, documentation, and adjustments to the equipment after comparing the original to the copy.
- Records:** (1) All information fixed in a tangible (textual, electronic, audiovisual, or visual) form that was created by an organization as part of its daily business. (2) Two or more data fields that are grouped as a unit in machine-readable records. (3) Official federal files, per the National Archives and Records Administration definition.
- Records management:** The process of determining the status, value, and disposition of an organization’s records throughout their lifetime (for example, official or non-official; active or inactive; of permanent value or not as listed on the records schedule). Records management involves scheduling records for their ultimate disposition and arranging for their disposition when that day comes.
- Recto:** The facing page (front) of a single sheet of text or images.
- Reformatting:** Preservation duplication of original archival materials through the use of long-lived copy technology such as silver halide microfilms or large format digital files and computer output microfilms.
- Register:** A type of archival finding aid. As defined by T. R. Schellenberg in *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, p. 66: “In a register a record is made of documents in the order in which they accumulate. The documents are assigned numbers consecutively. These numbers are the key by which the documents ... are controlled.” Most modern registers, such as those at the Library of Congress, are collection-level finding aids that contain the collection title, accession number, date of collection receipt, donor, collection status, and other basic information for purposes of later processing (arrangement, preservation, and description).
- Rights management:** Refers to the process of setting up equitable financial systems and structures for balancing the rights of the copyright owners with the use interests of the public.
- Secondary sources:** Refers to publications such as monographs.
- Secondary use:** Refers to all use of information beyond that for which it was originally created, for example: use in an archives is a secondary use.
- Series:** A group of documents arranged or maintained as a unit within a file system because of their shared circumstances of creation, receipt, or use. An example of a list of series would be: 1) incoming correspondence, 2) outgoing correspondence, 3) photographs.
- SGML:** See the **Standard Generalized Markup Language**.
- Sheets:** Individual pages, for example each page of a 5-page letter. An individual sheet may have both a recto (front) and verso (back).
- Special collections:** (1) Non-official collections of manuscripts, personal papers, non-federal corporate records, magnetic media, audiovisual materials, and other documents. (2) Non-textual records such as magnetic or audio-visual materials.
- Standards:** Archivists follow a wide variety of standards created by many associations and organizations, from the Society of American Archivists (SAA), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and the Association of Information and Image Management (AIIM), including standards for authority control, automated systems and networks (see Z39.50-1992), data content and cataloging (see APPM), data structure and exchange (see MARC), editing and publishing, non-cataloging structure and contents including finding aids (see EAD), abstract preparation, and information processing (see SGML), and statistical standards. SAA has a working group on standards for archival description.
- Survey:** A comprehensive and systematic review of a collection conducted either to obtain a brief overview of a collection or a park’s holdings or to gain knowledge on a particular point, such as the amount of cellulose nitrate-based negatives and film in a repository, or the physical condition of a group of collections. Surveys may be conducted on any level (item

to repository) and on any topic (for example, the amount of stereographs in a repository or the level of documentation on women in the NPS).

Tertiary sources: Refers to published sources which draw their content from other published sources, such as text books, abstracting services, and indices.

Textual records: A broad category of written records, including holographic, typed, word-processed, and mechanically printed documents, manuscripts, records, and archives.

TIFF: Refers to the Tagged Image/Interchange File Format, a nonproprietary digital file format that has become a defacto standard.

URL: Refers to Uniform Resource Locator, an addressing scheme for finding files on the Internet. The URL tells you the type of resource, the host and domain name, the file path and the file name.

Verso: The reverse side (back) of a single sheet of text or images.

Visual records: A broad category of records containing images including graphic, photographic, and photomechanical prints (in all formats from negative, direct positive, inter-positive transparency and slide, to print); drawings; paintings; and watercolors.

Watermarking: (1) Refers to makers marks in paper that are formed when the paper fibers are in suspension and placed over a grid to allow the water to drain off. Watermarks are often used in determining the authenticity and origins of a document by appraisers. (2) Also refers to the use of software to alter an electronic document to produce a subtle pattern

that serves as proof of ownership or origins of an image. Electronic watermarks may allow the organization that watermarked the file to trace usage of the file on the Internet.

Wisdom: Refers to knowledge that has a profoundly human context allowing for life-long analysis, reflection, and synthesis. Often based upon a particular life experience, wisdom is not necessarily the same from individual to individual, group to group, or organization to organization. Often in organizations, the organizational wisdom and culture is expressed in the mission statement which provides the context against which all activity can be judged as wise or unwise. Ambrose Bierce said, "[Wisdom is] a special knowledge in excess of all that is known."

Z39.50-1992: An information retrieval service definition and protocol specification for library applications developed jointly by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Information Standards Organization (NISO).

Diane Vogt-O'Connor



Printed on
recycled paper

CRM

VOLUME 22 • NO. 2
Cultural Resources
Washington, DC

U.S. Department of
the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources (Suite 350NC)
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

FIRST CLASS MAIL
Postage & Fees Paid
U. S. Department of the Interior
G-83