SI 580 Understanding Records and Archives: Principles and Practices

Week 10 – Records and Record Keeping Systems
Themes of this presentation

- Public programming & outreach
- Communication, workflow, organizations
- Record keeping systems
- Archives in the Digital Environment
Public programs & outreach

Efforts by repositories to communicate to the public/clientele/targeted groups:

- archives are important to creating organization and society
- types of unique materials held by the archives and their value
- archivists are critical to successful management of the historical record
Purposes of public programming

- service to society
- increased financial support
- greater use
- obtain increased understanding of clientele and their needs
- enhance image of program and value of archives
Types of public programming

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- brochures
- newsletters
- av productions
- workshops
- exhibitions

- special events
- conferences
- press releases
- educational programs
- presentations
- friends programs
Building a public outreach program - considerations

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- how well is repository known to clientele / potential clientele?
- has repository identified major user groups?
- has repository dedicated adequate resources to public programming?
- does repository understand that outreach can assist other core program functions?
- does staff understand and have commitment to public programming?
How records fit into the communications, workflow, structure of modern organizations

...1

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- Yates case studies demonstrating the interrelationships among:
  - management functions
  - communications technologies
  - communication genres
How records fit into the communications, workflow, structure of modern organizations

- Upward reporting
  - financial / statistical data & reports
  - fed into management planning

- Downward reporting
  - rules, procedures, circulars, notices
  - depersonalized office from individual holding it

- Lateral reporting
  - memoranda to document positions

Themes
- Public Programming & Outreach
- Record Keeping Systems
- Archives in the Digital Environment
Yates demonstrates roles of records in systematizing, rationalizing, and routinizing office work

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- Development of routine structured reporting (blank forms, report formats)
- Development of documentary forms / genres to facilitate reporting
- Development of language conventions (formalism for internal communications)
- Development of nascent organizational memory (vertical filing, indexing, copies)
Impact of computerization
(Bikson, Bearman)

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- New organizational forms
- New communications practices
- New records forms
- Increased decentralization of records
- Technology convergence
New organizational forms

Themes

- Public Programming & Outreach
- Record Keeping Systems
- Archives in the Digital Environment

- flatter hierarchies
- broader participation
- more teamwork
- greater boundary permeability
New communication practices

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- greater speed and flexibility
- denser connectivity
New records forms

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- breakdown of familiar forms whose content, structure & context and associated generating transaction are self evident
- emergence of unfamiliar forms whose content, structure & context and associated generating transaction are not self evident
- examples?
Increased decentralization of records

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- impairment of central filing systems
- hardware and software incompatibilities
Technology convergence

- previously separate media technologies (sound, video, text, images) are now available from a single desktop computer

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment
Key questions

- how can we ensure that information in computer systems are records (evidence of transactions)?
- what are the attributes of "recordness"?
- how do we capture these attributes and link them to a record's content, structure and context?
- how do we create, implement, manage recordkeeping systems?
Characteristics of recordkeeping systems (AS4390; ISO 15489)

- Information systems which capture, maintain, and provide access to records over time
- Defines “information systems” as organized collections of hardware, software, supplies, policies, procedures and people, which store, process and provide access to information.
- Provides methodology for constructing recordkeeping systems
Characteristics of recordkeeping systems
(U.S. NARA)

- manual or automated system in which records are collected, organized and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition

- notes that an “electronic recordkeeping system” may be either a distinct system designed specifically to provide recordkeeping functionality or part of another system.
Attributes of recordkeeping systems ...1

Themes
Public Programming & Outreach
Record Keeping Systems
Archives in the Digital Environment

- facilitate distinction between records and non-records
- provide grouping of related records into classifications by series or programs
- permit easy and timely retrieval of individual records and files or other groupings of related records (e.g., by function or program)
Attributes of recordkeeping systems …2

- provide access to those with proper permissions
- facilitate scheduling and disposition
- allow segregation of permanent and temporary records
- retain records in a usable format until their authorized disposition date
Recordkeeping systems must be:

- **COMPLIANT**
  - with all legal and regulatory requirements

- **ACCOUNTABLE**
  - includes requisite policies and assigned responsibilities

- **FUNCTIONAL**
  - captures, maintains, and provides access to records over time
Recordkeeping systems can be enabled via a combination of:

- **POLICY**
  - guidelines for use (e.g., creation, access, retention...)

- **DESIGN**
  - structuring systems specifications

- **IMPLEMENTATION**
  - training program for desired usage

- **STANDARDS**
  - use of information technology and/or other standards
Archives in the Electronic Environment

- virtual objects which challenge aspects of archival administrative practices!
- persistent technology change
- early lifecycle involvement!
- custodial and non-custodial approaches to control (physical custody and (not versus) virtual control strategies)
- identification of provenance (functional as opposed to organizational unit identification)
- decrease in mediated access, increase in distributed access
Thank you!

Paul Conway
Associate Professor
School of Information
University of Michigan
www.si.umich.edu