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SI 580 Understanding Records and Archives: Principles and Practices

Week 9 – Core Archival and Records Management Functions: Part Three
Summary - recent trends in description

- shift in emphasis from physical control to intellectual control
- shift from repository-centered to professionally-centered standards and practices
- shift from access and descriptive tools designed for mediation to tools that end users can access directly
- building adequate description into recordkeeping systems
Themes of this presentation

- Preservation
- Reference
- Access
- Outreach & Public Programming
Preservation - background

- Pre-1970s - preservation generally meant accessioning into an archives
- 1970s - 1980s - preservation situated within three-part umbrella:
  - preservation management (control environment)
  - restoration (restore original look)
  - conservation (physical & chemical treatment)
- More recently, preservation management has become the main preservation focus (en masse treatment)
Preservation - current approaches

Themes
Preservation
Reference
Access
Outreach & Public Programming

- housing and shelving
- environmental controls
- security
- reformatting
- factoring in preservation at the time of creation
Archival preservation

- Acquisition, organization, & distribution of resources
  - human
  - physical
  - monetary

- to ensure adequate protection of historical information of enduring value for access by present and future generations

- requires that
  - planning precede implementation
  - prevention activities have priority over renewal activities
Preservation methods / tools …1

Themes
Preservation
Reference
Access
Outreach & Public Programming

- intensity of care index
  - holdings (linear feet) / FTEs

- environmental care index
  - temperature stability
  - humidity monitoring equipment
  - fire protection
  - disaster planning
Preservation methods / tools …2

- environmental surveys
  - building
  - environment in the building
  - building security
  - storage areas and work rooms

- condition surveys
  - assess physical condition of holdings
  - record location, formats, date ranges, condition, containers, suggested action, ranking for treatment
Preventive preservation

- housing & environments
  - temperature, humidity, pest control, air quality, lighting, shelving…

- protective packaging & enclosures
  - encapsulation, acid-free boxes, folders…

- precautions in use, handling & display
- preservation photocopying
- microfilming
- disaster preparedness
Reference …1

Themes
Preservation
Reference
Access
Outreach & Public
Programming

- **enable use**
  - provide access to finding aids
  - provide research space
  - provide reprographic services

- **supervise use**
  - registration and education
  - pulling documents from the stacks
  - monitoring use (duplication, fees...
Reference …2

Themes
Preservation
Reference
Access
Outreach & Public Programming

- administer access policies fairly
- administer donor agreements requirements
- provide archives public face
- document reference services
Reference process

- initial interview
  - translate user’s natural language query into the retrieval language of the finding aid system (inference)

- interaction during research
  - iterative process, contextual clarifications, copyright…

- exit interview
  - evaluate visit and services
Access - contexts

- privacy & confidentiality
- proprietary business information
- legal issues
  - FOIA, privacy act, security classified information, copyright…
- donor agreements
- institutional policies
- state of collections
  - physically and in terms of processing
Access policy

Themes
Preservation
Reference
Access
Outreach & Public Programming

- relevant legislation
- sensitivity of records
- protection of privacy
- restrictions mandated by donor
- identification of clientele
- equity of access to identified clientele
- levels of access
- degree of control over holdings
- physical condition of records
- security of records
- fees
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

- brochures
- newsletters
- AV productions
- workshops
- exhibitions
- special events
- conferences
- press releases
- educational programs
- presentations
- friends programs
Building a public outreach program - considerations

- 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?
Thank you!

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