Less Product, More Joy

Practical Approaches for Reappraisal, Weeding, and Deaccessioning
Instructors

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## Agenda

### Morning
- **8:30-9:00** Arrival/Registration
- **9:00-9:15** Welcome/Introductions
- **9:15-10:30** A Common Vocabulary
- **10:30-10:40** Break
- **10:40-11:45** Less Product 1
- **11:45-1:00** Lunch on your own

### Afternoon
- **1:00-2:30** Refusing Refuse
- **2:30-2:45** Break
- **2:45-4:00** Less Product 2
- **4:00-4:15** More Joy - Giveaways!
- Tour of CIAA
- Networking at Pump House
A Common Vocabulary: Definitions, Policies, and the Whys of Reappraisal

Definitions are from the Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology published by the Society of American Archivists.

www2.archivists.org/glossary
Have you ever asked yourself...

Why do we have this?
collection development

The function within an archives or other repository that establishes policies and procedures used to select materials that the repository will acquire, typically identifying the scope of creators, subjects, formats, and other characteristics that influence the selection process.
retention schedule

A document that identifies and describes an organization's records, usually at the series level, provides instructions for the disposition of records throughout their life cycle.
Have you ever asked yourself...

Do we really have to keep this?
reappraisal

1. Archives · The process of identifying materials that no longer merit preservation and that are candidates for deaccessioning.

2. Records management · The process of reviewing materials to reassess their retention value.
Have you ever asked yourself...

What were they thinking?
Why did they collect that?
Why wouldn’t they have done it this way?
Who thought this was a good idea?
Possible Answers
(Or Reasons for Reappraisal)

What were they thinking?

Original appraisal was unsound.

Why did they collect that?

The collecting policy has changed.
Possible Answers
(Or Reasons for Reappraisal)

Why wouldn’t they have done it this way?
  Processing methods have changed.
Who thought this was a good idea?
  Perceived value of materials have changed.
Reappraisal is a collection management tool!

Hape Fix it Kid’s Wooden Tool Box and Accessory Play Set. Image retrieved from https://www.hape.com/fr/en/toy/fix-it-tool-box/E3001
So, too, is deaccessioning.

deaccessioning

The process by which an archives, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings.
disposal

The transfer of records, especially noncurrent records, to their final state, either destruction or transfer to an archives.
Reappraising ≠ Deaccessioning ≠ Weeding

weeding

The process of identifying and removing unwanted materials from a larger body of materials.
Common Types of Weeds

Blank forms

Duplicates

Scrap paper

Medical Info

Image adapted from https://www.thespruce.com/pictures-of-weeds-4069715
Less Product 1:
Scenarios with paper and artifacts

SAA’s Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning
[2017]
CIAA Collection Development Policies

2005 Collect everything and anything related to architecture in Bartholomew County.

2014 Collect material related to significant modern architecture, landscape architecture, public planning, and public art in Bartholomew County.

2018 CIAA becomes part of county library.

Step 1
Have a rationale and clear objectives.

→ Mission changed.
→ Collecting policy changed.
→ Refine scope & comply with collecting policy.
→ Provide better access.
→ Balance research potential with resources.
Step 2
Get ready! Get set!

➔ Review state abandoned property laws.
➔ Review your collecting policy.
➔ Review your collection management policy.
➔ Identify scope. (Entire collection, format, subject?)
➔ Get approval.
Step 3
Go! Reappraise!

➔ Gather data about collection.
➔ Determine ownership.
➔ Make a decision to retain, defer, or deaccession.
➔ Follow through with decision.
Activity: Make some decisions!

➔ Does collection fit within collecting or records management policy?
➔ How often is it used?
➔ Would it be better somewhere else?
➔ What is the condition and what are preservation costs?
➔ What is the potential research value?
➔ Are we required to retain certain records?

Retain? Defer? Deaccession? Something else?
CIAA’s Decisions

C0001 Retain
C0002 Weed (not yet processed or inventoried)
C0003 Deaccession (some) models & exhibit materials
C0004 Retain
C0005 Retain
C0006 Defer
CIAA’s Decisions

C0007 Sample (retain some, deaccession some)

C0008 Retain

C0009 Weed

C0010 Retain

C0011 Deaccession multiplicates

C0012 Deaccession subseries
CIAA’s Decisions

C0014 Retain

C0015 Sample (retain some, deaccession some)

C0017 Defer

C0025 Retain

C0027 Sample (retain some, deaccession some)

C0033 Deaccession
Step 4

Deaccession (if that’s your decision)!

➔ Transfer.
➔ Return.
➔ Sell.
➔ Destroy.

(Remember to complete all documentation.)
Out of scope.

Transferred to another archive.
Out of scope.
Destroyed.
Low research value.

Transferred to building owner.
Low research value. Returned to donor.
Does not advance mission.
Sell.
Damaged or deteriorated beyond reasonable repair. Destroyed.
Condition threatens collection.
Destroyed.
Step 5
Evaluate!

Celebrate!
Less Product, More Joy

Part 2
Refusing Refuse: Retention, Mission, and the Case for “Pre-appraisal”
Definitions

Reappraisal
The process of identifying materials that are candidates for deaccessioning.

Pre-appraisal (or pre-weeding)
The process of identifying materials that can be culled from an accession prior to transmittal.
It starts with policy
In a perfect world...

Joy

LOVE

HARMONY
What can policy do for you?

- Uphold your institutional mission
- Provide some legal protection
- Strengthen your position when you are put in a situation where you should not or do not want to accept certain records
- Allow for defensible disposal/destruction
- Can aid in writing internal procedural documents for more consistent processing workflows

There are many quality examples and templates online!
Collecting practices should support your mission & purpose

Are the materials relevant to your institutional mission and purpose?
As technology evolves, we have new considerations
“Selective appraisal policies and practices should include regular reappraisal. Initial appraisal decisions do not always stand the test of time, and, given the continual costs—environmental and otherwise—of preserving digital content, reappraisal should be standard practice. Reappraisal should include, among other factors such as use metrics and value, an assessment of the current and ongoing environmental costs of preservation.”

- Pendergrass, et al

“The Cloud” isn’t perfect!

After 3 Cloud Failures in 12 Months, Microsoft Fortifies Azure Reliability

Posted on July 17, 2019 by Bob Evans

https://cloudwars.co/azure-cloud-failures-microsoft-reliability/

Google details 'catastrophic' cloud outage events: Promises to do better next time

Data-center automation software was behind what Google describes as a "catastrophic failure" last Sunday.

https://www.zdnet.com/article/google-details-catastrophic-cloud-outage-events-promises-to-do-better-next-time/

Data Loss, Leakage Top Cloud Security Concerns

Compliance, accidental exposure of credentials, and data control are also primary concerns for senior IT and security managers.

Most (93%) cybersecurity professionals are "moderately to extremely concerned" about cloud security, with data loss and leakage (64%) and data privacy (62%) at the top of the collective list.

https://www.synopsys.com/software-integrity/resources/analyst-reports/security-in-the-cloud.html
It’s also expensive.
But we still have to deal with the backlog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Effort</th>
<th>Level of Control</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arrangement</th>
<th>Preservation</th>
<th>Appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Collection Level</td>
<td>Collection-level record in MARC or EAD (at least DACS single level minimum)</td>
<td>As is</td>
<td>Rebox if unserviceable in current housing.</td>
<td>Weeding not appropriate at this level. For collections with privacy concerns throughout, restrict entire collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries, p. 15.
https://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/hosc/docs/_Efficient_Archival_Processing_Guidelines_v3-1.pdf
It may be relevant but not permanent

Have you identified the materials?
Example 1

Proposed cost:

- Refurbish drive = $7,010
- Test 3 platters = $2,250
  - $9,260
- Convert 50 @ $750 each = $31,760
- Convert 60 @ $750 each = $45,000
  - $54,260
Should records be weeded because of their format?

What makes a record a record?

- Content
- Creator
- Decisions made around retention and disposition
Example 2

When you have means, motive, and opportunity to pre-weed, DO SO!

74 video channels with 772 videos total
Estimated **700 GB** of data

5% sample
Agency input to determine priority materials
Agency responsible for organizing and transmitting

ISDH video center: [http://videocenter.isdh.in.gov/videos/](http://videocenter.isdh.in.gov/videos/)
Less Product 2:
Scenarios with AV, electronic, and mixed materials

Live review with tools:

- Command Line and Powershell
- Karen’s Directory Printer
- File Deduplicator
- FTK Imager Lite
Sometimes

You just aren’t sure what you have
Content verification - it's important!
IDK what even are these?
Ghosts of accessions past...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backup_AccessionRegisters_Bob_Personal_unknown_Files8</td>
<td>8/14/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backup_AccessionRegisters_Bob_Personal_unknown_Files7</td>
<td>8/14/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backup_AccessionRegisters_Bob_Personal_unknown_Files6</td>
<td>8/14/2015</td>
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<td>8/14/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backup_AccessionRegisters_Bob_Personal_unknown_Files3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backup_AccessionRegisters_Bob_Personal_unknown_Files2</td>
<td>8/14/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backup_AccessionRegisters_Bob_Horton_Personal_unknown_Files1</td>
<td>8/14/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are plenty of free or inexpensive tools out there that can help you determine what you have so you can define scope and make plans.
Prioritize decision making (many guides and tools already exist)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audio Media Format*</th>
<th>Media Life</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Overall Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*An audit will be performed to determine priority within each format group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 16” Transcription Discs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Gramophones</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 DAT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Wire Recording</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 8mm DAC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 1/4” Audio Reel to Reel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Audio Cassette Tape</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ½” Audio Reel to Reel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 2” Audio Reel to Reel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 1” Audio Reel to Reel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Audio Compact Disc (CD)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Micro/Mini Cassette</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Audograph</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Soundscriver Disc</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

5 = Very High Risk
4 = High Risk
3 = Medium Risk
2 = Low Risk
1 = Very Low Risk

Example 3: weeding digital photos from disks

Set up boiler plate criteria for consistency, then add specific notes as needed.

Files were weeded according to the following criteria:
- duplicate (exact copy)
- extremely similar shots (multiple nearly identical images of the same subject were taken)
- unrelated to the collection (out of scope)
- blurry, blank, black, unidentifiable, or otherwise unusable image
- unreadable or unrecoverable file
- temp file, empty file or thumbnail cache file
- content is non-archival (e.g. test shots)
- For this accession, Word documents were recovered and retained. MOV video snippets were determined to be non-archival and weeded.
Once you know what you have...

Do you have what you need to process and provide access to the materials NOW?

Can you buy what you need and train enough people to do the work properly in-house?

what do you plan to do with it?
Tools can be used to apply retention and disposition to your internal operating documents as well as to accessioned materials.

Demo time!
Low-hanging fruit

What’s the easy stuff to get rid of? (paper)

- duplicates
- scratch paper
- blank forms
- envelopes
- drafts/versions (for some types of records)
- empty folders/boxes
- out of scope
- not actually produced by creator/donor
- memos, advertisements, generic mail
- superfluous reference materials

What’s the easy stuff to get rid of? (electronic)

- duplicates
- drafts/provisional versions/working documents (for some types of records)
- empty folder/file directories
- temp files
- unrecoverable files
- out of scope
- not actually produced by creator/donor (external documentation delivered by other agencies and used for reference)
Example accession

1 c.f. of electronic records (est. 14 TB total), including:
- (3) 4 TB hard drives
- (1) 2 TB hard drive
- (9) USB flash drives
- (~400) CD-Rs containing video files

12 c.f. of Report Forms
- One folder for every day containing a signed record packet for each event held, documenting a secure and auditable transaction (2-4 recordings per day)

How would you weed the records and organize the 5% sample that will be retained?
Digital files on NAS connected by record series and accession number
“Taking proper care of your collection does mean not spending your limited collection care resources on objects that do not help you accomplish your [institution’s] goals.”

- John E. Simmons

The Deaccessioning Dilemma: Laws, Ethics, and Actions.
https://www.connectingtocollections.org/the_deaccessioning_dilemma_laws_ethics_and_actions/
Some thoughts...

- What are your hopes for your newly defined/redefined collection?
- Throughout the process -- WHY are you deaccessioning? (maintain focus or review overall purpose)
- What are the strengths of the collection? Is the process upholding them?
- If you are entirely unable to make certain materials accessible to your audience, do you need to keep caring for them?
More Joy

Q & A

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