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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

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

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

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

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

- **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
Yates demonstrates roles of records in systematizing, rationalizing, and routinizing office work

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

- greater speed and flexibility
- denser connectivity

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

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

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

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

- 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
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!

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