

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE
OF
AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCES

University Archives
& Historical Collections

It's Different with Digital: Influencing Curation Policy When There's No Mandate to Curate

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Overview

- Michigan State University and the MSU Archives & Historical Collections
- The Traditional Archivist
- Archivist as Policymaker
- Archivist as Policymaker at MSU
- Archivist as Policymaker: Conclusions

Michigan State University

- Est. 1855 by act of Michigan Legislature to create agricultural college
- Nation's pioneer land grant college
- Tier one research university with significant national and global impact
- Leader in innovation and technology
- 46, 648 students: 36,337 undergrad, 10,311 graduate/professional

Michigan State University



“Belle Sarcastic”

MSU Archives & Historical Collections

- Official repository for the historical archives of MSU
- Est. 1969 by Board of Trustees mandate
 - Collect and preserve MSU's historical records
 - Provide university community, scholars, and general public with access to records
 - Approve final disposition and destruction
- 33,000 cubic feet of university records

MSU Archives & Historical Collections

- Subjects:
 - Administration
 - Athletics
 - Campus buildings and grounds
 - Student groups and activities
 - Faculty papers and research
- 700+ historical collections related to Michigan and the Great Lakes region

MSU Archives & Historical Collections

- Actively assists MSU units in efficient administration and management of official university records
- Includes management, collection, and preservation of electronic records

The Traditional Archivist

- Archivist (from SAA Glossary)
 - An individual responsible for appraising, acquiring, arranging, describing, preserving, and providing access to records of enduring value, according to the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control to protect the materials' authenticity and context.
 - An individual with responsibility for management and oversight of an archival repository or of records of enduring value.

The Traditional Archivist

- ACA Domains of Archival Practice
 - Selection, appraisal, and acquisition
 - Arrangement and description
 - Reference services and access
 - Preservation and protection
 - Outreach, advocacy, and promotion
 - Managing archival programs
 - Professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities

The Traditional Archivist

- Custodian of records of enduring/historical value
 - Includes electronic records
- Archival material accessioned into archives
- Life cycle model of managing records

Digital Archivists' Dilemma

- Electronic records proliferating all over campus
- May or may not belong in Archives
- Unit may not ever send to Archives
- Records continuum model
- No mandate to curate

Archivist as Policymaker

“The institutional archive needs to assume more of a policy role, identifying records throughout the campus and working to ensure that digital records are both maintained by their creators and kept ready for research use.”

—Richard Cox, “The Academic Archives of the Future,” *EDUCAUSE Review Magazine*, Volume 43

Archivist as Policymaker

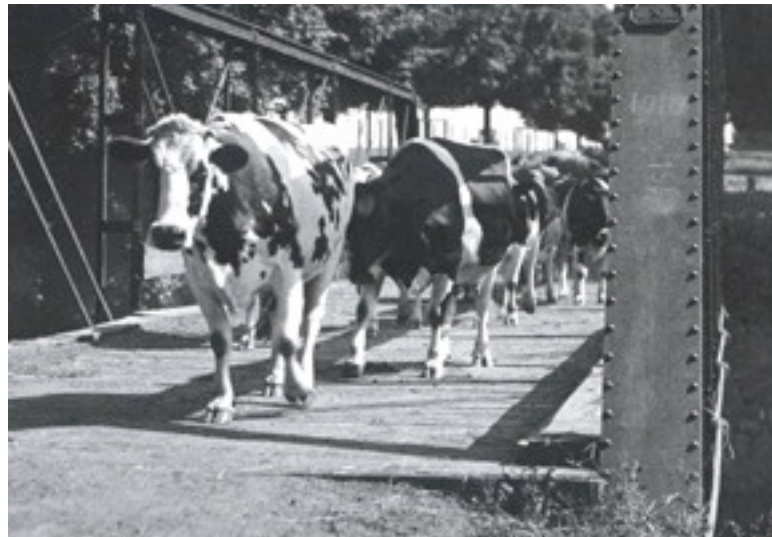
Archivists and records managers should move away from the custodial role and “...reposition themselves as policy makers and regulators...”

—Bearman, David, “An Indefensible Bastion: Archives as a Repository in the Electronic Age,” *Archival Management of Electronic Records*, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 13, 1991

Archivist as Policymaker

“Stop disciplining data and start herding it.”

—Steve Bailey, *Managing the Crowd*



Archivist as Policymaker

- Guidelines for preparation of digital files for eventual accession
- Not all digital material belongs in Archives
 - Local value, but no historical value to University
 - Records on retention schedule

Archivist as Policymaker

- Archives can't physically manage it all
- Archives has knowledge and expertise

Expertise Offered by the Archivist

- Appraisal and selection
- Records management guidance, including retention
- Intellectual property
- File naming conventions
- Metadata analysis and recommendations

Expertise Offered by the Archivist

- Digital preservation
 - File format recommendations
 - File authenticity/integrity checking methods
 - Repositories and repository software
 - Trusted digital repository knowledge
- Backup and disaster recovery planning

Archivist as Policymaker

- Take responsibility
- Speak IT language
- Create policy
- Provide guidance
- Intervene when appropriate
- Educate, influence, facilitate
- Consultant role

Archivist as Policymaker at MSU

- Digital Curation Planning Project
- University Relations digital photo/video
- Spartan Archive Project
- Records management training
- Design of Enterprise Business Systems Project (EBSP)

Archivist as Policymaker at MSU

- Tiered storage initiative
- Internal audit compliance
- Other guidance activity
 - Policy repository
 - Office of Intellectual Property
 - Controller's Office
 - Residential and Hospitality Services

Digital Curation Planning Project

- Assess digital assets, technical infrastructures, and state of digital curation needs and practices
- Year-long project: July 2009-June 2010
- Campus-wide, self-selective survey using web-based questionnaire

Digital Curation Planning Project

- In-depth interviews with 10 select units
- Evaluation of preservation practices, technical infrastructures, metadata
- Recommendations and next steps in digital curation planning

Digital Curation Planning Project

- Identified four types of digital content:
 - MSU publications, including e-journals, electronic theses and dissertations
 - Content of historical value to MSU
 - Non-MSU content
 - Research data

Digital Curation Planning Project

- Guidance for all four content types
 - Sharing of digital curation good practice guidelines
 - Working with Central IT to develop storage options and repository solutions
 - Research data: Data management plan mandated by NSF

Digital Curation Planning Project

- More policy enforcement authority for some content types
 - MSU publications: Likely to be stored in institutional repository
 - Content of historical interest: Will come into custody of Archives

University Relations Digital Photo/Video

- Servers bursting at seams with digital photos and video
- Records of historical value to the university
- Provide inventory and appraisal guidelines, storage options, and custody and file transfer workflows

Spartan Archive Project

- NHPRC-funded project to develop a permanent electronic records archive
- 3-year grant, April 2010-March 2013
- Three electronic records series from Office of the Registrar
- Will extend to other university records of enduring value

Records Management Training

- Presentations and workshops
- MSU Archives as RM resource
- Educate campus units on records management practices
 - What is a record?
 - MSU retention schedules
 - What to keep/not to keep

Records Management Training

- Best and good practices
 - Business classification schemes
 - Shared network drives
 - E-mail retention
 - Imaging
 - Document management
 - Paper sparse offices
 - File plans

Design of EBSP

- Multi-year initiative to create streamlined business processes and interconnected administrative systems for MSU's finance, human resources, and research administration
- Director of MSU Archives has seat at table to influence development, educate

Tiered Storage Initiative

- IT developing tiered storage options
- Guidance on providing curation layer
- Trusted digital repository space rather than cheap storage
 - Develop policy
 - Security, access, regular backups
- Connect meaningfully with records management, retention schedules

Internal Audit Compliance

- Compliance framework for enterprise data warehouse, system of record for EBSP
 - Model for MSU data sharing
 - Identity assurance profiles for access control
- Influence institutional data policy, especially records retention and disposal
- Archives as facilitator for enterprise information stewardship

Other Guidance Activity

- Policy repository
 - Compile online, all-organizational repository
 - Model: University of Minnesota Policy Library
- Office of Intellectual Property
 - Repository of information on university's inventions, creative works
 - Ensure practical workflows, permission, trustworthiness

Other Guidance Activity

- **Controller's Office**
 - Requested help with business records destruction policy
 - Concern: Confidential data saved to peripherals
- **Residential and Hospitality Services**
 - Requested guidance on contract with Microsoft for hosted e-mail service
 - Concern over spam control, whether contract would comply with university policy

Archivist as Policymaker: Conclusions

- Archivist as policymaker at your institution
- Archivists are traditionally stewards of records of enduring value
- Electronic records can benefit from the archivist's curation guidance, regardless of whether there's a "mandate to curate"

Archivist as Policymaker: Conclusions

- Archives and archivists can offer digital curation expertise and create/influence electronic record policy in addition to providing traditional services
- Archivists as consultants
 - Of the institution, provide “big picture”
 - Not invested at the unit level
 - Think about curation issues, so units don’t have to

Archivist as Policymaker: Conclusions

- Archivists vs. records managers
 - Functions linked at many institutions
 - If separate, need to work together
 - Especially with electronic records

Archivist as Policymaker: Conclusions

- Adapt to continue to provide value
- Archives as strategic asset!

References

- Cox, Richard, “The Academic Archives of the Future,” *EDUCAUSE Review Magazine*, Volume 43, <http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Review/>
- Enterprise Business Systems Project (EBSP), Michigan State University, <http://ebsp.msu.edu/>
- Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections, <http://www.archives.msu.edu>
- Michigan State University Digital Curation Planning Project, <http://msudcp.archives.msu.edu/>
- Spartan Archive Project, http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/spartan_archive.php

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