The Record in the Manuscript Collection

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This essay, written from the North American perspective, posits a single idea about the focus by archivists on personal papers: the vast majority of personal and family papers are records with the same organic, orderly nature deriving from functions and activities as institutional records. Yet this simple idea remains a major intellectual problem in the United States, and perhaps, elsewhere.

THERE SEEMS TO BE some sense by manuscripts curators and many other archivists who are primarily concerned with the acquisition and maintenance of non-organisational records that the work, theorising, and discussion of electronic records archivists is not relevant to them, or, even, that the new work on electronic records management represents a diversion from the real work and mission of the archivist. Should the archivist really be worried about the technicalities of the systems producing records? Is not the archivist really concerned with those records possessing broad cultural value to society? Do not archivists, with particular mandates by their organisations to document something or to preserve representative records related to some element of the populace and the past, have other equally or more pressing concerns with

the voluminous paper-based records still being created? Will electronic records really supplant paper records when it appears we are still drowning in the paper files? Is the attraction to archival work lost when we move from the manuscript realm to that of cyberspace?

There also seems to be some concern that the recent emphasis on electronic records by the archival community has diverted attention from other basic concerns most often represented by archivists in their manuscript curatorial role, such as the symbolic importance of archives, the value of records created outside of organisational settings, and the loss of certain organisational records when the institutions give up on the records or when the organisations go out of business. Can that small computer disk really ever have symbolic value? Is the average person really reliant on electronic recordkeeping systems? How will we manage, in any event, those electronic records alienated from their organisational settings when institutions end or purge (dump would be a better word) records?

These are important questions, and I do not intend to try to answer most, if any, of them. Some of this kind of questioning may be the fact that electronic recordkeeping has outraced where our profession now works, lengthening the gap between the mechanics of recordkeeping and the responsibility for managing the records with continuing value which we call archives. Or, it may be due to the fact that there always continues to be a gap between most practitioners and the theorists or professional leaders, the old friction between theory and practice characterising nearly every applied discipline, from librarianship to information resources management. The questions may also be the natural result of discussions within a profession that has always been somewhat fragmented, due to institutional allegiances, educational backgrounds, program size, and other such basic factors.

I believe these are real problems, but they are not what I want to address in this essay. Rather, it is the matter of the basic mission and objectives or focus of the archivist that I think is at the root of such concerns seemingly threatening to tear apart the archival profession in this decade just as it has been rent asunder at earlier times (such as with the split between archivists and records managers in the 1950s, archivists and historians in the 1970s, and archivists and librarians and other information workers in the 1990s).[1] Some of this continual shifting has been positive, serving to put the archivist back in touch with the primary purpose of his or her profession. The new focus on recordkeeping stemming from the discussions about electronic records management should be a unifying process. In my opinion the questions at the root of the recent debates and discussions in Australia (but also in archivy

worldwide) are part of an historic swing back to the real business of the archivist, the management of the record and recordkeeping systems with continuing value for evidence, accountability and memory. It is also my opinion that the manuscript curator needs to return to the business of characterising archives. This is why my original intent to write an essay relating the new recordkeeping functional requirements developed at the University of Pittsburgh to the world of the manuscript curator was shelved; the issue is far bigger than this project and cuts far closer to the psyche of our profession.[2]

While the concerns generated by the very recent emphasis on electronic records management are a new twist,[3] the issues about the place of manuscripts curatorship in the archival profession are part of an historic condition of the twentieth century archival profession, most evident in the North American professional community with three decades of navel-gazing about the historical manuscripts versus public archives tradition. But these concerns are also visible in other parts of the world. Seamus Ross of the British Academy in London, commenting at a recent Society of American Archivists session (1995) on the Pittsburgh recordkeeping project, noted that 'as important as all the work being carried out by the project will prove to the preservation of records for the business process one issue which concerns me is the lack of consideration which has been given to the preservation of records for cultural and historical purposes'.[4]

We could add to this concern scores of essays and books written by historians and other researchers which express the sentiment that the residue of private and organisational and governmental records preserved by chance and purpose provides a rich texture for understanding past times and societies.[5] That anyone would read into the project I have been associated with a lack of concern for the cultural value of records, stressing the definition of the specific attributes of a record so that records can be maintained for evidence purposes, is more testimony to the manner in which many archivists conceive of cultural and historical values than anything about the project and other efforts to return to the importance of the record. As will be seen from the following, it may be precisely at the root of the angst some are feeling about the continuing energies being devoted to electronic records.

For many archivists and certainly for me, records (in whatever form) possess evidence, and it is from this evidence that most of the value for culture, history and community stem. The 'sacred' records enshrined in the rotunda of the United States National Archives are merely part of the infinitesimal quantity of records of evidence that have become imbued with symbolic value, shifting

from just record to an artefact or cultural icon as well. Are not these records also a symbol of the various values of records for a democratic society and a representation of the many records created by many institutions and entrusted to the small, hardy band of archivists? In other words, while some archivists fix on these historic documents as the *raison d'être* for the profession, others, more correctly in my opinion, view these records as representations of the mandate to preserve the evidence of government and hence society.

Bringing It Home Down Under

The best statement of such concerns about the emphasis on electronic records and recordkeeping from the manuscripts curator's perspective has been that put forth by Adrian Cunningham. In his 1994 article Cunningham first posits that electronic technology is also transforming the creation of records by private individuals, drawing on the wise notion that the 'personal computer is exactly what it says it is—personal'! He then uses as an example that this poses for the collecting archives, that of the literary manuscripts created by authors and long a target of many collecting repositories, considering some of the proposals made for resolving this problem. Cunningham notes that most collecting programs have chosen to ignore the problem in the short-term in the hopes that by the time personal archives are largely electronic that some solution will have been worked out. He also takes issue with the suggestions made by Bearman, Hedstrom, myself and others that archives will become noncustodial, that recordkeeping systems will be the primary focus rather than the fonds or the series, and that standards (and other macro-level approaches) will need to be the primary strategy to maintaining such records. While struggling with these notions, Cunningham does accept the idea that personal records archivists will have to become active in the precustodial phase, building ongoing relationships with eventual donors at early stages in their work.[6]

Cunningham's concerns are valid but his solutions are far from viable. The chief value of his essay is raising precisely the right issues for archivists and manuscripts curators in the electronic information era. Efforts like that of the University of Pittsburgh can provide solutions to the problems faced by manuscripts curators because they can point to technical solutions in electronic information systems, but the openness to these solutions still depends on the manuscripts curators understanding what their business is—and their business is archives and records.

Cunningham is an Australian archivist, and Australian archivists are particularly sensitive to the fact that a separation between 'archival, organisational and cultural roles' has weakened some of the postcustodial arguments found in the renewed emphasis on recordkeeping.[7] To be honest, these difficulties exist in other countries as well. In the United States, Richard Berner long ago characterised the public archives and historical manuscripts traditions, and while arguing that Schellenberg brought the two traditions together, whatever melding occurred was more in theory than in practice.[8] In Canada, the total archives approach seems to bring both together, but there is ample evidence that even in that country a tension exists between the government and organisational archivists and those archivists and manuscript curators who toil in collecting programs.[9] These are but two examples of many examples of the types of friction evident in our archival discipline between institutional archivists and manuscripts curators, that must force us to wonder sometimes whether there is a profession rather than a constellation of affiliated communities. I am sure every archival community in every country can point to similar issues representing similar tensions.

This essay is an effort to relate the more precise definitions of records formulated by the electronic records community in the archives profession to the concerns about the preservation of historical (that is, non-organisational) records and the acquisition of organisational records by collecting repositories. As will be seen, I do not believe there is really any room for disagreement, at least due to theoretical or philosophical issues. Archivists are archivists. Archives are archives, and archives are composed of records. Historical manuscripts are composed of records, and they constitute archives. Manuscript curators are responsible for records and archives. And, I think this is the case in Australia as well as North America and elsewhere. So, what is the problem? There seems to be many problems, although the source of these problems is not what the electronic records archivists are saying or doing.

The Problem of Understanding Historical Manuscripts as Archives

Some of the problem in applying the recent discussions about records to historical manuscripts may be the result of a lack of understanding about the nature of historical manuscripts. In the United States, for example, archives and historical manuscripts have often been characterised as separate entities. David Gracy, in his pioneering American manual on archival arrangement and description, attempted to describe the differences between archives and manuscripts. What does he say is the fundamental difference between archives and manuscripts? 'Archives are kept primarily to satisfy the needs of their

creating organisation. A manuscripts collection is accumulated to foster the study of the subjects about which the repository collects.'[10] This means, according to Gracy, that there are very basic differences in the manner in which archives and historical manuscripts should be treated. For example, 'arrangement is a characteristic inherent in an archival record group because the records were created in, and maintained by, an office for its documentation and use. Personal papers, on the other hand, may or well may not systematically reflect the activity of their creator'.[11]

Gracy's statements capture a consistent comment regularly made by individuals responsible for such records. Such observations stress the wrong issue or emphasise the wrong characteristics. I contend that most often the reason why manuscript curators and other archivists think about personal papers in this fashion is because of the disorganisation that often results from the lengthy alienation of the records from the custody of their creators prior to coming into an archives. The vast majority of personal and family papers are records with the same organic, orderly nature deriving from functions and activities as institutional records discussed by archivists at least since the late nineteenth century. If they are considered in this fashion because they are artificial accumulations or loose odds and ends, fragmentary remnants of the documentary heritage, then we need to reflect more critically about why we would want to become absorbed with some items (can we call them records?). While there may be much for us to study about the nature of personal recordkeeping, it is not a study about chaos but one about the impulses driving individuals and families to create, maintain, and use their own records.[12]

If we forget that, or act as if, manuscripts produced by individuals and families and still reflecting their recordness are archives, we also forget that they are records. The other implications of Gracy's comments are that personal papers are formed for different reasons than institutional and other records, otherwise why would he argue that organisational records are intended to serve the needs of the records' creators and historical manuscripts are intended to serve the needs of historians and other researchers? This is a flawed idea, although it is an idea probably emanating from the reason why many can only see archives as cultural artefacts to be collected (in the same manner that you acquire bottle caps or baseball cards) and useful for those scholars who study such artefacts for a range of historical research (who often seem capable of finding value in anything and everything). Actually, many archivists believe this, certainly many who function as manuscript curators in the United States. They are wrong, at least from the perspective of archives.

An individual maintains records for generally the same reasons as does an organisation—to meet the needs of accountability, evidence, and corporate memory. Personal records are created out of the same needs to capture transactions, document activities, serve legal and administrative functions, and provide a basis for memory.[13] We maintain records to create our own evidence of crucial work, to protect ourselves, and to provide a kind of corporate memory of home, work, and family. And, in this era when many speculate about the uprootedness that new information technologies are bringing to spatial and physical environments,[14] it is perhaps the case that personal records will become more crucial. It might even be that individuals will want to create more traditional types of records because of their physical nature and personal symbolism (although I doubt this will really happen). The fact that personal papers may be acquired as part of an acquisition scheme of a collecting historical manuscripts repository does not negate the fact of the origins of these records.

The classic writings on archival science certainly capture a concern for both institutional and personal records creators. Hilary Jenkinson wrote with a firm conviction that 'The aim of the Archivist is to hand on to future generations the documents confided to him with no diminution in their evidential value: accordingly he has to guard against the destruction not only of those elements whose value as evidence is obvious to him but also of those whose value he does not perceive'.[15] Start applauding. Evidence. This applies both to personal and institutional records. In our modern times and in the light of our most essential concerns, we could say that Jenkinson was writing about the nature of the archival record, and this is the reason why his writings do not lose their currency for modern archivists.

If historical manuscripts are often not perceived to be the same as organisational records, then what are they seen to be? Terry Cook has provided the most convincing argument, one with which I would concur, that they have been defined too often as artefacts.[16] What does that mean? We collect them, hoard them, touch them, and otherwise regard them like museum artefacts, all of which can undermine the significance of these records for evidence, accountability, and even corporate memory. This is not to argue that archival records do not possess value in their original state or for symbolic purposes that dictates a higher regard for their physical, or artefactual, properties. But we must consider these things in a bit different light. In some rare instances, the characteristics of the original record convey important evidential and even informational characteristics that would be lost if the originals were destroyed. This applies, however, not only to a small percentage

of all records, but it is also relevant to a very small quantity of archival records. In even rarer circumstances the record must be acquired and held in its original state because it possesses symbolic value for an institution, a community, or a society.[17] Here the rarity is so great as to not make this a primary occupation for the archivist. If the archivist moves the symbolic importance of archives to the forefront of all his or her activities, the archivist is not fulfilling the ancient role of the remembrancer but is drifting over to that of the antiquarian who collected such records often due to the physical characteristics of an object because those characteristics represented some ancient past time.[18] In other words, we may have lost sight of the records as evidence. And, have we lost this because the increasing reliance on generally uninteresting (from a physical perspective) hardware and software prompts us to over compensate with a stress on artefactual value.

The challenge of the increasing influence of the information scientist and technologist on archival theory and practice

Another problem in conceptualising personal papers as archives may be the tendency of some information scientists who, when dealing with the convergence of libraries, museums and archives through the increasing use of electronic information technology, forget that there is more at stake than just similarities and dissimilarities between such cultural institutions. Consider one example. Boyd Rayward has described that this convergence is happening, noting that the newer technologies are breaking down former distinctions based on format and arguing that the distinctions are actually rather recent in any event. Rayward has focused on the needs of users, suggesting that 'digitisation eliminates physical distinctions between types of records and thus, presumably, the need for institutional distinctions in the management of the systems within these records are handled'. He believes that the user will not care whether the record is held in a library, archives, museum, commercial database, or the Internet.[19]

What Rayward, and others like him, miss is that the issues here are more than information access or professional turf battles. The mixing of multiple kinds of 'records' can minimise their 'recordness' by threatening their structure, context, and content—in other words, what makes them the distinct record they are from their point of creation. An archival record's 'information' includes not just its content but its context and its form. If all we worried about was content, then we could merrily join in with the information science professionals and cybernauts who are so evident in our society. The fact that a record takes on meaning because of other matters, such as the authority for

its creation, the activity that it supports, and the legal and administrative matters surrounding its origination and its maintenance makes things more complicated than massaging bits and bytes.

Archivists still must be careful not to discount such technologists. Michael Buckland has been, as well, a leader in writing about the characteristics of information. He makes the case that it is not stuff, but that it is the process of becoming informed, or as he argues—'The notion of information is meaningful only in relation to someone becoming informed'.[20] There is much that is valuable in his work, especially his broader efforts to understand how people can make use of a diverse array of sources for information purposes, but there is also much that must be recognised as being very different from the perspective of the archivist, manuscripts curator or records manager. For example, Buckland's idea that 'when a specific document is sought, what is happening is that the name of the document is being used as a surrogate definition of the knowledge actually sought'[21] is far different from our emphasis on the value of records as evidence for corporate memory, accountability and related issues. We need to incorporate the best of such insights from the technologists with our own particular mission. But, at the same time, archivists need to make sure that they do not abandon their primary purpose to well-meaning, trendy ideas emanating from related information professions.

Mark Brogan's recent stimulating paper about the market versus regulatory or *laissez faire* approaches to electronic records management revealed some of the dangers in such a posture. If archivists spend too much time worrying about whether the electronic recordkeeping systems support archival records without any effort to work with industry and government to develop systems that do, there is bound to be a major failure from our perspective—either the loss of our electronic documentary heritage or the loss of our archival professional identity and role. Brogan believes that time spent with the emerging markets to produce products are essential and a better effort than developing traditional archival repositories in the hopes that the records will somehow be able to be stored there.[22] In other words, archivists might have a better chance of being successful in the preservation of private, non-organisational records if they worked with software manufacturers to create commercial products that individuals could readily acquire that enable the long-term maintenance of their electronic files and the more easy transfer of these personal papers to real or virtual repositories.

There may be many lessons here, but let me suggest just one. Although we have heard and known this for some time, archivists must collaborate with

electronic information technology designers in order to ensure that the systems institutions are acquiring to create and maintain records can, in fact, do this. Can it be that this prospect so fundamentally changes the work of the archivist that we resist adapting our approaches and instead retreat to other venues (like personal papers) where the technology may not have had such an impact? I hope not. Can it be that some have turned to more traditional concerns perhaps represented by personal papers as a safe haven in order to resist the need for continual re-tooling, additional education, and staying current with a rapidly changing body of knowledge? I hope not, but here I am not so sanguine. In the United States, most debates about education have often declined into defences of where the individual currently is, with the result that we hear arguments for education ranging from a bachelor's degree with no formal archival education to multiple degrees with concentrated attention on archives. How can we resolve this, except to refocus on the knowledge about records, recordkeeping systems, and archives? Fortunately, doing this encompasses both personal papers and organisational records, even if it requires educated professionals committed to life-long learning derived from the study of records and recordkeeping systems.

The problem of what the archivist may acquire in the still emerging information age

There are many who are beginning to worry that the more precise definition of a record will identify materials that may deserve preservation as non-records and hence reduce the possibilities of maintaining such records. On the one hand, such reduction is a good thing, since the tendency has usually been by both archivists and manuscript curators to err on the side of trying to save too much or of being too reactive in accepting records and manuscripts as they become available. The emergence of the documentation strategy and macro-appraisal in North American archival thinking in the past decade has been one effort to be more strategic and selective with a clearer appraisal aim in mind.[23] The problem with the utilisation by the profession of concepts such as the documentation strategy and macro-appraisal is to see in them only a means for collecting, and this is not what such methods are suggesting at all.

There is another way of viewing this dilemma, however. David Roberts has hinted at this in one of his recent articles, when he wrote that archives will often still have some responsibility for the maintenance of information systems but that they need to recognise them for what they are, information not recordkeeping systems. As he states, 'Applying the transaction/evidence test . . . can be expected to pose a dilemma for many archival institutions,

which may accept the logic of the transaction/evidence argument . . . but which have custody of, or legislative or jurisdictional responsibility for, databases and electronic information which do not function as records'.[24] The issue still may be appropriate appraisal approaches for identifying what non records systems might be maintained, as well as the attitude and willingness of archivists and manuscripts curators to make the necessary distinctions.

The appraisal model or models loom large as an issue in just what might be done with electronic records produced by individuals. Australians have moved to what they call the continuum management of records, a model that records managers and archivists appraise records when records are still active rather than at the end of their traditional life cycle. Certainly, this shift is also evident in other countries, at least in a theoretical fashion, most notably in Canada and the United States. But the kind of continuum model for the appraisal of private electronic records posited by Cunningham, in which individuals with potential to produce significant records or to make significant contributions to society are identified and then worked with by archivists to ensure that their records are preserved, is problematic unless it is done within the context of appraisal strategies that focus on the macro-issues.

What do I mean by all this? I suggest that many of the problems seen by manuscript curators with the new emphasis on electronic records can be rectified by making a transition from an emphasis on collecting to appraising, and there is a difference. Collecting has often been characterised by the acquisition of interesting and often valuable documentary materials by an examination of the records as they materialise rather than through broader appraisal objectives. There are also other easily identified political and psychological aspects evident in collecting which have not been studied as a part of the archival landscape but which are being well-documented by other scholars and cultural commentators.[25] Appraising should be characterised by a focus on what is to be documented, and that means a stress on evidence and, as a result, records. Manuscripts curators who may lament the recent focus on electronic records may do so because they realise that they cannot collect such records, not because archival functions like appraisal become antiquated approaches.

This takes us back to the kinds of concerns being expressed by some archivists about what they perceive to be the new emphasis on electronic records and, thus, they argue, organisational records. This is the wrong concern. For the institutional archivist, the purpose must be squarely on supporting the organisation's mission through the identification and preservation of records with continuing value for matters of evidence,

administration, legal concerns, and so forth. The maintenance of records for this purpose will also identify many records meeting other informational needs of the research and other communities. For the manuscript curator, the purpose must be focused on similar evidential aims, conceptualised through acquisition or documentation policies. While the manuscript curator may identify with particular research communities, the manuscript curator must still recognise that not all of potential informational value can be preserved or that personal or family papers are somehow materials to be remoulded according to their usefulness rather than maintained according to their archival or record nature. Moreover, the manuscript curator's broader aim to document something cannot be achieved only through acquisition, but such objectives must take into account the fostering of institutional archives and the nurturing of the public's interest in archives and their value.

By refocusing on the record, the archivist and manuscript curator does a valuable service to society because a new understanding of the record and hence archives can be grasped. Cultural commentator Conor Cruise O'Brien provides an example in his recent book on the state of democratic governance, with his prancing off into a discussion of the reliability of government records. His notes that 'Billions and billions of transactions must have occurred in the course of what we . . . call "recorded history". But of all those billions of transactions, only a tiny proportion has left any record. And even what does survive is as likely to be intended to deceive as to illuminate'. O'Brien then suggests that historians are looking for documents:

> that are not intended for posterity, but which are there because they were generally known to, and taken for granted by, contemporaries. And the documents which historians most prize are those written down with no thought of posterity in mind but solely for an immediate and mundane purpose. And such documents have been preserved only spottily and by chance, for the greater part of the millennium now expiring. For the later part, especially for the last hundred and fifty years, the problem is the sheer abundance of the documents.[26]

There is much in this statement we could discuss, but suffice it to say that the refocus of the archivist on the record deals directly with some of O'Brien's concerns, while the continued scurrying about to collect all sorts of documentary material only compounds the problem. What, indeed, is our real purpose in society?

The Greater Problem: Archival value and mission

Archivists have tended increasingly to debate the problems of the diversity of recordkeeping media. Without question, this is a substantial challenge. But the bigger problem may be the vision of what the archivist is doing in the function of appraising. On the one hand, there are the substantial theoretical and conceptual debates within the archives profession that bring attention to specific matters such as evidential versus informational value to the broader concerns of documenting organisations or society. On the other hand, the archivist operates within an increasingly complex, diversified society currently engaged in volatile public and academic debates.

Far more daunting than the issue of electronic records preservation is the matter of how appraisal can be carried out in such a contested and ideologically charged environment. But to be able to address this, the archivist and manuscript curator must be able to understand that they are appraising first and foremost records and recordkeeping systems. It is here that the real problem emerges, not with a stress on electronic records or on other professional objectives. Indeed, if the world was to remain paper-based, there would still be a problem in what the manuscript curator might be doing.

All this might pale in comparison with the most nagging or persistent problem facing the archival community: Just how many times will we be able to rediscover the idea that manuscript collections are archives and that archives are records? Forty years ago American archivist and manuscript curator Lester Cappon wrote a brief essay forcefully arguing that what often passed for historical manuscripts were in fact archives — 'bodies of organic papers of persons or families, organisations, or institutions, in their original order of arrangement'.[27] A decade later T. R. Schellenberg's *The Management of Archives* described the same principle in greater detail and with more examples.[28] Thirty years later, Canadians working on descriptive standards determined that archives and historical manuscripts were one and the same with regards to descriptive needs, recognising that archives are archives and records are records.[29] Within the last few years the focus on metadata, driven by the idea of records being fundamentally evidence, has begun to transform even the most trusted dimension of all archival work, arrangement and description.[30] Mixed in with all this has been the new interest in diplomatics characterised best by the writings of Luciana Duranti of the University of British Columbia in *Archivaria* and in many other archival journals, all stressing a return to some basic archival fundamentals—namely, the record.[31] Crucial to all this is the strong endorsement of records and recordkeeping as the core business of the archivist and manuscript curator.

Given the inevitability of the transformation of all recordkeeping systems, organisational and private, into electronic systems, the archivist had better determine what his or her business is about. Viewing such systems as valuable for information purposes or for evidence will not only mean substantially different things but it will also determine whether there really is an archival mission, whether records that should be maintained are lost, and whether organisations and government can function with due regard to accountability, evidence and memory. Archivists and manuscript curators are important to society, if they have the right mission. The more precise descriptions of the recordkeeping functional requirements posed by the University of Pittsburgh can be utilised in the design of all types of recordkeeping systems (at least that is the intent), but that is hardly the first problem to be resolved. The acquisition of personal papers must be seen as a function only in the light of archivists working to study, understand, and manage records and recordkeeping systems.

Endnotes

1. By this, I am not suggesting that there have not been appropriate reasons for the schisms, most usually the re-affirmation of the principle that an archivist has a distinct mission and professional knowledge. What I mean is that often in these splits, something has been lost. The best example is the separation of records management and archives in the United States two generations ago, a loss that has plagued our ability to manage institutional records. Even the seeming alliance of archival educators with library and information science schools has brought with it the necessity to make distinctions and to identify areas of convergence, and the process has not been without confusion and consternation.

2. The purpose of this project has been to develop a set of recordkeeping functional requirements defining precisely the attributes of a record based on professional consensus, recordkeeping experts, and warrants (law, best practices, and standards) developed by a wide array of disciplines concerned with the maintenance of records. Project team (Kimberly Barata, David Bearman, Richard Cox, Wendy Duff, Ken Sochats, and David Wallace) have produced a variety of articles and position papers that can be retrieved via the project's homepage on the World Wide Web. The substance of my remarks about records and recordkeeping derive from this project, supported in its 1993–1996 work by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. For all the products of this project, consult our homepage at www2.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/

3. By this, I mean that from the late 1960s until roughly 1990, the number of archivists working on electronic records issues was quite small, and it was they who more often than not saw themselves on the outside of the professional mainstream. In the United States, for example, the vast majority of archivists work as manuscripts curators or function as archivists from an historical manuscripts orientation or tradition. For some suggestions about this, at least on how the electronic records community represented a small entity, see my *The First Generation of Electronic Records*

Archivists in the United States: A Study in Professionalization, Haworth Press, New York, 1994.

4.   Seamus Ross, 'Commentary on the Pittsburgh University Recordkeeping Requirements Project: A Progress Report', Society of American Archivists annual meeting, 31 August 1995, Washington, DC.

5.   This is the topic for more research and another article. However, I am willing to pose this hypothesis for someone else to test: while the number of books published about historical research methods continues to grow, most still seem not to provide much in the way of understanding about how archival records are formed or the basic principles supporting their management as evidence. In fact, most reveal only an appreciation of archives as a sort of information source to be mined by historians and others to prove particular viewpoints or to provide interesting quotations or color commentaries on certain key historical events or incidents.

6.   Adrian Cunningham, 'The Archival Management of Personal Records in Electronic Form: Some Suggestions', *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol. 22, no. 1, May 1994, pp. 94–105.

7.   See, for example, Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish, 'Somewhere Beyond Custody', *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol. 22, no. 1, May 1994, pp. 136–149.

8.   Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis,* University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1983.

9.   Teresa Thompson, 'Ecumenical Records and Documentation Strategy: Applying "Total Archives"', *Archivaria,* no. 30, Summer 1990, pp. 104–109.

10.   *Archives & Manuscripts: Arrangement & Description,* Basic Manual Series, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 1977, p. 3.

11.   Gracy, *Archives & Manuscripts: Arrangement & Description,* p. 3.

12.   Years ago, when I worked as a manuscripts curator, I found many examples of correspondence describing the organisation of personal papers reflecting the same care in organisation and management as that accorded business and organisational records. Now I wished I had studied this matter more closely, and it remains part of the larger agenda for studying the history of records and recordkeeping. For my most recent description of this need, including references to personal recordkeeping, see my 'Other Atlantic States: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, and South Carolina', in *Historical Consciousness in the Early Republic: The Origins of State Historical Societies, Museums, and Collectors, 1791-1861,* ed. H. G. Jones, North Caroliniana Society, Inc. and North Carolina Collection, Chapel Hill, 1995, pp. 102–124.

13.   We now have a new publishing venture in self-help books to guide one in personal recordkeeping such as Barbara Hemphill, *Taming the Paper Tiger: Organizing the Paper in Your Life* (1992); Ann E. Kruse, *Keeping Track: An Organizer for Your Legal, Business and Personal Records* (1991); and Stephanie Culp, *Conquering the Paper Pile-Up* (1990). The advice given in these volumes certainly parallel that given in textbooks designed for use by institutional records managers.

14.   You can read any number of new books and essays about this, but if you want to start somewhere, try William J. Mitchell, *City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn,* MIT Press, Cambridge, 1995.

15.   Hilary Jenkinson, *Manual of Archive Administration,* 2nd ed., Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., Ltd, London, 1966, p. 68. The degree of his conviction can be seen in this statement: 'The Archivist, dealing with loose papers, may presently . . . . fasten them

together or he may leave them loose: but whichever he does future generations will require a distinction between these papers and those which were found filed or fastened together; because the fact that not the Archivist but the original administration bracketed documents together in this way may be of extreme significance. It follows that there should be an absolute Rule that *no original filing or binding may be interfered with in any way*' (p. 88).

16. Terry Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 2, November 1994, pp. 300–328.

17. See James M. O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', *The American Archivist*, vol. 56, Spring 1993, pp. 234–255.

18. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is A Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, is as good an orientation to such matters as one can find.

19. W. Boyd Rayward, 'Electronic Information and the Functional Integration of Libraries, Museums, and Archives', in *Electronic Information Resources and Historians: European Perspectives*, eds Seamus Ross and Edward Higgs, Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, St. Katharinen, 1993, pp. 227–43 (quotation p. 233).

20. Michael Buckland, *Information and Information Systems*, Praeger, New York, 1991, p. 93.

21. *Information and Information Systems*, p. 57.

22. Mark Brogan, 'Regulation and the Market: A Micro-Economic Analysis of Strategies for Electronic Archives Management', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 2, November 1994, pp. 384–94.

23. I have tried to describe this in my 'The Archival Documentation Strategy: A Brief Intellectual History, 1984–1994 and Practical Description', *Janus*, 1995.2, pp. 76–93.

24. David Roberts, 'Defining Electronic Records, Documents and Data', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 1, May 1994, p. 18.

25. See, for example, Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion; Psychological Perspectives*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994; John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds), *The Cultures of Collecting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1994; and Phyllis Mauch Messenger (ed.), *The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property: Whose Culture? Whose Property?* University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1989.

26. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *On the Eve of the Millennium: The Future of Democracy Through an Age of Unreason*, Free Press, New York, 1994, pp. 111–112.

27. Lester J. Cappon, 'Historical Manuscripts as Archives: Some Definitions and Their Application', *The American Archivist*, vol. 19, April 1956, p. 103.

28. T. R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1965.

29. Archival Descriptive Standards, *Toward Descriptive Standards*, Bureau of Canadian Archivists, Ottawa, December 1995, pp. 63–64.

30. For the best debate on the idea of metadata see the three essays in the Spring 1995 issue of *Archivaria* by David Wallace, Heather MacNeil, and Wendy Duff (especially that by Duff).

31. See her 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science', published in six parts starting in *Archivaria*, vol. 28, Summer 1989.