2016 Business Archives Colloquium: Small Group Discussions on Object Care

Topics of Discussion

Acquisition, Accessioning and Deaccessioning

Specific Guidelines for Food and Beverage Collections

Storage, Handling and Preservation

Storage and Handling for Artwork

Storage and Handling for Consumer Products and Packaging

Storage and Handling for Cosmetics

Storage and Handling for Food and Beverage Collections

Storage and Handling for Large and/or Mechanical Devices

Storage and Handling for Props

Storage and Handling for Technology and Electronics

Storage and Handling for Textiles and Fashion

User Access, Security and Loans

User Access

Loans

Security

Outreach

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Acquisition, Accessioning and Deaccessioning

- Legal/ litigation purposes is the most commonly cited reason for keeping 3-D objects.
- Keep prototypes and mockups, about the decision making, as a way of knowing what may or could happen, sometimes the only remaining piece to show the company thought of doing something different
- Trust and care agreements can be used with items in our care, but not yet gifted to the institution
- Archivists should also advise when to call in an appraiser or conservator; typically an archivist will not have the specialized expertise
- Staying informed on company objectives and "knowing what to keep" is critical—there is both an art and a science to the decision making process.
- Many repositories do not keep licensed products – they are often out of scope, unless the purpose of your repository is specifically for licensed products.
- Condition reporting should be part of the process for an accessioning workflow for any archives that regularly accessions general classes of machines and/or objects.
- If dealing with variations, you must first decide if you want 1 of everything (every version, color, variation), or just the main product lines? Decide scope and how specific/broad we want it to be.
- Try to acquire empty packaging or flats from the manufacturing line. In some cases, some repositories only receive the label when the packaging is plastic. Have a written process / order in place to receive them. This is especially a large concern for consumer products, as batteries and unwanted liquids can be extremely corrosive.
- De-centralized processes is another big concern for repositories dealing with multiple brands, such as P&G. It can be difficult to write a policy or tap into a system when products come from multiple sources.
- Not all archival repositories are responsible for all objects. This is especially true for artwork. Sometimes, only "historic" art will fall under the custody of the archives, which can be a challenge as that can be subjective (what is the cut off?) and proper record keeping becomes essential.
- At what point is an item so damaged that you deaccession it from the collection because nothing can be done with it? It's too fragile or no longer fits the mission statement. Making sure collection policy states that an object can be deaccessioned is beyond repair. This is especially important if your repository becomes a place of abandoned property.
- Donation to a local museum is an acceptable practice, especially if the artwork or object no longer fits the mission of the institution.

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Specific Guidelines for Food and Beverage Collections:

- Packaging
    - Packaging should be kept and food emptied when possible.
    - Care should be taken when removing food products from their original containers to preserve as much of the packaging as possible for display and informational purposes.
    - Intact packaging and original labels can provide important evidentiary product information and can be requested by company legal, public relations and marketing departments.
    - Collect multiple copies of unused labels along with original packages.
        - Multiple copies are especially helpful if materials are borrowed by other departments (e.g. legal, public relations or marketing) and they are not returned or damaged.
- Food & Beverages
    - If food a product is visible in the packaging, then the food should also be retained.
        - Example: glass jars containing jams or jellies.
        - The decision to keep the product in the packaging should be based upon the use, exhibit and documentation needs of the organization.
    - Generally samples of food and beverages are often not necessary to provide evidentiary value of formulas or recipes.
    - Collections of spirits are often retained and can have high monetary value.

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Storage, Handling and Preservation

- Factor in your budget (what can you afford, what is the value of the item)
- Make best decision for storage and then monitor storage over periods of time to adjust to changing conservation standards, fiscals changes within institution, see what is working and what is not
- Think of what the item was made of, how it was meant to be used, then decide on the approach that makes the least damage down the road, such as 100 years.
- Find local experts, especially on unusual products – you can't be a knowledge expert on everything. Use their expertise to know how to care for these items.
- While a few repositories have a dedicated internal employee or expert who can care for these objects, in most cases, archivists tend to work with external contractors who are experts in the field of object care and/or a particular kind of machinery.
- Have to stay aware of original materials and then make best decision possible for storage
- If you have damage, be sure to note the damage in your collection management database or records
- No time to go around dusting things. Try to concentrate on your overall environment, keep air moving to keep items free of dust.
- Stable humidity very important.
- Try to keep your floors clean.
- Use boxes and dividers to store smaller items
- Store artifacts in Hollinger boxes. If box gets moved, will "solid pack" tissue paper around all artifacts to prevent damage.
- Seminar by IPI HVAC guy who is also an archivist is a great class, also mention of the DP calculator

Storage and Handling for Artwork

- It's crucial to stay in touch with facilities or local groups. A local facilities team should know not to touch/ move art without consulting the archives.
- Cleaning is typically the most common issue that archivists deal with artwork, it is recommended to engage a professional before attempting any DIY cleaning.
- Portrait art should typically be hung, or stored upright. Solutions include:
- A chain-link fence on which to hang portraits
- Create a base of carpet affixed to 2 x 4s on which portraits can be stored upright, with cardboard to separate
- Racks can be purchased to hang or store portraits upright
- Large pieces of archival board can be used to separate portraits if they cannot be hung.

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- Lack of suitable storage remains a key issues for archives dealing with art and artifact. Local vendors can be paid for storage, but requires close inspection to ensure security and environmental specs meet one's expectations.
- If possible, crating for artwork should be done in-house to avoid prohibitive costs.
- Example was given by Pixar, who has large volumes of concept art from their films, in media ranging from markers to pencil to pastels. They create custom mattes that allow art to be stacked safely, but some of this art was never meant to be matted, creating challenges.

Storage and Handling for Consumer Products & Packaging

- Aerosol cans – Greg (P&G) and Sarah (Amway) have both conducted product removal projects and have had the product removed from their aerosol products. These are under pressure and flammable and should be high priority to empty. Sarah (Amway) uses an internal hazardous waste removal department and Greg (P&G) uses an external company (Clean Harbors).
- Always ensure the people/company removing the product knows the value of the packaging and handles items with care. This may involve observing them and some education.
    - Often they can puncture a small hole in the bottom of the can or by the nozzle so it isn't noticeable.
- Product removal is often a case by case basis. chemicals may change properties and become dangerous over time, or may spill. Many described the need to keep some items that are colored and in a clear container. Greg (P&G) often keeps 1 laundry detergent with detergent still in packaging. Still has the first Tide (still smells and is the same blue!). May also decide to keep some colored mouthwash or perfume. Ultimately depends on the value the actual product has. Will the actual product be needed for a litigation? Will R&D want to test it after a period of time? Will it be on display? If keeping, recommended to maybe keep in a ziplock bag so it does not leak or damage other packaging.
- Libby (Disney) described example of bubble bath, that the actual bubble bath has no value – since it was contract manufactured for Disney, they only care about the packaging of the bottle.
- Beer/Soda: Archivists for large breweries (and Coca-Cola) will often keep the caps on glass and plastic bottles with the beverage still inside. The Plastic will often collapse over time. Beer/soda cans need to be emptied, as they can often leak at the bottom or the seams may split. Empty through a hold in the bottom, or by drinking normally! Just keep the pull tab on!
- Plastic containers often collapse on themselves. There is no perfect solution, since plastic is not meant to exist forever and will break down over time. Keeping out of light and temperature fluctuations will help slow this down. Also discussed ideas to fill the bottle with water or packing material to help?
- Paint – Disney keeps paint chips that match the paints used on rides. Do not recommend keeping actual paint. Disney also has all of the formulas/codes for the paint, which is more valuable, since the paint chips could change over time.
- Liquids (detergent) and aerosols… use Clean Harbors vendor to empty and dispose of product (they have a process where the product comes in, they set it on a specific box/section, Clean Harbors stops in regularly to take the products, empty them without damage to packaging, and return the packaging to be processed into the archives) -- make sure to train person emptying product so they don't destroy the historical packaging.

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    - http://www.cleanharbors.com/browse_by_service/waste_disposal_and_recycling/
- Also use heavy duty sealed plastic baggies if they need to keep the product completely intact (like cosmetics, need to show color, first product ever, clear containers, toothpaste, mouthwash, etc.)
    - Flammable? Empty nail polish and perfumes
- Keeps product upright, although takes up more space in box. Puts jars, bottles, cans in artifact trays.
  - Winthrop basic protocol:
    - Thank determining whether the label, packaging, and/or container needed to be retained
    - photographing the item and capturing data on product name, place of manufacture if indicated, dimensions, material, date if known,
    - if only the label was required, carefully removing it if possible and discarding the container
    - emptying all content if the container and/or other packaging was to be retained
    - scraping and/or wiping out remnants of content and rinsing out and/or carefully wiping off with wet cloths whatever content remained while still protecting the containers, lids (if applicable) and labels
    - air- or cloth-drying the containers
    - filling containers that we thought might collapse with stainless-steel or plastic beads or 'stuffing' paper packaging that could not be broken down and stored flat with crumpled acid free tissue or paper
    - tagging using cotton string or tape and acid free labels
    - wrapping and/or placing the objects in acid free paper and boxes and storing flattened labels and packaging in sleeves and/or folders and boxes.

Storage and Handling for Cosmetics

- Because our Company's product development teams are interested in the contents (lipstick shapes, colors, consistencies) of the products inside the packaging we keep all of our products filled rather than emptying them out. As these are not food items there is no concern with pests, also the nature of some of the products, like fragrance bottles which are sealed shut, makes it necessary to keep them filled. Also it would consume too much time to empty out our treatment products (creams & lotions) that we do not open. Gloves are used at all times when handling products to avoid fingerprints.
- All our packaging/products are contained in clear plastic bins (bottles stored vertically) in various sizes which sit on steel shelving. We store each brand together, and each brand is divided by treatment, makeup and fragrance which are stored in bins together chronologically. We plan on rehousing smaller items like lipsticks and other makeup items into modular artifact boxes with clear lids. We have housed our compacts this way and it makes browsing the collection much easier and with less handling of the objects.

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Storage and Handling for Food and Beverage Collections

- Food products and the packaging that contains them will degrade over time even when stored in temperature and light controlled environments.
    - Liquids will evaporate, liquids containing alcohol or spirits may have a longer shelf-life.
    - Seals on canned food products will fail.
- Storage
    - Stacks and storage areas containing food and beverage collections should have surfaces that can accommodate spills (e.g. carpet should not be used).
    - Food and beverage products should be stored separately from other collection materials (paper, paintings, etc.) that could potentially be damaged by a spill and/or pests.
    - Materials should be wrapped or sealed in bags to prevent spills.
        - If wrapping products, label item with a photo and description for easy identification.
            - It is best to double-bag products.
    - Collections should be checked for evidence of pests frequently.
- Preservation
    - Use photographs to preserve information and appearance of the product in its packaging prior to removal or storage.
    - Retaining multiple copies of labels and products is key to ensuring information is not lost from degraded packages or spills.
    - Explore alternate methods, such as 3D printing, to create surrogates for display and/or handling that will reduce wear and degradation of original items.

Storage and Handling for Large and/or Mechanical Devices

- A repository dealing with large and/or heavy machinery needs to consider the impact of weight and floor load bearing capacity. This may require close partnership with your facility staff as you bring in new objects.
- Both mechanical and other large objects are likely to combine materials ranging from metals to organics (rubber, etc). Replacement of organics may be necessary.
- Any issue, such as rust and corrosion, should be assessed for anything that is advancing and be addressed first.
- Handling requirements should be developed for all large, heavy and/or mechanical objects. For example, one may need to ensure that a minimum number of people move a particularly heavy object, use required moving equipment, or wear appropriate clothing, such as steel-toed shoes.
- Any mechanical device must also include a discussion on fluids and lubricants, this may include gasoline, other fuels, coolants, chemicals, and so on. Work with your facilities or environmental

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team to determine any codes that must be followed, including rules for disposal. Per fire code or environmental regulation, one may need to properly dispose of this material.

Storage and Handling for Props

- Props not made to last, only made for production, but we try to preserve for as long as possible
- Size, shape and weight are not uniform and materials range from piece to piece and even within 1 piece
- Have to stay cognitive of original materials and then make best decision possible for storage
  Ex: Owl from Psycho originally preserved in arsenic, now crated to isolate from other collections
  Ex: Indian Costumes are hand beaded with feathers
- Make best decision for storage and then monitor storage over periods of time to adjust to changing conservation standards, fiscals changes within institution, see what is working and what is not.
- Create barriers /layers of non-archival materials in dead space using archival blockers to save on costs.

Storage and Handling for Technology and Electronics

- Take the batteries out if you can (sometimes you can't, such as laptops)
- Clean the outside once you receive an object, but don't worry about the insides. You can accidentally knock something loose if you try to clean the insides (around wires, etc)
- Antistatic sheets are not required—really kept for display purposes only
- Don't plug it in if you don't know what it will do!
- Know your environmental risks. Are there fluids inside (hydrogen, mercury, oil?)
- Don't place a GPS magnet on a steel shelf—unless you don't want to ever remove it, ever again
- Segregate the magnets, and do not store near your compute
- Try to keep components and accessories for larger items together – cords, remotes, cards, and so on. If you must physically separate your materials, make sure you have excellent intellectual control. What card goes with what device? Easy to get lost. Don't want a box of cords.

Storage and Handling for Textiles and Fashion

- Suggestion to put tissue around a metal item that is beginning to rust (acid free, non buffered) being sure to change it out occasionally, especially as you monitor your collections, see a problem, put it on display, etc.
- Storage flat vs, hung depends on how the garment was constructed and its condition.
- Best to hang with padded hangers, but some are too delicate and flimsy to hang
- Keep similar type "trouble" collections stored near each other, when check on them periodically survey what you need to store
- Many places don't have space to hang their textiles

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- Decide how many objects should be stored in that same container
- Converse and Coke never wash their textiles
- Coke – flat file storage no washing, padding on arms
- Archdiocese of Atlanta sprays dirty football uniform with a spray bottle of cheap vodka
- NYC marathon question of whether or not to wash dirty marathon T shirts recommendation to deep freeze or decide should be preserved 'as is' or clean
- If decide to use a mannequin, can take 2 days to get this ready. Forms are much easier to work with.

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User Access, Security and Loans

User Access

- No one is allowed free access to browse the collection
- Access needs will depend on the preferences, information needs and functions of an organization.
    - A digital surrogate of a product or packaging materials, such as a photo or scan, can be acceptable for general information requests.
    - Some departments will require the original product package in requests to the archives.
        - Legal departments require the original product materials because important manufacturing codes and information are recorded in product labels.
        - Digital surrogates are not acceptable sources for legal documentations since they can be altered.
        - Retaining multiple copies of product materials (mentioned previously) ensures that a copy is still accessible in the archives in the event an original is loaned for legal purposes.
    - **Digital asset management systems (DAMS)** can used to deliver content to users in the organization.
        - Organization policies can be used to determine employee accessibility and permissible usage of archival materials.
        - Watermarks can be used on images to market or place boundaries on usage of archival images.
        - Some organizations require all requests to undergo a legal vetting process before materials are approved for usage.
        - Artifact photo collections can be useful, but time consuming to create. Some are open only to archival staff, others are open to employees to browse.
        - A photo can tell a lot, especially for larger objects. Sometimes people only want the image, no need to browse, physically handle the items.
        - Some repositories borrow from private collectors – take photos of items just as a record, but a lot of people don't like to do this, and some collectors can be resistant.
        - Partner with photo studio or professional photographer, but that costs $$ Then one can refer people to the nice catalog
        - Interns can also be useful for this project if you lack money for a professional photo shoot

- A few repositories are looking at 3D scanning / imaging of objects to provide access and digital record of 3d objects
    - require that all markings have to be reversible

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- Many repositories get things working for legal reasons only, and only those items that were mass produced, like a PC, or a common item.
- One of the early questions to address is whether or not one wants a "working" object to be operational. If yes, there are legal considerations, such as title, transportation laws, safety, that must be addressed with your legal partners.
- If your leadership requires the machine runs, retrofit may be required, which implies cost. Be sure to communicate this and include within your yearly budget.
- Retrofitting the machine to meet current codes or safety standards, such as electricity, will require a close partnership with your facilities team or an external specialist.
- Some people provided open houses and tours to internal clients and agency partners, others have no visitors. 1 employee must always be present.
- Appointments often must be made to view products. When products are needed for photo shoots or meetings, an archivist delivers and stays on site to handle the products
- One group discussed access given to scholars of assets that are fragile and not on display for long periods of time, or ever
    - strong handling guidelines before access
    - require staff monitoring of access granted
- Food and beverage collections also face the challenge of justifying a collection that may not be accessible or able to be displayed. The materials, however, need to be preserved and retained for legal purposes.

Security

- Many repositories rely on security and facilities to advise of issues on display internally. Many archivists do try and provide helpful guidance to facility staff on artwork or archives, such as practical advice on lighting
- Monitoring that does take place is typically of high value items, that are easily accessible (within the same building), and is done infrequently. Some repositories ask for updates from facilities staff located in other buildings/ geographical locations.
- Monitoring art on display is a challenge. Many times, the art is old and in poor quality frames/mounts, so monitoring does not take place
- Many repositories keep their most rare objects in locked displays within the Archives, and have a policy that they cannot leave the archives for photo shoots, meetings etc.
- Not all repositories are able to insure their items, due to the expense of appraisal. In many cases, they are "self-insured" by the institution.

Loans

- Some provide objects on loan to museums and movie sets, others never do. Depends on your risk tolerance
- One group discussed levels of loan agreements for internal vs external clients
    - Require facility reports beforehand and temp/humidity reports at various intervals of loan period.

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    - Require barcodes to create a "fear" to the requestors
    - have in writing that requestor is fully responsible for damage repair/replacement
    - legal department involvement in the process of loan agreements or when the worst happens
- If loaning items needing conservation treatment, try to work in agreement to have client pay for the work beforehand
- High value items get more care during packing and moving. In many cases, such as Converse, one must come to the archives to see the materials
- Most repositories mail things by UPS/ Fed Ex for most items, very valuable things get custom made containers

Outreach

- Many archives promote the rarity of their items – brand changes over time, showing the transformation of a company. Find the thread that connects the moments even if not obvious
- Learn from failure, from products that didn't work. Failed product displays, internal only.
- Nostalgia is big. Employee engagement high, 'cool and retro'. In the right place, such as an old movie and so on, can have a need for antique items.
- Collector Clubs can create issues during visits – demand for materials, theft, "don't touch," but can be a form of outreach
- Some can't put anything out publically – if you voluntarily put out an image of an artifact (8 year old Johnny riding a tractor) even if vintage, company becomes liable if someone becomes injured/ sues
- One group discussed fan culture for some corporate archives, particularly Disney, Coca-Cola, and Gillette (P&G). Fans will often keep an entire series of products and track changes in designs, etc., and can be a great educational resource for archivists! Employees and families are also passionate people that are a great resource. Good outreach to make fans/customers and employees aware there is a safe place for their collections when they are ready to pass on their products/objects/artwork, etc. If they want to keep, suggest asking if they could will them to the corporate archives so they don't get lost. Make them feel good about their donations.
- Coca-Cola and Amway both reach out to retirees. Coca-Cola participates in the retiree holiday party with an Archives display, gets them talking about the history, and encourages them to donate as well. Amway makes an appearance at their retiree picnic with a brief mention, donates Archives calendars to their raffle, hands out brochures, talks to employees. At this year's picnic, Sarah met the man who started the AV department at Amway and has a lot of video footage he's willing to donate to the Archives if they don't have it!

    - Which then started to raise concerns about Intellectual Property and employees taking their work home to keep instead of the records and corporate assets staying with the company to make their way to the Archives. This is a common problem with most companies, and reaching out to retirees and maintaining those relationships is the best the Archives can do in order to try to obtain those assets.