

The Archives Conference as a Venue for Professional Communication: Trends and Opportunities in Session Topics

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Abstract: As professionals we have a responsibility to keep current on issues within our field and to contribute to the development of the profession. A traditional area for professional communication is participation in professional conferences. This study analyzes conference programs from national and regional archives organizations with reference to the domains identified in the Academy of Certified Archivists' Role Delineation Statement.

A survey of conference programs shows trends in session topics. Some topics are perennial, some are popular for a time and then ebb, and some functional areas are largely neglected. The subjects represented in conference programs may be influenced by a number of factors including the meeting theme, current "hot" topics, technological developments, and recent events. On the flip side, some areas may receive less attention because they are less well suited to discussion in the conference presentation format or because they are perceived as lacking broad appeal. Conclusions are drawn about how well the totality of the archival enterprise is represented, and suggestions are offered for areas that would benefit from increased discussion at professional meetings.

About the author:

Melissa Gottwald has been the archivist for the Aviation Safety and Security Archives at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University since 2008. She previously held positions at Iowa State University, New Mexico State University, and Oberlin College. Her research interests include archives history and the profession, organizational records, and archival management issues. A member of SAA, the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA), and the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC), she serves on the SSA Professional Development Committee and is an associate editor for the MAC newsletter.