Archives is the new pink

A content analysis of national and regional archives conference presentation topics

Ashley Todd-Diaz and Alex H. Poole
SAA Research Forum, 2023
Literature review

RQ: how aligned are topics addressed at national and regional meetings with introduction to archives syllabi (namely readings and weekly topics) and GPAS (2016)?

Relevant literature:

Poole, Alex H., and Ashley Todd-Diaz, "‘Sometime I Feel Like They Hate Us’: The Society of American Archivists and Graduate Archival Education," *The American Archivist* 86, no 1 (2023): 79-116. DOI: 10.17723/2327-9702-86.1.79

Poole, Alex H., and Ashley Todd-Diaz, "’I’m not a very good visionary’: Challenge and Change in 21st Century North American Graduate Archival Education," *Archival Science* 22 (2022): 585-616. DOI: 10.1007/s10502-022-09389-0

Methodology

+ Content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013) of national and regional conference papers, presentations, and panels
  + SAA, NEA, MARAC, MAC, SSA, NWA
  + Reviewed conference websites and/or programs from 2018-2021
+ Iterative coding of topics
+ Comparison with Introduction to Archives syllabi and readings and GPAS (2016) to examine alignment
Regional conferences

NWA (n=64)
- Public history
- Project management
- Digital collections/archives
- Community engagement
- AV Collections
- Technology
- Profession
- Underrepresented voices
- Indigenous collections

NEA (n=57)
- Management
- Digital preservation
- Description
- DEI
- Access
- Ethics
- Preservation
- Collaboration

SSA (n=63)
- Collaboration
- Profession
- Digital collections/archives
- Metadata
- Management
- Underrepresented voices
- Outreach

MAC (n=77)
- Technology
- Project management
- DEI
- Public history
- Access
- Collaboration
- Profession
- Outreach
- Instruction
- Underrepresented voices

MARAC (n=119)
- Processing
- Community engagement
- AV Collections
- Digital preservation
- DEI
- Access
- Collection development
- Underrepresented voices
- Collaboration
- Outreach
- Profession
Conference Presentation Topics (SAA, n=249)

- Transparency: 6
- Processing: 6
- Preservation: 6
- Instruction: 6
- Records management: 7
- Policy: 7
- Technology: 8
- Community archives: 10
- Collaboration: 10
- Description: 11
- Access: 11
- Profession: 15
- Outreach: 16
- Underrepresented voices: 20
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference Presentations Topics (National and Regional, n=630)</th>
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Weekly topics
(38 syllabi)
+ Nature of Records and Archives: 38/38
+ Arrangement and Description: 37/38
+ Reference and Access: 34/38
+ Selection, Appraisal, Acquisition: 32/38
+ Presivation: 29/38
+ History of Archives and the Archives Profession: 26/38
+ Ethics and Values: 23/38
+ DEIA/Social Justice: 21/38
+ Management and Administration: 15/38
+ Outreach, Instruction, Advocacy: 14/38

Readings by GPAS category
(1,030 unique readings)
• DEIA/Social Justice: 130
• Nature of Records and Archives: 123
• Arrangement and Description: 95
• Reference and Access: 80
• Digital Materials Management: 77
• Selection, Appraisal, Acquisition: 75
• History of Archives and the Archives Profession: 61
• Outreach, Instruction, and Advocacy: 56
• Ethics and Values: 41
• Preservation: 38
Discussion

- Topics differ slightly across regional venues
- National topics include most primary archival functions
  - Access and description align with the top two functions identified by A*CENSUS II respondents
- Trends emerge across all venues (e.g., under-represented voices, outreach, state of the profession)
- Strong presence of DEI-related topics reinforces A*CENSUS II's findings that this is a profession-wide goal
- Pandemic was a catalyst to shift professional discussions
- Conference topics and Introduction to Archives syllabi are slightly misaligned
Thank you!