

Archivists' Personal Collecting Behaviors and Their Impact on Professional Archival Practice

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Abstract

Building upon the work of other information scholars who explore personal collecting behavior as a routine human activity (Dillon 2019, Krtalić et al 2021), this research expands the notion of personal collecting behavior to include intergenerational habits as an influence on one's collecting preferences. Using survey responses as well as individual interviews with archival studies students and current and former archival practitioners, this research explores the relationship between archivists' personal collecting behaviors and how they intersect with, or diverge from, those of their families. I attempt to understand whether family collecting practices influence one's decision to enter the archival profession. Further, I argue it's important for the archival field to better understand archival practitioners' personal relationships with "stuff," as these attitudes carry over into professional work settings, impacting everyday archival practice.

About the author

Alyssa Davis is a recent MLIS graduate from the University of California, Los Angeles with a focus on archival studies and informatics. During her time at UCLA, she served as the chair of the Student Governing Board for the Department of Information Studies and also led the student chapter of the Society of California Archivists (SCA). In the latter role she coordinated archival tours at local institutions such as the Huntington Library and the Autry Museum of the American West, participated in SCA's Annual General Meeting and hosted a panel discussion with alumni from the program. She is currently an intern with the National Parks Service, assisting in stewarding Yellowstone's digital archival material. Her main research interests include personal and intergenerational collecting behaviors, informal archival communities, and the impacts of archival practices on the environment. She hopes to explore these interests further with future work in the field in either a nonprofit or community archives context.