

# Reappraising "Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology"

**BETHANY ANDERSON, POLINA E. ILIEVA, and JORDON STEELE**

In 1985, Joan K. Haas, Helen Willa Samuels, and Barbara Trippel Simmons published authoritative guidelines for archivists working with science and technology records. *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide* was at the time a much-needed volume for archivists grappling with the exponential rate at which postwar science generated records of its activities. The Guide built on decades of work by archivists to develop appraisal guidelines for twentieth-century science's voluminous records, including the work and final report of the Joint Committee on Archives of Science and Technology (JCAST). However, the Guide sought to be broader in scope by taking into account personal and professional activities, the administration of science, and research and development in both academia and industry. It also sought to instill in archivists the importance of identifying and giving critical thought to the functions and activities resulting from scientific research and processes, linking it to broader theoretical appraisal discussions about functional analysis and documentation strategy associated with Samuels's work.

For decades the Guide has been a mainstay for archivists given its clear and comprehensive counsel. Yet the scientific enterprise has evolved in significant ways since 1985, including the emergence and evolution of big (digital) data, the open science movement, data management, citizen science, and #sciencetwitter and scientific exchange on social media. These changes have raised new questions for archivists about what to keep and what not to keep of contemporary science. Representing three distinct types of institutions that manage science and technology records—a research center, a health sciences university, and a science-intensive land-grant university—the presenters discuss “reappraising” the Guide in light of these changes and using a gap analysis to identify new directions and ways to build on this critical work in the twenty-first century.

## **About the authors:**

**Bethany Anderson** is the Natural and Applied Sciences Archivist and Assistant Professor in the University Archives at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In her research, she draws on anthropology, history of science, archival studies, and feminist theory to explore scientific archives, women and gender in STEM, computational archival science, and oral history. She holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Michigan, an MA in Near Eastern Art and Archaeology from the University of Chicago, and an MS in Information Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Bethany serves as joint Editor-in-Chief of *Comma*, the journal of the International Council on Archives, and as Co-Editor for the Archival Futures Series, which is co-published by the Society of American Archivists and the American Library Association. She previously served as Reviews Editor for *American Archivist*. Her published

work has appeared in *Archivaria*, *American Archivist*, *Journal of Open Humanities Data*, *Isis: A Journal of the History of Science Society*, and *Collections: A Journal of Archives and Museum Professionals*.

**Polina E. Ilieva** is an Associate University Librarian for Collections, UCSF Archivist, and an Assistant Professor with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco. Polina serves as a PI for several collaborative multi-institutional grant projects funded by the National Archives, National Endowment for Humanities, National Library of Medicine that support expansion and digitization of holdings related to the history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and women scientists. Polina partners with community health organizations in California on issues related to records' preservation with the goal of creating a more inclusive and equitable historical record. She is active in several groups working on preservation and access to historical patient records and interested in issues related to appraisal of contemporary scientific records.

**Jordon Steele** is Archivist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, where he oversees the acquisition, management and delivery of the historical records of APL. He previously served as University Archivist at Johns Hopkins University and Archivist at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Jordon's work, interests, and skills include archives administration, program oversight, human resources management, collection development, strategic planning, policy creation, grant writing, and donor relations. Jordon has a B.A. in English from Davidson College and an M.S. in Library Science from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.