The State of Reappraisal & Deaccessioning in Archives

How does the archival field use reappraisal and deaccessioning (R&D) as collections management tools? Marcella Huggard (mdwiget@gmail.com) and Laura Jackson (laura.uglean@gmail.com) conducted a survey to find out.

**Purpose**
- To obtain aggregated, comprehensive data
- Which institution types R&D? Which don’t?
- Is R&D accepted practice?
- Do archivists use the SAA Guidelines?
- How do institutions R&D?

**Methods**
- Survey ran March 10-April 22, 2017
- Qualtrics platform: skip logic and branching used, allowing participants to answer only relevant questions & reduce survey fatigue
- 489 responses recorded by Qualtrics--329 completed responses (67% completion rate)

**Top Reasons to R&D**
1. Found out-of-scope materials: 87%
2. Create collections storage space: 60%
3. Changes in collecting policies/focuses: 52%
4. Assess/prioritize backlogs: 27%
5. Preservation issues: 15%

**Top Reasons Not to R&D**
1. No need to do so: 47%
2. Not enough time: 42%
3. No policy or authority: 27%
4. Other: 21%
5. Fear of bad PR/donor relations: 17%

**Does Your Institution R&D?**

**Further Research:**
- Lack of transparency
- Making decisions individually
- Ad hoc vs. systematic reappraisal
- Lack of follow-up
- R&D of born-digital materials
- Weeding vs. deaccessioning
- SAA guidelines not being used

**Response Demographics**

**Location**
- 42% academic
- 15% government
- 11.5% museum or local historical society
- 8% public library
- 7.5% religious
- 4% corporate
- 8% misc./other

**Size**
- 10K-50K if (24%)
- 1K-10K if (42%)
- >1K if (13%)
- 50K+ if (13%)
- Unknown (7%)

**Time**
- 0-25 years acquiring (24%)
- 26-75 years (24%)
- 76-150 years (5%)
- 150+ years (2%)

**Negative Effects**
- 89% of respondents do NOT publicize that they deaccessioned

**What Happens to Deaccessioned Material?**
- Transfer to another (22)
- Transfer to another institution (17)
- Sold (12)
- Return to donor (12)
- Destroyed (10)
- Other (5)

43% of respondents do NOT use the SAA guidelines