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The Records Manager

The Newsletter for the Society of American
Archivists Records Management Roundtable
Lorette S.J. Weldon, Editor



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I hope everyone is settling in after the Annual Meeting in Austin. I am trying to settle in as the new chair of the Records Management Roundtable. Before I continue, I want to thank my predecessor Russell James, who is now serving as immediate past chair, for all of his hard work. Russell transformed the RMRT from a small sleepy roundtable into one of the most active roundtables in SAA. We now boast a membership of 552. Thank you Russell. Strong leadership has been one element of the RMRT success; a second component has been strong volunteers. So, I am looking for some strong volunteers to help work on one of three new committees. The first is the RMRT Travel Award Committee. The purpose of the Travel Award Committee is to raise monies to fund a competitive award that will assist RMRT members – with a demonstrated financial need – to defray some expenses to attend the RMRT meeting at the SAA Annual Meeting. To volunteer to help with this committee work, please contact me at mikecourtney1974@yahoo.com.

The second is an ad hoc committee: the Future of the Records Management Roundtable. In light of our significant growth, the time has come to consider converting the RMRT into a full-fledged section. This committee will consider the pros and cons of making such a move and make recommendations to the RMRT Steering Committee. The third is the Education Committee. While this is not a new committee, we do need volunteers to help to continue its work of developing resources for continuing records management education, including workshop proposals, electronic resource guides, and handbooks. To work with either the Future of the Records Management Roundtable or the Education Committee, please contact the Vice-Chair, Brad Houston, houstobn@uwm.edu. As new committees spring up, other committees are completing their missions. I am excited to report that the Resume Guide Committee has completed its work by creating: *Effective Resumes: Resources for Archivists and Records Managers*. I know this guide will be invaluable resource, not only for students who are just beginning their careers but also for seasoned records managers and archivists who just need to spruce up their resumes. Please tell your student workers and colleagues about the guide, which will be available on the RMRT website. Thank you Nancy Freeman, Larissa Woo, Holly Geist, Analisa Archer, Erin O'Meara, and Glenn Cook for all your hard work on this project, many people will benefit from your efforts.



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Report of the Joint RMRT/AMRT Working Group on Diversity in Archives and Records Management



Co-Coordinator
Debra Kimok

Co-Coordiators, Debra Kimok and Daria D'Arienzo, CA

This working group has completed its first charge, "To contact and network with persons with physical impairments in the archives and records management profession (archivists, records managers, and researchers/patrons), identify and study the challenges for them in same, and develop tools to assist them in overcoming these challenges." Members of the working group include archivists, records managers, librarians, and students. In July 2008 we conducted a survey through the Archives & Archivists listserv asking people about their experiences with archives employees and researchers with physical disabilities. We received 77 responses and followed up with interviews with nine respondents who agreed to do this.

As a result of our survey and research, we created two documents: "Recommendations for Working with Archives Researchers with Physical Disabilities" and "Recommendations for Working with Archives Employees with Physical Disabilities," both of which are available on the RMRT web pages. Two important resources that were very useful in creating our documents are Frank Serene's *Making Archives Accessible for People with Disabilities* (<http://www.archives.gov/publications/misc/making-archives-accessible.pdf>) and the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies' (ASCLA) "Library Accessibility-What You Need to Know" toolkit (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/ascla/asclaprotools/accessibilitytipsheets/default.cfm>). We were very pleased that Frank Serene joined some of the working group members to present the session, "Strategies for Accommodating People with Physical Impairments and Disabilities in Archives," at the SAA 2009 Annual Meeting in Austin. Co-Coordiators, Debra Kimok and Daria D'Arienzo and group members Avery Olmstead and Casey Greene also delivered papers during this presentation. Because Avery was unable to attend the annual meeting in person, he videotaped his presentation for the SAA audience. The session papers and Avery's video, as well as the group's recommendation documents are available on the RMRT web pages at <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/recmgmt/about/JointWGCharge.asp>.

The group is currently working on an Accessibility Forum to be held at SAA Annual 2010 in Washington, D.C.

Meet Your New 2009-2010 RMRT Officers



Michael Courtney Chair Archdiocese of New Orleans

I hold a bachelors degree in history from the Catholic University of America and two masters degrees from Loyola University, Chicago: one in history and the other in theology. Currently, I am a processing archivist/records analyst for the Archdiocese of New Orleans Archives. Before coming to New Orleans, I was employed full-time as a cataloging assistant at the Loyola University, Chicago School of Law Library. While at Loyola, I also worked part-time in archives, first at the Japanese American Service Committee of Chicago and later at the Archdiocese of Chicago. I first became active in the Records Management Roundtable by joining the Records Management Bibliography Working Group. In August 2008, I became a member of the Steering Committee. Since joining the Steering Committee, I have been involved in the Roundtable Records Retention Compliance Working Group and I was the chair of the RMRT Website Design Committee.



Brad Houston Vice Chair University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Brad Houston is the University Records Officer at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, serves on the steering committee of the Records Management Roundtable, and has presented on electronic records and records reformatting to professional groups such as the Southeast Wisconsin Archivists Group and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. He received a Bachelor of Arts with honors in History/Western European Studies from Grinnell College in 2004 and a joint Master of Arts in History and Master of Library Science with an Archives/Records Management specialization from the University of Maryland-College Park in 2007. Before coming to UW-Milwaukee, he worked as a records management intern at the Executive Office of the President, and performed archival and records management work at the Truman Presidential Library, National Geographic, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the University of Maryland Archives. As UWM Records Officer, he oversees and consults on records management functions and policy for over 200 offices and departments, including records inventory and scheduling, retention policies, records disposition, electronic records management, and long-term preservation of university records.



Katie Scanlan Committee Member University of Notre Dame

I began working at the Archives of the University of Notre Dame in July 2009. As Archivist for Records Management, I oversee the ongoing development, implementation, and management of the University's records management program. I encourage readers to actively participate in the RMRT by building new initiatives or by serving on current projects. The RMRT's accomplishments are directly proportional to the amount of time, talent and energy provided by its members. Together we can make great progress for the profession!

Meet Your New 2009-2010 RMRT Officers (cont.)



Katherine Goodwin Committee Member Iron Mountain

Katherine graduated in May 2009 from the University of Michigan School of Information with a specialization in Archives and Records Management. While at the University of Michigan, she was very active, serving as Information Manager for the School of Information Student Association (SISA), on the Curriculum Committee, and assisting the Faculty Search Committee in arranging meetings between faculty candidates and MSI students. She also worked at the University of Michigan Social Work Library and did research for Professor Paul Conway. On the national level, she is a member of SAA, involved with the RMRT Student Activities Committee, and was a recipient of the 2009 MER Conference Scholarship.



Laura Jackson Committee Member University of Wyoming

I am an Assistant Archivist in the processing department at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. In addition to my processing duties, I am the University Archivist and responsible for the University Archives and Records Management Program. In this capacity I help departments better manage their records by creating retention schedules and consulting on file organization and records preservation. I received my B.A. in art history from Colorado State University in 2004, and my M.L.I.S. from Simmons College in 2007. After library school I began working for the AHC on a grant to deaccession collections, and joined the AHC faculty in 2008.



Debra Kimok Committee Member SUNY College at Plattsburgh

Debra is a Senior Assistant Librarian at the State University of New York (SUNY) College at Plattsburgh. She received her B.A. in history from the same institution in 1997 and her M.L.S. from the University at Buffalo in 2000. She spends half of her time managing Feinberg Library's Special Collections and College Archives, and the other half working at the library reference desk, teaching a one-credit Information Management course, and on various special projects. In addition to the RMRT, Debra serves on several college, local, and regional committees and working groups. She has presented on digitization strategies, the use of video tutorials in online instruction, and most recently with the Joint Working Group on Diversity at SAA 2010.

Meet Your New 2009-2010 RMRT Officers (cont.)

**Tonia Sutherland****Committee Member****Bucknell University**

Tonia Sutherland is the Records Management Coordinator for Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA. With a BA in theater, history, and cultural studies from Hampshire College and an MLIS with an archives concentration from the University of Pittsburgh, Tonia has been working in libraries, archives, and cultural institutions for over twelve years. Prior to her position at Bucknell, Tonia served as University Archivist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst where, in addition to her archives and records management duties, she served as a member of the W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Group and took part in campus oral history initiatives. Tonia has been an SAA member since 2005, and in that time has served on the Steering Committee for the Preservation Section; as editor for Infinity, the Preservation Section newsletter; as a Key Contact for the Membership Committee; as an SAA Mentor; and most recently as part of the Web Committee for the Records Management Roundtable.

**Lorette Weldon****Newsletter Editor and Committee Member**

Lorette Weldon has been a librarian for over 15 years working in the government, private, and non-profit sectors. She holds MLS (Library Science) and BS (Information Systems Management) degrees from University of Maryland. She has managed various online databases for the National Institutes of Health, the Community Transportation Association of America, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Presently, Weldon is the SLA Maryland Chapter Project Archivist and the SAA RMRT Web Master. She was an online newsletter editor last year for the Board Professionals at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. For over five consecutive years, she was the newsletter editor for Shiloh Baptist Church's Alpha Circle. During the period of two years, Lorette has also created and moderated several education leadership webinars for boards and presidents of universities and colleges. She has written articles and spoken at conferences about working smarter through online tools.

COLUMN CONTINUES ON PAGE 6...

Congratulations

Congratulations to Elizabeth W. Adkins, CRM of Falls Creek, VA. She earned the Certified Records Managers designation by passing the part 6 examination.

Meet Your New 2009-2010 RMRT Officers (cont.)



Bruce Ambacher

Council Liaison

University of Maryland

I was given this liaison assignment because of my long interest and activity in the area of records scheduling and appraisal, especially in electronic records. I began work at the National Archives in 1976 in the relatively new electronic records custodial unit; the unit had written its first records schedule just six years earlier. My major responsibilities were scheduling and appraising electronic records. In 1980 I was one of the team leaders for the three year appraisal of the records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the largest scheduling and appraisal effort undertaken by the National Archives. I also was involved in several records management evaluations of federal agencies including the U.S. Courts and the Central Intelligence Executive Committee Agency. A second major area of records management activity has involved the development of standards for managing and preserving records. These include working on the development of the first version of General Records Schedule 20 for electronic records, NARA's first efforts at metadata standardization, serving as NARA's representative on the development of the Open Archival Information Systems Reference Model (ISO 14721), and co chairing the recent RLG-NARA task force that developed Trusted Repositories Audit and Certification (TRAC) released in January 2007. I have been teaching about archives and records management since 1984, first as an adjunct professor at George Mason University (1984- 2006) and the University of Maryland (2000-2006) and more recently as a Visiting Professor at the University of Maryland since my retirement from NARA in January 2007. Some of you may remember me from the Modern Archives Institute where I taught about electronic records for several years and served as co-director for three years. Over my career I also have tried to share what I have learned with the archival community and others through service. I have been the president of both MARAC and the National Archives Assembly, chaired or co-chaired SAA's Government Records Section, the 1988 Program Committee, and the 1995 Host Committee, and served on Membership, Appraisal and Acquisition, and the Posner Committee. I also have published about archives and records management in "non traditional" venues such as Of Significance, Photogrammetric Engineering and Remote Sensing, OAH Newsletter, and New Directions for Program Evaluation.

Special to the Editor: Are archives more than 'cheaper storage'?



Bruce Norman Smith
IM Analyst

Most staff and managers don't realize that when IT professionals talk about "archiving" they are primarily concerned about maintaining the speed of software applications on the active network. Archivists chuckle about this narrow use of the term "archiving" because it only addresses one aspect of the acquisition and storage process, and it neglects other processes for appraisal, arrangement, description, preservation and research assistance. However, as IT professionals continue to say "Yes, we archive your information" senior management may eventually contact your archivist to ask, "If the IT department is already archiving electronic content, and some of the business units are shipping boxes of paper files to Iron Mountain, how does the archives add value to our organization?"

Special to the Editor (cont.)

In order to resolve what may seem like overlapping efforts by different business units, senior management may recommend cost-benefit analyses to determine where the highest costs are and where the most benefit comes from. When done too quickly, these analyses may be informally based on corporate memories, common wisdom, organizational culture and trusted opinions. Unfortunately IT professionals and companies like Iron Mountain can have clear advantages when it comes to a "fast-tracked" informal cost-benefit analysis. The following examples are just a starting point:

- IT professionals already have licenses, training and processes in place to use the storage management systems needed for managing vast amounts distributed data.
- Iron Mountain is a for-profit corporation dedicated to records storage allowing it to turn its profits (2008 net income of \$82 million[1]) back into state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, processes and advertisements.

To overcome unfavourable stereotypes, Archivists must prepare in advance so they can demonstrate how archives add value to an organization's information holdings. This preparation may ensure that a cost-benefit analysis is made on a specific set of statements and proofs rather than informal opinions. These statements should show that archives are more than 'cheaper storage' because:

- ✓ Records Management methodologies organize active files by
 - Recommending File Plan categories which allow uniform access to documents across different media silos such as email folders, network folders, DVDs and paper files
 - Developing retention and disposition schedules which reduce risks when destroying information and make valuable information easier to find
- ✓ Acquisition policies and techniques
 - Create agreements that govern access to archival records to guarantee that sensitive and valuable information is handled in a respectful and legal manner
 - Help determine when inactive records should be transferred to an archive to prevent unnecessary expenditures resulting from the retrieval of files in storage
 - Maintain simple, centralized lists of what types of records are being acquired from what groups which enables access over time even as staff retire and change jobs
- ✓ Arrangement techniques allow
 - The reconstruction of business activities from masses of semi-structured files which puts records in context and makes them more useful for analysis
 - The identification of relationships between business activities at different points in time which allows organizations to evaluate their performance over time
- ✓ Appraisal methodologies
 - Identify the long-term value of records to ensure that archives acquire records that will provide a clear return on investment during future use
 - Identify organizational processes that generate overlapping or duplicate records in addition to reducing unnecessary storage costs this knowledge can also be used to improve active business processes
 - Evaluate interconnected organizational processes to separate less valuable draft material from valuable decisions which can reduce holdings and a companies environmental footprint

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RMRT is on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/recmgmt/>

Special to the Editor

- ✓ Standards for description
 - Are based on qualitative and quantitative research that demonstrates how different descriptive techniques can help different types of researchers
 - Improve search times by giving reliable search terms that can be used to sort and limit overwhelming search results returned from keyword searches
 - Allow researchers to quickly understand the context of records at the time of their creation which minimizes incorrect interpretations of previous events
- ✓ Client Service experience
 - Provides a feedback mechanism that informs and strengthens future acquisitions, appraisal decisions and descriptions
 - Gives archivists insight into the various issues that records are able to provide answers to thereby making them better advisors to senior managers
- ✓ Research skills
 - Allow archivists and records managers to streamline searches to support legal requests for the production of documents
 - Strengthen an organization's public representation when archivists assist authors, scholars, journalists and film makers in their research
- ✓ Professional archival theories
 - Have been continuously improved by archivists since the late 19th century and provide unified frameworks and strategies for managing large sets of records
 - Summarize best practices and lessons learned by professionals responsible for the management of records around the world

Experiences, theories, methods, techniques, processes and skills like those listed above are part of the 'value-add' that archives bring to their organizations. Archivists act as a liaison between management, records creators, administrators, IT professionals, legal advisors and researchers by providing a cross-cutting understanding of how records support different types of work in many different ways. Most importantly archivists are part of the team that prevents unsorted piles of data from obscuring the important information that may be hidden away on magnetic tapes and in boxes on warehouse shelves.

[1] Iron Mountain.(2009). *Annual Reports*. Retrieved October 17, 2009 from <http://investors.ironmountain.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=91787&p=irol-reportsannual>