

Cross Functional Collaboration: The Placement of Archival Processing in ARL Libraries

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Abstract: This poster reviews a study of the administrative structures that support archival processing functions in academic libraries, assessing benefits and drawbacks of current models. We sought to determine whether best practices exist for the placement of processing units within academic libraries and whether these structures correlate with other statistical measures. Our research results then informed our library's administrative reorganization. In order to address our questions we conducted two related organizational studies. The first examined staff directories and organizational charts on ARL member library websites. We identified the placement of archival processing staff and generated statistical measures based on available information. This data was correlated with ARL statistics on overall library staffing levels and budgets. Our second study gathered qualitative data from ARL libraries, to examine library administrators' experience with their organizational structure. This survey informed the statistical data previously analyzed. These two studies present a useful snapshot of the organizational landscape and identify three scenarios for administering processing. In the first scenario, archival processing is part of a vertical integration model, with all archival tasks completed within a single library division. The other two models demonstrate varying approaches to distributing archival work across the organization based on functional expertise. An emerging trend of placing archival processing units under the supervision of library cataloging departments will also be discussed. This poster will report the results of these studies, describe the current state of archival processing administration in ARL libraries, and discuss how these concepts were applied in our library's organizational revisions.

About the authors:

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