

Evolution of Records and Recordkeeping in the United States – A Genre-Based Approach

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Abstract: Genre theory introduced in the 1980s has seen expansion of its definitions and analysis models in the past few decades. Previous studies reveal that our understanding of records (created in the course of business process) and archival description (generated as a result of archival processing) can benefit through the lens of genre theory. This study adopts genre-based approach to investigating evolution of records and recordkeeping in the United States. Genre-based approach views records, recordkeeping, and archives as interconnected systems, and studies the impacts of records and recordkeeping practices on the formation of archival systems. Through close observation of sample records cases, the study presents a new narrative that helps to explore the formation of media-based modern archives. The study also argues that historical evolution of records and recordkeeping needs to be built into archival curriculum as archival foundation knowledge to educate future archival professionals.

About the Author:

Jane Zhang is an associate professor at the Department of Library and Information Science, the Catholic University of America (CUA). She holds a PhD in Library and Information Studies with Archives Concentration from Simmons College, Boston, and a joint Master of Archival Studies (MAS) and Library and Information Studies (MLIS) from the University of British Columbia, Canada. Before joining the faculty at the Catholic University, she worked at the Harvard University Archives and the University of Calgary Archives. At CUA, she teaches courses in Archives Management, Electronic Records and Digital Archives, Digital Curation, Metadata, Organization of Information, and History and Theory of Cultural Heritage Institutions. Her research areas cover records and recordkeeping, digital archival representation, and archival education and scholarship.