
Processing~

Personally I Hate This Term 😞 ~ But it’s the one the profession uses, so here it is.

- **Librarians Catalog** ~ by author, title & subject ~ a classification process
- **Archivists PROCESS** ~ Archives is a functional approach
- **Processing Has Two Elements** ~ Arrangement & Description ~ Organization depends on ~
  - Who created the records?
  - What they were created to do?
  - What is their internal structure?

**The Two Primary Arrangement & Description Principles** ~

**Provenance** ~ an organization’s records should be organized together ~ never mixed with others due to subject matter.

**Original Order** ~ Collections should not rearranged ~ they should retain the structure the creator gave them.

**Steps to Take~**

- **Accession** ~ it isn’t yours until you register it.
- **Organize** ~ Arrange & Describe according to the 5 Levels of Arrangement.

Archival arrangement is a stair-stepped approach (see the Five Levels Chart).

**The Five Levels of Archival Arrangement and Description**

- **Depository** ~ the system that organizes your entire archival collection.
- **Record Group** ~ all records generated by a single person or entity (a business, organization, government agency, family, etc.). When working with manuscript, the term "collection" is often used.
- **Series** ~ a distinct file of records created to carry out a single task (i.e., correspondence, or budget or diary, or photographs (when created by a single entity). Most archives concentrate arranging and description at the series level.
- **File Unit** ~ units within a series. The emphasis is on physical location (i.e., box or ledger or folder). Description at the document level is neither enduring and generally isn’t done.
- **Document** ~ a distinct record created to document a particular transaction (i.e., report, letter, or docket). Description at the document level is neither enduring and generally isn’t done.

- **Records can be assigned to any of the five levels ~ BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS SERIES ~ BECAUSE IT’S FUNCTIONAL. IT DEFINES WHAT THE RECORDS WERE CREATED TO DO.**
The Beauty of the Archival Approach is that it Allows You to **Divide & Conquer**

You can:
1. Make your description as detailed or as limited as you need it to be
2. Do What You Can Do When You Can Do It
3. Plan Additional Steps As Time & Resources Allow

Tools:
- Archivists’ Toolkit™, (AT) ~ A broad, integrated open source archival data management system for a wide range of repositories ~ to support archival processing and access [http://archiviststoolkit.org/node/96](http://archiviststoolkit.org/node/96).

Do you want to digitize your collection:
- Seek professional advice early
- Howard Besser is The Recognized Expert on long term retention of electronic archival data
  - Review the 3 essential tasks in the 1996 Commission on Preservation and Access Report ~ Refresh
  - Migrate
  - Emulate [www.oclc.org/.../dam/research/activities/digpresstudy/final-report.pdf](http://www.oclc.org/.../dam/research/activities/digpresstudy/final-report.pdf)

- Or review the 7 Sustainability Factors From Dr. Besser’s Website ~ Disclosure
  - Adoption
  - Transparency
  - Self-documentation
  - External dependencies
  - Impact of patents